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Ecumenism

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Ecumenism refers to efforts by Christians of different church traditions to develop closer relationships and better understandings. The term is also often used to refer to efforts towards the visible and organic unity of different Christian [churches](#) in some form.

The adjective *ecumenical* can also be applied to any interdenominational initiative that encourages greater cooperation among Christians and their [churches](#), whether or not the specific aim of that effort is full, visible unity.

The terms *ecumenism* and *ecumenical* come from the [Greek](#) οἰκουμένη (*oikoumene*), which means "the whole inhabited world", and was historically used with specific reference to the [Roman Empire](#).^[2] The ecumenical vision comprises both the search for the visible unity of the Church (Ephesians 4:3) and the "whole inhabited earth" (Matthew 24:14) as the concern of all



A common symbol of ecumenism portrays the Christian Church as a [cross](#) on a boat at sea.^[1]

Part of a series on
Christianity

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In Christianity the qualification *ecumenical* is originally (and still) used in terms such as "**ecumenical council**" and "**Ecumenical Patriarch**" in the meaning of pertaining to the totality of the larger Church (such as the **Catholic Church** or the **Orthodox Church**) rather than being restricted to one of its constituent local churches or **dioceses**. Used in this original sense, the term carries no connotation of re-uniting the historically separated Christian denominations, but presumes a unity of local congregations in a worldwide communion.

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Purpose and goal [[edit](#)]

Historically, the word was originally used in the context of large **ecumenical councils** that were organized under the auspices of **Roman Emperors** to clarify matters of **Christian theology** and doctrine. These "Ecumenical Councils" brought together bishops from around the inhabited world (such as, οἰκουμένη) as they knew it at the time. There were a total of seven ecumenical councils accepted by both Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism held before the **Great Schism**. Thus,

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the modern meaning of the world *ecumenical* and *ecumenism* derives from this pre-modern sense of Christian unity, and the impulse to recreate this unity again.

There are a variety of different expectations of what that Christian unity looks like, how it is brought about, what ecumenical methods ought to be engaged, and what both short- and long-term objectives of the ecumenical movement should be. Ecumenism and [nondenominational](#) or postdenominational movements are not necessarily the same thing. While some of these can be ecumenical in intent, normally nondenominationalism seeks no common organizing principle nor works toward the unity of Christians.

Historic divisions in Christianity [\[edit\]](#)

Christian denominations today [\[edit\]](#)

If ecumenism is the quest for Christian unity, it must be understood what the divisions are which must be overcome.

Christianity has not been a monolithic faith since the [first century](#) or [Apostolic Age](#), if ever, and today there exist a large variety of groups that share a common history and tradition within and without [mainstream](#) Christianity. Christianity is the largest religion in the world (making up approximately one-third of the population) and the various divisions have commonalities and differences in tradition, [theology](#), [church government](#), doctrine, and language.

The world's 2.2 billion Christians^[3] are visibly divided into different [communions](#) or [denominations](#), groupings of Christians and their churches that are in [full communion](#) with one another, but to some degree exclusive of other Christians.

The exact number of these denominations is disputed, based on differing definitions used. The largest number often quoted is "approximately 45,000" from the Center for the Study of Global

Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.^[4] The *World Christian Encyclopedia* lists "approximately 33,000" in 2001.^[5] Yet, at the same time, the [World Council of Churches](#) counts only 348 member churches, representing more than half a billion members.^[6] This, with the [Catholic Church's](#) 1.25 billion Christians^[7] indicates that 349 churches/denominations already account for nearly 80% of the world's Christian population.

One problem with the larger numbers is that single denominations can be counted multiple times. For example, the [Catholic Church](#) is a single church, or communion, comprising 24 distinct [self-governing particular churches in full communion](#) with the [bishop of Rome](#) (the largest being the [Latin Church](#), commonly called "Roman Catholic"). Further, the Catholic Church presence in each country is counted as a different denomination—though this is in no way an [ecclesiologically](#) accurate definition. This can result in the one Catholic Church being counted as 242 distinct denominations, as in the *World Christian Encyclopedia*.^[8]

Additionally, single nondenominational congregations or megachurches without denominational affiliation are effectively counted each as its own denomination, resulting in cases where entire "denominations" may account for only a handful of people. Other denominations may be very small remnants of once larger churches. The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing ([Shakers](#)) have only three full members, for example, yet are a distinct denomination.

Most current divisions are the result of historical [schisms](#)—a break in the [full communion](#) between previously united Churches, bishops, or communities. Some historical schisms proved temporary and were eventually healed, others have hardened into the denominations of today. However individual denominations are counted, it is generally acknowledged that they fall into the following major "families" of churches:

- The [Catholic Church](#);
- [Evangelical](#) and [Pentecostal](#) churches;

- [Mainline Protestant](#), [Old Catholic](#), and the [Anglican Communion](#) churches;
- The [Eastern Orthodox Church](#), the [Oriental Orthodox Churches](#), and the [Assyrian Church of the East](#);
- independent or marginally Christian groups and sects ([Mormon](#), [Jehovah's Witnesses](#), [Unitarian Universalist](#), [Christadelphian](#), etc.)

In the United States, the Historic Racial/Ethnic churches are sometimes counted as a distinct family of churches, though they may otherwise fit into any one of the previous categories.^[9]

Some of these families are in themselves a single communion, such as the [Catholic Church](#). Other families are a very general movement with no universal governing authority. Mainline Protestantism, for example, includes such diverse groups as [Adventists](#), [Anabaptists](#), [Baptists](#), [Congregationalists](#), [Evangelicals](#), [Holiness churches](#), [Lutherans](#), [Methodists](#), [Moravians](#), [Presbyterians](#), [Reformed](#). Many of these have, as a result of ecumenical dialogue, established full or partial communion agreements.

Moreover, the classic distinction between [Pentecostals](#) and [Charismatics](#) is that the former are entire denominations (such as the [Assembly of God](#)) or include most [nondenominational](#) churches, whereas the latter are Spirit-filled Christians in already existing Catholic or mainline Protestant churches. Moreover, some Evangelical churches are also Pentecostal, though certainly not all. So there is some overlap.

Ancient apostolic churches [\[edit\]](#)

Further information: [Christology § Post-Apostolic controversies](#)

The oldest lasting [schism](#) in Christianity resulted from fifth-century disagreements on [Christology](#), heightened by philosophical, linguistic, cultural, and political differences.

The first significant, lasting split in historic Christianity came from the [Church of the East](#),

consisting largely of Eastern Syriac churches outside the Roman Empire, who left full communion after 431 in response to misunderstandings and personality conflicts at the [Council of Ephesus](#). After fifteen centuries of estrangement, the [Assyrian Church of the East](#) and the [Roman Catholic Church](#) entered into an ecumenical dialogue in the 1980s, resulting in agreement on the very issue that split them asunder, in the [1994 Common Christological Declaration](#), which identifies the origin of the schism as largely linguistic, due to problems of translating very delicate and precise terminology from Latin to [Aramaic](#) and vice versa.

