

Church United (Part 1):

## **A Short History of Denominations**

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### **Terminologi**

Kata “denomination” (denominasi) berasal dari kata kerja bahasa Latin *denominare* yang berarti “untuk memberi nama/menamakan” (*Merriam-Websters Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition*). Dari studi etimologis ini terlihat bahwa kata benda denominasi berhubungan dengan penamaan sesuatu. Para ahli berbeda pendapat tentang definisi “denominasi”. Untuk memudahkan pemahaman, secara umum “denominasi” bisa dipahami sebagai “kumpulan gereja-gereja yang memiliki kesamaan esensial tertentu dan berkomitmen untuk bergabung secara legal/organisatoris” (Yakub Tri Handoko).

Dari definisi di atas, ada dua elemen penting yang membentuk suatu denominasi. Elemen pertama adalah kesamaan-kesamaan esensial. Setiap gereja pasti memiliki kesamaan tertentu dengan semua gereja yang lain, tetapi sejauh kesamaan itu tidak esensial, hal itu tidak bisa disebut sebagai suatu denominasi. Tentang batasan seberapa jauh yang termasuk “esensial” memang sulit ditentukan. Para ahli biasanya membatasi pada kesamaan secara sistem doktrinal dan tradisi/historis gereja, walaupun beberapa ahli lain menambahkan kesamaan lain yang harus dimiliki, misalnya tujuan pelayanan yang sama (Elmer L. Towns, *Is The Day of Denomination Dead?*, 49).

Elemen kedua yang penting dari definisi di atas adalah komitmen untuk bergabung secara legal/organisatoris. Memiliki kesamaan esensial saja tidak cukup. Gereja-gereja tersebut juga harus saling mengikatkan diri secara legal/organisatoris dengan tujuan untuk menegakkan jati diri/keunikan mereka, saling mendukung dalam lingkungan denominasi yang sama dan sekaligus membedakan diri dengan gereja-gereja lain dalam lingkungan denominasi yang berbeda.

### **Sejarah ringkas**

Bagaimana proses terjadinya beragam denominasi? Mengapa ada begitu banyak denominasi? Apakah masing-masing denominasi yang ada saling terkait secara historis? Bagian ini akan menelusuri perkembangan beberapa denominasi utama (Roma Katolik, Ortodoks, Protestant dan Anglikan) dan denominasi-denominasi lain yang berakar dari empat denominasi itu.

Cikal bakal semua denominasi harus ditelusuri sampai pada jaman para rasul. Pada waktu itu gereja mula-mula terfokus pada dua tempat: gereja Yerusalem dan Anthiokia (walaupun Alkitab juga mencatat eksistensi gereja lokal lain, *lihat Kis 8:5-25*). Kedua gereja ini memiliki beberapa perbedaan seperti terlihat dari tabel berikut ini:

<b>Yerusalem</b>	<b>Anthiokia</b>
Didominasi etnis Yahudi (Kis 2:5, 41; 11:1-3)	Didominasi etnis lain (Kis 11:19-21)
Pemimpinnya memiliki budaya Yahudi, yaitu Petrus, Yohanes dan Yakobus (Kis 11:1-3)	Pemimpinnya memiliki latar belakang budaya campuran (etnis Yahudi tetapi kultur Yunani), yaitu Paulus dan Barnabas (Kis 11:22-26)
Hidup dalam lingkungan masyarakat Yahudi	Hidup dalam lingkungan diaspora
Berposisi sebagai gereja induk (Kis 8:14; 11:22)	Bukan gereja induk
Dalam melakukan misi masih belum proaktif dan cenderung tersegmentasi pada masyarakat Yahudi	Melakukan misi secara lebih aktif dan jangkauannya ke semua bangsa (Kis 13:2-3)

Perbedaan-perbedaan di atas pada akhirnya menimbulkan ketegangan yang berhubungan dengan praktek hidup (budaya) yang dianggap sangat penting oleh orang Yahudi, yaitu sunat (Kis 15:1). Perselisihan ini akhirnya diselesaikan dalam sebuah konsili gereja di Yerusalem. Semua pemimpin gereja sepakat bahwa orang Yunani yang bertobat tidak perlu melakukan sunat (Kis 15:23-30). Keputusan ini didasarkan pada pertimbangan *teologis* dan *praktis*, sebagaimana disampaikan oleh Petrus (Kis 15:7-11), Paulus/Barnabas (Kis 15:12) maupun Yakobus (Kis 15:13-21). Dengan kata lain, para rasul menuntut semua gereja waktu itu untuk memiliki dasar teologis yang sama, walaupun mereka boleh memiliki pola hidup (budaya) yang berbeda, sebatas hal itu tidak melanggar firman Allah.

Pada tahun-tahun selanjutnya, tantangan terhadap kesatuan gereja tetap bermunculan. Yang paling dominan adalah pengaruh berbagai ajaran sesat, misalnya asketisisme Yahudi (Kolose), Yudaisme (Ibrani) filsafat dunia (1Kor 1-3, 15), pemikiran Gnostik (1Yohanes). Para rasul bersikap tegas terhadap berbagai bidat itu. Mereka mengajarkan kembali dasar-dasar iman Kristen *untuk membedakan orang percaya dengan penganut bidat*. Paulus mengutuk mereka yang mengikuti ajaran sesat (Gal 1:9). Yohanes bahkan memiliki pandangan yang positif terhadap mereka yang terpengaruh oleh ajaran sesat dan meninggalkan komunitas orang percaya (1Yoh 2:19).

Pada jaman pasca rasuli (bapa-bapa gereja awal) berbagai bidat tetap menjadi tantangan serius bagi kesatuan gereja. Para pemimpin gereja waktu itu menggunakan rumusan iman tertentu yang dijadikan standard untuk membedakan gereja yang benar dengan yang tidak benar. Salah satu tokoh yang terkenal pada periode ini adalah Irenaeus yang menulis sebuah buku yang berjudul *Against Heresies* untuk menentang berbagai ajaran populer waktu itu yang bertentangan dengan ajaran/tradisi para rasul.

