

# THE MODERN CHRISTIAN FAMILY TREE

*What Exists Today and Where Did It Come From?*

## The Genealogy of Christian Division

*A Historical and Biblical Study of Schism, Reformation, and the Making of Modern Christianity*

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## Abstract

Christianity today is often presented as a bewildering collection of denominations whose relationships are obscured by shared names, overlapping doctrines, disputed succession claims, mergers, missionary transplantation, revival networks, and independent ministries. This chapter reconstructs the modern Christian family tree as a historical genealogy rather than a catalogue. Drawing on conciliar records, confessions, denominational histories, official contemporary sources, and specialist scholarship, it distinguishes direct institutional descent from schism, reform, renewal, restoration, merger, influence, parallel development, and new religious formation. The synthesis begins with the apostolic root and the emergence of ancient communions, then traces the East Syriac, Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Eastern Catholic families; the Lutheran, Reformed, Presbyterian, Anglican, Anabaptist, Congregational, Baptist and Quaker trajectories; Wesleyan, Holiness, restorationist, Adventist, Pentecostal, charismatic and independent-network developments; and Christian-derived movements whose additional scriptures, non-Nicene doctrines, or alternative authority structures require separate classification. Particular attention is given to Africa and other regions where imported, indigenous, revivalist and transnational streams have recombined in ways that resist a simple European tree. The chapter argues that institutional ancestry and doctrinal continuity are related but never identical: ancient pedigree does not prove apostolic fidelity, while recent origin does not by itself prove error. A *Sola Scriptura* assessment therefore uses the historical tree to clarify, rather than predetermine, theological judgment. The result is a layered master genealogy showing not only where contemporary Christian bodies came from, but also why religious family trees must represent multiple kinds of relationship if they are to remain historically defensible and biblically useful.

**Keywords:** *Christian genealogy; denominations; ancient communions; Protestantism; restorationism; Pentecostalism; independent churches; Christian-derived religions*

## 1. Introduction: Seeing the Whole Tree After Walking the Historical Road

The preceding historical chapters followed Christian development in sequence: from the apostolic communities of the first century, through post-apostolic institutionalization and imperial Christianity, into the early Christological divisions, the estrangement of Latin West and Greek East, medieval Latin consolidation, the Protestant Reformation, post-Reformation multiplication, nineteenth-century restorationism, twentieth-century Pentecostal and charismatic expansion, African Christian agency, and finally the Rwandan case study. That chronological method was necessary because a family tree is unintelligible unless the reader knows what existed before each branch appeared. The present chapter now reverses the camera angle. Instead of moving from century to century, it stands at the contemporary end of the story and reconstructs the visible genealogical relationships among the principal Christian communions, denominational families, movements, networks, and Christian-derived religions that exist today.

This task is harder than drawing one trunk with steadily multiplying branches. Christian history contains true schisms, but it also contains reforms inside existing churches, missionary transplantations, ecclesial reunions, mergers, parallel revivals, cross-denominational movements, charismatic networks and new religious formations. Some contemporary bodies possess a reasonably continuous institutional lineage stretching back many centuries. Others are confessional families held together more by shared texts and theology than by one worldwide juridical structure. Still others are voluntary associations, loose fellowships or personality-centered networks with no stable succession at all. A single congregation may be institutionally Anglican, spiritually evangelical, liturgically charismatic, theologically Reformed, influenced by Pentecostal worship and connected digitally to transnational ministries. A two-dimensional tree can therefore illuminate history only if its symbols distinguish different kinds of relationship.

Taxonomy also carries theological risk. To place two movements near one another historically is not to declare them doctrinally equivalent. Seventh-day Adventism, for example, emerged from the Millerite and restorationist environment but today officially confesses the Trinity and identifies Scripture as supreme authority, whereas the Latter-day Saint movement emerged in a partly similar nineteenth-century restorationist atmosphere but developed additional scriptures, a restoration of priesthood claims and a doctrine of the Godhead explicitly different from historic Nicene Christianity (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, n.d.; The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2023). Likewise, Oneness Pentecostalism is genealogically Pentecostal, yet its doctrine of God differs fundamentally from Trinitarian Pentecostalism. Historical proximity must not erase doctrinal boundaries.

The converse error is equally serious. Doctrinal similarity does not necessarily prove direct descent. Modern believer-baptist churches may resemble sixteenth-century Anabaptists at several points without being lineal descendants of them. Contemporary independent charismatic ministries may reproduce features found in older Pentecostalism without belonging institutionally to classical Pentecostal denominations. African Instituted Churches may preserve elements inherited from Anglican, Methodist, Reformed, Catholic or Pentecostal missions while also being genuinely indigenous ecclesial formations created through African agency. Genealogy therefore asks a narrower question than theology: what historical relationship can actually be demonstrated?

The governing thesis of this chapter is that the modern Christian landscape becomes intelligible when four distinctions are consistently maintained. Institutional continuity must be distinguished from doctrinal continuity. Direct descent must be distinguished from influence. Renewal must be distinguished from schism. Christian self-identification must be distinguished from the historical and theological boundaries of classical Nicene Christianity. These distinctions permit the family tree to remain descriptive before it becomes evaluative. They also prepare the final chapter, where the historical tree will be tested more fully against the apostolic doctrinal baseline.

## 2. Sources, Method, and the Limits of a Christian Family Tree

A synthesis of this scale necessarily combines different kinds of evidence. Ancient genealogy depends on conciliar records, episcopal correspondence, creeds, liturgical traditions, historical chronicles and specialist studies of late antiquity and the medieval churches. The Church of the East requires attention to the East Syriac world beyond the Roman Empire rather than a narrative written only from Constantinople or Rome (Baum & Winkler, 2003). The Oriental Orthodox family must be described through its own miaphysite self-understanding rather than the historically polemical shorthand "Monophysite." Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism must be situated within the long estrangement of Greek East and Latin West rather than treated as if two fully formed modern denominations simply separated on one day in 1054 (Chadwick, 2003).

The Reformation and post-Reformation branches are reconstructed through confessions, church orders, reformers' writings and modern scholarship. Here the word Protestant covers a real historical family but not one homogeneous church. Lutheranism, the Reformed tradition, Anglicanism and the Radical Reformation emerged through different mixtures of theological protest, political protection, local reform and institutional separation. Their later descendants inherited those differences unevenly.

McGrath (2012) is particularly useful for understanding the doctrinal differentiation of the magisterial reformations, while Williams (1995) remains foundational for the far more diverse Radical Reformation.

Modern genealogy adds another methodological problem: current church bodies count themselves differently. Roman Catholic statistics count baptized Catholics; the Lutheran World Federation reports people represented by member churches; the Baptist World Alliance reports baptized believers; the World Assemblies of God Fellowship reports adherents; the United Pentecostal Church International reports constituents; Jehovah's Witnesses distinguish active publishers from memorial attendance; and some charismatic networks have no membership rolls comparable to denominations. Contemporary figures are therefore used only as indicators of scale and geographic presence. They are not treated as directly comparable measures of religious commitment.