As part of the ongoing Christological controversy, following the [Council of Chalcedon](#) in 451, the next large split came with the [Syriac](#) and [Coptic](#) churches dividing themselves. The churches dissented from Chalcedon becoming today's Oriental Orthodox Churches. These also include the [Armenian Apostolic Church](#), the [Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church](#), and the [Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church](#) in India. In modern times, there have also been moves towards healing this division, with common Christological statements being made between [Pope John Paul II](#) and Syriac patriarch [Ignatius Zakka I Iwas](#), as well as between representatives of both Oriental Orthodoxy and the [Eastern Orthodox Church](#).^[10]

Great Schism [\[edit\]](#)

Further information: [East–West Schism](#)

Although the Christian world as a whole did not experience any major church divisions for centuries afterward, the [Eastern](#), predominantly Greek-speaking and [Western](#), predominantly Latin-speaking cultural divisions drifted toward division and isolation culminating in the mutual excommunication of [Patriarch of Constantinople Michael I Cerularius](#) and the legate of then-deceased [Pope of Rome Leo IX](#) in 1054, in what is known as the [Great Schism](#). The canonical separation was sealed by the Latin [sacking of Constantinople](#) (1204) during the [Fourth Crusade](#) and through the poor reception of the [Council of Florence](#) (1449) among the Orthodox Eastern

Churches.

The political and theological reasons for the schism are complex and multifaceted. Aside from the natural rivalry between the [Eastern Roman](#) or Byzantine Empire and the [Franco-Latin Holy Roman Empire](#), one major controversy was the inclusion and acceptance in the West in general - and in the diocese of Rome in particular - of the [Filioque clause](#) ("and the Son") into the [Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed](#), which the East viewed as a violation of ecclesiastical procedure at best, an abuse of [papal authority](#) as only an [Ecumenical Council](#) could amend what had been defined by a previous council, and a heresy at worst, inasfar as the Filioque implies that the essential divinity of the Holy Spirit is derived not from the Father alone as *arche* (singular head and source), but from the [perichoretic](#) union between the Father and the Son. That the hypostasis or persona of the Spirit either is or is produced by the mutual, preeternal love between God and His Word is an explanation which Eastern Christian detractors have alleged is rooted in the medieval [Augustinian](#) appropriation of [Plotinian Neoplatonism](#). (See Augustine of Hippo, *De Trinitate*)

Both West and East agreed that the patriarch of Rome was owed a "primacy of honour" by the other patriarchs (those of [Alexandria](#), [Antioch](#), [Constantinople](#) and [Jerusalem](#)), but the West also contended that this primacy extended to jurisdiction, a position rejected by the Eastern patriarchs. Various attempts at dialogue between the two groups would occur, but it was only in the 1960s, under Pope [Paul VI](#) and [Patriarch Athenagoras](#), that significant steps began to be made to mend the relationship between the two. In 1965, the excommunications were 'committed to oblivion'.

The resulting division remains, however, giving us the "[Catholic Church](#)" and the "[Orthodox Church](#)", both of which are globally distributed bodies and no longer restricted geographically or culturally to the "West" or "East", respectively. (There exists both Eastern Rite Roman Catholicism and Western Rite Orthodoxy, for example.) There is an ongoing and fruitful [Catholic-Orthodox dialogue](#).

Western schisms and reformations [\[edit\]](#)

Main articles: [Protestant Reformation](#) and [Catholic Reformation](#)

In Western Christianity, there were a handful of geographically isolated movements that preceded in the spirit of the [Protestant Reformation](#). The [Cathars](#) were a very strong movement in medieval southwestern France, but did not survive into modern times. In northern [Italy](#) and southeastern [France](#), [Peter Waldo](#) founded the [Waldensians](#) in the 12th century, which remains the largest non-Catholic church in Italy and is in full communion with the Italian Methodist Church. In [Bohemia](#), a movement in the early 15th century by [Jan Hus](#) called the [Hussites](#) called for reform of Catholic teaching and still exists to this day, known as the [Moravian Church](#). Though generally counted among [Protestant](#) churches, groups such as the Waldensians and Moravians pre-exist Protestantism proper.

The Protestant Reformation began, symbolically, with the posting of [Martin Luther's "Ninety-Five Theses"](#) in [Saxony](#) on October 31, 1517, written as a set of grievances to reform the Western Church. [Luther's writings](#), combined with the work of [Swiss](#) theologian [Huldrych Zwingli](#) and French theologian and politician [John Calvin](#), sought to reform existing problems in doctrine and practice. Due to the reactions of ecclesiastical office holders at the time of the reformers, the Roman Catholic Church separated from them, instigating a rift in [Western Christianity](#). This schism gives us the [Mainline Protestant](#) Churches, including especially the [Lutheran](#) and [Reformed](#) traditions.

In [England](#), [Henry VIII of England](#) declared himself to be supreme head of the [Church of England](#) with the [Act of Supremacy](#) in 1531, repressing both Lutheran reformers and those loyal to the pope. [Thomas Cranmer](#) as [Archbishop of Canterbury](#) introduced the [English Reformation](#) in a form compromising between the Calvinists and Lutherans. This schism brings us today's [Anglican Communion](#).

The [Radical Reformation](#), also mid-sixteenth century, moved beyond both [Anglican](#) and [Protestant](#)

reformations, emphasizing the invisible, spiritual reality of the Church, apart from any visible ecclesial manifestation. A significant group of Radical reformers were the [Anabaptists](#), people such as [Menno Simmons](#) and [Jakob Ammann](#), whose movements resulted in today's communities of [Mennonites](#), [Amish](#), [Hutterites](#), and Brethren churches.

Further reform movements within Anglicanism during the 16th through 18th centuries, with influence from the Radical Reformation, produced the [Puritans](#) and [Separatists](#), giving us today's [Baptists](#), [Congregationalists](#), [Quakers](#), and eventually [Unitarian Universalism](#).

The [Weslyan](#) and [Methodist](#) churches grew out of a revival within Anglicanism, especially in England and the [American colonies](#), under the leadership of the brothers [John Wesley](#) and [Charles Wesley](#), both priests in the Church of England. This movement also produced the [Holiness movement](#) churches.

The [Old Catholic Church](#) split from the [Catholic Church](#) in the 1870s because of the promulgation of the [dogma](#) of [Papal Infallibility](#) as promoted by the [First Vatican Council](#) of 1869–1870. The term "Old Catholic" was first used in 1853 to describe the members of the See of Utrecht who were not under Papal authority. The Old Catholic movement grew in America but has not maintained ties with Utrecht, although talks are under way between some independent Old Catholic bishops and Utrecht.

