

## 1: A World History of Christianity by Adrian Hastings

*The history of Christianity is filled with conflict, controversy, and division. It also has countless instances of brilliant creativity in worship, architecture, painting, sculpture, music, and literature.*

April 2, The Future of World Religions: Over the next four decades, Christians will remain the largest religious group, but Islam will grow faster than any other major religion. If current trends continue, by 2050 the number of Muslims will nearly equal the number of Christians around the world. The global Buddhist population will be about the same size it was in 2010, while the Hindu and Jewish populations will be larger than they are today. India will retain a Hindu majority but also will have the largest Muslim population of any country in the world, surpassing Indonesia. In the United States, Christians will decline from more than three-quarters of the population in 2010 to two-thirds in 2050, and Judaism will no longer be the largest non-Christian religion. Muslims will be more numerous in the U.S. Four out of every 10 Christians in the world will live in sub-Saharan Africa. These are among the global religious trends highlighted in new demographic projections by the Pew Research Center. Islam was second, with 1.5 billion adherents. If current demographic trends continue, however, Islam will nearly catch up by the middle of the 21st century. As a result, according to the Pew Research projections, by 2050 there will be near parity between Muslims and Christians. 2. The global Buddhist population is expected to be fairly stable because of low fertility rates and aging populations in countries such as China, Thailand and Japan. In 2010, censuses and surveys indicate, there were about 240 million Buddhists. At the same time, however, the unaffiliated are expected to continue to increase as a share of the population in much of Europe and North America. As the example of the unaffiliated shows, there will be vivid geographic differences in patterns of religious growth in the coming decades. One of the main determinants of that future growth is where each group is geographically concentrated today. Religions with many adherents in developing countries where birth rates are high, and infant mortality rates generally have been falling are likely to grow quickly. Much of the worldwide growth of Islam and Christianity, for example, is expected to take place in sub-Saharan Africa. Globally, Muslims have the highest fertility rate, an average of 3.1 children per woman. Worldwide, Jewish fertility is 1.8. All the other groups have fertility levels too low to sustain their populations: Another important determinant of growth is the current age distribution of each religious group whether its adherents are predominantly young, with their prime childbearing years still ahead, or older and largely past their childbearing years. All the remaining groups have smaller-than-average youth populations, and many of them have disproportionately large numbers of adherents over the age of 40. In addition to fertility rates and age distributions, religious switching is likely to play a role in the growth of religious groups. But conversion patterns are complex and varied. In some countries, it is fairly common for adults to leave their childhood religion and switch to another faith. In others, changes in religious identity are rare, legally cumbersome or even illegal. The Pew Research Center projections attempt to incorporate patterns in religious switching in 70 countries where surveys provide information on the number of people who say they no longer belong to the religious group in which they were raised. In the projection model, all directions of switching are possible, and they may be partially offsetting. In the United States, for example, surveys find that some people who were raised with no religious affiliation have switched to become Christians, while some who grew up as Christians have switched to become unaffiliated. These types of patterns are projected to continue as future generations come of age. For more details on how and where switching was modeled, see the Methodology. For alternative growth scenarios involving either switching in additional countries or no switching at all, see Chapter 1. Over the coming decades, Christians are expected to experience the largest net losses from switching. Globally, about 40 million people are projected to switch into Christianity, while 100 million are projected to leave, with most joining the ranks of the religiously unaffiliated. All told, the unaffiliated are expected to add 97 million people and lose 36 million via switching, for a net gain of 61 million by 2050. Modest net gains through switching also are expected for Muslims (3 million), adherents of folk religions (3 million) and members of other religions (2 million). Jews are expected to experience a net loss of about 1 million people due to switching, while Buddhists are expected to lose nearly 3 million. International migration is another factor that will influence the projected size

of religious groups in various regions and countries. Forecasting future migration patterns is difficult, because migration is often linked to government policies and international events that can change quickly. For this reason, many population projections do not include migration in their models. But working with researchers at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Laxenburg, Austria, the Pew Research Center has developed an innovative way of using data on past migration patterns to estimate the religious composition of migrant flows in the decades ahead. For details on how the projections were made, see Chapter 1. The impact of migration can be seen in the examples shown in the graph at the right, which compares projection scenarios with and without migration in the regions where it will have the greatest impact. In Europe, for instance, the Muslim share of the population is expected to increase from 5. In North America, the Hindu share of the population is expected to nearly double in the decades ahead, from 0. Beyond the Year This report describes how the global religious landscape would change if current demographic trends continue. With each passing year, however, there is a chance that unforeseen events – war, famine, disease, technological innovation, political upheaval, etc. Owing to the difficulty of peering more than a few decades into the future, the projections stop at Readers may wonder, though, what would happen to the population trajectories highlighted in this report if they were projected into the second half of this century. And, if so, when? The answer depends on continuation of the trends described in Chapter 1. After that, the number of Muslims would exceed the number of Christians, but both religious groups would grow, roughly in tandem, as shown in the graph above. Due to the heavy concentration of Christians and Muslims in this high-fertility region, both groups would increase as a percentage of the global population. It bears repeating, however, that many factors could alter these trajectories. Or if disaffiliation were to become common in countries with large Muslim populations – as it is now in some countries with large Christian populations – that trend could slow or reverse the increase in Muslim numbers.

### Regional and Country-Level Projections

In addition to making projections at the global level, this report projects religious change in countries and territories with at least , people as of , covering Population estimates for an additional 36 countries and territories are included in regional and global totals throughout the report. Ongoing growth in both regions will fuel global increases in the Muslim population. One exception is Hindus, who are overwhelmingly concentrated in India, where the population is younger and fertility rates are higher than in China or Japan. As previously mentioned, Hindus are projected to roughly keep pace with global population growth. Europe is the only region where the total population is projected to decline. While Christians will remain the largest religious group in Europe, they are projected to drop from three-quarters of the population to less than two-thirds. Over the same period, the number of Hindus in Europe is expected to roughly double, from a little under 1. Buddhists appear headed for similarly rapid growth in Europe – a projected rise from 1. In the United States, for example, the share of the population that belongs to other religions is projected to more than double – albeit from a very small base – rising from 0. And by the middle of the 21st century, the United States is likely to have more Muslims 2. But Nigeria also will continue to have a very large Christian population. Indeed, Nigeria is projected to have the third-largest Christian population in the world by , after the United States and Brazil. As of , the largest religious group in France, New Zealand and the Netherlands is expected to be the unaffiliated. About These Projections While many people have offered predictions about the future of religion, these are the first formal demographic projections using data on age, fertility, mortality, migration and religious switching for multiple religious groups around the world. The projections cover eight major groups: Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, adherents of folk religions, adherents of other religions and the unaffiliated see Appendix C: Defining the Religious Groups. Because censuses and surveys in many countries do not provide information on religious subgroups – such as Sunni and Shia Muslims or Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Christians – the projections are for each religious group as a whole. Data on subgroups of the unaffiliated are also unavailable in many countries. As a result, separate projections are not possible for atheists or agnostics. The projection model was developed in collaboration with researchers in the Age and Cohort Change Project at IIASA, who are world leaders in population projections methodology. The model uses an advanced version of the cohort-component method typically employed by demographers to forecast population growth. It starts with a population of baseline age groups, or cohorts, divided by sex and religion. Each cohort is projected into

