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### Christianity The Main Branches of

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These owe their existence to three crises in Christianity;

- . the splintering of eastern catholic Christendom in the 5th century
- the 'Great Schism' between the West (catholic) and the East ( orthodox) circa 1054
- emergence of Protestantism. • the Reformation in the 16th century, which led to the

## Eastern Churches

Middle East Asia-Pacific

Europe

This refers to the orthodox churches and those sharing the spiritual and cultural ethos which derives from the Byzantine Empire.

There are over 214 million Orthodox Christians today.

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positions of honour and authority: Alexandria, Antioch, There are four ancient patriarchates, which have special Jerusalem and Constantinople.

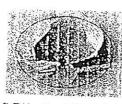
countries and the eastern Mediterranean. The churches extend across Eastern Europe, Slav

Holy Spirit came from the Son of God as well as God. conflict over the Pope's claim to supreme authority and a clause added to the church's creed which said that the The split with the western church came about because of

Veneration of icons is an important part of public and

monastic centre since the 10th century. Monastries have played an Important part in the history of the church. Mount Athos in Greece has been the chief





# The Roman Catholic Church

billion members. It is the largest of the Christian denominations, with approaching a

Its origins are from the Western church of the Middle Ages.

and the successor of St Peter (one of Jesus' disciples and the first It believes in the primacy and authority of the Bishop of Rome (the Pope), who is traditionally regarded as Christ's representative on earth Bishop of Rome)

regarded as infallible and binding on all Catholics. When defining matters of faith or morals what the Pope says is

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more open relationship with non-catholic churches The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) Introduced wide reforms and a

sacraments: baptism, confirmation, marriage, ordination, penance (sacrament of reconciliation), extreme unction (anointing the sick) Both the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches recognise the 7 and the Mass.

## Protestant Churches

They rose out of protest against Roman Catholicism in the 16th

There are approx. 500 million members.

The contentious issues at the Reformation were the authority of the Pope, the authority and accessibility of Scripbure and precise meaning of the eucharist (the ritual of sharing bread and wine to represent Christ's body and blood, as he did with his disciples the night before his death).



The church rejects the supremacy of the Pope.

traditions of the early church Emphasis is placed on the authority of the Bible and the

A believer is saved by the grace of God

The priesthood of all believers

Anglican/Episcopal, Lutheran, Reformed/Presbyterian and the Free Churches. There are four main strands within the Protestant churches:

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