The [Evangelical](#) movement takes form as the result of spiritual renewal efforts in the anglophone world in the 18th century. According to religion scholar, social activist, and politician [Randall Balmer](#), Evangelicalism resulted "from the confluence of [Pietism](#), [Presbyterianism](#), and the vestiges of [Puritanism](#). Evangelicalism picked up the peculiar characteristics from each strain – warmhearted spirituality from the Pietists (for instance), doctrinal precisionism from the Presbyterians, and individualistic introspection from the Puritans".^[11][\[incomplete short citation\]](#) Historian [Mark Noll](#) adds to this list [High Church](#) Anglicanism, which contributed to Evangelicalism a legacy of

"rigorous spirituality and innovative organization".^[12]^[incomplete short citation]

[Pentecostalism](#) is likewise born out of this context, and traditionally traces its origins to the 1 January 1901 outpouring of the spirit in Topeka, Kansas, at the [Bethel Bible School](#). Subsequent charismatic revivals in [Wales](#) in 1904 and the [Azusa Street Revival](#) in 1906 are held as the beginnings of the Pentecostal movement. For a Spirit-believing Christian, it is not coincidence that these started just a few hours after [Pope Leo XIII](#) lead a prayer *Veni Spiritus Sanctus* during his *urbi et orbi* message, consecrating the 20th century to the Holy Spirit and through this prayer to the reunion of Christianity.^[13]

Modern ecumenical movement ^[edit]

One understanding of the ecumenical movement is that it came from the Roman Catholic Church's attempts to reconcile with Christians who had become separated over theological issues.^[14]

Others see the [1910 World Missionary Conference](#) as the birthplace of the ecumenical movement.^[15] Others yet point to the 1920 encyclical of the Eastern Orthodox [Ecumenical Patriarch](#) Germanos of Constantinople "To the Churches of Christ Everywhere" that suggested a "fellowship of churches" similar to the League of Nations.^[16]

[Nathan Söderblom](#), [Archbishop of Uppsala](#), the head of the [Lutheran church in Sweden](#), is known as the architect of the ecumenical movement of the twentieth century. During the First World War, he called on all Christian leaders to work for peace and justice. His leadership of the Christian "[Life and Work](#)" movement in the 1920s has led him to be recognised as one of the principal founders of the ecumenical movement. His was instrumental in chairing the [World Conference of Life and Work](#) in [Stockholm, Sweden](#) in 1925. At the Stockholm Conference in 1925, the culminating event in Söderblom's ecumenical work, the Anglican, Protestant, and Orthodox Christians were all present and participating, with the exception of the [Catholic Church](#), much regretted absence. He

was a close friend of the English ecumenist [George Bell](#). In 1930 was one of the [recipients](#) of the [Nobel Prize](#), [Nobel Peace Prize](#) laureate, for the: *Cooperation between Christian Church Communities Brings Peace* and the first clergyman to receive this prize.^{[17][18]}

After [World War I](#), which had brought much devastation to many people, the church became a source of hope to those in need. In 1948 the first meeting of the [World Council of Churches](#) took place. Despite the fact that the meeting had been postponed due to World War II, the council took place in Amsterdam with the theme of "Man's Disorder and God's Design".^[14] The focus of the church and the council following the gathering was on the damage created by the Second World War. The council and the movement went forward to continue the efforts of unifying the church globally around the idea of helping all those in need, whether it be a physical, emotional, or spiritual need. The movement led to an understanding amongst the churches that, despite difference, they could join together to be an element of great change in the world. To be an agent of hope and peace amongst the chaos and destruction that humans seem to create. More importantly the council and the movement lead to not only ecumenism but to the forming of councils amongst the denominations that connected churches across continental lines.^[14]

Today, the [World Council of Churches](#) sees its role as sharing "the legacy of the one ecumenical movement and the responsibility to keep it alive" and acting "as a trustee for the inner coherence of the movement".^[19]

Three approaches to Christian unity [\[edit\]](#)

For some [Protestants](#), spiritual unity, and often unity on the church's teachings on central issues, suffices. According to [Lutheran](#) theologian [Edmund Schlink](#), most important in Christian ecumenism is that people focus primarily on [Christ](#), not on separate church organizations. In Schlink's book *Ökumenische Dogmatik* (1983), he says Christians who see the risen Christ at work in the lives of various Christians or in diverse churches realize that the unity of Christ's church has

never been lost,^[20] but has instead been distorted and obscured by different historical experiences and by spiritual myopia.

Both are overcome in renewed faith in Christ. Included in that is responding to his admonition (John 17; Philippians 2) to be one in him and love one another as a witness to the world. The result of mutual recognition would be a discernible worldwide fellowship, organized in a historically new way.^[21]

For a significant part of the Christian world, one of the highest goals to be sought is the reconciliation of the various denominations by overcoming the historical divisions within Christianity. Even where there is broad agreement upon this goal, approaches to ecumenism vary. Generally, Protestants see fulfillment of the goal of ecumenism as consisting in general agreements on teachings about central issues of faith, with mutual pastoral accountability between the diverse churches regarding the teachings of salvation.

For Catholics and Orthodox on the other hand, the true unity of [Christendom](#) is treated in accordance with their more sacramental understanding of the [Body of Christ](#); this ecclesiastical matter for them is closely linked to key theological issues (e.g. regarding the [Eucharist](#) and the [historical Episcopate](#)), and requires full dogmatic assent to the [pastoral authority of the Church](#) for [full communion](#) to be considered viable and valid. Thus, there are different answers even to the [question of the church](#), which finally is the goal of the ecumenist movement itself. However, the desire of unity is expressed by many denominations, generally that all who profess faith in Christ in sincerity, would be more fully cooperative and supportive of one another.

For the Catholic and Orthodox churches, the process of approaching one another is formally split in two successive stages: the "dialogue of love" and the "dialogue of truth".^[22] To the former belong the mutual revocation in 1965 of the [anathemas](#) of 1054 (see below [Contemporary developments](#)), returning the relics of [Sabbas the Sanctified](#) (a common saint) to [Mar Saba](#) in the

same year, and the first visit of a Pope to an Orthodox country in a millennium ([Pope John Paul II](#) accepting the invitation of the [Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church](#), Teoctist, in 1999), among others. The later one, involving effective theological engagement on matters of dogma, is only just commencing.

Christian ecumenism can be described in terms of the three largest divisions of Christianity: Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant. While this underemphasizes the complexity of these divisions, it is a useful model.

Catholicism [\[edit\]](#)

Main article: [Catholic Church and ecumenism](#)

The [Catholic Church](#) has always considered it a duty of the highest rank to seek full unity with estranged communions of fellow-Christians and, at the same time, to reject what it sees as a false union that would mean being unfaithful to or glossing over the teaching of sacred scripture and tradition.

Before the [Second Vatican Council](#), the main stress was laid on this second aspect, as exemplified in canon 1258 of the 1917 Code of Canon Law:

1. It is illicit for the faithful to assist at or participate in any way in non-Catholic religious functions.
2. For a serious reason requiring, in case of doubt, the Bishop's approval, passive or merely material presence at non-Catholic funerals, weddings and similar occasions because of holding a civil office or as a courtesy can be tolerated, provided there is no danger of



Te Deum Ecuménico 2009 in the [Santiago Metropolitan Cathedral](#), Chile. An ecumenical gathering of clergy from different denominations.

perversion or scandal.

The 1983 [Code of Canon Law](#) has no corresponding canon. It absolutely forbids Catholic priests to concelebrate the Eucharist with members of communities which are not in full communion (canon 908), but allows, in certain circumstances and under certain conditions, other sharing in the sacraments. The *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 102^[23] states: "Christians may be encouraged to share in spiritual activities and resources, i.e., to share that spiritual heritage they have in common in a manner and to a degree appropriate to their present divided state."