Berikut ini adalah beberapa bidat populer yang mengancam kesatuan gereja.

(1) Montanisme.

Bidat ini menekankan wahyu Allah secara langsung melalui dua nabi mereka, Priskila dan Maximilla. Ibadah mereka diwarnai dengan peristiwa-peristiwa ekstasi, yang dikalim sebagai intervensi Roh Kudus. Mereka juga menekankan kesembuhan secara fisik.

- (2) **Gnosticisme.**  
Ajaran ini didasarkan pada konsep dualisme Yunani yang mengajarkan bahwa materi bersifat jahat dan yang non-materi adalah baik. Dunia yang bersifat materi dan penuh kejahatan ini tidak mungkin diciptakan oleh Allah yang bersifat roh dan baik. Pencipta dunia adalah Demiurgos, yaitu suatu kuasa yang lebih rendah daripada Allah. Keselamatan dipahami sebagai pelepasan jiwa/roh (non-material) dari tubuh (material). Mereka juga menganggap diri sebagai penerima wahyu Allah yang khusus (kaum eksklusif) melalui pengalaman mistis. Penekanan pada “pengetahuan” semacam inilah yang melatarbelakangi sebutan “gnosticisme” (berasal dari kata Yunani *gnosis* = pengetahuan).
- (3) **Manichaenisme.**  
Bidat ini didirikan oleh Mani, seorang Persia, pada akhir abad ke-3 M. Hampir sama dengan Gnosticisme, ajaran ini juga dipengaruhi konsep dualisme Yunani. Pada dasarnya Manicheanisme bisa dianggap sebagai sinkretisme dari kekristenan, Zoroastrianisme, agama misteri dan filsafat Yunani.
- (4) **Marcionisme.**  
Ajaran ini juga dipengaruhi konsep dualisme Yunani. Mereka membedakan antara Allah Perjanjian Lama (yang dianggap jahat) dan Perjanjian Baru (yang dianggap penuh kasih). Sebagai konsekuensi, mereka menolak beberapa kitab Perjanjian Baru yang dianggap terlalu bernafaskan Perjanjian Lama.

Perkembangan gereja mengalami perubahan yang signifikan ketika Kaisar Konstantinopel mengeluarkan Edict Milan (awal abad ke-4 M) yang menetapkan agama Kristen sebagai agama resmi. Sejak waktu itulah kekristenan mengalami perkembangan yang luar biasa secara kuantitas di berbagai daerah. Seiring dengan situasi ini, di daerah Barat kekuasaan gereja menjadi semakin dominan dan akhirnya para pemimpin gereja juga memegang kekuasaan politik.

Pada awal abad ke-11 M, gereja mengalami perpecahan besar antara Gereja Timur dan Gereja Barat. Peristiwa ini disebut dengan *Great Schism* (Perpecahan Besar). Perselisihan ini sudah memiliki akar historis yang sangat panjang. Berikut ini adalah beberapa perbedaan antara Gereja Timur dan Barat yang menyebabkan timbulnya perpecahan tersebut:

<b>Gereja Timur</b>	<b>Gereja Barat</b>
Berpola pikir filosofis	Cenderung anti-filsafat
Lebih berketat dengan isu dogma (terutama dalam kaitan dengan filsafat)	Lebih memperhatikan pemerintahan gereja
Paskah dirayakan setiap tanggal 14 Nissan (mengikuti kebiasaan Yahudi)	Paskah dirayakan hari Minggu setelah 14 Nissan
Rohaniwan yang kedudukannya di bawah bishop boleh menikah	Semua rohaniwan dilarang menikah
Harus memakai jenggot	Tidak harus
Bahasa resmi adalah Yunani	Bahasa resmi adalah Latin
Tidak menerima frase “Roh Kudus yang keluar dari Anak” dalam kredo Nicea	Menerima
Menolak penggunaan gambar/patung dalam ibadah kecuali salib	Memakai gambar/patung untuk melukiskan realitas rohani

Pemindahan ibu kota pemerintahan dari Roma ke Konstantinopel mengkondisikan gereja-gereja Timur di bawah pemerintahan kaisar secara langsung	Gereja-gereja Barat yang berpusat di Roma terlalu jauh untuk ditangani kekaisaran. Selain itu, para bishop di daerah Barat semakin memiliki kuasa
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Setelah perpecahan besar di atas, berbagai usaha untuk menyatukan gereja sudah dilakukan, namun tidak ada yang memberi hasil. Sejarah Gereja Barat terus berlanjut sampai jaman Reformasi (lihat bagian selanjutnya), sedangkan Gereja Timur terus melakukan misi ke daerah-daerah sekitar Rusia dan Mesir. Seiring dengan melemahnya kekuasaan kaisar dan berkembangnya agama Islam, beberapa daerah yang dulu merupakan basis Gereja Timur berhasil dikuasai oleh orang Islam.

Gereja Barat semakin lama semakin memiliki kekuasaan yang lebih. Mereka akhirnya menggabungkan kekuasaan gereja dan politik. Integrasi kekuasaan ini terus berlanjut dan mengakibatkan dekadensi gereja, baik secara teologis, ekklesiastikal maupun moral. Protes terhadap para rohaniwan makin lama makin mengkristal seiring dengan munculnya politik *nation-state* (pemerintahan otonom suatu negara) dan Renaissance (kebangkitan budaya yang ingin kembali pada budaya Yunani-Romawi kuno). Pemikiran *nation-state* menaburkan benih bagi penolakan kekuasaan kepausan yang universal, sedangkan Renaissance menumbuhkan spirit individualisme dan semangat belajar secara mandiri.