The chapter also uses official self-descriptions to establish what living traditions say about themselves. This is especially important where doctrinal classification is contested. The Seventh-day Adventist Church officially confesses one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and describes the Bible as its only creed (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, n.d.). The Latter-day Saint Church officially teaches that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are three separate beings united in purpose, and that the Father and Son possess tangible glorified bodies (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2023). Jehovah's Witnesses explicitly reject the Trinity, teach that Jesus is not Almighty God, and identify the prehuman Christ with Michael the archangel (Jehovah's Witnesses, 2010, 2025a). Christian Science identifies the Bible and Mary Baker Eddy's *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* as its primary theological texts and interprets salvation, healing and matter within its own metaphysical framework (Christian Science, n.d.-a, n.d.-b). These are not hostile characterizations imposed by opponents; they are documented self-descriptions that permit a fair historical taxonomy before biblical evaluation.

No genealogy can include every local schism, national church, independent congregation or extinct movement without becoming unreadable. The master charts therefore operate at the level of major families and historically consequential branches. They indicate representative descendants rather than claiming exhaustive enumeration. The World Council of Churches uses a comparable family-level method and explicitly notes that such presentation need not prejudice the ecclesiological question (World Council of Churches, n.d.-c). This chapter adopts the same descriptive caution while adding a distinct Sola Scriptura theological assessment at the end.

**Table 1. Vocabulary for reading the genealogy**

| Term               | Historical meaning in this chapter                                                                                                  | What it does not automatically mean                                                    |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Branch             | A body or family that emerges from an identifiable earlier ecclesial stream and develops durable continuity.                        | That the branch is doctrinally identical with its parent.                              |
| Schism             | A rupture of communion producing distinct institutional bodies, often while substantial doctrine remains shared.                    | That one side alone caused the rupture, or that all doctrinal questions are secondary. |
| Reform             | Deliberate correction of doctrine, worship, discipline or government within or against an inherited church.                         | That reform necessarily requires institutional separation.                             |
| Renewal or revival | Intensification of conversion, holiness, prayer, mission or spiritual experience that can cross existing denominational boundaries. | A new denomination or a complete doctrinal system.                                     |
| Restoration        | A movement claiming that apostolic Christianity or a lost biblical pattern must be recovered after serious corruption.              | That the claimed restoration is historically or biblically demonstrated.               |
| Merger or union    | Two or more existing ecclesial bodies forming a new united institution.                                                             | Direct descent from only one parent.                                                   |
| Communion          | Churches joined by sacramental, confessional or ecclesial bonds while often retaining regional self-government.                     | A single centralized denomination.                                                     |
| Denomination       | A named, organized Christian body with relatively stable structures, doctrine and membership.                                       | The only valid organizational form of Christianity.                                    |
| Movement           | A translocal religious current defined by convictions, practices or mission more than by one constitution.                          | A single institution with centralized control.                                         |

| Term                       | Historical meaning in this chapter                                                                                                                                                                                     | What it does not automatically mean                                                             |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Network                    | Relational organization linking leaders, ministries and congregations through voluntary association, media, conferences or apostolic-prophetic claims.                                                                 | Stable denominational succession or uniform doctrine.                                           |
| New religious movement     | A comparatively recent religious formation developing from, alongside or in reaction to an older religious environment.                                                                                                | A pejorative judgment by itself; the theological classification must be separately argued.      |
| Christian-derived religion | A movement whose historical origin and vocabulary are substantially Christian but whose authoritative texts or doctrines of God, Christ, revelation or salvation depart materially from classical Nicene Christianity. | A claim about the sincerity of adherents or a denial that the movement uses Christian language. |

The practical consequence is that the lines in the charts are typed rather than merely drawn. A solid line represents demonstrable institutional descent or schism. A dashed line represents strong influence without direct succession. A double line indicates merger or communion. A dotted line indicates restorationist appropriation of earlier Christian patterns rather than organic institutional descent. This visual grammar prevents the most common error in popular denominational charts: turning every similarity into ancestry.

Biblical references in the theological assessment use the Christian Standard Bible (CSB), and Scripture citations are hyperlinked to BibleGateway's CSB text. Historical genealogy is kept descriptive before the later biblical evaluation so that theological conclusions do not predetermine the reconstruction of institutional descent, influence, reunion, or new religious formation.

### 3. The Root and the Earliest Trunk: Apostolic Christianity to Conciliar Christianity

Every modern Christian family claims some relationship to the apostolic church, but not all claims are of the same kind. Ancient communions usually appeal to continuous ministry, sacramental life, episcopal succession and conciliar tradition. Protestant churches commonly appeal to doctrinal continuity through the apostolic Scriptures and the recovery of the gospel. Restorationist movements often claim that accumulated ecclesiastical corruption required a return to New Testament Christianity. Pentecostal and charismatic movements frequently appeal to the gifts, mission and Spirit-empowered life described in Acts and 1 Corinthians. The historical root is common; the theories of continuity differ.

The first century itself does not provide a denominational name from which later institutions can simply be read backward. The churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome and other centers were connected by apostolic mission, shared confession, baptism, the Lord's Supper, discipline, charity and translocal communication, yet they did not constitute a medieval papal monarchy, an Eastern Orthodox autocephalous system, a Protestant confessional federation or a Pentecostal denomination. The proper root label is therefore "apostolic Christianity," not the retrospective name of any later communion.

Between the second and fourth centuries, those communities developed stronger episcopal structures, rules of faith, regional synods, canonical consensus and increasingly formal sacramental and disciplinary systems. This development produced what historians can reasonably call catholic Christianity in the early sense of a universal, interconnected church, while still avoiding the anachronism of equating second-century catholicity with every later doctrine of Roman Catholicism (Pelikan, 1971). After imperial legalization and the ecumenical councils, conciliar Christianity acquired another layer of structure. Nicaea in 325 and Constantinople in 381 supplied the doctrinal grammar by which the mainstream church confessed the full deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Ephesus in 431 and Chalcedon in 451 then exposed disagreements over Christological language and ecclesiastical authority that produced enduring institutional fractures.

The first major lesson for the modern family tree is therefore chronological. The Church of the East and the Oriental Orthodox traditions are not products of the 1054 East-West Schism and certainly not descendants of medieval Roman Catholicism. Their trajectories became institutionally distinct centuries earlier. The second lesson is that the East-West rupture itself cannot be reduced to one date. By the eleventh century, Latin and Greek Christianity had accumulated disputes concerning papal claims, the *Filioque*, liturgical practice, political rivalry and competing imperial worlds; the excommunications of 1054 were a milestone within that longer estrangement, which the Fourth Crusade of 1204 deepened dramatically (Chadwick, 2003). The resulting ancient tree has several durable trunks before the Reformation ever begins.

**Exhibit 1. Before, change, result: the ancient Christian trunk**

| Before                                                                                                                     | Change                                                                                                                                                             | Result                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| First-century apostolic communities linked by the gospel, apostolic teaching, mission, ordinances and recognized ministry. | Post-apostolic episcopal consolidation, canon recognition, creedal clarification and conciliar structures, followed by Christological and jurisdictional disputes. | Multiple ancient communions claiming continuity with the early church through different lines of institutional and doctrinal inheritance.                           |
| Imperial conciliar Christianity after Nicaea and Constantinople.                                                           | Ephesus (431), Chalcedon (451), later reception conflicts and the independent East Syriac trajectory beyond Roman imperial control.                                | Church of the East and Oriental Orthodox families become distinct from the Chalcedonian imperial church.                                                            |
| Chalcedonian Christianity across Greek East and Latin West.                                                                | Centuries of linguistic, political, liturgical and jurisdictional estrangement, conventionally marked by 1054 and intensified by 1204.                             | Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic trajectories become enduringly distinct, while later reunion movements create Eastern Catholic churches in communion with Rome. |

## 4. The Ancient Communions

### 4.1 The Church of the East: an East Syriac trajectory beyond the Roman imperial frame

The Church of the East belongs near the earliest major branching point in the family tree, but the familiar label "Nestorian Church" is historically inadequate. Christianity developed east of the Roman frontier in Mesopotamia and the Sasanian Persian Empire, where its communities faced a political environment different from that of Antioch, Alexandria or Constantinople. Seleucia-Ctesiphon emerged as a principal ecclesiastical center, and the Persian church developed its own synodical and catholic structures. Its later reception of Antiochene Christological traditions associated with Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius contributed to estrangement from the churches aligned with Ephesus, yet the Church of the East cannot be reduced to a personal cult of Nestorius or treated as if it were created at Ephesus in 431 (Baum & Winkler, 2003).