[Pope John XXIII](#), who convoked the council that brought this change of emphasis about, said that the council's aim was to seek renewal of the church itself, which would serve, for those separated from the See of Rome, as a "gentle invitation to seek and find that unity for which Jesus Christ prayed so ardently to his heavenly Father".^[24]

Some elements of the Catholic perspective on ecumenism are illustrated in the following quotations from the council's decree on ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio* of 21 November 1964, and [Pope John Paul II](#)'s encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint* of 25 May 1995.

Every renewal of the Church is essentially grounded in an increase of fidelity to her own calling. Undoubtedly this is the basis of the movement toward unity ... There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart. For it is from renewal of the inner life of our minds, from self-denial and an unstinted love that desires of unity take their rise and develop in a mature way. We should therefore pray to the Holy Spirit for the grace to be genuinely self-denying, humble. gentle in the service of others, and to have an attitude of brotherly generosity towards them. ... The words of St. John hold good about sins against unity: "If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us". So we humbly beg pardon of God and of our

separated brethren, just as we forgive them that trespass against us.^[25]

Christians cannot underestimate the burden of long-standing misgivings inherited from the past, and of mutual misunderstandings and prejudices. Complacency, indifference and insufficient knowledge of one another often make this situation worse. Consequently, the commitment to ecumenism must be based upon the conversion of hearts and upon prayer, which will also lead to the necessary purification of past memories. With the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Lord's disciples, inspired by love, by the power of the truth and by a sincere desire for mutual forgiveness and reconciliation, are called to re-examine together their painful past and the hurt which that past regrettably continues to provoke even today.^[26]

In ecumenical dialogue, Catholic theologians standing fast by the teaching of the Church and investigating the divine mysteries with the separated brethren must proceed with love for the truth, with charity, and with humility. When comparing doctrines with one another, they should remember that in Catholic doctrine there exists a "hierarchy" of truths, since they vary in their relation to the fundamental Christian faith. Thus the way will be opened by which through fraternal rivalry all will be stirred to a deeper understanding and a clearer presentation of the unfathomable riches of Christ.^[27]

The unity willed by God can be attained only by the adherence of all to the content of revealed faith in its entirety. In matters of faith, compromise is in contradiction with God who is Truth. In the Body of Christ, "the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6), who could consider legitimate a reconciliation brought about at the expense of the

truth?...Even so, doctrine needs to be presented in a way that makes it understandable to those for whom God himself intends it.^[28]

When the obstacles to perfect ecclesiastical communion have been gradually overcome, all Christians will at last, in a common celebration of the Eucharist, be gathered into the one and only Church in that unity which Christ bestowed on his Church from the beginning. We believe that this unity subsists in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose, and we hope that it will continue to increase until the end of time.^[29]

While some Eastern Orthodox churches commonly baptize converts from the Catholic Church, thereby refusing to recognize the baptism that the converts have previously received, the Catholic Church has always accepted the validity of all the sacraments administered by the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches.

The Catholic Church likewise has very seldom applied the terms "[heterodox](#)" or "[heretic](#)" to the Eastern Orthodox churches or its members, though there are clear differences in doctrine, notably about the authority of the Pope, Purgatory, and the [filioque](#) clause. More often, the term "separated" or "[schismatic](#)" has been applied to the state of the Eastern Orthodox churches.

Orthodoxy [\[edit\]](#)

The [Oriental Orthodox](#) and [Eastern Orthodox](#) churches are two distinct bodies of local churches. The churches within each body share [full communion](#), although there is not



official communion between the two bodies. Both consider themselves to be the original church, from which the [West](#) was divided in the 5th and 11th centuries, respectively (after the 3rd and 7th [Ecumenical councils](#)).

Many theologians of the Eastern and Oriental Orthodoxies engage in theological dialogue with each other and with some of the Western churches, though short of full communion. The Eastern Orthodox

have participated in the ecumenical movement, with students active in the [World Student Christian Federation](#) since the late 19th century. Most Eastern Orthodox^[30] and all Oriental Orthodox churches^[31] are members of the [World Council of Churches](#). [Kallistos of Diokleia](#), a bishop of the Eastern Orthodox Church has stated that ecumenism "is important for Orthodoxy: it has helped to force the various Orthodox Churches out of their comparative isolation, making them meet one another and enter into a living contact with non-Orthodox Christians."^[32]

Historically, the relationship between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the [Anglican Communion](#) has been congenial, with the Patriarch of Constantinople in 1922 recognising Anglican [orders](#) as valid. He wrote: "That the orthodox theologians who have scientifically examined the question have almost unanimously come to the same conclusions and have declared themselves as accepting the validity of Anglican Orders."^[33] Moreover, some Eastern Orthodox bishops have assisted in the ordination of Anglican bishops; for example, in 1870, the Most Reverend Alexander Lycurgus, the Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Syra and Tinos, was one of the bishops who consecrated [Henry](#)



The consecration of [The Rt. Rev Weller](#) as an Anglican bishop at the [Cathedral of St. Paul the Apostle](#) in the [Protestant Episcopal Diocese of Fond du Lac](#), with the Rt. Rev. Anthony Kozlowski of the [Polish National Catholic Church](#) and the [Patriarch Tikhon of Moscow](#) (along with his chaplains [Fr. John Kochurov](#), and Fr. Sebastian Dabovich) of the [Russian Orthodox Church](#) present

[MacKenzie](#) as the [Suffragan Bishop of Nottingham](#).^[34] From 1910–1911, the era before [World War I](#), [Raphael of Brooklyn](#), an Eastern Orthodox bishop, "sanctioned an interchange of ministrations with the [Episcopalians](#) in places where members of one or the other communion are without clergy of their own."^[35] Bishop Raphael stated that in places "where there is no resident Orthodox Priest", an Anglican (Episcopalian) priest could administer Marriage, Holy Baptism, and the Blessed Sacrament to an Orthodox layperson.^[36] In 1912, however, Bishop Raphael ended the intercommunion after becoming uncomfortable with the fact that the Anglican Communion contained different [churchmanships](#) within Her, e.g. High Church, Evangelical, etc.^[37] However, after World War I, the [Fellowship of Saint Alban and Saint Sergius](#) was organized in 1927, which much like the [Anglican and Eastern Churches Association](#) worked on ecumenism between the two Churches; both of these organisations continue their task today.^[38]

In accordance with the [Soviet anti-religious legislation](#) under the [state atheism](#) of the Soviet Union, several [Russian Orthodox](#) churches and seminaries were closed.^{[39][40]} With ecumenical aid from [Methodists](#) in the United States two Russian Orthodox seminaries were reopened, and hierarchs of the Orthodox Church thankfully made the following statement: "The services rendered by the American Methodists and other Christian friends will go down in history of the Orthodox Church as one of its brightest pages in that dark and trying time of the church. Our Church will never forget the Samaritan service which your whole Church unselfishly rendered us. May this be the beginning of closer friendship for our churches and nations."^[41]

Anglicanism and Protestantism [edit]



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(December 2015) ([Learn how and when to remove this template message](#))

Anglicanism [\[edit\]](#)

Main article: [Anglican Communion and ecumenism](#)

The members of the [Anglican Communion](#) have generally embraced the Ecumenical Movement, actively participating in such organizations as the [World Council of Churches](#) and the [National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA](#). Most provinces holding membership in the Anglican Communion have special departments devoted to ecumenical relations; however, the influence of [Liberal Christianity](#) has in recent years caused tension within the communion, causing some to question the direction ecumenism has taken them.