the future by adding likely gains immigrants and people switching in and by subtracting likely losses deaths, emigrants and people switching out year by year. For more details, see the Methodology. An initial set of projections for one religious group, Muslims, was published in , although it did not attempt to take religious switching into account. Some social theorists have suggested that as countries develop economically, more of their inhabitants will move away from religious affiliation. While that has been the general experience in some parts of the world, notably Europe, it is not yet clear whether it is a universal pattern. Rather, the projections extend the recently observed patterns of religious switching in all countries for which sufficient data are available 70 countries in all. And the projections assume that people gradually are living longer in most countries. These and other key input data and assumptions are explained in detail in Chapter 1 and the Methodology Appendix A. Since religious change has never previously been projected on this scale, some cautionary words are in order. Population projections are estimates built on current population data and assumptions about demographic trends, such as declining birth rates and rising life expectancies in particular countries. The projections are what will occur if the current data are accurate and current trends continue. But many events – scientific discoveries, armed conflicts, social movements, political upheavals, natural disasters and changing economic conditions, to name just a few – can shift demographic trends in unforeseen ways. That is why the projections are limited to a year time frame, and subsequent chapters of this report try to give a sense of how much difference it could make if key assumptions were different. For more details on the possible impact of religious switching in China, see Chapter 1. Finally, readers should bear in mind that within every major religious group, there is a spectrum of belief and practice. The projections are based on the number of people who self-identify with each religious group, regardless of their level of observance. What it means to be Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish or a member of any other faith may vary from person to person, country to country, and decade to decade. Acknowledgements These population projections were produced by the Pew Research Center as part of the Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures project, which analyzes religious change and its impact on societies around the world.

## 2: History of Christianity

*History of Christianity: The Arrival of Jesus Christ History of Christianity -- With this cultural and religious backdrop, the ministry of Jesus began. Jesus was a Jew.*

The history of Christianity begins there with the birth of Jesus and through his ministry some 28 years later. People accepting Christ as their savior, the messiah, are called Christians. Christianity is a historical religion, being founded not on abstract principles, but in concrete events, actual happenings. The history of Christianity begins in Israel, over years ago, in what was then the ancient land of Palestine, with the short three-year ministry of this man, Jesus of Nazareth. His ministry culminates in his Crucifixion and Resurrection in Jerusalem. Here the Apostles and other disciples lived and taught out of this city for some 40 years. An Introduction to Christian History It is important to remember that Christianity grew out of, and is a continuation of, Judaism. Originally Was Part of Judaism The background is that the Jews had been waiting for a leader who had been promised centuries before by the prophets. They believed that this leader "the Messiah" would rescue them from their Roman oppressors, and establish a new kingdom. As their king, he would rule with justice. However, many Jews overlooked prophecies that also spoke of this king as a suffering servant who would be rejected, and killed. There is a misconception regarding the acceptance of Jesus by the Hebrew people. While it is very true that the religious leaders and political leaders rejected Jesus as the Messiah, many Jewish people really, by the droves did embrace Jesus in the early years of the Church, and this is how Christianity received its start. Its beginning was inside the Jewish religion, it became a sect of Judaism. It began to grow, and with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in the year 70 AD and the dispersing of Jews The Diaspora all over the Roman Empire, Christianity began its growth. Christianity is the religion of one-third of the population of the earth. Some 2 billion people are identified in some way or other with the Christian movement with substantial populations on every continent. Despite its representation and support in many lands today, Christianity has been principally a Western phenomenon. Yet the influence of Christianity extends beyond the borders of traditional Christendom. It has affected other religions, and its characteristic and distinguishing attitudes and habits continue to shape the character of individuals and nations that no longer live by its creed. This Christian event became so colossal, that the calendar for the entire world is marked by the birth of Jesus. So, Christianity was founded around the year 29 AD. Jesus of Nazareth was born somewhere around the year 0, died at 32 years of age, and was resurrected. He is considered the Christ, the Messiah by his followers. The effects of his life, the response to his teachings, and the experience of his death and Resurrection were the beginnings of the Christian community. And it is in response to this confession that Jesus is described as announcing the foundation of the Christian church: There were doctrinal issues like the filioque clause wording in the Nicene Creed and the authority of the Pope the Bishop of Rome, also with title of Patriarch involved in the split, but these were exacerbated by cultural and linguistic differences between Latins and Greeks. While cultural difference occurred over time, probably the major problem was language. Latin was the language of Rome, while Greek was really the common language of the world, and particularly in the East. Then, through further theological disputes, there have been many divisions in both the Eastern church and the Western church to create other distinct churches. However, it is really important to realize that all Christian faiths are on the same frequency. The fundamental beliefs have not changed over all these centuries, in spite of all this splintering that has occurred into various denominations. Either one of these Creeds or both is accepted by every Christian faith, and therefore, they have a great deal in common with each other.

## 3: Christianity, The Origins Of Christianity

*A history of unparalleled scope that charts the global transformation of Christianity during an age of profound political and cultural change.*

