

# Church History

Scholars estimate there are over 2600 groups today who lay claim to being the Church, or at least the direct descendants of the Church described in the New Testament. Repeat: 2600!

But for the first thousand years of her history the Church was essentially one. Five historic Patriarchal centers--Jerusalem; Antioch, Rome, Alexandria, and Constantinople--formed a cohesive whole and were in full communion with each other. There were occasional heretical or schismatic groups going their own way, to be sure; but the Church was unified until the 11th century. Then, in events culminating in A.D.1054, the Roman Patriarch pulled away from the other four, pursuing his long-developing claim of universal headship of the Church.

Today, nearly a thousand years later, the other four Patriarchates remain intact, in full communion, maintaining that Orthodox apostolic faith of the inspired New Testament record. The Orthodox Church and her history is described herein, from Pentecost to the present day.