Each member church of the Anglican Communion makes its own decisions with regard to [intercommunion](#). The 1958 [Lambeth Conference](#) recommended "that where between two Churches not of the same denominational or confessional family, there is unrestricted *communio in sacris*, including mutual recognition and acceptance of ministries, the appropriate term to use is 'full communion', and that where varying degrees of relation other than 'full communion' are established by agreement between two such churches the appropriate term is '[intercommunion](#)'."

Full communion has been established between Provinces of the Anglican Communion and these Churches:

- [Old Catholic Churches](#) of Europe
- [Philippine Independent Church](#)
- [Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar](#)
- [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#)
- [Moravian Church](#) in America, Northern and Southern Provinces

Full communion has been established between the Anglican Churches of Europe ([England](#), [Wales](#), [Scotland](#), [Ireland](#), [Spain](#), [Portugal](#) and [Gibraltar in Europe](#)) and the Lutheran Churches of Northern

Europe (Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Estonia, Lithuania, Great Britain and the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad) with the [Porvoo Communion](#).

The [Episcopal Church](#) is currently engaged in dialogue with the following religious bodies:

- [Churches Uniting in Christ \(CUIC\)](#)
- [Eastern Orthodox Church](#)
- [Roman Catholic Church](#)
- [Presbyterian Church USA](#)
- [United Methodist Church](#)
- [Reformed Episcopal Church](#) and the [Anglican Province of America](#)

Worldwide, an estimated forty million Anglicans belong to churches that do not participate in the Anglican Communion^{[[citation needed](#)]}, a particular organization limited to one province per country. In these Anglican churches, there is strong opposition to the ecumenical movement and to membership in such bodies as the World and National Councils of Churches. Most of these churches are associated with the [Continuing Anglican movement](#) or the movement for [Anglican realignment](#). While ecumenicalism in general is opposed, certain Anglican church bodies that are not members of the Anglican Communion—the [Free Church of England](#) and the [Church of England in South Africa](#), for example—have fostered close and cooperative relations with other evangelical (if non-Anglican) churches, on an individual basis.

Protestantism [\[edit\]](#)

Nicolaus Ludwig, Count von [Zinzendorf](#), (1700–1760) the renewer of the [Unitas Fratrum / Moravian Church](#) in the 18th century, was the first person to use the word "ecumenical" in this sense. His pioneering efforts to unite all Christians, regardless of denominational labels, into a "Church of God in the Spirit"—notably among [German](#) immigrants in [Pennsylvania](#)—were misunderstood by his contemporaries and 200 years before the world was ready for them.

The contemporary ecumenical movement for Protestants is often said to have started with the 1910 [Edinburgh Missionary Conference](#). However this conference would not have been possible without the pioneering ecumenical work of the Christian youth movements: the [Young Men's Christian Association](#) (founded 1844), the [Young Women's Christian Association](#) (founded 1855), the [World Student Christian Federation](#) (founded 1895), and the Federal Council of Churches (founded 1908), predecessor to today's [National Council of Churches USA](#).

Led by [Methodist](#) layman [John R. Mott](#) (former YMCA staff and in 1910 the General Secretary of WSCF), the World Mission conference marked the largest Protestant gathering to that time, with the express purposes of working across denominational lines for the sake of [world missions](#). After the [First World War](#) further developments were the "Faith and Order" movement led by [Charles Henry Brent](#), and the "Life and Work" movement led by [Nathan Soderblom](#). In the 1930s, the tradition of an annual [World Communion Sunday](#) to celebrate ecumenical ties was established in the [Presbyterian Church](#) and was subsequently adopted by several other denominations.

Eventually, formal organizations were formed, including the [World Council of Churches](#) in 1948, the [National Council of Churches](#) in the United States in 1950, and [Churches Uniting in Christ](#) in 2002. These groups are moderate to liberal, theologically speaking, as Protestants are generally more liberal and less traditional than Anglicans, Orthodox, and Roman Catholics.

Protestants are now involved in a variety of ecumenical groups, working in some cases toward organic denominational unity and in other cases for cooperative purposes alone. Because of the wide spectrum of Protestant denominations and perspectives, full cooperation has been difficult at times. [Edmund Schlink's](#) *Ökumenische Dogmatik* (1983, 1997) proposes a way through these problems to mutual recognition and renewed church unity.

In 1999, the representatives of [Lutheran World Federation](#) and [Roman Catholic Church](#) signed the [Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification](#), resolving the conflict over the nature of

[Justification](#) which was at the root of the [Protestant Reformation](#), although some conservative Lutherans did not agree to this resolution. On July 18, 2006, delegates to the [World Methodist Conference](#) voted unanimously to adopt the Joint Declaration.^{[42][43]}


Contemporary developments [\[edit\]](#)

Catholic–Orthodox dialogue [\[edit\]](#)

The mutual [anathemas](#) (excommunications) of 1054, marking the [Great Schism](#) between Western (Catholic) and Eastern (Orthodox) branches of Christianity, a process spanning several centuries, were revoked in 1965 by the Pope and the [Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople](#). The Roman Catholic Church does not regard Orthodox Christians as excommunicated, since they personally have no responsibility for the separation of their churches. In fact, Catholic rules admit the Orthodox to communion and the other sacraments in situations where the individuals are in danger of death or no Orthodox churches exist to serve the needs of their faithful. However, Orthodox churches still generally regard Roman Catholics as excluded from the sacraments and some may even not regard Catholic sacraments such as baptism and ordination as valid.

In November 2006, [Pope Benedict XVI](#) traveled to Istanbul at the invitation of [Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople](#) and participated in the feast day services of St. Andrew the First Apostle, the patron saint of the Church of Constantinople. The Ecumenical Patriarch and Pope Benedict had another historic meeting in Ravenna, Italy in 2007. The [Declaration of Ravenna](#)



Ecumenical worship service at the [monastery of Taizé](#). 

marked a significant rapprochement between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox positions. The declaration recognized the bishop of Rome as the Protos, or first among equals of the Patriarchs. This acceptance and the entire agreement was hotly contested by the Russian Orthodox Church. The signing of the declaration highlighted the pre-existing tensions between the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Moscow Patriarchate. Besides their theological concerns, the Russian Orthodox have continuing concerns over the question of the [Eastern Catholic Churches](#) that operate in what they regard as Orthodox territory. This question has been exacerbated by disputes over churches and other property that the Communist authorities once assigned to the Orthodox Church but whose restoration these Churches have obtained from the present authorities.