The very earliest reports are in these texts: There are reasons to suppose that they were written within a few years of the crucifixion of Jesus and came from the Jerusalem Church. Christianity thought the Jewish scriptures to be sacred and used mostly the Septuagint edition and translation as the Old Testament, and added other texts as the New Testament. Christians professed Jesus to be the God of Israel, having taken human form, and considered Jesus to be the Messiah Christ who had been prophesied about in the Old Testament and so was expected by the people of Israel. Christianity continued many Judaic practices: Post-Apostolic Church[ change change source ] The time when most of the apostles had died and their jobs as leaders of the Christian communities in the cities had been taken over by bishops, is called post-apostolic period. It includes the time of persecutions until Christian worship was legalized under Constantine the Great. The term was used by Ignatius of Antioch c. Persecutions[ change change source ] Early Christians were subject to various persecutions. This meant even death. Early martyrs included Stephen Acts 7: Persecutions in larger scale by the authorities of the Roman Empire began with the year 64, when the Emperor Nero blamed them for the great Fire of Rome as the Roman historian Tacitus reported. Several of the New Testament writings mention persecutions and very difficult times. For years there were times when Christians suffered from persecutions, because they refused to worship the Roman emperor. That was seen as treason and punished by execution. But the Christian religion continued to spread throughout the Mediterranean region. In the late fourth century they became the dominant religious force of the Roman Empire. Christianity legalized[ change change source ] Galerius issued an edict permitting the practice of the Christian religion under his rule in April of Constantine became the first Christian emperor. By, under the reign of Theodosius I, Christianity had become the state religion of Rome. The Bishop of Rome claimed to be the highest amongst all others and chose the title pope. During this era, there were several Ecumenical Councils. These were mostly concerned with Christological disputes. The two Councils of Niceaea, condemned Arianism and produced the Nicene Creed to define the faith. Perhaps the most important council was the Council of Chalcedon that affirmed that Christ had two natures, fully God and fully man, at the same time. That meant that Monophysitism was condemned. With the Muslim invasions of the seventh century, the Western Latin and Eastern Greek areas of Christianity began to take on distinctive shapes, and the Bishops of Rome were more interested in barbarian kings than in the Byzantine Emperors. Emperor Justinian I tried to restore imperial dominion in Italy against the gothic aristocracy. The following campaigns were more or less successful, and the Imperial Exarchate was established in Ravenna for Italy, but imperial influence was often limited. Then came the invasion of the Lombards, and Rome had to take care of itself. Thus the popes, out of necessity, found themselves feeding the city with grain from papal estates, negotiating treaties, paying protection money to Lombard warlords, and, failing that, hiring soldiers to defend the city. Investiture Controversy[ change change source ] The Investiture Controversy, also known as the lay investiture controversy, was the most important conflict between secular and religious powers in medieval Europe. The question was who would control appointments of bishops investiture. The end of lay investiture meant an important loss of royal power, for the benefit Church reform, as the pope intended, and for ambitious noblemen as well. Bishops collected revenues from estates attached to their bishopric. Noblemen who held lands fiefdoms hereditarily passed those lands on within their family. However, a king had more control of lands under the domain of his bishops. Kings would give bishoprics to powerful friends. If a king left a bishopric vacant, he got the money until a bishop was appointed, when he was supposed to repay the earnings. The Church wanted to end this lay investiture because of the vacant sees simony and other problems. Pope Gregory VII issued the Dictatus Papae, which said only the pope make or break bishops, or move them to other sees. With excommunication and a revolt by his dukes, Henry apologized and was forgiven see Walk to Canossa, though the revolt and conflict of investiture continued. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury. The English dispute was resolved by a deal in, where the king gave up

making bishops but did require an oath of fealty. The later Concordat of Worms Pactum Calixtinum resolved the Imperial investiture controversy with a similar compromise. Crusades[ change change source ] The Crusades were a military conflicts conducted by Christian knights for the defense of Christians and for the expansion of Christian domains. Generally, the crusades refer to the campaigns in the Holy Land against Muslim forces sponsored by the Papacy. There were other crusades against Islamic forces in southern Spain, southern Italy, and Sicily, as well as the campaigns of Teutonic knights against pagan strongholds in Eastern Europe, and to a much lesser extent crusades against Catharism or other Christian heresies. The Holy Land had been part of the Roman Empire, and thus Byzantine Empire, until the Islamic conquests of the seventh and eighth centuries. Thereafter, Christians had generally been permitted to visit the sacred places in the Holy Land until , when the Seljuk Turks closed Christian pilgrimages and assailed the Byzantines, defeating them at the Battle of Manzikert. Instead of sending money, Urban II called upon the knights of Christendom in a speech made at the Council of Clermont on 27 November , combining the idea of pilgrimage to the Holy Land with that of waging a holy war against infidels. Western Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. It was the first major division since certain groups in the East rejected the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon see Oriental Orthodoxy , and was far more significant. Though normally dated to , the East-West Schism was the result of an long time of disagreement between Latin and Greek Christendom over papal primacy and certain doctrinal matters like the filioque. Bad feelings were intensified by cultural and linguistic differences. A few days later, he excommunicated the legates. Attempts at reconciliation were made in in Lyon and in in Basel but in each case the eastern hierarchs who agreed to the unions were repudiated by the Orthodox as a whole. However, reconciliation was achieved between the West and what are now called the " Eastern Rite Catholic Churches ". More recently, in the mutual excommunications were rescinded by the Pope and the Patriarch of Constantinople, though schism remains. Though both acknowledge the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, Eastern Orthodoxy understands this as a primacy of honor with limited or no ecclesiastical authority in other dioceses. Western Schism[ change change source ] The Western Schism, or Papal Schism, was a prolonged period of crisis in Latin Christendom from to , when there were two or more claimants to the See of Rome and thus it was difficult to discern who the true Pope was. The conflict was political, rather than doctrinal, in nature. On the one hand, it was a time of great artistic patronage and architectural magnificence, where the Church patroned such artists as Michelangelo , Brunelleschi , Bramante , Raphael , Fra Angelico , Donatello , and da Vinci. On the other hand, wealthy Italian families often secured episcopal offices, including the papacy, for their own members, some of whom were known for immorality, such as Alexander VI and Sixtus IV. Protestant Reformation â€” [ change change source ] In the early 16th century, movements were begun by two theologians, Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli , that aimed to reform the Church; these reformers are distinguished from previous ones in that they considered the root of corruptions to be doctrinal rather than simply a matter of moral weakness or lack of ecclesiastical discipline and thus they aimed to change contemporary doctrines to accord with what they perceived to be the "true gospel". The term "Protestant", however, was not originally used by these leaders; instead, they called themselves "evangelical", emphasizing the "return to the true gospel Greek: Early protest was against corruptions such as simony , episcopal vacancies, and the sale of indulgences. The Protestant position, however, would come to incorporate doctrinal changes such as sola scriptura and sola fide. The three most important traditions to emerge directly from the Protestant Reformation were the Lutheran , Reformed Calvinist , Presbyterian , etc. The Protestant Reformation may be divided into two distinct but basically simultaneous movements, the Magisterial Reformation and the Radical Reformation. The Magisterial Reformation involved the alliance of certain theological teachers Latin: Radical Reformers, besides forming communities outside state sanction, often employed more extreme doctrinal change, such as the rejection of tenants of the Councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon. Often the division between magisterial and radical reformers was as or more violent than the general Catholic and Protestant hostilities. The Protestant Reformation spread almost entirely within the confines of Northern Europe, but did not take hold in certain northern areas such as Ireland and parts of Germany. By far the magisterial reformers were more successful and their changes more widespread than the radical reformers. The Catholic response to the Protestant Reformation is known as the Counter Reformation,

or Catholic Reformation, which resulted in a reassertion of traditional doctrines and the emergence of new religious orders aimed at both moral reform and new missionary activity. Protestant expansion outside of Europe occurred on a smaller scale through colonization of North America and areas of Africa.