Puncak dari protes ini adalah munculnya gerakan reformasi yang dipelopori oleh Martin Luther pada tanggal 31 Oktober 1517. Gerakan ini diikuti oleh para reformator lainnya, yaitu Zwingli dan John Calvin. Peristiwa di atas kali ini memecah gereja sekali lagi menjadi Gereja Roma Katholik dan Gereja Protestan. Aliran Katholik selanjutnya tidak terlalu banyak mengalami perubahan, kecuali beberapa langkah reformis yang dilakukan oleh beberapa rohaniwan mereka. Sistem gereja yang tersentralisasi dan homogen membuat aliran Katholik mampu mempertahankan kesatuan mereka. Mereka yang tidak mau mengikuti teologi dan tradisi yang ada dikategorikan sebagai non-Katholik (Protestan).

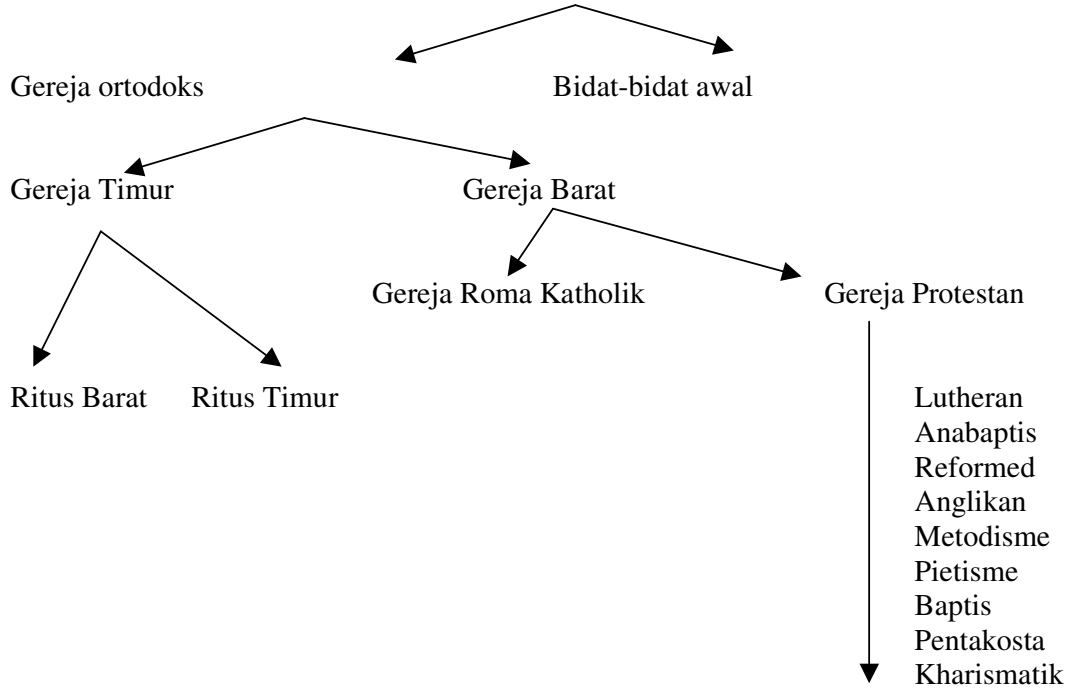
Di sisi lain, gerakan reformasi Protestan terus mengalami perkembangan. Pengaruh Luther, Zingli dan Calvin melahirkan beragam aliran dalam gerakan Protestan. Gerakan Anabaptis pada abad ke-16 merupakan reaksi terhadap ajaran Zwingli. Luther, melanchton dan para penerus mereka meletakkan dasar bagi gereja-gereja di dalam tradisi Lutheran. Calvin, Theodorus Beza dan pengikutnya meletakkan dasar bagi gereja-gereja beraliran Reformed. Untuk membedakan masing-masing aliran dalam gerakan Protestan, masing-masing aliran menetapkan pengakuan iman tertentu sebagai dasar teologi dan praktek gereja. Gereja Lutheran memakai Augsburg Confession, sedangkan gereja Reformed memiliki Heidelberg Catechism, Canon of Dort, Westminster Confession of Faith.

Pengaruh pemikiran para reformator di atas tidak hanya terjadi di daerah asal reformasi (Jerman, swiss, Geneva), tetapi juga merambah daerah-daerah lain. Salah satu yang perlu disinggung di sini adalah pengaruh gerakan reformasi di Inggris. Ada dua aliran utama yang terkait dengan reformasi, yaitu gereja Anglikan dan Metodis. Gereja Kristen Anglikan dipelopori oleh Raja Henry VIII. Gerakan ini sebenarnya lebih ditentukan oleh kepentingan pribadi dan politik Raja Henry VIII daripada semangat untuk menegakkan doktrin yang benar (Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries*, 3rd & rev. ed., 320-324). Gerakan lain adalah Metodisme yang menekankan kekudusan hidup dan dipelopori oleh Wesley bersaudara (John dan Charles Wesley).

Pada periode modern, jumlah denominasi gereja semakin banyak dan semakin sulit untuk dideteksi akar historisnya. Sebagian memiliki keterkaitan secara tradisi dengan suatu aliran, tetapi teologinya berbeda. Mereka yang teologinya sama juga memilih tata pemerintahan gereka atau liturgi yang berbeda, sehingga mereka dikelompokkan ke dalam tradisi yang berbeda.

**Salah satu alternatif pembagian denominasi**

Gereja mula-mula



**Kepustakaan penting**

Aritonang, Jan. S. Berbagai Aliran di dalam dan di Sekitar Gereja.  
 Cairns, Earle E. Christianity Through Centuries.  
 Neve, J. L. Churches and Sects of Christendom.  
 Schaff, Philips. History of the Christian Church.  
 Stuber, Stanley. How We Got Our Denominations.  
 Twons, Elmer L. Is the Day of the Denomination Dead.

