

Comparative Christianity
by
Fr. William G. Brown
via
Zoom 5:30 – 6:30 pm



February 2, 9, 16, 23; April 20, May 4, 11, 18, 2022

Introduction

February 2, 2022

“That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. That they may be one as we are one – I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” John 17: 21-23

The Scandal of our Disunity

“Followers of Jesus span the globe. But the global body of more than two billion Christians is separated into thousands of denominations. Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Lutheran Baptist, Apostolic, Methodist, - the list goes on. **Estimations show that there are more than 200 Christian denominations in the U.S. and a staggering 45,000 globally, according to the Center for the Study of Global Christianity.**

<https://www.gordonconwell.edu/center-for-global-christianity/>

Since the end of World War II, and particularly in the last quarter century there has been an unbelievable change in the Christian situation not only in the United States but, for that matter, in most of the world. The Ecumenical Movement which began with the establishment of the World Council of Churches and has grown in slow and, oft-times, uncertain pace. In the not-too-distant past, Christian denominations treated each as foreigners, and in some cases even as enemies.

Sadly, inter-denomination conflict remains in some parts of the world, but the overall situation is vastly improved. Some groups (e.g. The Methodists) have reunified themselves following previous internal disagreements and in some countries (e.g. Australia with the Uniting Church) there have been unions that have cut across several Protestant denominations. The modern ecumenical movement has done much to encourage a sense of shared faith and common understanding. These ideas have spread, not just between Protestants but across all Christendom. Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox can now meet and pray together in a way that might have seemed unthinkable only several decades before.

Since the establishment of the World Council of Churches (WCC), we have seen the establishment of National Council of Churches (NCC), and of State Council of Churches. I was privileged to serve three terms as President of the Kentucky Council of Churches (KCC). The purpose of all these councils is to bring about a unity between churches by fostering understanding, fellowship and cooperative enterprises, studies,

and activities. For example, when there is a local (national or state) issues, through the councils, participating members put together joint statements and actions relative to the issues.

An example: In a given city, such as Frankfort, instead of each parish or church having its own library, which involves space, and most especially costs. In many instances these parish libraries are limited in scope and quality of offerings. What if all the denominations in Frankfort established a central Christian library including quality materials and open and operated jointly?

The Achilles Heel

It is a fundamental belief of all Christians that we have the bible and one of our beliefs is that the bible is the revealed word of God. We believe that God began His revelation with Abraham and continued it through the Old Testament through the New Testament. In other words from Genesis through Revelation. We believe that what God has told us is the Truth because God cannot err. In fact, Jesus called himself *The Truth*. The New Testament book of Hebrews puts it this way:

"In times past, God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son whom he appointed heir of all things and through whom he made the Universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustain all things by his powerful word." Heb. 1:1-3

One of the biggest problems in Christianity has been the claim that "we have the truth."

But this has also been the source of much of our division. This particularly

"In contrast to the Roman Catholic Church, where interpretation of scripture is carried out by the Pope and his Bishops, Protestantism encourages 'Private Interpretation' of scripture by the individual. As a direct result, differing denominational groups have emerged, each holding to distinctive doctrines. Each regards itself as part of the 'Invisible Church' i.e. the union of believers on earth and in heaven, known only to God." (<http://protestantismhttp://protestantism.co.uk/denominations>)

The Cause of some of our divisiveness: Our tendency has been to say, "We have the truth" and, of the other denomination, "You do not!" As a result we have call each other "Heretics," and we have even killed each other in the name of the truth. We have killed each other over what is the *true* interpretation of the Eucharist. **How incredibly sad!**

As soon as we have multiple people looking at the truths contained in the Bible, we are bound to have multiple interpretation of some of the ideas contained therein. Each claim that they have the truth, it is right there in the Bible. So we have started a new denomination, or church, each calling the other "Heretic!"

The problem is: We have made the TRUTH the main thing, where we are not going to be judged according to how much of the truth we know, we are going to be judged on how much we loved. Truth has become the Achilles heel of Christianity where Jesus made it quite clear that LOVE is the heart. We must love even our enemies (whose who do not hold the same truth as we do): There is no alternative.