## 4: Christianity Origins, Christianity History, Christianity Beliefs

*Christianity is the most global of religions. However, most books on the subject fail to do justice to the history of Christianity outside Europe and North America.*

Much of the impetus for this new religion rested in issues in the Jewish religion, including a long-standing belief in the coming of a Messiah and rigidities that had developed in the Jewish priesthood. Whether or not Christianity was created by God, as Christians believe, the early stages of the religion focused on cleansing the Jewish religion of stiff rituals and haughty leaders. It had little at first to do with Roman culture. Christianity arose in a remote province and appealed particularly to the poorer classes. It is not easy, as a result, to fit Christianity neatly into the patterns of Roman history: It was deliberately separate, and only gradually had wider impact. Christianity originated with Jesus of Nazareth, a Jewish prophet and teacher who probably came to believe he was the Son of God and certainly was regarded as such by his disciples. Jesus preached in Israel during the time of Augustus, urging a purification of the Jewish religion that would free Israel and establish the kingdom of God on earth. He urged a moral code based on love, charity, and humility, and he asked the faithful to follow his lessons, abandoning worldly concern. Many disciples believed that a Final Judgment day was near at hand, on which God would reward the righteous with immortality and condemn sinners to everlasting hell. Jesus won many followers among the poor. He also roused suspicion among the upper classes and the leaders of the Jewish religion. These helped persuade the Roman governor, already concerned about unrest among the Jews, that Jesus was a dangerous agitator. Jesus was put to death as a result, crucified like a common criminal, about A. His followers believed that he was resurrected on the third day after his death, a proof that he was the Son of God. This belief helped the religion spread farther among Jewish communities in the Middle East, both within the Roman Empire and beyond. As they realized that the Messiah was not immediately returning to earth to set up the Kingdom of God, the disciples of Jesus began to fan out, particularly around the eastern Mediterranean, to spread the new Christian message. Initially, Christian converts were Jewish by birth and followed the basic Jewish law. Their belief that Christ was divine as well as human, however, roused hostility among other Jews. When one early convert, Stephen, was stoned to death, many disciples left Israel and traveled throughout western Asia. By the 4th century A. As it spread, Christianity connected increasingly with larger themes in Roman history. With its particularly great appeal to some of the poor, Christianity was well positioned to reflect social grievances in an empire increasingly marked by inequality. Slaves, dispossessed farmers and impoverished city dwellers found hope in a religion that promised rewards after death. Christianity also answered cultural and spiritual needs - especially but not exclusively among the poor - left untended by mainstream Roman religion and culture. Roman values had stressed political goals and ethics suitable for life in this world. They did not join peoples of the empire in more spiritual loyalties, and they did not offer many emotionally satisfying rituals. As the empire consolidated, reducing direct political participation, a number of mystery religions spread from the Middle East and Egypt, religions that offered emotionally charged rituals. Worship of gods such as Mithra or Isis, derived from earlier Mesopotamian or Egyptian beliefs, attracted some Roman soldiers and others with rites of sacrifice and a strong sense of religious community. Christianity, though far more than a mystery religion, had some of these qualities and won converts on this basis as well. Christianity, in sum, gained ground in part because of features of Roman political and cultural life. Political stability and communications over a wide area aided missionary efforts, while the Roman example helped inspire the government forms of the growing Christian church. Bishops headed churches in regional centers and supervised the activities of other churches in the area. Bishops in politically powerful cities, including Rome, gained particular authority. Roman principles also helped move what initially had been a religion among Jews to a genuinely cosmopolitan stance. Under the leadership of Paul, converted to Christianity about A. Rather, in the spirit of Rome and of Hellenism, the new faith was seen as universal, open to all whether or not they followed Jewish practices in diet, male circumcision, and so on. Paul was Jewish, but he had been born in a Greek city and was familiar with Greco-Roman culture. He helped explain basic Christian beliefs in terms other adherents of this culture

could grasp, and he preached in Greece and Italy as well as the Middle East. Paul essentially created Christian theology, as a set of intellectual principles that followed from, but generalized, the message of Jesus. Paul also modified certain initial Christian impulses. They began to develop a body of Christian writings beyond the Bible messages written by the disciples of Jesus. Ironically, as the Roman Empire was in most respects declining, Christianity produced an outpouring of complex thought and often elegant use of language. In this effort, Christianity redirected Roman culture never known for abundant religious subtlety but also preserved many earlier literary and philosophical achievements. Adherents of the new religion clashed with Roman authorities, to be sure. Christians, who put their duties to God first, would not honor the emperor as a divinity and might seem to reject the authority of the state in other spheres. Several early emperors, including the mad Nero, persecuted Christians, killing some and driving their worship underground. Persecution was not constant, however, which helps explain why the religion continued to spread. It resumed only in the 4th century, when several emperors sought to use religious conformity and new claims to divinity as a way of cementing loyalties to a declining state. Christianity had more to do with opening a new era in the history of the Mediterranean region than with shaping the later Roman Empire. Yet important connections did exist that explain features of Christianity and of later Roman history.

## 5: Christianity, A History of Christianity

*The history of Christianity concerns the Christian religion, Christendom, and the Church with its various denominations, from the 1st century to the present. Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christianity spread to all of Europe in the Middle Ages.*

What is the history of Christianity? The history of Christianity is really the history of Western civilization. Christianity has had an all-pervasive influence on society at large—art, language, politics, law, family life, calendar dates, music, and the very way we think have all been colored by Christian influence for nearly two millennia. The story of the church, therefore, is an important one to know. Jesus had promised that He would build His church Matthew The initial converts to Christianity were Jews or proselytes to Judaism, and the church was centered in Jerusalem. Because of this, Christianity was seen at first as a Jewish sect, akin to the Pharisees, the Sadducees, or the Essenes. However, what the apostles preached was radically different from what other Jewish groups were teaching. It is quite proper to say that Christianity has its roots in Judaism. The Old Testament laid the groundwork for the New, and it is impossible to fully understand Christianity without a working knowledge of the Old Testament see the books of Matthew and Hebrews. The New Testament, then, is all about the coming of Messiah and His work to save us from sin. In His life, Jesus fulfilled over specific prophecies, proving that He was the One the Old Testament had anticipated. The evangelist Philip preached to the Samaritans Acts 8: The apostle Paul the former persecutor of the church spread the gospel all over the Greco-Roman world, reaching as far as Rome itself Acts For the next years, Christians were persecuted by Rome—sometimes at random, sometimes by government edict. In the 2nd and 3rd centuries, the church leadership became more and more hierarchical as numbers increased. Several heresies were exposed and refuted during this time, and the New Testament canon was agreed upon. Persecution continued to intensify. About 70 years later, during the reign of Theodosius, Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Bishops were given places of honor in the government, and by A. After Constantine, then, Christians were no longer persecuted. Such forced conversions led to many people entering the church without a true change of heart. The pagans brought with them their idols and the practices they were accustomed to, and the church changed; icons, elaborate architecture, pilgrimages, and the veneration of saints were added to the simplicity of early church worship. About this same time, some Christians retreated from Rome, choosing to live in isolation as monks, and infant baptism was introduced as a means of washing away original sin. As the Roman Empire grew weaker, the church became more powerful, and many disagreements broke out between the churches in the West and those in the East. The Western Latin church, based in Rome, claimed apostolic authority over all other churches. This did not sit well with the Eastern Greek church, based in Constantinople. History of Christianity - The Middle Ages During the Middle Ages in Europe, the Roman Catholic Church continued to hold power, with the popes claiming authority over all levels of life and living as kings. Corruption and greed in the church leadership was commonplace. From to the popes endorsed a series of bloody and expensive crusades in an effort to repel Muslim advances and liberate Jerusalem. History of Christianity - The Reformation Through the years, several individuals had tried to call attention to the theological, political, and human rights abuses of the Roman Church. All had been silenced in one way or another. But in , a German monk named Martin Luther took a stand against the church, and everyone heard. Although Catholicism made a comeback in Europe, and a series of wars between Protestants and Catholics ensued, the Reformation had successfully dismantled the power of the Roman Catholic Church and helped open the door to the modern age. History of Christianity - The Age of Missions From to , the church showed an unprecedented interest in missionary work. Colonization had opened eyes to the need for missions, and industrialization had provided people with the financial ability to fund the missionaries. Missionaries went around the world preaching the gospel, and churches were established throughout the world. The evangelical church is strongly independent and rooted firmly in Reformed theology. The church has also seen the rise of Pentecostalism, the charismatic movement, ecumenicalism, and various cults. Each of us is responsible to know what the Scripture says and to live by it. When the church forgets what the Bible teaches and ignores