## Tabel perbandingan masing-masing aliran utama

	<u>Catholic</u>	<u>Orthodox</u>	<u>Lutheran</u>	<u>Reformed/Presbyterian</u>	<u>Methodist/Wesleyan</u>	<u>Anglican/Episcopalian</u>
<b>Date Founded as Distinct Denomination</b>	Gradual development; 1054 AD (Great Schism between East and West)	Gradual development; 1054 AD (Great Schism) (see <a href="#">GOAA</a> )	1530 (Augsburg Confession)	c. 1520 (Reformed); 1560 (Presbyterian)	1787	1534 (King Henry's Act of Supremacy)
<b>Place(s) Founded</b>	Rome; Western Roman Empire	Constantinople, Eastern Roman Empire	Germany	Switzerland, Scotland	England	England
<b>Founders (in addition to Jesus, Apostles &amp; Church Fathers)</b>	St. Peter (Catholic view); various bishops of Rome	Various eastern church fathers; Patriarch Michael Cerularius (1054)	<u>Martin Luther</u> , Philip Melancthon	Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, Theodore Beza, John Knox	John Wesley	King Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth I, Thomas Cromwell, Thomas Cranmer, Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley
<b>Reformation Roots</b>	Catholic/Counter-Reformation	n/a	German Reformation	Reformed Theology, Scottish Reformation	English Reformation	English Reformation
<b>Number of Adherents</b>	65 million in the US ( <a href="#">Encyc. Britannica</a> ); 1.5 billion worldwide ( <a href="#">Adherents.com</a> )	5.9 million in the US ( <a href="#">Encyc. Britannica</a> ); 225 million worldwide ( <a href="#">Adherents.com</a> )	66 million worldwide ( <a href="#">LWF</a> )	2.5 million in the <a href="#">PCUSA</a>	8.3 million in <a href="#">UMC in 2003</a>	70 million in 161 countries in the Anglican Communion ( <a href="#">CofE</a> ); 2.3 million in the US ( <a href="#">Encyc. Britannica</a> )
<b>Dominant Regions</b>	<a href="#">France</a> , Italy, Spain, Latin America, USA	Russia, Greece	<a href="#">Germany</a> , Scandanavia	Switzerland, Scotland	England, USA	England
<b>Original</b>	Latin	Greek	German	French	English	English

<b>Language</b>						
<b>Worship Guide</b>			Book of Concord	Directory for Worship	Book of Discipline	Book of Common Prayer
<b>Church Government</b>	Episcopal	Episcopal	Episcopal	presbyterian	" <u>connectional</u> "	Episcopal
<b>Major Churches in the USA</b>	n/a	<u>Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America</u> ; <u>Orthodox Church in America</u> ; <u>Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America</u>	<u>Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)</u> ; <u>Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS)</u>	<u>Presbyterian Church (USA) (PCUSA)</u>	<u>United Methodist Church (UMC)</u>	Episcopalian Church in the USA
<b>Other Churches</b>	n/a	<u>British Orthodox Church</u> ; <u>Serbian Orthodox Church</u> ; <u>Orthodox Church of Finland</u> ; <u>Russian Orthodox Church</u>	<u>Evangelical Lutheran Church in Italy</u> ; <u>Church of Norway</u> (for more, see <u>LWF</u> )	Presbyterian Church of Wales; Reformed Church of France	<u>Methodist Church in Great Britain</u>	<u>Church of England (CofE)</u> ; <u>Scottish Episcopal Church</u>
<b><u>World Council of Churches Member?</u></b>	No	some yes; some no	ELCA - yes; LCMS - no	yes	yes	Yes
	<b><u>Catholic</u></b>	<b><u>Orthodox</u></b>	<b><u>Lutheran</u></b>	<b><u>Reformed/Presbyterian</u></b>	<b><u>Methodist/Wesleyan</u></b>	<b><u>Anglican/Episcopalian</u></b>

<b>Religious Authority</b>	<b><u>Catholic</u></b>	<b><u>Orthodox</u></b>	<b><u>Lutheran</u></b>	<b><u>Reformed/ Presbyterian</u></b>	<b><u>Anglican/ Episcopalian</u></b>	<b><u>Methodist/ Wesleyan</u></b>	<b><u>Baptist</u></b>
<b>Creeds &amp; Confessions</b>	Many, but special focus on Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed ( <u>Catechism, 2nd ed.</u> )	Nicene Creed is "the authoritative expression of the fundamental beliefs of the Orthodox Church." ( <u>GOAA</u> )	Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed, Augsburg Confession, Formula of Concord ( <u>ELCA</u> ) ( <u>LCMS</u> )	Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, Westminster Confession	"We understand the Apostles' creed as the baptismal symbol, and the Nicene creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith." ( <u>CofE; Art. 7</u> )	Nicene and Apostles' ( <u>UMC</u> )	"We have tended to avoid embracing prepared creeds or other statements that might compromise our obligation to interpret Scripture as individuals within the community of faith under the guidance of the Holy Spirit." ( <u>ABC</u> )
<b>Sacred Text</b>	Bible w/ <u>Apocrypha</u>	Bible w/ <u>Apocrypha</u>	Bible - Apocryphal books can be "useful" reading and can help to increase one's faith. ( <u>ELCA</u> )	Bible ( <u>PCUSA</u> )	Bible. Apocrypha used only for edification ( <u>Art. 7</u> ). Tradition and reason assist interpretation. ( <u>ECUSA</u> )	Bible	Bible
<b>Inspiration &amp; Inerrancy of the Bible</b>	"The books of Scripture firmly, faithfully, and without error teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the	"God's inspiration is confined to the original languages and utterances, not the many translations." ( <u>GOAA</u> ) "While	Inspired and inerrant. ( <u>LCMS</u> ) Inspired but not inerrant. ( <u>ELCA</u> )	The Bible is inspired. "For some, that means the Bible is inerrant. For others, it means that even though the Bible is	The OT and NT contain all things necessary for salvation. ( <u>CofE</u> )	Inspired and inerrant in original manuscripts, "and have been transmitted to the present without corruption of any essential	"written by men and divinely inspired. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter." ( <u>SBC</u> )