This East Syriac family became one of the most geographically expansive Christian traditions of the medieval world. Its missionaries traveled through Central Asia and reached China, while East Syriac ecclesiastical connections also shaped Indian Christianity. Political upheaval, persecution and demographic collapse later reduced this vast network, but modern descendants survive. The Assyrian Church of the East is the principal direct continuation, while the Ancient Church of the East emerged from a twentieth-century internal division. The Chaldean Catholic Church represents a different genealogical relationship: it arose from East Syriac communities that entered communion with Rome through complex sixteenth-century and later union processes. It is therefore simultaneously East Syriac in liturgical-historical ancestry and Catholic in present communion.

The World Council of Churches describes the Assyrian Church of the East as an ancient East Syriac church rooted in the Persian sphere and explicitly cautions against inaccurate naming (World Council of Churches, n.d.-b). Modern Christological dialogues have also shown that older polemical labels often exaggerated differences by translating distinct Syriac and Greek terminologies as if they were exact equivalents. Genealogically, the Church of the East is best shown as an ancient eastern branch parallel to, not derived from, later Eastern Orthodoxy or Roman Catholicism.

### 4.2 Oriental Orthodoxy: the non-Chalcedonian family

The Oriental Orthodox churches trace their enduring separation to the reception crisis following Chalcedon in 451. Their historic centers include Egypt, Syria, Armenia and, through the Alexandrian relationship, Ethiopia; later the family also includes the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church in India. These churches accept the first three ecumenical councils and reject the Chalcedonian settlement as historically received in their traditions. They should be described as miaphysite in their own Christological vocabulary rather than indiscriminately as Monophysite, a label they reject because it suggests absorption of Christ's humanity into divinity (World Council of Churches, n.d.-h).

The genealogy within this family is itself layered. The Coptic Orthodox Church preserves the Alexandrian Egyptian trajectory. The Syriac Orthodox Church developed within the West Syriac world. Armenian Christianity possessed an older national ecclesial history but ultimately belonged to the non-Chalcedonian communion. Ethiopian Christianity had fourth-century roots through Aksum and Alexandria, long before European missions, and later gave rise institutionally to the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church as an autocephalous body. The Malankara tradition in India reflects interaction between older Saint Thomas Christian history and West Syriac ecclesiastical connections. These are sister churches within an ancient communion family, not denominations founded by a single post-Reformation organizer.

Modern theological dialogues between Oriental Orthodox and Chalcedonian churches have found substantial agreement concerning the confession that the one Lord Jesus Christ is fully divine and fully human, even while questions of conciliar reception and ecclesial communion remain. This does not erase the historical schism, but it demonstrates why genealogy must not reproduce polemical caricatures as if they were neutral descriptions.

### 4.3 Eastern Orthodoxy: the Chalcedonian East after estrangement from Rome

Eastern Orthodoxy represents the Greek and other eastern Chalcedonian churches that remained in communion through a network of autocephalous and autonomous churches after the durable estrangement from the Latin West. The ancient patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem coexist with later autocephalous churches such as those of Russia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Cyprus, Greece, Poland, Albania and the Czech Lands and Slovakia, together with autonomous bodies and disputed questions of recognition in some regions. The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople is traditionally accorded primacy of honor as first among equals, but Eastern Orthodoxy does not possess a papal office of universal ordinary jurisdiction comparable to Roman Catholic claims (World Council of Churches, n.d.-g).

The family is held together by a shared sacramental and liturgical inheritance, episcopal succession, the seven ecumenical councils recognized in Eastern Orthodoxy, and a conciliar understanding of ecclesial order. National or regional autocephaly should not be mistaken for Protestant denominationalism. An autocephalous Orthodox church is understood as a fully churchly local or regional expression in sacramental communion with the others, not as a voluntary doctrinal association formed around a distinctive confessional platform.

The modern Orthodox landscape nonetheless includes real jurisdictional tensions, competing claims over autocephaly, overlapping diasporic jurisdictions and geopolitical pressures. A family tree can show common ancestry and communion without implying administrative uniformity. It also must distinguish Eastern Orthodoxy from Oriental Orthodoxy, whose names sound similar in English but whose separation predates the East-West Schism by centuries.

### 4.4 Roman Catholicism and the Eastern Catholic churches

Roman Catholicism developed from the Latin Western church that remained centered on communion with the bishop of Rome after the estrangement with Constantinople. Its medieval genealogy includes the consolidation of papal monarchy, canon law, the scholastic and sacramental synthesis, mendicant and monastic orders, and the Western doctrinal definitions that became objects of Reformation controversy. The Council of Trent then clarified Catholic doctrine and discipline in response to Protestant challenges, while the First and Second Vatican Councils further shaped modern Roman Catholic ecclesiology.

The Catholic communion is not exclusively Latin. It includes the Latin Church and multiple Eastern Catholic Churches *sui iuris* that preserve Byzantine, Alexandrian, Antiochene, Armenian, East Syriac and West Syriac liturgical and canonical inheritances while remaining in communion with Rome. Their genealogies are not identical. Some represent communities or hierarchies that entered or restored communion with Rome at particular historical moments; others emerged through divisions inside older eastern churches. The Vatican's Dicastery for the Eastern Churches explicitly recognizes these Eastern Catholic Churches as *sui iuris* communities with their own structures and traditions (Dicastery for the Eastern Churches, 2022).

This means that a master tree cannot portray "Eastern Catholic" as one branch founded at one date. It is better represented as several reunion lines crossing from ancient eastern traditions into communion with Rome. The Chaldean Catholic Church, for example, is historically East Syriac; the Maronite Church developed in the West Syriac environment while maintaining a distinctive communion narrative; the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church belongs to the Byzantine tradition; and the Syro-Malabar Church in India preserves East Syriac heritage. Genealogical diagrams need cross-links, not only downward branches.

According to the *Annuarium Statisticum Ecclesiae* data for 2023 published by Vatican News in 2025, the global Catholic population was approximately 1.406 billion baptized persons, with Africa accounting for about 281 million. These figures illustrate scale but should not be compared directly with active-membership measures used by other communions (Vatican News, 2025).

### 4.5 What ancient continuity does and does not establish

The ancient communions possess genuine historical depth. Their liturgies, episcopal structures, theological languages and institutional memories cannot be dismissed as if Christianity disappeared after the apostles and reappeared at the Reformation or in modern restoration movements. At the same time, historical continuity is not identical with apostolic doctrinal infallibility. Institutions can preserve truth and accumulate error simultaneously. The family tree therefore records ancient continuity as a historical fact while reserving the theological question of fidelity for scriptural assessment.