what Jesus taught, chaos reigns. There are many churches today, but only one gospel. May we be careful to preserve that faith and pass it on without alteration, and the Lord will continue to fulfill His promise to build His church.

## 6: Role of Christianity in civilization - Wikipedia

*In , about two-thirds of the world's Christians lived in Europe, where the bulk of Christians had been for a millennium, according to historical estimates by the Center for the Study of Global Christianity. 2 Today, only about a quarter of all Christians live in Europe (26%). A plurality - more than a third - now are in the Americas.*

Is a source of bigotry 4. Causes pollution and animal extinction 6. Contributes to the population explosion 7. Analysis of the Charges Unfortunately, some of the charges are true. The church, as an institution, has not always been a positive influence for social change. Platonism " The spiritual sphere is the real world. Thus, the body is the prison of the soul. Humanism " Views the physical and social needs of man as the only importance. The institutional church has, at times, failed at preaching regeneration. Jesus was concerned for the total man. Jesus would have done both"put a new suit on a new man! When the church is assimilated by the culture in which it finds itself, it loses its cutting edge. The institutional church and true Christianity are not always synonymous. Renaissance popes are not Christianity; St. Francis of Assisi is. Captain Ball, a Yankee slave captain, is not Christianity, Wilburforce is. The Rise of Modern Science 1. Science rose in the West, not in the East. Whitehead and Oppenheimer insisted that modern science could not have been born except in a Christian milieu. Many pioneering scientists were not only theists, but Christians: Concepts conducive to scientific inquiry were expressly Christian: Positive attitude toward the world. Awareness of order i. Views of man as a superintendent of nature. The Development of Higher Education 1. The Puritans were 95 per cent literate. Christianity and the Arts: Means of Social Change a. Reform"moderately effective, but slow. Revolution"more rapid, but usually bloody. Reneneration"Changing persons changes society. That which is born of flesh is flesh: There is a difference between professing Christianity and possessing a personal relationship with Christ. Examples in the Early Church a. Early Christians stood in opposition to infanticide, degradation of women, gladiatorial combats, slavery, etc. Examples in the Middle Ages Consider the Monks, not the knights. Monasteries served as hospitals, places of refuge. Monastic schools trained scribes to preserve manuscripts. Monasteries also developed agricultural skills and knowledge. The Scholastics remain a pivotal period of intellectual growth. A time of major artistic development: Examples during the Reformation a. A myriad of forces were at work in the vast social and religious shift known as the Reformation i. Luther, printing, Gutenberg Bible. Calvin and the other reformers must not be ignored. They assume that it was simply the rupture with tradition made by Calvinists which produced certain changes of life-styles which, in turn, affected society in Protestant countries in later centuries. Examples in Colonial America. The First Great Awakening raised up many American universities. American educational and political systems, Christian influences. The New England Primer appeared about and was almost universally adopted. It was the chief beginning reading book for American schools for over years. The contents clearly show its religious character and purpose which included forty pages containing the Westminster Shorter Catechism. The vast majority at the Constitutional Convention 55 delegates were members of Protestant churches: The Wesley-Whitefield revivals resulted in millions of Christian conversions. I felt I did trust in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, and Christ alone, for my salvation, and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine. Wesley preached the social responsibilities of Christian piety: England spent 15 million pounds for enforcement, even making payments to Spain and Portugal to stop the trade. Wilburforce, along with Buxton, Macaulay, and Clark. Daughter of a preacher, married to a preacher; all her brothers were preachers. Her book was the first great American bestseller. Initial print run was , copies. Sold three million copies in America, then 40 million worldwide in 40 languages. The Third Great Awakening produced a rash of missionary and philanthropic organizations in the U. World Vision, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Mission agencies, Parachurch groups, Denominational missionaries, medical personnel, teachers, and volunteers. It brought with it, for one thing, an altogether new sense of human life. For the Greeks had shown man his mind; but the Christians showed him his soul. They taught that in the sight of God, all souls were equal, that every human life was sacrosanct and inviolate. Where the Greeks had identified the beautiful and the good, had thought ugliness to be bad, had shrunk from disease

and imperfection and from everything misshapen, horrible, and repulsive, the Christian sought out the diseased, the crippled, the mutilated, to give them help. Love, for the ancient Greek, was never quite distinguished from Venus. For the Christians held that God was love, it took on deep overtones of sacrifice and compassion. For almost a score of centuries Christian beliefs, principles, and ideals have colored the thoughts and feelings of Western man. The traditions and practices have left an indelible impress not only on developments of purely religious interest, but on virtually the total endeavor of man. This has been manifest in art and literature, science and law, politics and economics, and, as well, in love and war. Indeed, the indirect and unconscious influence Christianity has often exercised in avowedly secular matters—social, intellectual, and institutional—affords striking proof of the dynamic forces that have been generated by the faith over the millenniums. Even those who have contested its claims and rejected its tenets have been affected by what they opposed. Whatever our beliefs, all of us today are inevitable heirs to this abundant legacy; and it is impossible to understand the cultural heritage that sustains and conditions our lives without considering the contributions of Christianity. The Christian religion has suffered periods of persecution and critical divisions within its own ranks. It has been the cause and the victim of war and strife. It has assumed forms of astonishing variety. It has been confronted by revolutionary changes in human and social outlooks and subjected to searching criticism. The culture of our own time, indeed, has been termed the most completely secularized form of culture the world has ever known. We live in what some have called the post-Christian age. Yet wherever we turn to enrich our lives, we continue to encounter the lasting historical realities of Christian experience and tradition. I, explanatory insert mine. Arnold Toynbee, *Horizon* magazine, Lyn White, *Science Magazine*, *The Environmental Handbook*, p. Whatever Became of Sin? *Horizon Magazine*, Marshall B. Distributed by Harper and Row, Moody Press, Chicago, *Religion and the Rise of Modern Science*. *The Roots of American Order*. *A History of Christianity*. *Imperial Cities and the Reformation*. *Modern Art and the Death of Culture*. *Science and the Modern World*.