	Sacred Scriptures." ( <u>Catechism, 2nd ed.</u> )	the Bible is treasured as a valuable written record of God's revelation, it does not contain wholly that revelation." ( <u>GOAA</u> )		culturally conditioned and not necessarily factual or even always true, it breathes with the life of God." ( <u>PCUSA</u> )		doctrine." ( <u>WC</u> )	"the final authority and trustworthy for faith and practice." ( <u>ABC</u> )  Inspired by God, written by humans ( <u>MB</u> )
<b>Sources of Doctrine</b>	Bible, church fathers, popes, bishops	"The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, along with Sacred Apostolic Tradition." Seven Ecumenical Councils. ( <u>GOAA</u> )	Bible alone	"Our standards of belief are to be found in the Bible and in the Church's historic Confession of Faith." ( <u>CofS</u> )	"The Scriptures and the Gospels, the Apostolic Church and the early Church Fathers, are the foundation of Anglican faith and worship."	"The Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation." ( <u>UMC</u> )	"We hold the Scriptures, the Old and New Testaments, as our final authority. We accept no humanly devised confession or creed as binding." ( <u>ABC</u> )
<b>God &amp; Spirits</b>	<u>Catholic</u>	<u>Orthodox</u>	<u>Lutheran</u>	<u>Reformed/ Presbyterian</u>	<u>Anglican/ Episcopalian</u>	<u>Methodist/ Wesleyan</u>	<u>Baptist</u>
<b><u>The Trinity</u></b>	"The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith and of Christian life." ( <u>Catechism, 261</u> )	"The fundamental truth of the Orthodox Church is the faith revealed in the True God: the Holy Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost "	"We teach that the one true God. is the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, three distinct persons, but of one and the same divine essence, equal in power, equal in eternity, equal in	"We trust in the one triune God." ( <u>PCUSA</u> )	"There is only one God, the Creator of the universe, who has three 'persons' or aspects, inseparable yet unique parts of the whole." ( <u>ECUSA</u> )	"With Christians of other communions we confess belief in the triune God— Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." ( <u>UMC</u> )  "We believe in the one living and	"The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being." ( <u>SBC</u> )

		(GOAA)	majesty, because each person possesses the one divine essence." (LCMS)			true God... Within this unity there are three persons of one essential nature, power and eternity--the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." (WC)	
<b><u>Nature of Christ</u></b>	"The Son is consubstantial with the Father, which means that, in the Father and with the Father the Son is one and the same God." (Catechism, 262)	"Christ was born with two perfect natures, the divine and human, as God-man." (GOAA)	"True God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, [and] Lord." (Sm. Catech.)	Christ is "fully human, fully God." (PCUSA)	"Jesus is the complete revelation of God to us, and as such, Jesus, although fully human with us, is also fully God—fully divine." (ECUSA)	"The Son, who is the ... very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature... so that two whole and perfect natures... were joined together in one person, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man." (UMC, Art. 2)	Christ "is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man." (SBC)
<b><u>Resurrection of Christ</u></b>	"The mystery of Christ's resurrection is a real event, with manifestations that were historically verified." (Catechism, 639)	"The Resurrection of Christ is considered by the Church to be the supreme declaration of faith." (GOAA)	"ELCA Lutherans believe that what history does is to demonstrate the disciples' faith in the resurrection. Their witness and testimony to Jesus' post-death	Christ "died, was buried, and was resurrected by God. For Christians, this resurrection is God's most amazing miracle and proof that	"We believe that as a fully human person, Jesus died on the cross at Jerusalem, just as all humans die, yet death could not keep him and so he	"Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and took again his body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith he	

			appearances make it abundantly clear that the resurrection was a primary object of the apostolic proclamation from Christianity's very beginning." (ELCA)	Jesus was indeed divine." (PCUSA)	was raised from the dead to life again." (ECUSA)	ascended into heaven." (UMC, Art. 3)	
<b>Holy Spirit</b>	The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and from the Son (Catechism, 264)	"The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, Who proceeds from the Father only." (GOAA)	"The Holy Spirit - as person - might be said to be one of God's 'three faces'.. In carrying on Jesus' earthly ministry, the Spirit's ongoing work is to reveal truth, give life and strengthen faith." (ELCA)	"We trust in God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life." (PCUSA)	"This is the aspect of God that is at work in the world, that inspires us, that strengthens us to do the often difficult work that our faith demands of us." (ECUSA)	"The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God." (UMC Art. 4) "We believe in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is... truly and eternally God." (WC)	"The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth." (SBC)
<b>Angels</b>	"The existence of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings that Sacred Scripture usually calls "angels" is a truth of faith. The witness of		"Most ELCA Lutherans will agree that belief in angels is a non-issue. We simply accept that they are in the Bible and may well be	"Angelology has not traditionally been emphasized in the Reformed churches..." Calvin affirmed			

	Scripture is as clear as the unanimity of Tradition... They are personal and immortal creatures, surpassing in perfection all visible creatures." ( <u>Catechism 328-330</u> )		part of the realities of heaven that we will not fully understand in this life." ( <u>ELCA</u> )	their existence as "celestial spirits," but doubted idea of personal guardian angels. ( <u>PCUSA</u> )			
<b>Satan and Demons</b>	Demons are fallen angels who can never repent. Satan is a pure spirit, powerful and evil, but limited by God's providence. ( <u>Catechism 391-95</u> )		Some ELCA Lutherans understand Satan to be a very real being, others view Satan metaphorically. ( <u>ELCA</u> )				Historic Baptists believe in the literal reality and actual personality of Satan... though they certainly do not perceive him as the caricatured red figure with horns, a long tail, and a pitchfork. ( <u>BaptistPillar.com</u> )
<b><u>Mary</u></b>	Mary had no original sin, remained free of sin throughout her life, is "Mother of God" and the new Eve. ( <u>Catechism, 508-10</u> ) Bodily assumption into heaven instead of death. ( <u>Catechism, 966</u> )	Theotokos ("God-Bearer"). Honored highly, but no immaculate conception or bodily assumption into the heavens. ( <u>GOAA</u> )		Mary should not be regarded as a mediator between man and God, but she should be honored as "God-bearer" and a model for Christians. ( <u>PCUSA</u> )		Mary was the mother of Jesus and one of his disciples. ( <u>UMC</u> ) Virgin birth affirmed, immaculate conception denied. ( <u>UMC</u> )	