Proper understanding of "Faith," and "Church"

Before we can attempt to start comparing the various denominations of Christianity, we must come to a correct understanding of what we mean when we are speaking of "faith" and "church." This is essential.

Faith: A working theological, scriptural definition of faith would be: *"Faith is an encounter with God which results in a change of lifestyle."*

The scriptural concept of faith is that faith is primarily a *relationship* and only secondarily a system of beliefs. It is clear from the New Testament (cf. especially St. Paul's letter to the Romans) that it is faith that saves us. I can know and believe in all the doctrines about God, but if I do not have a relationship with God the belief in doctrines will not save me.

"Encounter with God" - it means that we come to believe that God is real and that we want a relationship with God. Because we believe that God is and that we want a relationship with him, it results in a "change of lifestyle." Without this change of lifestyle, we do NOT have faith. (Cf. James 2:14-26)

Encounter with God does not mean being knocked off a horse as was Paul. Sometimes this encounter can be an emotional experience, sometimes it is as simple as concluding that God is real, that God exists, and therefore that we want a relationship with God.

Later we begin to put into words what we believe about this God with whom we have a relationship. And, therefore, our faith in God will always lead to an enunciation of what we have come to learn about God. BUT the expression of the truths that we believe about this God, is not, the faith that saves us, it is the RELATIONSHIP that saves us.

THEREFORE, when we talk about the Catholic Faith, the Baptist Faith, the Methodist Faith, etc., we are speaking about a set of beliefs, but NOT "Faith" in the salvation sense. There is only ONE faith that saves, it is neither Catholic, Baptist, Pentecostal, etc., there is only this one relationship and that is with Christ which WE ALL HAVE!!

Therefore, we form ONE body. We are all one body (St. Paul), one vine (St. John).

As the Book of Common Prayer puts it (cf. Holy Baptism, pg. 299) “There is one Body and one Spirit; There is one hope in God’s call to us; One Lord One Faith, One Baptism; One God and Father of all.”

Church: The concept of church today has come to mean an institution, be that a single church building, or be it a specific organizational denomination, e.g. The Baptist Church, the Presbyterian Church referring to the whole institution.

This is also a use of the term “church” in the New Testament, e.g. the church in Rome, the church in Ephesus, etc. In this case it refers to believers who are organized into a worshipping community in a specific location.

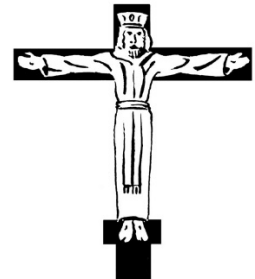
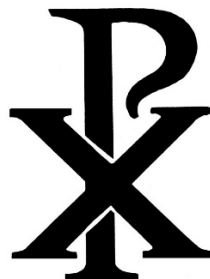
All of these refer to a visible organized group of people.

But there is another, invisible entity which encompasses ALL who are in unity with Christ. It is confusing to call this Church, we often use that term when, in the proper sense, it would be more accurate to use the scriptural term “the Body of Christ” or “the whole Christ.” In our Creed we refer to this invisible entity as “The Communion of Saints.” **We are referring to all who are in union with Christ**, those on earth and the those in heaven. The proper terms in referring to the whole communion is “*Body of Christ*” (St. Paul), or the “*Vine and the branches*” (St. John).

Michael Kinneman, a prominent leader in the international ecumenical movement, who most recently was Dean of the Lexington Theological Seminary, in Lexington, but who has served on the World Council of Churches as well as on the Kentucky Council of Churches. Michael is a close friend of mine. Both he and his wife were with us the night that Linda and I were married in the Crestwood Baptist Church in 1996.

Michael used to refer to the various denominations of Christianity with following comment: “We are already One, we just don’t act like it.”

