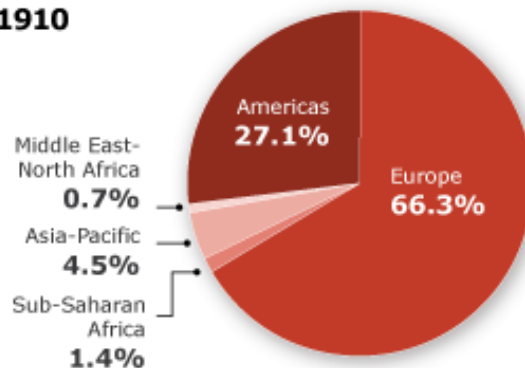


Christianity in the World Today

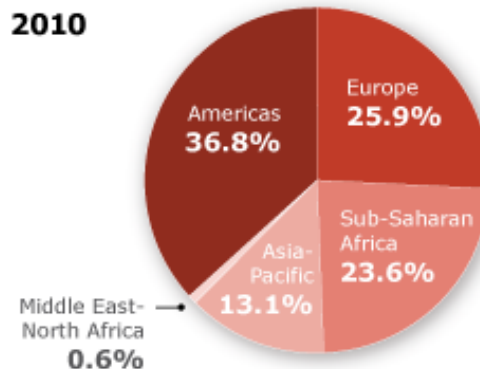
- ♦ Largest religion
[2.18 billion]

Regional Distribution of Christians

1910



2010

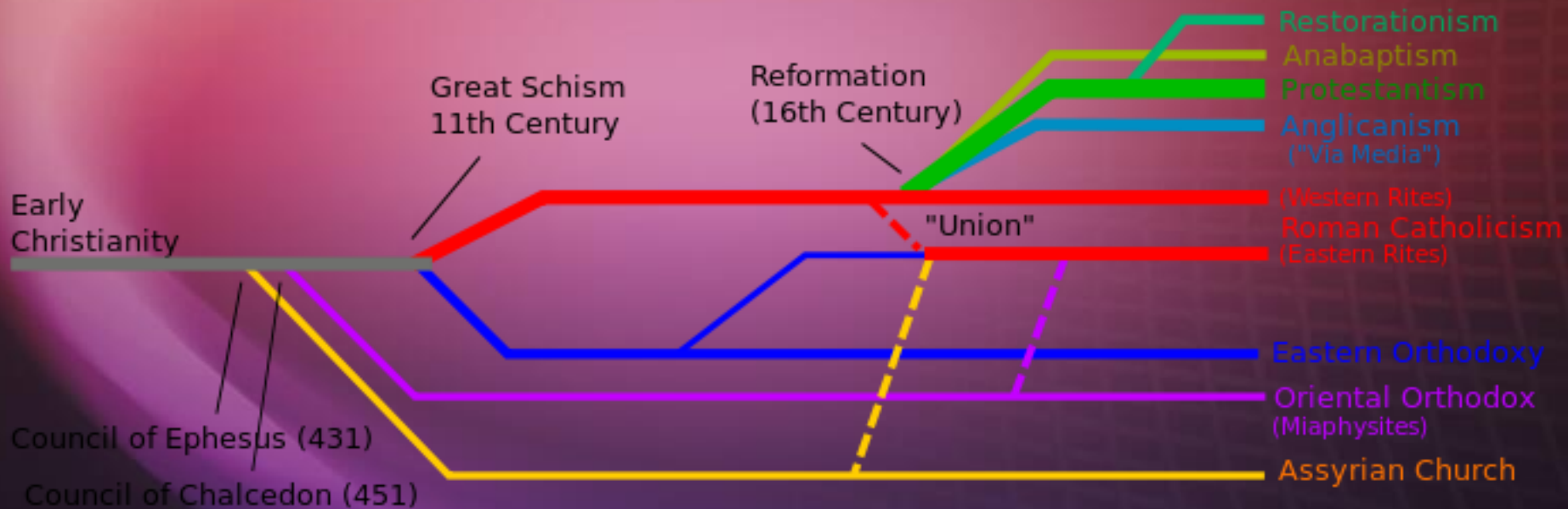


Figures for 1910 are from a Pew Forum analysis of data from the Center for the Study of Global Christianity. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life • *Global Christianity*, December 2011

History of Sects

Major branches within Christianity



What is important to know about Jesus?

- ◆ Fulfillment of Hebrew prophets
- ◆ Teacher/healer
- ◆ Tenets of forgiveness & redemption
- ◆ Parables: stories that teach a lesson
- ◆ Betrayal, crucifixion and resurrection

Betrayal by Judas



Crucifixion: Paying for the sins of humanity



Resurrection: Redemption and eternal life



Contradictions / questions

- ◆ Length of ministry
- ◆ Views on sin / punishment
- ◆ End days- eschatology
- ◆ Jewish law
- ◆ Claim that he is the Messiah

How and what do we know about the historical Jesus?

Jewish Texts

Roman Texts

Greek Texts

New Testament

How and what do we know about the historical Jesus?