<b>Sin &amp; Salvation</b>	<b><u>Catholic</u></b>	<b><u>Orthodox</u></b>	<b><u>Lutheran</u></b>	<b><u>Reformed/ Presbyterian</u></b>	<b><u>Anglican/ Episcopalian</u></b>	<b><u>Methodist/ Wesleyan</u></b>	<b><u>Baptist</u></b>
<b><u>Human Nature</u></b>	"Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is ... capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. And he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give." ( <u>Catech 357</u> )	Humanity was created in the image and likeness of God. "'Image' is... intellect, emotion, ethical judgment, and self-determination. ... The 'likeness' is the human potential to become like God." ( <u>GOAA</u> )	"The first man was not brutelike nor merely capable of intellectual development, but ... God created man in His own image." ( <u>LCMS</u> )		"We are part of God's creation, made in the image of God... [which] means that we are free to make choices: to love, to create, to reason, and to live in harmony with creation and with God." ( <u>BCP 845</u> )		
<b><u>Body &amp; Soul</u></b>	"The unity of soul and body is so profound that one has to consider the soul to be the "form" of the body...; spirit and matter, in man, are not two natures	Material and spiritual realities are "closely bound together. The icon is an example of this belief... Human life and human fulfillment are	Soul is not an independent entity but the "life principle" of the self, which is a psycho-physical organism. ( <u>ELCA</u> )				

	<p>united, but rather their union forms a single nature." (Catech 365)</p>	<p>inextricably bound to both the physical and the spiritual dimensions of human existence." (GOAA)</p>					
<p><b>Original Sin</b></p>	<p>Only a tendency to sin. "Luther and Calvin taught as their fundamental error that no free will properly so called remained in man after the fall of our first parents... and that man in all his actions sins." (CE)</p>	<p>"In fallen humanity [the image of God] remains part of human nature, albeit darkened, wounded, and weakened." (GOAA) An unnatural condition of human life that ends in death. (EB)</p>	<p>Adam's offspring "have lost the original knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, and thus all men are sinners already by birth, dead in sins, inclined to all evil, and subject to the wrath of God." (LCMS)</p>	<p>"No one of us is good enough on our own--we are all dependent upon God's goodness and mercy... from the kindest, most devoted churchgoer to the most blatant sinner." (PCUSA)</p>		<p>"Man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually." (UMC)  "Humans are very far gone from original righteousness, and by nature are continually inclined to evil." (WC)</p>	
<p><b>Free will</b></p>	<p>Free to do good or evil. "God has endowed us with reason and free-will, and a sense of responsibility." (CE)</p>	<p>"Man is truly free only when he is in communion with God; otherwise he is only a slave to his body or to the world." (Eneve)</p>	<p>Free only to do evil</p>	<p>Free only to do evil Presbyterians believe it is through the action of God working in us that we become aware of our</p>		<p>"We have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us." (UMC)</p>	<p>"The freedom to respond to the Lordship of Christ in all circumstances is fundamental to the Christian gospel and to human dignity." (ABC)</p>

		<u>Britannica</u> ) At the Fall, "man's will became blurred, but did not disappear." ( <u>GOAA</u> )		sinfulness and our need for God's mercy and forgiveness." ( <u>PCUSA</u> )			
<b>Atonement (Purpose of Christ's Death)</b>	"By his death and Resurrection, Jesus Christ has "opened" heaven to us." ( <u>Catech 1026</u> ) Also created merit that is shared with sinners through sacraments.	"Christ enlightens the minds of the people, purifies their hearts and frees their wills from the bondage of the devil. Christ became flesh to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." ( <u>GOAA</u> )	"The purpose of this miraculous incarnation of the Son of God was that He might become the Mediator between God and men, both fulfilling the divine Law and suffering and dying in the place of mankind. In this manner God reconciled the whole sinful world unto Himself." ( <u>LCMS</u> )	"Through Jesus' death and resurrection God triumphed over sin." ( <u>PCUSA</u> )		Christ " truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men. " ( <u>UMC</u> )  "Christ's offering of himself... through His sufferings and meritorious death on the cross, provides the perfect redemption and atonement for the sins of the whole world." ( <u>WC</u> )	Christ "honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin." ( <u>SBC</u> )
<b>Means of Salvation</b>	Received at baptism; may be lost by mortal sin; regained by penance	"The acceptance of Christ as the Savior through confession in Christ as the	"Faith in Christ is the only way for men to obtain personal reconciliation	"We are able to choose God because God first chose us." ( <u>PCUSA</u> )	"We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord	"We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord	"Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus

		True God is the highest gift given to the believer by the Holy Spirit. ...acceptance is his own choice through his own free will. This is why one is responsible for his own fate." (GOAA)	with God, that is, forgiveness of sins" (LCMS)		and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings." (Art. XI)	and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings." (UMC)  "The final destiny of each person is determined by God's grace and that person's response, evidenced inevitably by a moral character which results from that individual's personal and volitional choices." (WC)	Christ as Lord and Saviour." (SBC)
<b>Grace</b>	Prevenient grace helps one believe; efficacious grace cooperates with the human will to do good		Common grace enabling good works given to all; sufficient grace for salvation given to elect only				
<b>Predestination</b>	Predestination to heaven only, and related to God's foreknowledge. "God predestines no one to go to hell " (Catech	Seeks a middle ground between Pelagianism and Augustinian predestination. (GOAA)	Predestination to heaven only. "There is no... predestination to damnation." (LCMS)	"We are able to choose God because God first chose us." (PCUSA) Some modern Presbyterians	"Predestination to Life is the everlasting purpose of God... to deliver from curse and damnation those	Affirmed, but understood in terms of God choosing those he knew would freely believe	Affirmed - "Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners