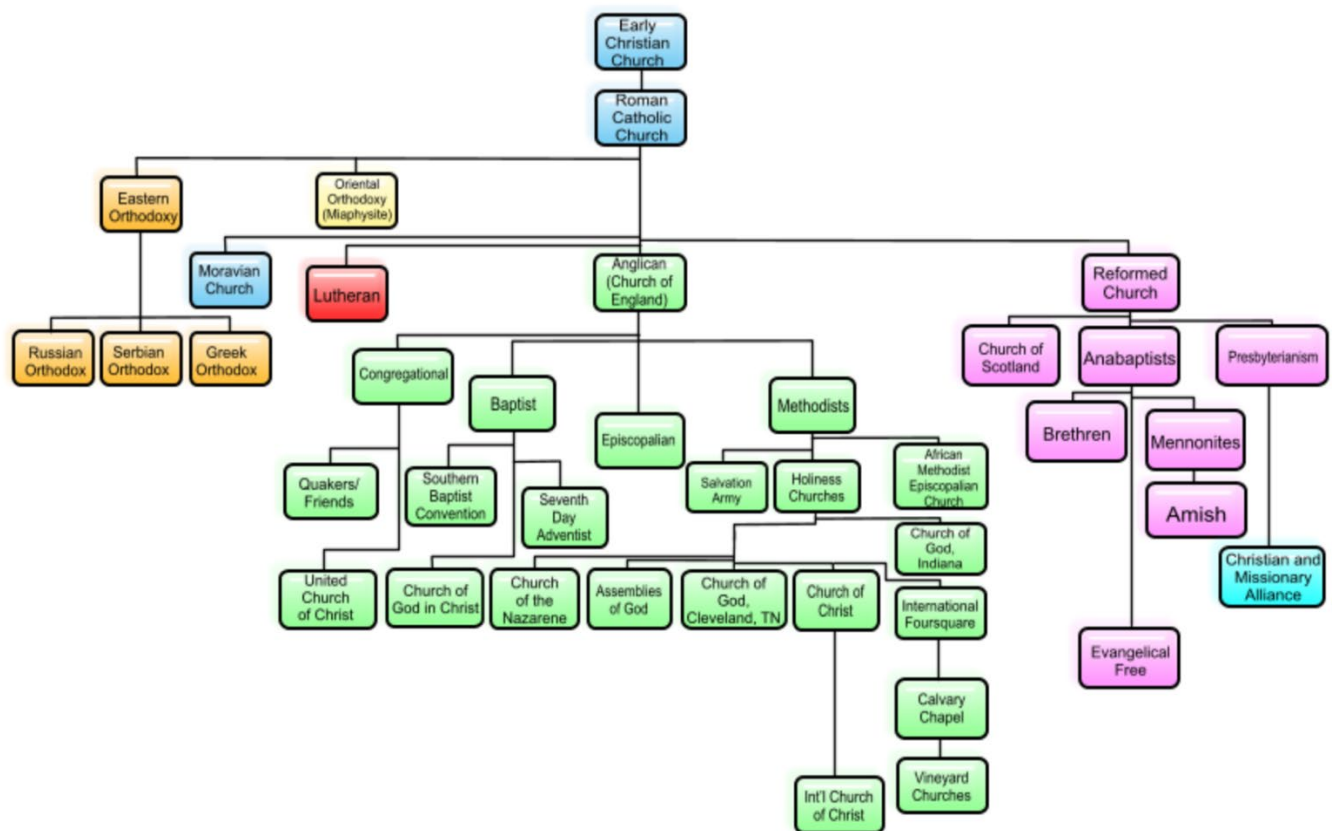
“They will know that you are my disciples in this, that you love one another” (John 13:35)



Christianity

When asked about religions in the United States, we have traditionally responded by saying: Protestant, Catholic, and Jew. Now, of course most today would add a fourth, Muslim. Protestant, Catholic, Jew and Muslim.

When talking about Christianity, the division is **Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant** and this division is not just for the United States, but for the world. This covers all of the basis. And yet, when we speak of Christianity, as mentioned above, we say that there are at least 200 denominations of Christianity in the United States, and over 4,500 in the world.