This distinction is essential because competing ancient communions all make continuity claims while remaining divided from one another. If mere age settled the doctrinal question, the existence of ancient mutually non-communing traditions would be difficult to explain. Antiquity is weighty historical evidence; it is not a substitute for testing doctrine.

## 5. The Magisterial Reformation Families

The sixteenth-century Reformation did not produce "Protestantism" as one church. It produced several reform trajectories whose common opposition to aspects of late medieval Roman Catholicism did not erase profound differences over the Eucharist, baptism, church government, predestination, worship and the relationship between church and civil authority. "Magisterial Reformation" is a modern scholarly label for movements in which reformers such as Luther, Zwingli and Calvin worked with civic magistrates or territorial governments rather than rejecting the established social order in the manner associated with many Radical Reformers. The label is genealogical and political, not a claim that the traditions formed one institution (McGrath, 2012).

### 5.1 Lutheranism: reform from Wittenberg into territorial and national churches

Lutheran genealogy begins within the late medieval Latin church. Martin Luther did not initially set out to found a denomination. The indulgence controversy of 1517 expanded into disputes over justification, papal authority, sacramental theology and the authority of Scripture. Excommunication, imperial politics and territorial protection transformed a reform controversy into a durable ecclesial separation. The Augsburg Confession of 1530 became the principal public confession of the emerging Lutheran churches, while Luther's catechisms and later the *Book of Concord* supplied a more complete confessional corpus.

Lutheran churches spread through German territories, Scandinavia and the Baltic region, later developing national, immigrant and missionary branches around the world. The family includes episcopal, synodical and other organizational forms. It is held together less by one worldwide juridical authority than by a confessional inheritance centered on justification by grace through faith, Word and sacrament, baptism, the Lord's Supper and the Lutheran confessions. The Lutheran World Federation presently represents 153 member churches, including two associate member churches, and more than 78 million Christians in 99 countries, illustrating both the family's global reach and its institutional plurality (Lutheran World Federation, n.d.).

The genealogical line is therefore medieval Latin Christianity -> Lutheran Reformation -> territorial and national Lutheran churches -> modern Lutheran synods and global communions. Later Lutheran Pietism is a renewal current within this family, not a separate Reformation parent.

### 5.2 The Reformed family: Swiss reform, confessional diversification and Presbyterian polity

The Reformed tradition emerged through several interconnected reform centers rather than one founder. Huldrych Zwingli's Zurich reforms, Martin Bucer's Strasbourg work, John Calvin's Geneva ministry and the development of Reformed churches in Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, Scotland, parts of Germany and elsewhere produced a family united by substantial theological affinities but diversified by national confessions and polity. Reformed theology stressed the sovereignty of God, the authority of Scripture, covenantal patterns of biblical interpretation, disciplined church life and a Eucharistic theology distinct from both Roman transubstantiation and the Lutheran position (McGrath, 2012).

Presbyterianism is best represented as a major polity and confessional branch within the Reformed family, not as an unrelated denomination. In Scotland, John Knox and other reformers developed a Reformed church ordered through ministers and graded assemblies of elders rather than bishops. Presbyterian churches later multiplied through migration, mission, national establishment, voluntary separation, doctrinal controversies and mergers. The Reformed family also includes continental Reformed churches and numerous united or uniting churches whose ancestry combines Reformed, Presbyterian, Congregational, Methodist, Lutheran or other streams.

Congregationalism shares much Reformed theology but developed through English Puritan and Separatist debates over the nature and government of the gathered church. Because the congregation rather than a presbytery or bishop is the primary governing unit, Congregational churches form a related but distinct line. The modern World Communion of Reformed Churches brings together churches from Reformed, Presbyterian, Congregational and related united traditions, illustrating how a present-day communion can embrace several historically related polity forms without erasing their separate genealogies.

### 5.3 Anglicanism: institutional continuity, royal separation and Protestant reform

Anglicanism resists a simple one-parent diagram. Institutionally, the Church of England emerged from the medieval Western church and retained bishops, dioceses, cathedrals and much inherited liturgical structure. Politically, the decisive break with papal jurisdiction occurred under Henry VIII. Doctrinally and liturgically, however, the English Reformation deepened under

Edward VI, passed through Catholic restoration under Mary I, and reached a durable Elizabethan settlement shaped by Scripture, patristic appeals and substantial Reformation theology. The *Book of Common Prayer* and the Thirty-Nine Articles became major identity-forming texts. Anglicanism is therefore neither a direct child of Lutheranism nor simply an unchanged medieval Catholic church detached from Rome. Its genealogy combines institutional continuity with the English Reformation.

The later Anglican Communion developed as churches outside England became autonomous provinces through colonial-era expansion, postcolonial reorganization and national ecclesial development. The Episcopal Church in the United States became an early example of autonomous Anglican life after the American Revolution. Today the Anglican Communion describes itself as 42 autonomous member churches or provinces across more than 165 countries, with no single central government exercising juridical authority over all provinces (Anglican Communion Office, n.d.). That structure makes "communion" a more accurate category than "world denomination."

Anglicanism also generated or hosted multiple later currents. Evangelical Anglicanism, Anglo-Catholicism, charismatic renewal and various theological schools coexist within the family. Methodism began as an eighteenth-century renewal movement inside Anglicanism before becoming institutionally distinct. Some modern Anglican jurisdictions have also separated or realigned over doctrinal and ethical disputes, demonstrating that the family tree remains active rather than historically closed.

**Table 2. The principal magisterial Reformation families**

| Family       | Immediate historical setting                                                                         | Conventional emergence | Defining early texts or structures                                                                          | Principal later lines                                                                                               |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lutheran     | Late medieval Latin church in the Holy Roman Empire                                                  | 1517-1530s             | Augsburg Confession; Luther's catechisms; later <i>Book of Concord</i>                                      | German, Scandinavian, Baltic, North American, African, Asian and other Lutheran churches and synods                 |
| Reformed     | Swiss and south German reform centers, then France, Netherlands, Scotland and elsewhere              | 1520s-1560s            | Zurich reforms; Geneva ordinances; Helvetic, Gallican, Belgic and related confessions; Heidelberg Catechism | Continental Reformed; Presbyterian; Dutch Reformed; Huguenot; later united and uniting churches                     |
| Presbyterian | Reformed movement with representative rule by elders                                                 | Mid-sixteenth century  | Scottish Reformation settlement; later Westminster Standards in many English-speaking branches              | Church of Scotland traditions; Presbyterian churches worldwide; many mission-founded churches                       |
| Anglican     | Medieval English church separated from papal jurisdiction and reformed through the sixteenth century | 1530s-1560s            | Royal supremacy; <i>Book of Common Prayer</i> ; Thirty-Nine Articles; episcopal polity                      | Church of England; Episcopal and Anglican provinces worldwide; evangelical, Anglo-Catholic and charismatic currents |

The table reveals why "Protestant" should function as a family-level category. These traditions share Reformation ancestry and overlapping convictions, especially the normative authority of Scripture and criticism of late medieval Roman claims, yet their church structures and sacramental theologies diverged early enough that no single Protestant succession can represent them all.