	<u>1037)</u>			are "very concerned about the few statements in the confessions" suggesting predestination to hell. <u>(PCUSA)</u>	whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour." (Art. 17)		It is consistent with the free agency of man." <u>(SBC)</u>
<b>Perseverance Once Saved</b>	Can lose salvation. "Mortal sin cuts us off entirely from our true last end." <u>(CE)</u> Perseverance to the end is a gift of God, but we must cooperate with God's gift. <u>(CE)</u>					"Sanctification is that renewal of our fallen nature... whereby we are... enabled, through grace, to love God with all our hearts and to walk in his holy commandments blameless." <u>(UMC)</u>  Possible to lose salvation if fall into sin without repentance. <u>(WC)</u>	Salvation cannot be lost. "Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end." <u>(SBC)</u>
<b>Good works</b>	Meritorious		Good works in the eyes of God "are done for the glory of God and the good of man, according to the rule of divine Law" True good	Good works not sufficient for avoiding God's judgment, but follow after salvation. Good works done without faith are		"Although good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the	"Those who truly have faith in Christ necessarily live out that faith expressing compassion for others for whom He died." <u>(ABC)</u>

			works cannot be done until saved without works. (LCMS)	not pleasant to God. (Arts. 12-13)		severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively faith." (UMC)	
<b>End Times</b>	"At the end of time, the Kingdom of God will come in its fullness. After the universal judgment, the righteous will reign for ever with Christ, glorified in body and soul. The universe itself will be renewed." (Catech 1042)		"We reject every type of millennialism, or Chiliasm, the opinions that Christ will return visibly to this earth a thousand years before the end of the world." (LCMS)	When and how the end will come are open questions, but "the cosmos will be renewed, perfected, purged of impurities, and subjected to the rule of God." (PCUSA)  "There is considerable latitude for variations in eschatological position within the Reformed Tradition." (PCUSA)		"The resurrection of the righteous dead will occur at Christ's Second Coming, and the resurrection of the wicked will occur at a later time." (WC)	"God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness."
<b>Judgment</b>						God's "judgment will culminate in the final meeting of all persons before His throne	

						of great majesty and power, where records will be examined and final rewards and punishments will be administered." (WC)	
<b>Heaven</b>	Heaven is "blessed communion with God and all who are in Christ" (Catech 1027) and "the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness." (Catech 1024)			"In their spiritual bodies the saints will live forever in rapt adoration of God." (PCUSA)		"Heaven with its eternal glory and the blessedness of Christ's presence is the final abode of those who choose the salvation which God provides through Jesus Christ." (WC)	
<b><u>Purgatory</u></b>	Affirmed - " All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified. after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven." (Catech 1030)	Denied (GOAA)	Denied.	Denied.	Denied.	Denied. Purgatory is "vainly invented and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugnant to the Word of God." (UMC)	Denied.

<b><u>Eternal Hell</u></b>	Affirmed. "The chief punishment of hell is eternal separation from God." ( <u>Catech 1030</u> )	Affirmed. ( <u>GOAA</u> )	Affirmed.	Affirmed by some. "In a 1996 Presbyterian Panel survey only 51 percent of members and 46 percent of pastors said they believed in hell." ( <u>PCUSA</u> )	Affirmed.	Affirmed. "Hell with its everlasting misery and separation from God is the final abode of those who neglect [God's] great salvation." ( <u>WC</u> )	Affirmed.
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b><u>Catholic</u></b>	<b><u>Orthodox</u></b>	<b><u>Lutheran</u></b>	<b><u>Reformed/ Presbyterian</u></b>	<b><u>Anglican/ Episcopalian</u></b>	<b><u>Methodist/ Wesleyan</u></b>	<b><u>Baptist</u></b>
<b>The Church</b>	"The sole Church of Christ which in the Creed we profess to be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him." ( <u>Catech 870</u> )		Church consists of baptized people who have received Christ as the Son of God and Savior of the world. ( <u>ELCA</u> )  Church made of "all those who have despaired of their own righteousness before God and believe that God forgives their sins for Christ's sake." ( <u>LCMS</u> )		"The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." (Article 19)	"The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered." ( <u>UMC</u> )  "The church includes both those believers who have gone to be with the Lord and those who remain on the earth." ( <u>WC 240</u> )	"A New Testament church is. an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers." ( <u>SBC</u> )  "The Church is a gathered fellowship of regenerated believers, a sign of the coming universal reign of God." ( <u>ABC</u> )
<b>Other</b>	"The sole Church	"The Orthodox	"The invisible	"The Church of	"The Church of	"The branches of	"Cooperation is

<b>Denominations</b>	of Christ which in the Creed we profess to be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic, subsists in the Catholic Church... Nevertheless, many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside its visible confines." ( <u>Catech 870</u> ) Those "who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are put in a certain, although imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church." ( <u>Catech 838</u> )	Church continuously and without interruption is the true keeper of the truths of the Undivided Church, without omissions or additions." ( <u>GOAA</u> ) Orthodox do not seek to proselytize non-Orthodox Christians, but Orthodox who join a different Christian church are apostates. ( <u>GOAA</u> )	communion of all believers" includes visible church communions where, "along with error, so much of the Word of God still remains that men may be brought to the knowledge of their sins and to faith in the forgiveness of sins, which Christ has gained for all men." ( <u>LCMS</u> ) Warn against Unitarianism. ( <u>LCMS, 1932</u> )	Scotland... recognises the obligation to seek and promote union with other Churches in which it finds the Word to be purely preached, the sacraments administered according to Christ's ordinance, and discipline rightly exercised." ( <u>CofS</u> )	England is committed to working towards the goal of full visible unity within the Christian Church." ( <u>CofE</u> )	Christ's church have developed diverse traditions that enlarge our store of shared understandings. Our avowed ecumenical commitment as United Methodists is to gather our own doctrinal emphases into the larger Christian unity, there to be made more meaningful in a richer whole." ( <u>UMC</u> )	desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament." ( <u>SBC</u> )  "American Baptist Churches USA respects the variety of theological understandings that its members, and other Christians, have embraced." ( <u>ABC</u> )
<b>Other Religions</b>	"Many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside [the Catholic Church's] visible confines." ( <u>Catech 870</u> )	"The majority of Orthodox scholars would accept inclusivism.... This view holds firmly to the centrality of Christ... yet acknowledges that salvation	"Faith in Christ is the only way for men to obtain personal reconciliation with God." ( <u>LCMS</u> )  "There is a large hope for salvation, for all people		"The Church of England... seeks to build up good relations with people of other faith traditions, and to co-operate with them where possible in service to society." ( <u>CofE</u> )		"There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord." ( <u>SBC</u> )  "Cherishing our own God-given gift of freedom has motivated us to support religious