The table below aims to give an outline of some of the key issues in Christian belief and how the three traditions view these issues. We have tried to state what might be called the 'representative' view of each tradition, though there are obviously differing views within each of them e.g. the diverse range of opinions on the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. [Comparison between Orthodoxy, Protestantism &](#)

Topic	Orthodox	Protestant	Roman Catholic
Apostolic Succession	This is an important part of Orthodox belief and ensures continuity with the church that Christ founded.	With the exception of the Anglicans and some Lutherans, this idea is rejected. Rather it is important to emphasize continuity of teaching with that of the apostles, rather than a direct line of succession.	As in Orthodoxy, this is of vital importance to the church. There is also some degree of mutual recognition of the validity of Orthodox ordinations.
Bible - Composition of	Accept the 39 Old Testament and 27 New Testament books, but also a collection of books not found in the original Hebrew Bible. These are known as <i>Deuterocanonicals</i> i.e. a second canon of scripture.	Protestants reject the deuterocanonicals as not being inspired scripture and term them <i>Apocrypha</i> (Greek: 'Hidden Things').	Agrees with Orthodoxy as to the validity of these books.
Clergy - Qualification for	Priests and Bishops must be male, but deaconesses are permitted, though the order is dormant. Priests and deacons may marry before ordination but not after. Bishops, on the other hand, must be celibate.	The majority of Protestants do not require celibacy as a condition of election to the clergy. Many churches practice female ordination, including those within the Anglican communion, where the issue of female episcopacy is currently being discussed.	All clergy are required to be male. Priests and Bishops must also be celibate, with the exception of Eastern Rite Catholics and Anglican married clergy who subsequently convert to Catholicism. These groups are allowed to have married priests.
Eucharist - Significance of	Commonly termed the 'Mystic Supper' or 'Divine Liturgy' - This makes present Christ's sacrifice and therefore forgiveness of sins is obtained through it. It is also an encounter with the Risen Christ.	The Eucharist, like Baptism is only a symbol of grace. The sacrificial nature of the Eucharist is also rejected.	The position is similar to the Orthodox. The Eucharist is also known as the 'Holy sacrifice of the Mass'.
Eucharist - Presence of Christ in	During the Eucharist, the Priest calls down the Holy Spirit (in Greek: <i>epiklesis</i>) upon the gifts (the bread and the wine). They then change into the actual body and blood of Christ. The precise way in which this happens is a divine mystery.	The bread and wine, being symbols, do not change substance. There are, however, a wide variety of views held within Protestantism on this subject (e.g. some Anglicans accept the Catholic view, whereas Baptists deny it).	As in Orthodoxy, the Priest invokes the Holy Spirit during the Mass. However, the consecration becomes effective through the Priest, who acts in the person of Christ. The gifts change completely into Christ's body and blood and this change is termed 'Transubstantiation' i.e. the outward appearance remains the same, but the substance changes.

Eucharist - Distribution of	The consecrated elements can only be received by members. Orthodox policy is to have communion in both kinds (i.e. both the bread and wine are given to those present).	The elements are usually offered to all Christians who feel able to partake of them. The vast majority of Protestant churches have communion in both kinds.	As with Orthodoxy, only members of the church may receive. In some Catholic Churches, the bread alone is given to the congregation, the Priest receiving the wine. However, it is becoming common for churches to have communion in both kinds.
Holy Spirit	The third person of the Trinity, proceeding from the Father alone as in the original Nicene Creed. The Father sends the Spirit at the intercession of the Son. The Son is therefore an agent only in the procession of the Spirit.	The Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son. The Nicene creed includes the <i>filioque</i> (Latin: 'and the son').	Agrees with the Protestant view. Ambrose of Milan (340-397) wrote: 'When the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, He is not separated from the Father, He is not separated from the Son'.
Marriage and Divorce	Marriage is a mystical union between a man and a woman. Divorce is generally only allowed in cases of adultery, though there are exceptions.	Marriage is a contract, but is not unbreakable. Divorce is discouraged, but permitted as evidence of human weakness. Some denominations permit remarriage in church.	Marriage is seen as an unbreakable contract & a type of Christ and the church. Remarriage after divorce is not permitted unless there is some canonical impediment to the marriage. In this situation, an annulment may be granted.
Mary - Assumption and Immaculate conception of	The Assumption is accepted and it is agreed that Mary experienced physical death, but the Immaculate conception is rejected. Orthodox belief is that the guilt of original sin is not transmitted from one generation to the next, thus obviating the need for Mary to be sinless.	Both are denied. The claim that Mary was sinless is rejected - only Christ was sinless.	Both are dogmas of the church. The church has not as yet decided whether Mary actually experienced Physical death. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception states that Mary, was at conception 'preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin' and should not be confused with the virgin birth.
Mary - Position of	Mary is venerated as <i>Theotokos</i> (Greek: 'God-bearer'). By this is meant that the son she bore was God in human form. She is first amongst the saints and 'ever-virgin'.	Mary was a holy woman who was chosen to bear the Son of God. Her perpetual virginity and intercession are denied.	The view is similar to the Orthodox church - the title 'Mother of God' being used more commonly than <i>Theotokos</i> . This title forms one of the 'Marian Dogmas' of the Church. The others are Mary's perpetual virginity, assumption, and immaculate conception.