## 6. The Radical Reformation and the Anabaptist Families

The Radical Reformation emerged partly from the same early sixteenth-century reform environment but rejected important assumptions shared by both Roman Catholic and magisterial Protestant establishments. The most enduring Anabaptist currents insisted that baptism should follow personal confession of faith, that the church should be a disciplined community of voluntary disciples, and, in many branches, that Christians should refuse coercive violence and resist the fusion of church and territorial state. Because sixteenth-century "Anabaptism" included diverse and sometimes mutually hostile groups, it should not be drawn as if one founder created one church. Swiss Brethren, South German-Austrian networks, Hutterites, the later Mennonite consolidation and other trajectories developed through overlapping but distinct networks (Williams, 1995).

The Mennonite line is associated especially with the stabilizing influence of Menno Simons in the Dutch and North German world after the catastrophe at Munster had discredited the Anabaptist name. Hutterites developed a communal form of Anabaptist life associated with Jakob Hutter and community of goods. The Amish emerged much later from a 1693 division among Swiss and Alsatian Mennonites around Jacob Amman, especially over discipline and separation. Brethren in Christ history is more mixed, combining Anabaptist/Mennonite, Pietist and later Wesleyan-Holiness influences; it should therefore be represented by converging influence lines rather than a single pure descent.

Modern Anabaptist communities are far more globally distributed than popular images of Amish settlements suggest. Mennonite World Conference's September 2026 compilation describes a broader Anabaptist-related family of about 2.03

million baptized believers in 87 countries. MWC itself comprises 109 Mennonite and Brethren in Christ national churches from 60 countries with close to 950,000 baptized believers, while the wider statistical family is distributed 45 percent in Africa, 13 percent in Asia and the Pacific, and 10 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean. In other words, about two-thirds of the global Anabaptist-related family is now located in Africa, Asia or Latin America rather than Europe or North America (Mennonite World Conference, n.d.). This geographic shift is historically significant because it relocates the demographic center of a movement born in sixteenth-century Europe into the contemporary Global South.

The Anabaptist genealogy also illustrates the difference between resemblance and descent. Modern Baptists share believer's baptism and religious-liberty commitments with Anabaptists, and early English Baptist history includes contact with Dutch Mennonites. Yet mainstream Baptist historiography does not support reducing the entire Baptist family to direct sixteenth-century Anabaptist descent. The more defensible diagram places Baptists in the English Separatist and broader Reformation environment with an influence line from continental Anabaptism rather than a single parent-child arrow.

## 7. English Dissent: Congregationalists, Baptists and Friends

### 7.1 Puritan and Separatist roots

After the Elizabethan settlement, English Protestants who believed the Church of England remained insufficiently reformed pursued different strategies. Puritans often sought further reform from within, while Separatists concluded that faithful gathered congregations should exist apart from the established church. From this environment emerged important Congregational and Baptist lines. Political persecution, migration to the Netherlands and North America, civil war, toleration and transatlantic networks all contributed to their institutional development.

Congregationalists emphasized the covenantal autonomy of the local gathered church while retaining substantial Reformed theology. Their descendants played major roles in New England, British Nonconformity, mission societies and later united churches. Because many Congregational bodies entered mergers, a modern genealogy must often represent them as one parent among several. The United Church of Christ in the United States and various united churches elsewhere, for example, cannot be reduced to a single denominational ancestor.

### 7.2 Baptist origins and diversification

The first durable modern Baptist communities arose in the early seventeenth century. John Smyth and Thomas Helwys emerged from English Separatism; Smyth's congregation experienced exile in Amsterdam and contact with Mennonites, while Helwys returned to England and established a General Baptist congregation in 1612. Particular Baptists later arose from a different English Puritan-Separatist context and held Calvinistic soteriology. This dual origin helps explain why Baptist identity cannot be equated with one soteriological system. General Baptists were more Arminian; Particular Baptists were more Calvinistic; both defended believer's baptism and increasingly articulated religious liberty.

Baptists subsequently diversified through revivalism, confessional controversies, racial and national histories, mission societies, ecclesial associations and local autonomy. The family includes conventions, unions and independent congregations whose levels of central coordination vary widely. The Baptist World Alliance currently reports a fellowship of 283 conventions and unions in 138 countries and territories, comprising about 53 million baptized believers in approximately 180,000 churches (Baptist World Alliance, n.d.). These figures represent bodies affiliated with the Alliance rather than every Baptist worldwide, a necessary caution in a tradition whose congregational autonomy and overlapping associations complicate global enumeration.

Baptist genealogy is therefore best drawn as English Separatist/Puritan Protestantism -> early General and Particular Baptist streams -> extensive national and transnational Baptist families, with acknowledged Anabaptist contact and influence but without forcing universal lineal descent.

### 7.3 Quakers: the Society of Friends as a distinct English radical Protestant movement

The Religious Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers, emerged in the turmoil of seventeenth-century England rather than from Baptist institutional succession. George Fox and early Friends stressed the immediate work of Christ and the Spirit, inward spiritual illumination, radical truthfulness, simplicity and a gathered community that rejected a separate professional priesthood and the outward sacraments as necessary rites. Quaker meetings developed distinctive forms of worship, discipline and testimony, including important traditions of pacifism and social reform (Dandelion, 2007).

Over time, Friends divided into evangelical, conservative and liberal streams with substantial differences in biblical interpretation and Christological emphasis. A family tree should preserve their common historical root while recognizing that

contemporary Quaker theology is unusually diverse. Their line belongs to English radical Protestant dissent, but it is not simply a Baptist sub-branch.

## 8. Renewal Rather Than Immediate Schism: Pietism, Moravians, Evangelical Revival and Methodism

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries generated movements that initially crossed or renewed existing churches rather than beginning as formal schisms. This category is essential because a religious genealogy composed only of institutional separations misses the historical role of revival.

Pietism arose within Lutheranism as a protest against perceived formalism and as a call for experienced regeneration, Bible study, small-group fellowship, practical holiness and mission. Philipp Jakob Spener's proposals and August Hermann Francke's institutions became major centers of the movement. Pietism remained partly inside established Lutheran churches while also generating networks, institutions and mission initiatives that influenced Christians far beyond Lutheranism.

The Moravian renewal at Herrnhut under Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf had a different root. The renewed Moravian community drew upon the older *Unitas Fratrum*, itself connected to the Hussite and Bohemian reform tradition, while being profoundly shaped by German Pietism. Moravian prayer, mission and Christ-centered spirituality later influenced John Wesley. Its genealogy is therefore a particularly clear case of historical convergence: pre-Reformation Bohemian Brethren heritage + Pietist renewal -> renewed Moravian Church.

The eighteenth-century Evangelical Revival and Great Awakenings likewise crossed denominational boundaries. Revivalists such as George Whitefield preached across Anglican, Congregational and other Protestant settings. The movement emphasized conversion, the new birth, experiential assurance, the cross and active mission. Bebbington (1989) famously summarized later evangelical identity through conversionism, activism, biblicism and crucicentrism. These characteristics describe a transdenominational movement, not a denomination. Evangelicalism should therefore be drawn as a wide band of influence crossing Anglican, Reformed, Baptist, Methodist, Holiness, Brethren, fundamentalist and later Pentecostal spaces rather than as one vertical branch.

### 8.1 Methodism: an Anglican renewal becomes a global ecclesial family

John and Charles Wesley began within the Church of England. The Methodist societies used itinerant preaching, classes, bands, lay leadership and disciplined spiritual formation to pursue conversion and holiness without initially intending to create a separate denomination. John Wesley remained an Anglican priest throughout his life. Political and missionary realities, however, especially in the newly independent United States, accelerated institutional separation. The Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1784, and after Wesley's death British Methodism also consolidated outside the Church of England. Hempton (2006) shows how this society-based revival became one of the most consequential international Protestant movements of the nineteenth century.