A major obstacle to improved relations between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches has been the insertion of the Latin term [filioque](#) into the [Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed](#) in the 8th and 11th centuries.^[44] This obstacle has now been effectively resolved. The Roman Catholic Church now recognizes that the Creed, as confessed at the [First Council of Constantinople](#), did not add "and the Son", when it spoke of the Holy Spirit as proceeding from the Father. When quoting the [Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed](#), as in the 6 August 2000 document [Dominus Iesus](#), it does not include *filioque*.^[45] It views as complementary the Eastern-tradition expression "who proceeds from the Father" (profession of which it sees as affirming that he comes from the Father through the Son) and the Western-tradition expression "who proceeds from the Father and the Son", with the Eastern tradition expressing firstly the Father's character as first origin of the Spirit, and the Western tradition giving expression firstly to the consubstantial communion between Father and Son; and it believes that, provided this legitimate complementarity does not become rigid, it does not affect the identity of faith in the reality of the same mystery confessed.^[46]

Continuing dialogues at both international and national level continues between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. A particularly close relationship has grown up between Pope

Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. Both church leaders have in particular emphasized their common concern for refugees and persecuted Christians in the Middle East. The 2016 [Pan-Orthodox Council](#) that was held in Crete aroused great expectations for advances in Church unity. Unfortunately, not all Orthodox churches participated and, as a result, the Russian Patriarch refused to recognize the council as a truly ecumenical gathering. A major milestone in the growing rapprochement between the Catholic and Orthodox churches was the 12 February 2016 meeting held in Havana, Cuba between Patriarch Kirill and Pope Francis. The two church leaders issued a [Joint Declaration of Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill](#) at the conclusion of their discussions.

Issues within Protestantism [\[edit\]](#)

Contemporary developments in mainline Protestant churches have dealt a serious blow to ecumenism. The decision by the U.S. [Episcopal Church](#) to ordain [Gene Robinson](#), an openly gay, non-celibate priest who advocates same-sex blessings, as bishop led the [Russian Orthodox Church](#) to suspend its cooperation with the Episcopal Church. Likewise, when the [Church of Sweden](#) decided to bless same-sex marriages, the Russian Patriarchate severed all relations with the Church, noting that "Approving the shameful practice of same-sex marriages is a serious blow to the entire system of European spiritual and moral values influenced by Christianity."^[47]

Bishop [Hilarion Alfeyev](#) commented that the inter-Christian community is "bursting at the seams". He sees the great dividing line—or "abyss"—not so much between old churches and church families as between "traditionalists" and "liberals", the latter now dominating Protestantism, and predicted that other Northern Protestant Churches will follow suit and this means that the "ecumenical ship" will sink, for with the liberalism that is materializing in European Protestant churches, there is no longer anything to talk about.^[48]

Organizations such as the [World Council of Churches](#), the [National Council of Churches USA](#),

[Churches Uniting in Christ](#), [Pentecostal Charismatic Peace Fellowship](#) and [Christian Churches Together](#) continue to encourage ecumenical cooperation among Protestants, Eastern Orthodox, and, at times, Roman Catholics. There are universities such as the [University of Bonn](#) in Germany that offer degree courses in "Ecumenical Studies" in which theologians of various denominations teach their respective traditions and, at the same time, seek for common ground between these traditions.

The Global Christian Forum (GCF) was founded in 1998 following the proposal of the then General Secretary of the WCC, Rev. Konrad Raiser, that a new, independent space should be created where participants could meet on an equal basis to foster mutual respect and to explore and address together common concerns. The GCF brought in two advantages: historic freshness and [postmodern approach](#).^[49]

Influenced by the ecumenical movement, the "scandal of separation" and local developments, a number of [United and uniting churches](#) have formed; there are also a range of mutual recognition strategies being practiced where formal union is not feasible. An increasing trend has been the sharing of church buildings by two or more denominations, either holding separate services or a single service with elements of all traditions.

Opposition to ecumenism [\[edit\]](#)

Opposition from some Protestants [\[edit\]](#)

There are some members of the [United Methodist Church](#) who oppose ecumenical efforts which are "not grounded in the doctrines of the Church" due to concerns over theological compromise.^[50] For example, an article published in *Catalyst Online: Contemporary Evangelical Perspectives for United Methodist Seminarians* stated that false ecumenism might result in the "blurring of theological and confessional differences in the interests of unity."^[51]

The [Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod](#) (LCMS) bars its clergy from worshiping with other faiths, contending "that church fellowship or merger between church bodies in doctrinal disagreement with one another is not in keeping with what the Bible teaches about church fellowship."^[52] In keeping with this position, a Connecticut LCMS pastor was asked to apologize by the president of the denomination, and did so, for participating in an interfaith prayer vigil for the 26 children and adults [killed at a Newtown elementary school](#); and a LCMS pastor in New York was suspended for praying at an interfaith vigil in 2001, twelve days after the [September 11 attacks](#).^[53] In 2015, LCMS Synodical President Matthew Harrison excommunicated Rev. Matthew Becker, a Lutheran minister for a number of stated reasons, including ecumenism with Roman Catholics. Another conservative Lutheran body, the [American Association of Lutheran Churches](#), is strongly opposed to ecumenical (more accurately, [interfaith](#)) dialogue with non-Christian religions and with denominations it identifies as cults.

When the [Manhattan Declaration](#) was released, many prominent [Evangelical](#) figures – particularly of the [Calvinist](#) Reformed tradition – opposed it, including [John F. MacArthur](#), [D. James Kennedy](#), [Alistair Begg](#), [R. C. Sproul](#), and [Arminian](#) Protestant teacher and televangelist [John Ankerberg](#).

Opposition from some Orthodox Christians [\[edit\]](#)

See also: [Sobornost](#)

Practically, "the whole of Eastern Orthodoxy holds membership in the [World Council of Churches](#)."^[54] [Ecumenical Patriarch Germanus V of Constantinople](#)'s 1920 letter "'To all the Churches of Christ, wherever they may be', urging closer co-operation among separated Christians, and suggesting a 'League of Churches', parallel to the newly founded League of Nations" was an inspiration for the founding of the World Council of Churches; as such "Constantinople, along with several of the other Orthodox Churches, was represented at the Faith and Order Conferences at Lausanne in 1927 and at Edinburgh in 1937. The Ecumenical

Patriarchate also participated in the first Assembly of the WCC at Amsterdam in 1948, and has been a consistent supporter of the work of the WCC ever since."^[55]

However, many Orthodox Christians are vehemently opposed to ecumenism with other Christian denominations. They view ecumenism, as well as interfaith dialog, as being potentially pernicious to Orthodox Church Tradition; a "weakening" of Orthodoxy itself.^[56] In the Eastern Orthodox world, the monastic community of [Mount Athos](#), arguably the most important center of Orthodox spirituality, has voiced its concerns regarding the ecumenist movement and opposition to the participation of the Orthodox Church.^[57] They regard modern ecumenism as compromising essential doctrinal stands in order to accommodate other Christians, and object to the emphasis on dialogue leading to intercommunion rather than conversion on the part of participants in ecumenical initiatives. [Greek Old Calendarists](#) also claim that the teachings of the [Seven Ecumenical Councils](#) forbid changing the church calendar through abandonment of the [Julian calendar](#).^[citation needed] The Inter-Orthodox Theological Conference entitled "Ecumenism: Origins, Expectations, Disenchantment",^[58] organized in September 2004 by the [Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki](#) has drawn negative conclusions on ecumenism.