Pope - Authority of	As the Bishop of Rome, he has a primacy of honor when Orthodox, not of jurisdiction. At present, his primacy is not effective as the papacy needs to be reformed in accordance with Orthodoxy. His authority is thus no greater or lesser than any of his fellow Bishops in the church.	The Pope is the leader of the Catholic church, having no authority to speak for the church as a whole.	The Pope is the 'Vicar of Christ' i.e. the visible head of the church on earth and spiritual successor of St. Peter. He has supreme authority (including that over church councils) within Christendom (The <i>Power of the keys</i>).
Pope - Infallibility of	Papal Infallibility is rejected. The Holy Spirit acts to guide the church into truth through (for example) ecumenical councils. This Orthodoxy recognizes the first seven ecumenical councils (325-787) as being infallible.	Protestants also reject Papal infallibility. The only source of infallible teaching is that found in the Bible.	The Pope is infallible when, through the Holy Spirit, he defines a doctrine on faith and morals that is to be held by the whole church. This is a dogma and is therefore a required belief within Catholicism.
Purgatory	An intermediate state between earth and heaven is recognized, but cleansing and purification occur in this life, not the next.	Purgatory is rejected - Christ's death on the cross is sufficient to remove the penalty for all our sins.	An intermediate state of cleansing and preparation for heaven. Also a state where the punishment due to unremitted venial sins may be expiated.
Sacraments	There are at least seven Sacraments (known as 'Mysteries' in Orthodoxy): Baptism, Chrismation, Eucharist, Holy Orders, Holy Unction, Marriage (Holy Matrimony) and Penance (Confession). The list is not fixed.	Generally, only two sacraments (also known as <i>Ordinances</i>) are recognized: Baptism and the Eucharist (often called 'Holy Communion' or the 'Lord's Supper').	The number of Sacraments is fixed at seven and is the same list as that in Orthodoxy, with the exception of Chrismation, which is generally known as 'Confirmation'.
Sacraments - Effect of	The Mysteries convey grace to those who participate in them worthily.	There is a diverse range of opinions, but many Protestants regard the Sacraments as symbols or reminders of Grace already given.	Agrees with the Orthodox position. The Sacraments are signs that effect that which they signify.
Saints	A special group of holy people, who are venerated. They may act as intercessors between God and Man and may be invoked in prayer.	All Christians are saints, called to imitate Christ. Only Christ may mediate between God and Man.	The position is very similar to Orthodoxy. For sainthood, it is also required that at least two verifiable miracles have occurred as a result of the intercession of that person.
Salvation	Salvation is "faith working through love" and should be seen as a life long process.	Salvation is the free and unmerited gift of God to man. It is obtained by grace	Salvation is by grace, specifically sanctifying grace, which is given initially