		can be found outside Christianity." (GOAA)	whenever or wherever they might have lived and no matter how religious or irreligious they may have proved to be themselves." (ELCA)				freedom for all to seek God's will." (ABC)
	<u>Catholic</u>	<u>Orthodox</u>	<u>Lutheran</u>	<u>Reformed/Presbyterian</u>	<u>Anglican/Episcopalian</u>	<u>Methodist/Wesleyan</u>	<u>Baptist</u>

	<u>Catholic</u>	<u>Orthodox</u>	<u>Lutheran</u>	<u>Presbyterian/Reformed</u>	<u>Anglican/Episcopalian</u>	<u>Methodist/Wesleyan</u>	<u>Baptist</u>
<b>Role and Type of Clergy</b>	"To the apostles and their successors Christ has entrusted the office of teaching, sanctifying and governing in his name and by his power. But the laity are made to share in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ." (Catech 873)		All believers are priests, in that they have direct access to God. Clergy are "pastors" or "ministers." (ELCA)		Priests and bishops. "The historic episcopate is locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of his Church." (CofE)		"The affirmation of lay leaders as integral to church vitality... underscore the belief that many have been called by God to serve." (ABC)
<b>Marriage of Clergy</b>	Priests are celibate, except in Eastern Rite Catholicism or for priests who were already married when ordained.	Priests may be married.	Ministers may be married.		"Bishops, Priests, and Deacons are not commanded by God's Law either to vow the estate of single life or to abstain from	"The ministers of Christ are not commanded by God's law either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from	

					marriage: therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness." (Art. 32)	marriage; therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christians, to marry at their own discretion." (UMC)	
<b>Ordination of Women?</b>	No. (Catech 1577)	No, but the role of deaconess is being considered. (GOAA)	Yes. (ELCA) No. (LCMS)	Yes. (PCUSA)	Yes. (ECUSA) Some parishes. (CofE)	Yes. (UMC)	Yes. (ABC)  No. "While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture." (SBC)
<b>View of Sacraments</b>	Convey grace by their operation ( <i>ex opere operato</i> ).	"Special experiences when the perception of God's presence and actions is heightened and celebrated." (GOA)	Means of grace only if received with faith.	"Through the Sacraments, God seals believers in redemption, renews their identity as the people of God, and marks them for service." (PCUSA)	"The two sacraments ordained by Christ himself are administered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and the elements are ordained by him." (CofE)	" Sacraments ordained of Christ are ... certain signs of grace and God's good will toward us, by which he works invisibly in us, and not only quickens, but also strengthens and confirms, our faith in him." Only beneficial	

						when received worthily. (UMC)	
<b>View of Baptism</b>					"By baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, a person is made one with Christ and received into the fellowship of the Church." (CofE)	"A sign of regeneration or the new birth." (UMC)  "A symbol of the new covenant of grace... acceptance of the benefits of the atonement of Jesus Christ." (WC)	"An act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus." (SBC)
<b>Infant Baptism</b>	Accepted	Accepted. (GOAA)	Accepted	<u>Accepted</u>	Accepted. (CofE) (Art. 27)	Accepted. (UMC)  Rejected. (WC)	Rejected. (SBC) (ABC)
<b>View of Eucharist</b>	Transubstantiation	<u>Transubstantiation</u>	"Real Presence"	"Real Presence"	"In this offering of prayer and praise, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are recalled." (CofE)	"The body of Christ is... eaten in the Supper only after a heavenly and spiritual manner." (UMC)	"A symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church... memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming." (SBC) Symbolic only. (ABC)

<b>Other Sacraments</b>	<u>Extreme Unction (Anointing)</u>	<u>Holy Chrism (Anointing)</u>	None.	None.	"Other important rites, commonly called sacraments, include confirmation, holy orders, reconciliation, marriage and anointing of the sick." (CofE)	None.	None.
<b>Other Practices</b>	<u>Exorcism</u>	<u>Exorcism; Confession</u>					
<b>Prayer to Saints</b>	Accepted	<u>Accepted</u>	Rejected		Rejected (Art. 22)		
<b>Icons &amp; Images</b>	Accepted	<u>Emphasized</u>	Mostly rejected	Strongly rejected	Rejected (Art. 22)		
<b>Evangelism</b>		"Missionary activity is an essential part of the life of the Church." "Orthodox do not... actively seek to cause the disaffection of others from their non-Orthodox Christian faiths." (GOAA)	"It is our privilege to tell the good news about Jesus." (LCMS)		"Following the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Churches are committed to the proclamation of the good news of the Gospel to the whole creation." (CofE)		"...committed to see Jesus Christ proclaimed as Savior and Lord to all people and nations." (ABC) "It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ... to endeavor to make disciples of all nations." (SBC)
<b>Tongues and Other Spiritual</b>		"The Greek Orthodox Church does not preclude the use of				"The relative value of the gifts of the Spirit is to	

<b>Gifts</b>		Glossolalia, but regards it as one of the minor gifts of the Holy Spirit." (GOAA)				be tested by their usefulness in the church and not by the ecstasy produced in the ones receiving them." (WC 15)	
	<u>Catholic</u>	<u>Orthodox</u>	<u>Lutheran</u>	<u>Presbyterian/Reformed</u>	<u>Anglican/Episcopalian</u>	<u>Methodist/Wesleyan</u>	<u>Baptist</u>