Methodism combined Anglican inheritance, Arminian soteriology, revivalist conversion, disciplined small groups and Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection or perfect love. It later divided and reunited in many national contexts. Methodist bodies also generated major holiness and social-holiness currents, including the Wesleyan Methodist and Free Methodist traditions, while the Salvation Army arose from Methodist-Holiness roots in Britain. The Church of the Nazarene and numerous holiness denominations developed from the nineteenth-century holiness movement rather than directly from early Methodism alone.

The crucial genealogical transition is Anglicanism -> Wesleyan revival and Methodist societies -> Methodist churches -> Holiness denominations and transdenominational holiness networks -> major influence on early Pentecostalism. The arrows represent both institutional descent and theological influence, and those two kinds of relation must be visually distinguished.

## 9. Wesleyan-Holiness Families and the Bridge to Pentecostalism

The nineteenth-century Holiness movement sought to recover and intensify Wesley's teaching on entire sanctification. It emerged first as a renewal within American Methodism and then spread across denominational boundaries through camp meetings, publications, colleges, missions and voluntary associations. The movement did not remain one institution. Some holiness advocates remained Methodist; others formed denominations such as the Wesleyan Methodist Connection, the Free Methodist Church and the Church of the Nazarene; still others contributed to independent missions or the Salvation Army. The World Council of Churches' family overview correctly describes Holiness as a Methodist-rooted but increasingly transdenominational renewal (World Council of Churches, n.d.-e).

Holiness theology became one of the most important bridges between eighteenth-century Methodism and twentieth-century Pentecostalism. Many early Pentecostals inherited a three-stage pattern of conversion, entire sanctification and Spirit baptism. Others, influenced by Reformed or Keswick higher-life traditions, rejected sanctification as a separate instantaneous second work and developed the "Finished Work" understanding. That dispute became one of early Pentecostalism's first major doctrinal differentiations (Anderson, 2014; World Council of Churches, n.d.-i).

The genealogy is therefore not Wesley → Pentecostalism in one simple line. More accurately, Wesleyan Methodism generated Holiness theology; Holiness intersected with divine-healing movements, Keswick spirituality, premillennial expectation, revivalism and restorationist hopes; from this environment several Pentecostal trajectories emerged. Some retained Wesleyan-Holiness sanctification; others did not. This multi-source ancestry explains why Pentecostal denominations can share Spirit-baptism and charismatic expectations while differing significantly over sanctification.

## **10. Nineteenth-Century Restorationist Families: Returning to the Primitive Church**

The nineteenth century produced repeated claims that inherited denominations had obscured or corrupted apostolic Christianity. Restorationism was not one movement but a family resemblance across otherwise different projects. Some restorationists remained within Nicene Protestant Christianity and sought to simplify church order. Others developed non-Trinitarian theology or new prophetic authority. Still others added new scriptures or elaborate apocalyptic chronologies. The genealogical category therefore describes a historical strategy, not a verdict that all restorationist groups occupy the same theological location.

### **10.1 Stone-Campbell churches: restoration and unity without a new prophet**

The Stone-Campbell Movement grew from converging efforts associated with Barton W. Stone and Thomas and Alexander Campbell. Stone's movement emerged from the Presbyterian and revival environment in Kentucky; the Campbells came from a Presbyterian background and pursued Christian unity through a return to New Testament faith and order. Their movements united in 1832. The resulting restoration tradition emphasized biblical names for the church, believer's baptism, frequent or weekly communion, local congregational life and a desire to transcend inherited denominational creeds (Foster et al., 2004; World Council of Churches, n.d.-d).

Later institutional and hermeneutical disagreements produced the principal modern Stone-Campbell families: Churches of Christ, Christian Churches/Churches of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Their separations were not caused by one single theological issue, and differences in missionary societies, instrumental music, institutional cooperation, biblical interpretation and modernism all mattered in different phases. Genealogically, these bodies belong inside the broader Protestant restorationist world, not outside Christianity merely because they criticized denominationalism.

### **10.2 Plymouth Brethren: restorationist ecclesiology within evangelical Protestantism**

The early Brethren movement emerged in the British Isles during the 1820s and 1830s among Christians dissatisfied with denominational structures and clericalism. Meetings in Dublin, Plymouth and elsewhere sought simple New Testament gathering, the weekly breaking of bread and the spiritual unity of all believers. John Nelson Darby became the most influential theologian of the movement, especially through dispensationalism and an increasingly separatist ecclesiology. A major division in 1848 helped crystallize the Open and Exclusive Brethren trajectories.

Brethren restorationism remained deeply connected to evangelical Protestantism: it affirmed the inspiration of Scripture, the deity and atoning work of Christ and conversion through faith. Its historical significance reaches beyond Brethren assemblies because Darby's dispensational system and related prophecy teaching influenced Bible conferences, fundamentalism and later evangelical eschatology. The family tree should therefore show both a direct Brethren branch and a wide dashed influence line into modern evangelicalism and Pentecostal/fundamentalist prophecy traditions.

### **10.3 Millerism and the Adventist family**

William Miller's interpretation of biblical prophecy generated a transdenominational American movement expecting Christ's return around 1843-1844. The failure of the expected event, remembered as the Great Disappointment, fragmented the movement rather than ending apocalyptic restorationism. Different groups reinterpreted the chronology in different ways, abandoned it or developed new doctrines. Seventh-day Adventism emerged from one Sabbatarian Millerite stream and gradually consolidated around Sabbath observance, sanctuary theology, the prophetic ministry of Ellen G. White, health reform and a global missionary organization.

Modern Seventh-day Adventism must be distinguished both from its early developmental diversity and from non-Nicene restorationist religions. George R. Knight's study of Adventist doctrinal development documents important changes among

early Adventists, including movement toward a fully Trinitarian position over time (Knight, 2000). The denomination's current official statement explicitly confesses one God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, "a unity of three coeternal Persons," and states that the Holy Scriptures are the supreme authoritative revelation of God's will (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, n.d.). Genealogically and in contemporary doctrine, Seventh-day Adventism is therefore best classified as a restorationist Protestant Christian tradition with distinctive teachings, not simply as a Christian-derived new religion alongside movements that reject the Trinity or add new canonical scriptures.

#### 10.4 Christadelphians and other non-Trinitarian restorationist trajectories

John Thomas, originally connected for a period with the Campbell movement, developed a distinct restorationist community in the nineteenth century that became known as the Christadelphians. The movement rejected the Trinity and the personal preexistence of Christ as understood in Nicene Christianity, taught conditional immortality and developed a distinctive eschatological and ecclesial system. Genealogically, this is an instructive case in which a restorationist trajectory emerged from contact with one Protestant restoration movement but became doctrinally distinct enough to require separate classification.

The same period produced other restorationist and Adventist-derived bodies whose genealogies intersect without being identical. A responsible master tree therefore includes a category for "restorationist Protestant families" and a separate marker for "non-Nicene restorationist trajectories." The historical mode of origin does not predetermine theological classification.