	The Ultimate aim of every Orthodox Christian is to obtain <i>Theosis</i> or union with God. This is done through living a holy life and seeking to draw closer to God.	through faith in Christ alone. Through Christ's atoning sacrifice, we are rendered acceptable to God and judged righteous (justified) in his sight.	through Baptismal regeneration and then maintained through the Sacraments, which are 'channels of grace'.
Scripture - Importance of	There is one source of divine revelation: Tradition. Scripture forms the oral part, and the writings of saints, decisions of ecumenical councils etc. are also part of it.	Scripture alone is the only infallible guide and the final authority on matters of Christian faith and practice (One of the foundational principles of Protestantism).	Alongside Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition (i.e. teachings handed down from Christ and the apostles to the present) are to be considered sources of divine revelation. Tradition and scripture are interpreted by the <i>magisterium</i> or teaching authority of the church.
Worship and Liturgy	The 'Divine Liturgy' is the center of Orthodox spirituality. Worship is usually in the vernacular, though Greek is also used.	There are a wide variety of worship styles. Examples include the spontaneity of the Pentecostal churches, and the more traditional worship of the Anglican churches in the Catholic tradition.	Worship is centered around the Mass. Following the Vatican II council (1962-5), greater emphasis was placed on worship in the vernacular, though the traditional Latin ('Tridentine') Mass is also used.

The Protestant Reformation taking place between the 1300s and the 1600s. The Protestant Reformation had **four founding movements**, each similar and yet each different:

Anglican

Calvinist

Anabaptist

Lutheran

These four movements were similar in that each had common Protestant features and each was different with distinctive traits. All protestant groups have emerged either directly or as a combination of two or more groups (i.e. modern-day Lutheranism directs its heritage directly back to Martin Luther, modern day Methodism began in an Anglican context and modern-day Baptists are a combination of all four, even though they could be misconstrued to be a direct derivative of the Anabaptists),

An outline of the four movements:

Anglican

Began in 1531 when Parliament declared Henry VIII "Supreme Head on Earth of the Church of England". Thereby renouncing the authority of the Pope on English soil All financial, judicicia, and

administrative connections were severed. Despite these changes, Henry VIII's English church retained Roman views on many things, such as the sacraments and salvation by grace and works. Henry VIII's son Edward VI (1547-1553) led the church along more Protestant lines in liturgy and doctrine as evidenced by the Prayer Book of 1549 and 1552. After his death, Mary Tudor (1553-1558) tried to remake England into a Roman Catholic state. During this time many of Edward's reformers were martyred, hence the name Bloody Mary. These included Thomas Cranmer, Nicholas Ridley, and Hugh Latimer as well as many ordinary people. Elizabeth I (1558-1603) restored Protestantism to England through the Elizabethan Settlement, which established a comprehensive, episcopal church with the monarch as Supreme Governor. This created a church with a close church—state relationship. The Pope had no authority. The church retained a sacramental theology based on two rituals, baptism and communion.

Calvinist

This branch of the Protestant Reformation is named after John Calvin (1509-1564). Calvin was a Frenchman, with an extensive educational background in scholasticism and humanism. After his religious conversion he left his native France for areas of Europe where the reforming spirit of Protestantism dominated. He ended up in Geneva, Switzerland. Calvin's ideas had an enormous impact on that city. Calvin was a diligent correspondent, fervent preacher with an intense pastoral concern and most important, a theologian. Calvin was the Protestant Reformation's first great theologian, its first great systematizer of thought. In 1556, he wrote the first edition of his theological treatise, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Calvin's place in history rests on his theology as expressed by his actions in Geneva and his writing.

The theology of John Calvin can be summarized in these five points: The points are often summarized by the word **TULIP**, from the first letter of each point:

1. **Total Depravity of Man** – Man's nature is totally fallen and needs the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit working in him (regeneration) before he can find faith.
2. **Unconditional Election** – Election is the act of God in choosing an individual. His choice is not based on any foreseen merit in man, but rather comes from his own mercy. (Predestination)
3. **Limited Atonement** – Christ's death was effective in removing only the sins of those chosen by him (The Elect) and not for all mankind. This is also known as *Particular Redemption*.
4. **Irresistible Grace** – the call of the Holy Spirit in bringing a person to conversion cannot be frustrated. God's grace, given freely, always results in salvation
5. **Perseverance of the Saints** – Those who are chosen by God, will continue in faith until the end. Those who fall away will not have had true faith in the beginning.