- ◆ The New Testament
 - ◆ The four Gospels
 - ◆ Matthew (c. 80 C.E.)
 - ◆ Mark (c. 70 C.E.)
 - ◆ Luke (c. 80 C.E.)
 - ◆ John (c. 90=100 C.E.)
 - ◆ Letters of Paul
 - ◆ Prophecies (Revelations)

Religious Options in the Roman World



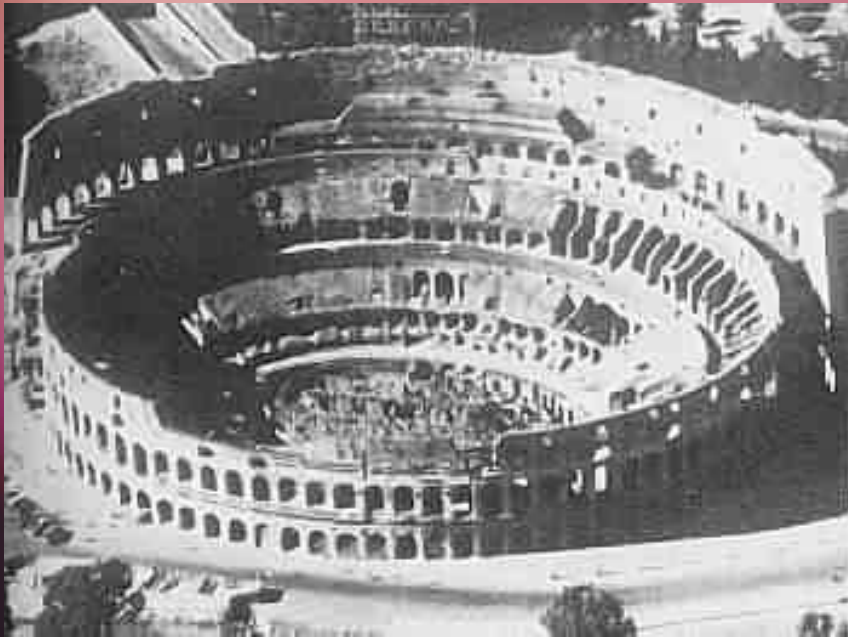
- ◆ Christianity
- ◆ Judaism
 - “zealots”
- ◆ Roman Pagan Religion
- ◆ Philosophical Religions
 - Plotinus and Neo-Platonism
- ◆ Mystery Religions
 - Mithraism
 - Cults of Isis and Cybele

First Century Christianity



- ◆ Secretive, Urban Religion
- ◆ In Roman eyes, immoral and impure
- ◆ In Roman eyes, illegal and seditious
- ◆ In Roman eyes, atheistic
- ◆ Theologically diverse Jewish sect
- ◆ Active participation by women

First Century Christianity (cont)



- ◆ Apparently disorderly and disorganized
- ◆ Persecuted periodically by the Roman government
 - Nero (64 AD)
 - Decius (249-251 AD)
 - Diocletian (303 AD)
- ◆ And yet, very vital, courageous faith

Early Christian Doctrinal Diversity



IS JESUS GOD?

- ♦ The canon of Scripture was not set until 325 AD at the Council of Nicaea
- ♦ Christianity placed belief or creed on the same level with practice
- ♦ Christian “orthodoxy”
 - Monotheism and the Trinity
 - The Nature of Jesus

Early Christian Doctrinal Diversity



- ♦ The teachings of Arius (260-336 AD) Jesus flowed from God the father (not co-equal)
- ♦ Gnostic Teaching
 - physical and spiritual dualism
 - evil Old Testament god
 - salvation comes through knowledge (“gnosis”)
 - rejection of earthly spiritual authority

Early Christian Controversies



- ◆ Circumcision: *Acts 15*
- ◆ Gender of God and gender roles in the church
- ◆ The Resurrection: Physical or Spiritual?
- ◆ Authority
Structure/Evolving Organization of the Church
 - Apostolic Succession
 - Growing power of the Roman bishop

Constantine

- ◆ Constantine:
 - ◆ Legalization (313 ACE)
 - ◆ Council of Nicea (325 ACE)
 - ◆ Moves Roman Capitol to Constantinople in 330 A.C.E.
- ◆ Theodosius:
 - ◆ Christianity adopted as religion of Rome (392 AD)
- ◆ Initiation of governmental influence on religion—the problem of the State using the Church to its own ends

The “Acculturation” of Christianity



- ♦ Christian ideas and practices reflected imperial political realities (bishops, tithes, courts)
- ♦ Pagan temples become Christian churches
- ♦ Pagan symbols synthesized (The Celtic Cross)
- ♦ All Saints day, Christmas, from Pagan holidays

Why Did this Acculturation Occur?



- ◆ Result of mass tribal conversions
- ◆ New converts bring cultural baggage with them
- ◆ Christian missionaries tried to build bridges of belief and practice toward pagan religion to ease the difficulty of conversion
- ◆ General church acceptance of Greco-Roman culture

But also Many Diversions



“I feel that nothing so casts down the manly mind from its height as the fondling of women and those bodily contacts which belong to the married state.” Augustine of Hippo

Roman Catholic Church

4th to 16th century

- ◆ Becomes political power in Western Europe
- ◆ Replaces Roman Empire as the centralized authority
- ◆ Coronation of Kings of Europe from the 9th century
- ◆ Becomes increasingly worldly as wealth increases
 - ◆ Monastic lands
 - ◆ Indulgences
 - ◆ Patronage of royal lines

The First Great Schism (1054 A.C.E.)

- ◆ Reasons
 - ◆ Elevation of Pope in western church
 - ◆ Nature of the Trinity-- Holy Spirit flows from the Father vs. Holy Spirit flows from the Father and Son
 - ◆ Crusades
- ◆ Effects
 - ◆ Roman Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodox Church split
 - ◆ Thousand years of disagreement & rancor
 - ◆ Ultimate weakening of Christianity in the East



Christianity & Islam in Medieval Europe (c. 1050)