**Table 3. Restorationist movements and their theological location**

| Movement/family                 | Principal historical setting                                              | Mode of emergence                                                             | Authority pattern                                                      | Genealogical-theological location                                                                       |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stone-Campbell                  | Early nineteenth-century U.S./British restoration and revival environment | Converging restoration movements; later internal divisions                    | Bible as normative authority; anti-creedal impulse                     | Protestant restorationist family; generally within historic Trinitarian Christianity                    |
| Plymouth Brethren               | 1820s-1830s British/Irish evangelical world                               | Renewal/restoration on critique of denominationalism and clergy; later schism | Strong biblical primitivism; no new canon                              | Evangelical Protestant restorationist family                                                            |
| Seventh-day Adventist           | Sabbatarian Millerite stream after 1844                                   | Post-disappointment reorganization and doctrinal development                  | Bible as supreme authority; Ellen G. White accorded prophetic ministry | Trinitarian Protestant restorationist/Adventist family with distinctive sanctuary and Sabbath doctrines |
| Christadelphian                 | Mid-nineteenth-century restorationist environment; John Thomas            | New restorationist formation after separation from earlier associations       | Bible-only claim with non-Nicene interpretation                        | Christian-derived, non-Nicene restorationist movement                                                   |
| Latter-day Saint                | Second Great Awakening and restorationist America                         | New church claiming restored priesthood and continuing revelation             | Bible plus additional scriptures and prophetic authority               | Christian-derived new religious movement, distinct from Nicene Christianity                             |
| Bible Student/Jehovah's Witness | Late nineteenth-century Adventist/Bible Student milieu                    | Bible Student movement followed by organizational transformation              | Watch Tower interpretive authority; non-Trinitarian doctrine           | Christian-derived new religious movement, distinct from Nicene Christianity                             |
| Christian Science               | Nineteenth-century American metaphysical and healing environment          | New religious movement founded by Mary Baker Eddy                             | Bible interpreted through <i>Science and Health</i>                    | Christian-derived new religious movement with distinctive metaphysical theology                         |

## 11. Christian-Derived New Religious Movements

The expression "Christian-derived" is used here to solve a genuine taxonomic problem. Some movements arise historically from Christian settings, use Christian Scripture and vocabulary, and sincerely identify themselves as Christian, yet depart from classical Nicene Christianity in doctrines central to the identity of God and Christ or introduce additional revelatory authorities that reshape the apostolic gospel. To call such movements ordinary Protestant denominations obscures their historical and

doctrinal discontinuities. To deny their Christian derivation obscures their genealogy. The layered category preserves both facts.

### 11.1 The Latter-day Saint movement

Joseph Smith's movement arose in the religiously fertile environment of early nineteenth-century upstate New York and rapidly developed a restoration narrative far more expansive than ordinary Protestant reform. The *Book of Mormon* was published in 1830, the Church of Christ was organized that year, and additional revelations, priesthood claims, temple practices and new scriptures became constitutive of the movement. After Smith's death in 1844, a succession crisis generated several enduring bodies, most prominently The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints under Brigham Young's leadership in the western migration and the movement now known as Community of Christ through another succession line (Bushman, 2005).

The principal LDS church today officially teaches that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are three separate beings united in purpose, and that the Father and Son possess tangible glorified bodies (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2023). This is not the one divine essence and three persons confessed by Nicene Christianity. The movement also accepts additional scriptures, including the *Book of Mormon*, *Doctrine and Covenants* and *Pearl of Great Price*. These authority and Godhead claims make it historically inaccurate to classify the LDS tradition as merely another Protestant denomination.

At the same time, the wider Latter Day Saint movement should not be flattened into the doctrine of its largest church. Community of Christ, for example, officially confesses the Trinity and has undergone substantial theological development distinct from the Utah-based LDS tradition; it also describes the Bible as foundational Scripture while continuing to use the *Book of Mormon* and *Doctrine and Covenants* (Community of Christ, n.d.). The genealogy therefore requires a post-1844 branch point with doctrinal notes rather than one undifferentiated "Mormon" category.

As of December 31, 2025, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints reported 17,887,212 members, 32,046 wards and branches and 451 missions (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2026). These are institutional membership figures, not directly comparable with active-participation statistics in other traditions.

### 11.2 Christian Science

Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science emerged from nineteenth-century American healing and metaphysical currents. The movement dates its discovery of Christian Science to 1866; the Church of Christ, Scientist was organized later. Its official sources identify the Bible and Eddy's *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* as the two primary texts used in theology and worship (Christian Science, n.d.-a). Its six tenets speak of God, Christ, atonement and resurrection, yet interpret these themes through a metaphysical framework emphasizing Spirit and the unreality or "nothingness" of matter (Christian Science, n.d.-b).

The movement is therefore undeniably Christian-derived in vocabulary and self-understanding, but its anthropology, view of matter, Christological language and use of Eddy's interpretive text distinguish it substantially from the historic Nicene, Chalcedonian and Protestant traditions. Its placement outside the main Protestant branches is a taxonomic conclusion grounded in its own official teaching rather than a denial that its adherents appeal to Jesus and the Bible.

### 11.3 Bible Students and Jehovah's Witnesses

Charles Taze Russell's Bible Student movement developed in a late nineteenth-century Adventist and restorationist environment marked by chronological speculation, rejection of traditional doctrines and intense Bible study. After Russell's death, Joseph F. Rutherford's leadership transformed the Watch Tower organization, and the name Jehovah's Witnesses was adopted in 1931. Not all Bible Students followed Rutherford, so modern independent Bible Student groups and Jehovah's Witnesses should be represented as related but distinct descendants of the earlier movement (Chryssides, 2016).

Jehovah's Witnesses explicitly identify themselves as Christians while rejecting the Trinity and teaching that Jesus is not Almighty God. Official Watch Tower sources also identify the prehuman Christ with Michael the archangel and teach that Jesus was created by God before the rest of creation (Jehovah's Witnesses, 2010, 2013, 2025b). Because these claims place the Son on the created side of the Creator-creature distinction, the movement stands outside the Nicene confession that the Son is eternally begotten, not made, and fully divine. The classification is therefore both historical and doctrinal: Adventist/Bible Student genealogy, followed by a non-Nicene Christian-derived religious formation.

For the 2025 service year, Jehovah's Witnesses reported a peak of 9,205,326 publishers, 119,652 congregations and activity in 241 lands. A publisher is an active evangelizing participant according to the movement's own reporting rules, so the figure cannot be compared directly with nominal membership in churches that count baptized or registered persons differently (Jehovah's Witnesses, 2025a).

## 12. Pentecostalism: Several Branches from a Shared Revival Environment

Pentecostalism is one of the clearest examples of why historical genealogy must distinguish origin from symbolic memory. The Azusa Street Revival of 1906 under William J. Seymour became a uniquely influential missionary and interracial symbol, but modern scholarship no longer treats global Pentecostalism as if every Pentecostal church descended institutionally from one Los Angeles mission. The movement arose through multiple revival networks involving Wesleyan-Holiness theology, Keswick and higher-life spirituality, divine healing, restorationist expectation, premillennialism and transatlantic missionary exchange (Anderson, 2014; Dayton, 1987).

### 12.1 Topeka, Azusa and the tongues question

Charles Fox Parham's Bible school in Topeka, Kansas, became associated with the teaching that speaking in tongues was the initial evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit. William Seymour carried this expectation into the Los Angeles revival beginning in 1906, where sustained meetings at Azusa Street attracted a racially and socially diverse constituency and sent missionaries and testimonies across the world. Early Pentecostals interpreted Acts as evidence that apostolic gifts had been restored to the church and often understood their movement in strongly eschatological and missionary terms.