Following the reformation, several Catechisms were drawn up, including the Heidelberg Catechism of 1563 which remains influential today in Reformed Churches. Also of importance within Presbyterianism is the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, devised in 1646 which is widely used, especially within the Church of Scotland, whose identity was shaped by John Knox who led the Protestant Reformation in Scotland. Protestantism.co.uk/today

Anabaptist

This branch of the Protestant Reformation has often been called the *Radical* or *Left-Wing Reformation* because of the movement's rejection of some major tenets of the other Reformation groups and the Roman Catholic Church, including such things as the close link of church and state, and infant baptism. These churches emerged during the formation era, particularly in Switzerland and the Netherlands. A group of reformers disagreed with the baptism of infants as practiced by the Swiss reformer Zwingli. This group of individuals was known as Anabaptists (literally rebaptizers) as they emphasized adult baptism and held that anyone baptized as a child had to be rebaptized when they became capable of accepting Christ as their savior. They believed in strict church discipline and the creation of a pure believer's church. They had deep moral earnestness and sought to model their lives after Christ. They were pacifists and refused to swear oaths. They believed in total separation of Church and State. Martyrdom became the norm in Anabaptist circles.

Lutheran

The Lutheran movement is most closely linked to Germany, Scandinavia and later the United States. This part of Protestantism was launched by Martin Luther (1483-1546). He is remembered as the "impassioned preacher and pastor" of the Protestant Reformation. He became an Augustinian monk. Luther was ordained a priest in 1507. In 1512 he received a Doctor of Theology degree and became professor of scripture at the University of Wittenberg.

During his professorship, Luther became increasingly troubled by his own personal guilt before God and pastorally concerned about the Western church's trafficking in indulgences. He protested with his famous *91 Theses*. This began a controversy that lasted the rest of his lifetime and triggered the German Reformation. In 1520 the Pope excommunicated Luther and stated that his teachings were heretical. Luther published many of his writings. Partially because of his writings, Luther's central ideas later found their way into the other branches of Protestant Reformation. Luther began the Protestant stress on the "onlys"

Much of the above is taken from: Comparative Christianity: A Student's Guide to a Religion and its Diverse Traditions, Thomas A Russell, University Publishers, Boca Raton, c.2010 ISBN 13: 978-1-59942 877-2, Pgs. 87-92

The Five Sola's of Protestantism

1. Sola Gratia (Grace Alone)

PROTESTANT VIEW

Salvation is the free gift of God to man. It is obtained by God's Grace alone and not through any merit on the part of the Christian.

GRACE = **G**od's **R**iches **A**t **C**hrist's **E**xpense.

"For by grace you are saved through faith: and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God. Not of works, that no man may glory."

Ephesians 2:8-9

CATHOLIC VIEW

In Catholic doctrine, Salvation is obtained by God's Grace through faith; faith which is active, not passive. Salvation is through the grace of God which is "infused" into us. This grace is freely given, but men and women are responsible for co-operating with it. Primarily, this is done through participation in the [Sacraments](#), which are seen as channels of grace. This grace of salvation (known as *sanctifying grace*) can be lost through committing [mortal sin](#), but regained through the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Penance, which involves confession, repentance and forgiveness.

"Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 7:21 (DRB).

"The grace of Christ is the gratuitous gift that God makes to us of his own life, infused by the Holy Spirit into our soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify it. It is the sanctifying or deifying grace received in Baptism. It is in us the source of the work of sanctification: Therefore if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself."

2. Sola Fide (Faith Alone)

PROTESTANT VIEW

We are judged righteous in the sight of God purely on the basis of our faith. The atoning sacrifice of Christ leads to righteousness being imputed to us as sinners through a legal declaration by God. This is often stated as *Justification by faith alone*. There is a clear distinction between **Justification** and **Sanctification**, the latter being the growth in holiness arising from the work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian.

FAITH = **F**orsaking **A**ll **I** Trust **H**im.

"But that in the law no man is justified with God, it is manifest: because the just man liveth by faith."

Galatians 3:11

CATHOLIC VIEW

As with Grace, the Catholic view is that good works accompanied by our faith, form the basis for our justification.

"For even as the body without the spirit is dead: so also faith without works is dead."

James 2:26 (DRB).