## 7: History of Christianity - Simple English Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

*Christianity, major religion, stemming from the life, teachings, and death of Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ, or the Anointed One of God) in the 1st century www.enganchecubano.com has become the largest of the world's religions and, geographically, the most widely diffused of all faiths.*

Christianity began as a Jewish sect in the mid-1st century arising out of the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. The life of Jesus is recounted in the New Testament of the Bible, one of the bedrock texts of Western Civilization and inspiration for countless works of Western art. Christmas and Easter remain holidays in many Western nations. Jesus learned the texts of the Hebrew Bible, with its Ten Commandments which later became influential in Western law and became an influential wandering preacher. He was a persuasive teller of parables and moral philosopher who urged followers to worship God, act without violence or prejudice and care for the sick, hungry and poor. These teachings have been deeply influential in Western culture. Jesus criticized the privilege and hypocrisy of the religious establishment which drew the ire of the authorities, who persuaded the Roman Governor of the province of Judaea , Pontius Pilate , to have him executed. The Tanakh says Jesus was executed for sorcery and for leading the people into apostasy. Catholicism, as we know it, emerged slowly. Christians often faced persecution during these early centuries, particularly for their refusal to join in worshipping the emperors. Nevertheless, carried through the synagogues, merchants and missionaries across the known world, the new internationalist religion quickly grew in size and influence. Rulers, and the priests, soldiers and bureaucrats who carried out their will, were a small minority who kept power by exploiting the many. Spartan Law required that deformed infants be put to death; for Plato, infanticide is one of the regular institutions of the ideal State; Aristotle regards abortion as a desirable option; and the Stoic philosopher Seneca writes unapologetically: And whilst there were deviations from these views Most historians of western morals agree that the rise of Christianity contributed greatly to the general feeling that human life is valuable and worthy of respect. Lecky gives the now classical account of the sanctity of human life in his history of European morals saying Christianity "formed a new standard, higher than any which then existed in the world For women deacons, the oldest rite in the West comes from an eighth-century book, whereas Eastern rites go all the way back to the third century and there are more of them. There are several Gospel accounts of Jesus imparting important teachings to and about women: The church forbade its members to do so. Greco-Roman society saw no value in an unmarried woman, and therefore it was illegal for a widow to go more than two years without remarrying. Christianity did not force widows to marry and supported them financially. Christians did not believe in cohabitation. If a Christian man wanted to live with a woman, the church required marriage, and this gave women legal rights and far greater security. Finally, the pagan double standard of allowing married men to have extramarital sex and mistresses was forbidden. A broad distinction was popularly made between infanticide and infant exposure which was practiced on a gigantic scale with impunity. Many exposed children died, but many were taken by speculators who raised them to be slaves or prostitutes. It is not possible to ascertain, with any degree of accuracy, what diminution of infanticide resulted from legal efforts against it in the Roman empire. In AD , Constantine conferred the First Council of Nicaea to gain consensus and unity within Christianity, with a view to establishing it as the religion of the Empire. The population and wealth of the Roman Empire had been shifting east, and around the year , Constantine established the city of Constantinople as a new imperial city which would be the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. Although cultural continuity and interchange would continue between these Eastern and Western Roman Empires, the history of Christianity and Western culture took divergent routes, with a final Great Schism separating Roman and Eastern Christianity in AD. Pope Gregory the Great c 495" who established medieval themes in the Church, in a painting by Carlo Saraceni , c. The remarkable transformation of Christianity from peripheral sect, to major force within the Empire is illustrated by the influence held by St Ambrose , the Bishop of Milan. A Doctor of the Church and one of the most influential ecclesiastical figures of the 4th century, Ambrose became a player in Imperial politics, courted for his influence by competing contenders for the Imperial throne. When the Emperor Theodosius I ordered the punitive massacre of

thousands of the citizens of Thessaloniki, Ambrose admonished him publicly, refused him the Eucharist and called on him to perform a public penance, a call to which the Christian Emperor submitted. Theodosius reigned albeit for a brief interim as the last Emperor of a united Eastern and Western Roman Empire. In Theodosius sought to block the restoration of the pagan Altar of Victory to the Roman Senate and then fought against Eugenius, who courted pagan support for his own bid for the imperial throne. Thus, the Catholic Encyclopedia lauds Theodosius as: He stamped out the last vestiges of paganism, put an end to the Arian heresy in the empire, pacified the Goths, left a famous example of penitence for a crime, and reigned as a just and mighty Catholic emperor. Many of these works remain influential in politics, law, ethics and other fields. A new genre of literature was also born in the fourth century: What little security there was in this world was provided by the Christian church. In the absence of a magister militum living in Rome, even the control of military matters fell to the pope. Gregory the Great administered the church with strict reform. A trained Roman lawyer and administrator, and a monk, he represents the shift from the classical to the medieval outlook and was a father of many of the structures of the later Roman Catholic Church. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, he looked upon Church and State as co-operating to form a united whole, which acted in two distinct spheres, ecclesiastical and secular, but by the time of his death, the papacy was the great power in Italy: From this time forth the varied populations of Italy looked to the pope for guidance, and Rome as the papal capital continued to be the centre of the Christian world. The Dark Ages[ edit ] The period between and , often referred to as the "Dark Ages," could also be designated the "Age of the Monk". Christian aesthetes, like St. Monasteries were models of productivity and economic resourcefulness teaching their local communities animal husbandry, cheese making, wine making and various other skills. Medical practice was highly important in medieval monasteries, and they are best known for their contributions to medical tradition, but they also made some advances in other sciences such as astronomy. Sometimes called the "Father of Europe," Charlemagne instituted political and judicial reform and led what is sometimes referred to as the Early or Christian Renaissance. It supplied food to the population during famine and distributed food to the poor. This welfare system the church funded through collecting taxes on a large scale and by owning large farmlands and estates. Men of a scholarly bent usually took Holy Orders and frequently joined religious institutes. Those with intellectual, administrative or diplomatic skill could advance beyond the usual restraints of society leading churchmen from faraway lands were accepted in local bishoprics, linking European thought across wide distances. Complexes like the Abbey of Cluny became vibrant centres with dependencies spread throughout Europe. Ordinary people also trekked vast distances on pilgrimages to express their piety and pray at the site of holy relics. Inquisition The Inquisitions were religious courts originally created to protect faith and society by identifying and condemning heretics. It was rather a natural evolution of the forces at work in the thirteenth century As the twelfth century drew to a close the church was facing a crisis Woman-as-witch became a stereotype in the s until it was codified in by Pope Innocent VIII who declared "most witches are female. This treatment provides [dramatic] contrast to the respect given to women during the early era of Christianity and in early Europe Medieval abbesses and female superiors of monastic houses were powerful figures whose influence could rival that of male bishops and abbots: Relations between the major powers in Western society: The Investiture Controversy was perhaps the most significant conflict between Church and state in medieval Europe. A series of Popes challenged the authority of monarchies over control of appointments, or investitures, of church officials. Moreover, they were vitally concerned with the trappings of political power. They plunged into Italian politics As the Church grew more powerful and wealthy, many sought reform. The Dominican and Franciscan Orders were founded, which emphasized poverty and spirituality. Palestine, Syria, Persia, and Egypt once the most heavily Christian areas in the world quickly succumbed. By the eighth century, Muslim armies had conquered all of Christian North Africa and Spain and were moving into France. The holdings of the old Roman Empire, known to modern historians as the Byzantine Empire, were reduced to little more than Greece. In desperation, the emperor in Constantinople sent word to the Christians of western Europe asking them to aid their brothers and sisters in the East. A more complex picture of nobles and knights making sacrifices has emerged creating an increased interest in the religious and social ideas of the laity. Crusading can no longer be defined solely as

