

Christianity

Basic Facts

Founded

Usually dated to the death of Jesus, about AD 33 (AD 25 to 35)

Key Figures

Jesus, Peter, Paul, early apostles

Geography

Europe, North and South America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, Australia

Adherents

2.2 billion worldwide (47% Catholic, 10% Orthodox, 43% Protestant and Other)

Basic Beliefs

Nicene Creed

Written by the church in mid-300s to express orthodox Christian belief in the face of numerous heresies of the time. While not a complete expression of the faith, it is regarded by many Christians as describing basic Christian truths.

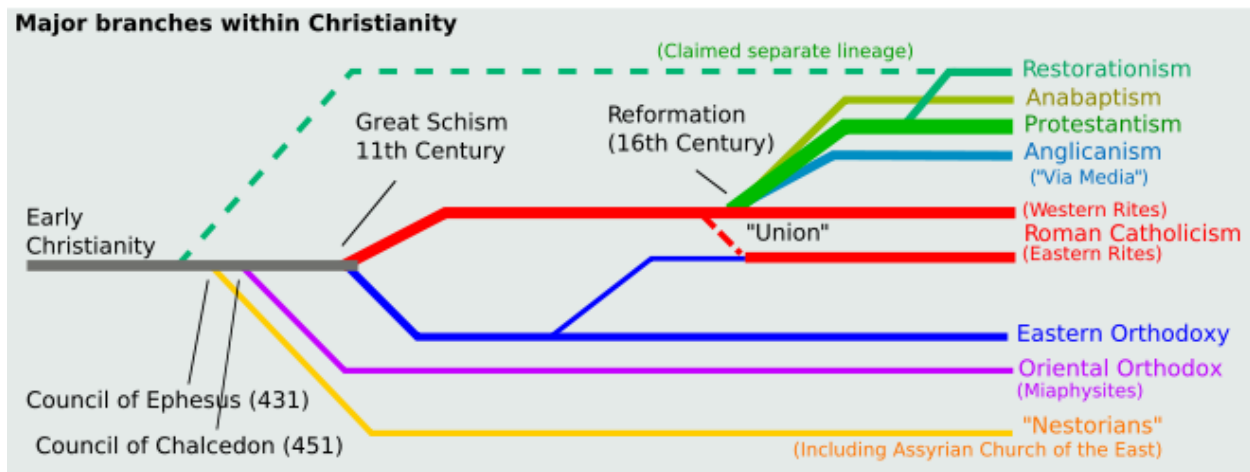
We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father (and the Son)*, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And we believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

*"And the Son" was added by the Western (Catholic) Church in the Middle Ages, and was one of the causes of the Great Schism between East and West.

Christian Denominations/Movements



Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_denomination

The original source of this chart notes that the “claimed separate lineage” applies to ALL Protestants, not just Restorationists. Protestantism usually claims that its teachings and practices date back to the New Testament church.

Further Resources

The Story of Christianity (two volumes) by Justo Gonzalez (Harper, 1984-85)

A very well-written history of Christianity. Unlike most Western histories, it tries to include the Eastern churches in its survey of history. Also available in a very large one volume edition.

Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis (originally published 1952 from radio talks given during WWII)

Basic Christianity by John Stott (InterVarsity Press, 2007 - originally published 1958)

Simply Christian by N. T. Wright (Harper, 2006)

All three of these books provide a basic overview of Christian theology. *Mere Christianity* and *Basic Christianity* are “classics,” while *Simply Christian* is more recent and uses contemporary issues (such as environmentalism) to provide a case for the Gospel.

The Story of Theology by Roger Olson (InterVarsity, 1999)

If you are interested in Christian history and theology from a different perspective, this book tells the story of Christianity through its beliefs. Olson traces the development and origins of Christian doctrines through the stories of the people and groups behind them.

Adherents.com

An all-encompassing website for statistics about various religions and denominations. Most population estimates in this lesson series are taken from adherents.com.

Christian Classics Ethereal Library - www.ccel.org

Hundreds of documents from the early church through the 19th century.