Justification is a **process** in which we grow in grace and perform good works acceptable to God, rather than a once only **event**. Thus in Catholicism, Justification includes not only God's action in *declaring* us righteous, but also the process of *making* us so. Therefore sanctification is part of justification:

“Like conversion, justification has two aspects. Moved by grace, man turns toward God and away from sin, and so accepts forgiveness and righteousness from on high. Justification includes the remission of sins, sanctification, and the renewal of the inner man.”

3. *Solus Christus* (Christ Alone)

PROTESTANT VIEW

Christ is the one Mediator between God and man and our salvation is accomplished only through His death and resurrection.

“For there is one God: and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

1 Timothy 2:5

CATHOLIC VIEW

Catholicism accepts Christ’s sole mediatorship between God and Man, but it argues that this does not exclude secondary mediatorships that are *subordinated* to Christ. On this basis, the saints (including Mary) can act as mediators.

“And another angel came and stood before the altar, having a golden censer: and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which is before the throne of God. And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel.”

Revelation 8:3-4 (DRB).

Mediatorship can also take the form of that exercised by the priesthood. For example, a validly ordained Priest can celebrate the Mass, which, as a Sacrament acts as a vehicle for the dispensation of Grace.

Like Protestants, Roman Catholics affirm the doctrine of the *Priesthood of all Believers*, on the basis of 1 Peter 2:9:

“But you are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people: that you may declare his virtues, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”

1 Peter 2:9 (DRB).

However, the Catholic view is that there also exists a special or “ministerial” priesthood, which has its roots in the Biblical priesthood outlined in the Old Testament. Thus ordained priests are able to offer sacrifices to God (especially the **Sacrifice of the Mass**) and absolve people of sins (through the Sacrament of **Reconciliation**).

“That I should be the minister of Christ Jesus among the Gentiles: sanctifying the gospel of God, that the oblation of the Gentiles may be made acceptable and sanctified in the Holy Ghost.”

Romans 15:16

4. *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture Alone)

PROTESTANT VIEW

Scripture alone is the only infallible source of divine revelation and the final authority for matters of faith and practice. *Sola Scriptura* does not mean that all truth is contained in the Bible, rather that all we need to know for salvation is contained within it.

"All scripture, inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice. That the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work."

2 Timothy 3:16-17

CATHOLIC VIEW

The Catholic view is that alongside Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition (that is, those teachings which have been handed down from the Apostles) constitutes divine revelation. Interpretation of this revelation has been entrusted to the Catholic church through the *magisterium* or teaching authority that it possesses. This it is claimed, was given to it by Christ himself.

"This living transmission, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called Tradition, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. Through Tradition, the Church, in her doctrine, life and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes. The sayings of the holy Fathers are a witness to the life-giving presence of this Tradition, showing how its riches are poured out in the practice and life of the Church, in her belief and her prayer."

Paragraph 78, CCC.

"Therefore, brothers, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught, either by an oral statement or by a letter of ours."

2 Thessalonians 2:15 (DRB).

The Pope as the visible head of the Church on earth, and the successor of Peter, acts with the authority given to him directly by Christ in Matthew 16:18. Scripture and Tradition together form the *fidei depositum* – the sacred deposit of faith.

5. *Soli Deo Gloria* (To the Glory of God Alone)

PROTESTANT VIEW

Every aspect of the Christian life is to be seen as giving glory to God. This was a reaction to the honour given to the Papacy and the saints and in effect, underlies the other four *Soli* above.

"If any man speak, let him speak, as the words of God. If any minister, let him do it, as of the power which God administereth: that in all things God may be honoured through Jesus Christ: to whom is glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen."

1 Peter 4:11

CATHOLIC VIEW

The beginnings of the Papacy (From the Greek *Pappas* : 'Father') may be traced to Christ's words to Peter: *"And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."*

Matthew 16:18-19

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Finally –

In contrast to the four founding movements of the Reformation, today, modern day Protestant denominations may be roughly grouped into **nine families**:

Anabaptist

Anglican

Baptist

Congregational

Lutheran

Methodist

Pentecostal

Quaker

Reformed