warfare against Muslims; the crusades were religious wars and the crusaders moved by ideas; and the issue of colonialism is no longer one considered worthy of serious discussion. Secularists such as Hugo Grotius later expanded the idea of human rights and built on it. Aquinas continues to influence the works of leading political and legal philosophers. It cannot be denied, because they are morally based on the Judeo-Christian tradition and Graeco-Roman philosophy; they were codified in the West over many centuries, they have secured an established position in the national declarations of western democracies, and they have been enshrined in the constitutions of those democracies. He examines three cases of "Christendom divided against itself": Reformation until Modern era[ edit ] Calvin preached at St. Pierre Cathedral , the main church in Geneva. In the Middle Ages, the Church and the worldly authorities were closely related. Martin Luther separated the religious and the worldly realms in principle doctrine of the two kingdoms. The members of a congregation had the right to elect a minister and, if necessary, to vote for his dismissal Treatise On the right and authority of a Christian assembly or congregation to judge all doctrines and to call, install and dismiss teachers, as testified in Scripture; This system was taken over by the other Reformed churches. He appreciated the advantages of democracy: To further protect the rights of ordinary people, Calvin suggested separating political powers in a system of checks and balances separation of powers. Thus he and his followers resisted political absolutism and paved the way for the rise of modern democracy. Hugo Grotius was able to teach his natural-law theory and a relatively liberal interpretation of the Bible. Australia, New Zealand, and India. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the British variety of modern-time democracy, constitutional monarchy , was taken over by Protestant-formed Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands as well as the Catholic countries Belgium and Spain. The legacy of Christianity lies in the dissolution of an ancient system where social and political status, power, and the transmission of social inequality to the next generation scripted the terms of sexual morality. Roman literature indicates the Romans were aware of these dualities. This was a transformation in the deep logic of sexual morality. Paul, whose views became dominant in early Christianity, made the body into a consecrated space, a point of mediation between the individual and the divine. Same-sex attraction spelled the estrangement of men and women at the very deepest level of their inmost desires. By boiling the sex act down to the most basic constituents of male and female, Paul was able to describe the sexual culture surrounding him in transformative terms.

## 8: The Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population

*Christianity had more to do with opening a new era in the history of the Mediterranean region than with shaping the later Roman Empire. Yet important connections did exist that explain features of Christianity and of later Roman history.*

On a late afternoon, in about the year AD 30, two men were walking from Jerusalem to the nearby village of Emmaus. Their conversation centered on notable events that had occurred the previous week. As they journeyed, they were joined by a stranger who seemed ignorant of these events. Surprised, they asked him: Our chief priests and rulers handed him over [to the Roman authorities] to be sentenced to death, and [they] crucified him. But we were hoping that he was the man to liberate Israel. Suddenly the stranger spoke: And how slow to believe all that the prophets said. Was not the messiah bound to suffer thus before entering upon his glory? For the stranger was Jesus of Nazareth, of whom the two had been speaking. It claims more than one billion members in all parts of the world. In the late 20th century, it is divided into hundreds of groups, or denominations, the largest of which are the Roman Catholic church, the Eastern Orthodox churches, and innumerable Protestant churches. Expectation and Reality The two men on the road to Emmaus were not disinterested bystanders. They were followers called disciples, or learners of Jesus who had known him for at least three years. During this period they had listened to all he said and had witnessed his amazing actions, such as healing the sick, giving sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, and even bringing individuals back to life. They had become convinced that he was "the one who was to redeem Israel. This small Jewish nation, located in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, had for centuries looked forward to a time when their God would, through some decisive action, free it from outside domination and establish it as the preeminent nation in the world. One way he might do this was by sending a messiah Christos in Greek who would deliver them from their enemies and become their king. Christians believe that Jesus, from the small town of Nazareth in Galilee, was that messiah. They also believe that what he accomplished far exceeded the expectations of Israel. The Jews looked for a messiah exclusively for themselves, though his power would be such as to draw other nations to a belief in their God. His work is to be considered inclusive of everyone in all times and places. The Man and the Message With all the differences in beliefs in the many denominations of Christianity, it is impossible to set out one list of teachings that apply to all Christians everywhere. The reason for this is fairly simple. Jesus, along with his life and work, are for Christians objects of faith; and the objects of faith are thought of by different people in different ways and differently in various periods of history. No one has ever succeeded in distilling an "essence of Christianity. He was also, in some incomprehensible way, God. And by his ministry, death, and resurrection he had accomplished a universal salvation available to all who believe in him. From what Jesus said and did, his followers came to believe that God was perhaps acting through him in a very special way. It was reasonable that they should think this, for they too were Israelites; and they saw in his words and deeds what portended to be the dawning of a new age. What dashed their hopes was his ignoble death, for crucifixion was a punishment reserved for criminals. Then came the great surprise: He was raised from the dead and appeared to them again over a period of 40 days. This stunning event required a complete reassessment of what Jesus was all about. It is this reassessment that forms the basis for the writings of the New Testament. The Gospels themselves are part of it, but it is more strikingly conveyed by the other 23 books, all written by his followers over the subsequent decades after he had left them. For he had left them. How and where to could only be explained as his returning to the God who had sent him. But he did not leave them forever: He promised that he would one day return, and he gave them a mission to perform--to carry the message about his life and work to the whole world. The Assembly of Believers: The word Christian came into use years later and was at first a derogatory term applied by outsiders. When the books of the New Testament were written, the word used to name the believers was simply assembly. The Greek word is ecclesia and denotes any assembly of people, though it often had political connotations. Much later, probably in the 3rd or 4th century, the word church came into use to denote the specific kind of assembly that the believers composed. The term church is also of Greek origin, from the word kuriakon, meaning "belonging to the lord. The word is also frequently applied to denominations, a usage now so common as to be