Ecumenical organizations ^[edit]

Councils of churches ^[edit]

- [Action of Churches Together in Scotland](#)
- [Canadian Council of Churches](#)
- [Caribbean Conference of Churches](#)

Ecumenical institutes and offices ^[edit]

- [Anglican and Eastern Churches Association](#)
- [Centro Pro Unione](#), Rome
- [Churches Uniting in Christ](#), USA


Ecumenical monastic communities and orders ^[edit]

- [Benedictine Women of Madison](#)

- Christian Churches Together in the USA
- Christian Conference of Asia
- Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
- Churches Together in England
- Communion of Churches in Indonesia
- Conference of European Churches
- Conference of Secretaries of World Christian Communions
- Council of Churches of Malaysia
- Covenant Christian Coalition
- Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa
- Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in West Africa
- Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches of Central Africa
- Ecumenical Institute at Château de Bossey [↗](#), Geneva
- Ecumenical Institute for Study and Dialogue, Sri Lanka
- Fellowship of Saint Alban and Saint Sergius
- Groupe des Dombes
- Institute for Ecumenical Research [↗](#), Strasbourg
- International Ecumenical Fellowship
- Irish School of Ecumenics, Dublin
- Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches
- North American Academy of Ecumenists
- North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation
- Porvoo Communion
- Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
- Prairie Centre for Ecumenism [↗](#)
- Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry
- Bose Monastic Community
- Iona Community
- L'Arche
- New Monasticism related Communities
- Order of Ecumenical Franciscans
- Order of Saint Lazarus
- Priory of St. Wigbert
- Society of Ordained Scientists
- Taizé Community
- Holy Love Ministry, North Ridgeville, Ohio

Interdenominational ministries [\[edit\]](#)

- American Bible Society
- Church World Service
- Cru. formerly

- Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa
- Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches
- Hong Kong Christian Council
- Latin American Council of Churches
- Middle East Council of Churches
- Myanmar Council of Churches
- National Christian Council in Japan
- National Council of Churches in Bangladesh
- National Council of Churches in Korea
- National Council of Churches in the Philippines
- National Council of Churches of Nepal
- National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.
- Pacific Conference of Churches
- Tantur Ecumenical Institute, Jerusalem
- Ukrainian Catholic University Institute of Ecumenical Studies 
- Washington Theological Consortium
- World Council of Churches, Geneva
- "Campus Crusade for Christ"
- Girls' Brigade
- Pentecostal Charismatic Peace Fellowship
- People of Praise
- Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center
- Student Christian Movement (Britain)
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- World Communion Sunday
- World Student Christian Federation
- Boys' Brigade

- [World Council of Churches](#)

Ecumenical symbols [\[edit\]](#)

Ecumenical symbol [\[edit\]](#)

The ecumenical symbol pre-dates the [World Council of Churches](#) (WCC), formed in 1948, but is incorporated into the official logo of the WCC and many other ecumenical organizations.

The church is portrayed as a boat afloat on the sea of the world with the mast in the form of a cross. These early Christian symbols of the church embody faith and unity and carry the message of the ecumenical movement.... The symbol of the boat has its origins in the gospel story of the calling of the disciples by Jesus and the stilling of the storm on Lake Galilee.^[59]

Christian flag [\[edit\]](#)


Main article: [Christian Flag](#)

Though originating in the Wesleyan tradition, and most popular among mainline and evangelical Protestant churches, the "Christian Flag" stands for no creed or denomination, but for Christianity. With regard to the [Christian symbolism](#) of the flag:

The ground is white, representing peace, purity and innocence. In the upper corner



is a blue square, the color of the unclouded sky, emblematic of heaven, the home of the Christian; also a symbol of faith and trust. In the center of the blue is the cross, the ensign and chosen symbol of Christianity: the cross is red, typical of Christ's blood.^[60]

The Christian flag 

An ecumenical Christian organization, the [Federal Council of Churches](#) (now succeeded by the [National Council of Churches](#) and [Christian Churches Together](#)), adopted the flag on 23 January 1942.^[61]

See also [[edit](#)]

- [Inclusivism](#)
- [Invisible church](#)
- [One true church](#)
- [One true faith](#)
- [Religious pluralism](#)



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35. [^] Herbermann, Charles (1912). *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church*. Robert Appleton. p. 149. "This A.E.O.C.U. is particularly active in the United States, where the existence side by side of Westerns and Easterns offers special facilities for mutual intercourse. It is due mainly to its instances that the orthodox Bishop Raphael of Brooklyn recently sanctioned an interchange of ministrations with the Episcopalians in places where members of one or the other communion are without clergy of their own—a practice which, as coming from the Orthodox side, seemed strange, but was presumably justified by the "principle of economy" which some Orthodox theologians unaccountably advocate (see Reunion Magazine, Sept., 1910)."

36. [^] [Journal of the Proceedings of the One Hundred and Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church](#). The Rumford Press. 1910. p. 411. Retrieved 15 April 2014. "Inasmuch as there is a variance between your and our Churches in these matters, I suggest that, before any marriage Service is performed for Syrians desiring the services of the Protestant Episcopal Clergy, where there is no Orthodox Priest, that the Syrians shall first procure a license from me, their Bishop, giving them permission, and that, where there is a resident Orthodox Priest, that, the Episcopal Clergy may advise them to have such Service performed by him. Again, in the case of Holy Baptism, that, where there is no resident Orthodox Priest, that the Orthodox law in reference to the administration of the Sacrament be observed, namely immersion three times, with the advice to the parents and witnesses that, as soon as possible, the child shall be taken to an Orthodox Priest to receive Chrismation, which is *absolutely binding* according to the Law of the Orthodox Church. Furthermore, when an Orthodox Layman is dying, if he confesses his sins, and professes that he is dying in the full communion of the Orthodox Faith, as expressed in the Orthodox version of the Nicene Creed, and the other requirements of the said Church, and desires the Blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, at the hands of an Episcopal Clergyman, permission is hereby given to administer to him this Blessed Sacrament, and to be buried according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Episcopal Church. But, it is recommended that, if an Orthodox Service Book can be procured, that the Sacraments and Rites be performed as set forth in that Book. And now I pray God that He may hasten the time when the Spiritual Heads of the National Churches, of both yours and ours, may take our places in cementing the Union between the Anglican and Orthodox Churches, which we have so humbly begun; then there will be no need of suggestions, such as I have made, as to how, or by whom, Services shall be performed; and, instead of praying that we "all may be one" we shall know that we are one in Christ's Love and Faith. RAPHAEL, *Bishop of Brooklyn*."

