

KNOW YOUR FAITH XIV
The Family Tree (A very brief review)

In the First Century, C.E. Jews and Christians were suspect because they only believe(d) in One God, while the cultures of the Roman World and elsewhere believed in many gods. The People of the Way were often the scapegoat and object of persecution for 250 years or so until Emperor Constantine, with the Edict of Milan or Edict of Toleration, made Christianity the official religion of the state in 313 C.E.

This led to the Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E. and our Nicene Creed in an attempt to create a united empire. The empire and Christianity began to fuse into one.

The first break with the church came in 1054 C.E. with the Eastern Church or Orthodox Church separating themselves. This is called the Great Schism. Despite various religious orders within the church, after 1054 there were two major bodies.

The Reformation of 1517 created two more bodies with concentric circles emanating from Northern German (Luther) and from Switzerland (Calvin.) In the middle of the 16th Century, the Church of England came about (Henry VIII) and spread with the British Empire (Anglicans/Episcopalians.)

Later in the 16th Century, the Anabaptist Movement (Adult Baptism) grew and in the 18th Century there was the rise of Methodism (John Wesley) both in England and America. The frontier religions of America were Baptists in the south and Methodists in the north with Episcopalians on the east coast. Roman Catholics were considered suspect but came to America with certain ethnic groups and settled in pockets.

By the late 19th Century and early 20th Century all major groups have had split-offs so that today there are thousands of different religious groups that call themselves Christian. Mormons, Christian Scientists and Seventh Day Adventists are an American phenomena and not a part of the Christian family tree.