unavoidable. Denominations are, however, institutional arrangements based on specific viewpoints and traditional practices. They exist as a result of long historical development, doctrinal diversity, and geographical separation. The assembly of believers separated themselves from the religion of Israel; they formulated an extensive assessment of what the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus meant; new congregations of believers were founded in all parts of the Roman Empire; and the believers improvised organizational arrangements and forms of worship that were to remain influential. The early Christians were all Jews. They remained in Jerusalem and partook of the religious observances in the Temple. They differed from their fellow Jews only in that they believed that the Messiah had come. Had they remained quiet about their conviction, they might well have remained a sect within Judaism. However, they insisted on preaching to all who would listen that the Jesus whom the Jewish authorities had persecuted was the one Israel had long awaited. This preaching aroused great hostility on the part of religious leaders, and the early Christians were persecuted. Yet these Christians had no thought of venturing beyond the confines of Israel with their message. It was only with the appearance of a man named Saul of Tarsus that the assembly of believers enlarged its horizons to include the whole known world. Saul, a strict Jew, was a persecutor of the church. He was nevertheless converted, and, after changing his name to Paul, began what is called the mission to the gentiles. The word gentile is simply a cover-all term for all non-Jewish peoples. It was this man who, more than any other, pulled the church out from temple and synagogue and set it apart as a separate institution. But the separation was, for Paul, more than a physical one. It was also doctrinal. Christians, he asserted, did not have to become Jews. This, perhaps more than any other factor, aroused the intense hostility of the Jews and led to a definitive separation of the two camps. The first issue that had to be settled was whether Jesus was for Israel only. The answer, already noted, was no. The first verse of the Book of Hebrews states: But in this, the final age, he has spoken to us in the Son whom he has made heir to the whole universe, and through whom he created all orders of existence. This represented a whole new way of thinking about God. Somehow this Jesus was one with the creator. This notion is abhorrent to both Judaism and Islam, which are strictly monotheistic religions for whom God is one and cannot be divided. But the Christians had to deal with this problem, and from what they believed about Jesus they could come to no other conclusion. They claimed it to be true, even though they could not understand or explain it. They simply believed it and stated it in their early confession: How could this man have achieved such status? The writers of the New Testament answer: But how could these events, occurring as they did in a remote part of the Roman Empire, have a universal significance? Yet it was stated as true by all early Christians. They believed that Jesus, by his death, had paid a universal penalty for all human unbelief and disobedience toward God. They further asserted that the resurrection was the first act by which God was restoring the whole creation. This was the message the earliest Christians took, first to Israel, then to the rest of the world. Mission to the gentiles. Paul and his associates took this message to most of the urban centers of the Mediterranean world. By the end of the 1st century there were strong congregations in Alexandria, Ephesus, Antioch, Corinth, Thessalonica, and even at Rome, the capital of the empire. Jerusalem, the mother church, was dispersed when the Roman legions destroyed the city in AD 70 during a Jewish uprising. It is unlikely that the early Christians intended to devise structures that would endure for centuries. But any institution, to operate successfully, must organize itself. Of first importance in the church were the apostles, those who had been with Jesus during his lifetime. To their number Paul was later added. They were the living and authoritative voices that could be appealed to on all questions of belief. To assist them, deacons, or attendants, were appointed to help in preaching and in the everyday operation of the congregations. Later, there developed other leaders called elders in Greek, presbyteroi, from which the modern Presbyterian denomination gets its name and leaders called episkopoi literally meaning "overseers"--the word episcopal is derived from it--normally translated as bishops. The early church had no clergy; it had people who performed specific functions--leading worship, preaching, collecting offerings, and feeding and clothing the poor among them. But as centuries passed, the three functions of bishop, elder priest, and deacon became arranged in a hierarchy. The bishop became the overseer for a city or region. He was, as well, the authoritative person in matters of doctrine. In time these functionaries came to be set apart from the rest of the membership by a process called ordination--suggesting that they were a special order within the church.

### 9: The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, | Pew Research Center

*The role of Christianity in civilization has been intricately intertwined with the history and formation of Western www.enganchecubano.comhout its long history, the Christian Church has been a major source of social services like schooling and medical care; inspiration for art, culture and philosophy; and influential player in politics and religion.*

The church and its history The essence and identity of Christianity At its most basic, Christianity is the faith tradition that focuses on the figure of Jesus Christ. As a tradition , Christianity is more than a system of religious belief. It also has generated a culture , a set of ideas and ways of life, practices, and artifacts that have been handed down from generation to generation since Jesus first became the object of faith. Christianity is thus both a living tradition of faith and the culture that the faith leaves behind. The agent of Christianity is the church, the community of people who make up the body of believers. Few Christians, however, would be content to keep this reference merely historical. Although their faith tradition is historical. While there is something simple about this focus on Jesus as the central figure, there is also something very complicated. That complexity is revealed by the thousands of separate churches, sects, and denominations that make up the modern Christian tradition. To project these separate bodies against the background of their development in the nations of the world is to suggest the bewildering variety. To picture people expressing their adherence to that tradition in their prayer life and church-building, in their quiet worship or their strenuous efforts to change the world, is to suggest even more of the variety. Given such complexity, it is natural that throughout Christian history both those in the tradition and those surrounding it have made attempts at simplification. Modern scholars have located the focus of this faith tradition in the context of monotheistic religions. Christianity addresses the historical figure of Jesus Christ against the background of, and while seeking to remain faithful to, the experience of one God. It has consistently rejected polytheism and atheism. A second element of the faith tradition of Christianity, with rare exceptions, is a plan of salvation or redemption. That is to say, the believers in the church picture themselves as in a plight from which they need rescue. For whatever reason , they have been distanced from God and need to be saved. The agent of that redemption is Jesus Christ. It is possible that through the centuries the vast majority of believers have not used the term essence to describe the central focus of their faith. The term is itself of Greek origin and thus represents only one part of the tradition, one element in the terms that have gone into making up Christianity. Essence refers to those qualities that give something its identity and are at the centre of what makes that thing different from everything else. To Greek philosophers it meant something intrinsic to and inherent in a thing or category of things, which gave it its character and thus separated it from everything of different character. Thus, Jesus Christ belongs to the essential character of Christianity and gives it a unique identity. If most people are not concerned with defining the essence of Christianity, in practice they must come to terms with what the word essence implies. Whether they are engaged in being saved or redeemed on the one hand, or thinking and speaking about that redemption, its agent, and its meaning on the other, they are concentrating on the essence of their experience. Those who have concentrated from within the faith tradition have also helped to give it its identity. It is not possible to speak of the essence of a historical tradition without referring to how its ideal qualities have been discussed through the ages. Yet one can take up the separate subjects of essence and identity in sequence, being always aware of how they interrelate. Page 1 of

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