37. [^] Herbermann, Charles (1912). *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church*. Robert Appleton. p. 149. "This A.E.O.C.U. is particularly active in the United States, where the existence side by side of Westerns and Easterns offers special facilities for mutual intercourse. It is due mainly to its instances that the orthodox Bishop Raphael of Brooklyn recently sanctioned an interchange of ministrations with the Episcopalians in places where members of one or the other communion are without clergy of their own—a practice which, as coming from the Orthodox side, seemed strange, but was presumably justified by the "principle of economy" which some Orthodox theologians unaccountably advocate (see Reunion Magazine, Sept., 1910), The concordat did not, however last very long' Bishop Raphael seems not to have understood, at first, the motley character of the Episcopalian communion, but having come to realize it, quickly revoked his concession (Russian Orthodox American Messenger, 28 Feb., 1912)."
38. [^] *Church Quarterly Review*. London: [Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge](#). January–March 1964. "In 1927, the "Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius" was founded, becoming, like the "Anglican and Eastern Church Association", one of the chief focal points of these contacts."
39. [^] Greeley, Andrew M. *Religion in Europe at the End of the Second Millennium: A Sociological Profile*. Transaction Publishers. p. 89. [ISBN 978-1-4128-3298-4](#). "Seminaries were closed, churches turned into museums or centers for atheist propaganda, the clergy rigidly controlled, the bishops appointed by the state."
40. [^] Gerhard Simon (1974). *Church, State, and Opposition in the U.S.S.R.* [University of California Press](#). "On the other hand the Communist Party has never made any secret of the fact, either before or after 1917, that it regards 'militant atheism' as an integral part of its ideology and will regard 'religion as by no means a private matter'. It therefore uses 'the means of ideological influence to educate people in the spirit of scientific materialism and to overcome religious prejudices..' Thus it is the goal of the C.P.S.U. and thereby also of the Soviet state, for which it is after all the 'guiding cell', gradually to liquidate the religious communities."

41. ^ Rev. Thomas Hoffmann; William Alex Pridemore. "Esau's Birthright and Jacob's Pottage: A Brief Look at Orthodox-Methodist Ecumenism in Twentieth-Century Russia"  (PDF). Demokratizatsiya. Archived from [the original](#)  (PDF) on 29 September 2011. Retrieved 19 October 2009. "The Methodists continued their ecumenical commitments, now with the OC. This involved a continuance of financial assistance from European and American resources, enough to reopen two OC seminaries in Russia (where all had been previously closed). OC leaders wrote in two unsolicited statements: The services rendered... by the American Methodists and other Christian friends will go down in history of the Orthodox Church as one of its brightest pages in that dark and trying time of the church.... Our Church will never forget the Samaritan service which... your whole Church unselfishly rendered us. May this be the beginning of closer friendship for our churches and nations. (as quoted in Malone 1995, 50-51)"
42. ^ "News Archives" . UMC.org. July 20, 2006. Retrieved 10 October 2013.
43. ^ "CNS STORY: Methodists adopt Catholic-Lutheran declaration on justification" . Catholicnews.com. July 24, 2006. Archived from [the original](#)  on July 25, 2006. Retrieved 10 October 2013.
44. ^ "Catechism of the Catholic Church, 247" . Vatican.va. Retrieved 2013-04-25.
45. ^ "Dominus Iesus" . Vatican.va. Archived from [the original](#)  on 2013-04-11. Retrieved 2013-04-25.
46. ^ "Article 1 of the Treaty of Brest" . Ewtn.com. Retrieved 2013-04-25.
47. ^ Russian Orthodox Church condemns Lutheran gay weddings  *Pravda*, 30 December 2005. Accessed 24 March 2009.
48. ^ Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev: Will the Ecumenical Ship Sink?  The Official Website of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. Accessed 24 March 2009.
49. ^ Domenic Marbaniang, "Unity in the Body", *Journal of Contemporary Christian*, Vol.3, No.1 ISSN 2231-5233  (Bangalore: CFCC, August 2011), p.36
50. ^ William J. Abraham (2012). "United Methodist Evangelicals and Ecumenism"  (PDF). Southern Methodist University. Retrieved 11 November 2012.

51. ^ [Randall Balmer \(1998\). "The Future of American Protestantism"](#) . Catalyst Online: Contemporary Evangelical Perspectives for United Methodist Seminarians. Archived from [the original](#)  on April 15, 2012. Retrieved 11 November 2012.
52. ^ ["A Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod"](#)  (PDF). Concordia Publishing House. 2009. Retrieved 7 February 2013.
53. ^ ["Pastor apologizes for role in prayer vigil after Connecticut massacre"](#) . Reuters. 2013. Archived from [the original](#)  on February 8, 2013. Retrieved 7 February 2013.
54. ^ Fey, Harold C. (1 December 2009). *A History of the Ecumenical Movement, Volume 2: 1948–1968*. Wipf and Stock Publishers. p. 304. ISBN 978-1-60608-910-1. "With the exception of the Orthodox Church of Albania the whole of Eastern Orthodoxy holds membership in the World Council of Churches."
55. ^ Ware, Kallistos (29 April 1993). *The Orthodox Church*. Penguin Adult. p. 322. ISBN 978-0-14-014656-1. "From the beginning of the twentieth century the Ecumenical Patriarchate has shown a special concern for Christian reconciliation. At his accession in 1902, Patriarch Joachim III sent an encyclical letter to all the autocephalous Orthodox Churches, asking in particular for their opinion on relations with other Christian bodies. In January 1920 the Ecumenical Patriarchate followed this up with a bold and prophetic letter addressed 'To all the Churches of Christ, wherever they may be', urging closer co-operation among separated Christians, and suggesting a 'League of Churches', parallel to the newly founded League of Nations. Many of the ideas in this letter anticipate subsequent developments in the WCC. Constantinople, along with several of the other Orthodox Churches, was represented at the Faith and Order Conferences at Lausanne in 1927 and at Edinburgh in 1937. The Ecumenical Patriarchate also participated in the first Assembly of the WCC at Amsterdam in 1948, and has been a consistent supporter of the work of the WCC ever since."
56. ^ Patrick Barnes. ["Ecumenism Awareness Introduction"](#) . Orthodox Christian Information Center. Retrieved 2008-12-30.
57. ^ The Theological Committee of the Sacred Community of Mount Athos (2007-02-18). ["Memorandum on the Participation of the Orthodox Church in the World Council of Churches"](#) . orthodoxinfo.com. Retrieved 2008-11-01.

58. ^ "Conclusions of the Inter-Orthodox Theological Conference "Ecumenism: Origins Expectations Disenchantment" "[🔗](#). orthodox.info. Retrieved 2008-11-03.
59. ^ "The Ecumenical Symbol" [🔗](#). *World Council of Churches*.
60. ^ "Christian Flag". *The Christian Advocate*. New York: T. Carlton & J. Porter. **84**. 7 January 1909. "Within recent years (1897) a flag has been designed which shall stand as an emblem around which all Christian nations and various denominations may rally in allegiance and devotion. This banner is called the Christian flag. It was originated by Charles C. Overton of Brooklyn, N.Y., whose first thought of it came to him while addressing a Sunday school at a rally day service. The flag is most symbolic. The ground is white, representing peace, purity and innocence. In the upper corner is a blue square, the color of the unclouded sky, emblematic of heave, the home of the Christian; also a symbol of faith and trust. in the center of the blue is the cross, the ensign and chosen symbol of Christianity: the cross is red, typical of Christ's blood. The use of the national flag in Christian churches has become almost universal throughout the world."
61. ^ "Resolution". *Federal Council Bulletin*. Religious Publicity Service of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. 25-27. 1942.

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