Yet the early movement quickly diversified. Wesleyan-Holiness Pentecostals retained entire sanctification as a distinct work of grace before Spirit baptism. Finished Work Pentecostals, influenced by William Durham and others, rejected that three-stage scheme and treated sanctification more progressively while maintaining conversion and Spirit baptism. This division helps explain the later doctrinal difference between bodies such as the Church of God in Christ, Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) and International Pentecostal Holiness Church on one side of the sanctification question, and the Assemblies of God and Foursquare tradition on the other (Anderson, 2014; World Council of Churches, n.d.-i).

### 12.2 Classical Trinitarian Pentecostal denominations

As revival networks stabilized, Pentecostals formed denominations and fellowships to coordinate missions, credential ministers, settle doctrine and manage institutions. The Assemblies of God, organized in 1914 in the United States, became one of the largest global Pentecostal families. The World Assemblies of God Fellowship currently reports more than 180 member bodies, more than 451,000 churches and approximately 88 million adherents worldwide (World Assemblies of God Fellowship, n.d.). Other major classical Pentecostal families include the Church of God in Christ, Church of God (Cleveland), International Pentecostal Holiness Church, International Church of the Foursquare Gospel and numerous national movements that developed through mission, indigenous revival and local initiative.

The term "classical Pentecostal" therefore denotes a historical generation and doctrinal family, not one denomination. Most classical Pentecostal bodies confess the Trinity, biblical authority, the saving work of Christ, conversion and the continuing gifts of the Spirit, while differing over sanctification, church government, women in ministry, eschatological details and the precise formulation of Spirit baptism. The Assemblies of God's official Statement of Fundamental Truths, for example, explicitly affirms the inspiration of Scripture, the one true God revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, salvation through Christ and Spirit baptism with speaking in tongues as initial physical evidence (Assemblies of God, n.d.; Anderson, 2014).

### 12.3 The Oneness schism: Pentecostal genealogy with non-Nicene doctrine

The Oneness controversy beginning in the 1910s created a branch that is unmistakably Pentecostal in genealogy but non-Nicene in its doctrine of God. The movement developed around baptism in Jesus' name and the conviction that God is absolutely and indivisibly one, revealing himself as Father, through his Son in redemption, and as the Holy Spirit, while confessing Jesus Christ as God manifested in flesh. This self-understanding differs from the Nicene confession of one divine being eternally existing as three coeternal persons. The Assemblies of God adopted a Trinitarian Statement of Fundamental Truths in 1916 amid the controversy, after which Oneness adherents increasingly organized in separate bodies (Assemblies of God, n.d.; United Pentecostal Church International, 2023).

Modern Oneness organizations include the United Pentecostal Church International and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, among others. The UPCI currently reports approximately six million constituents in 49,000 churches in 203 nations and many territories (United Pentecostal Church International, n.d.). The figures illustrate global presence, but the more important genealogical point is conceptual: Oneness Pentecostalism belongs on the Pentecostal branch by historical descent while simultaneously carrying a theological marker outside classical Nicene Trinitarianism. Genealogy and doctrinal classification must therefore be displayed on separate axes.

## 12.4 Postwar healing revival and independent prophetic trajectories

The post-Second World War healing revival created another set of relationships that cannot be represented as one denominational branch. Oral Roberts, A. A. Allen, William Branham, T. L. Osborn, Gordon Lindsay and others operated through evangelistic campaigns, magazines, radio and independent ministries. The *Voice of Healing* network connected ministers without making them one church. Some later charismatic, prosperity and prophetic practices inherited methods and expectations from this environment.

William Branham is especially important genealogically because his influence continued after his death in 1965 through the international "Message" or Branhamist movement. Scholarly study locates Branham firmly within the mid-century healing revival while also documenting the distinct prophetic authority that his followers attached to his ministry (Weaver, 2000). Branhamism should therefore not be drawn simply as a classical Pentecostal denomination. It is better represented as an independent prophetic-restorationist formation emerging from the healing-revival environment, with influence lines from Pentecostalism and postwar revivalism but its own subsequent doctrinal identity.

## 12.5 A Parallel Development: Fundamentalism and Modern Evangelicalism

Although placed here for chronological continuity, modern fundamentalism is not a Pentecostal sub-branch. It belongs on the genealogy as a cross-denominational conservative Protestant coalition that crystallized in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries among evangelicals who opposed theological liberalism, higher-critical reconstructions of Scripture and other developments they believed compromised historic Christian doctrine. The publication of *The Fundamentals* between 1910 and 1915 gave the movement a durable name, but the coalition drew from Presbyterian, Baptist, dispensational, Holiness, revivalist and Bible-institute networks rather than one ecclesiastical parent. Denominational conflicts in the 1920s and 1930s led some fundamentalists toward separatist institutions, independent churches, mission boards and Bible colleges, while others remained within larger denominations (Marsden, 2022).

After the Second World War, a substantial portion of conservative Protestantism embraced the label *evangelical* while seeking wider intellectual, cultural and institutional engagement than separatist fundamentalism had generally pursued. The resulting evangelical world overlaps Reformed, Baptist, Anglican, Methodist, Holiness, Brethren and Pentecostal traditions without constituting one church. Genealogically, fundamentalism and modern evangelicalism are therefore best represented as broad transdenominational networks running across multiple Protestant branches, with dispensational Brethren influence, revivalist institutions and later parachurch organizations shown as influence lines rather than parent-child descent.

## 13. Charismatic Renewal and the Rise of Network Christianity

The charismatic movement changed the geometry of the Christian family tree because Pentecostal-type experience no longer required denominational transfer. Beginning visibly in the 1960s, Episcopalians, Anglicans, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Roman Catholics and others reported speaking in tongues, healing, prophecy and renewed worship while often remaining within their inherited churches. Classical Pentecostalism had created denominations; charismatic renewal often created networks, prayer groups and renewal fellowships inside denominations.

This distinction matters genealogically. Catholic Charismatic Renewal is not a branch that left Roman Catholicism to become Pentecostal. It is a renewal current inside Catholic sacramental and magisterial structures. Anglican charismatic renewal likewise remains within Anglican provinces. The same charismatic practices can therefore appear at multiple points on the institutional tree without implying common denominational descent.

The Jesus Movement of the late 1960s and 1970s further blurred boundaries between evangelicalism and charismatic spirituality. New churches and ministries developed informal worship, contemporary music, youth-oriented evangelism and less denominational identity. Calvary Chapel became a major example of this evangelical-charismatic convergence. The Vineyard movement later emphasized healing, worship, church planting and "signs and wonders" while distinguishing itself from the classical Pentecostal doctrine that tongues must be the initial physical evidence of Spirit baptism.

The Word of Faith and prosperity movements represent another networked stream. Their genealogy combines Pentecostal healing revival, positive-confession teaching, media ministries and later charismatic megachurch culture. Kate Bowler (2013) demonstrates that the prosperity gospel is not one church but a historically developing religious movement organized around recurring themes of faith, health, wealth and victory. It crossed denominational and racial boundaries and spread globally through television, conferences, books, Bible schools and itinerant ministries.

By the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, some charismatic leaders increasingly organized through apostolic-prophetic networks rather than denominations. Christerson and Flory (2017) describe "Independent Network Charismatic" Christianity as a form in which relational networks around influential leaders can operate without the bureaucratic structures

characteristic of denominations. Claims to restored apostles, prophets, spiritual warfare, territorial transformation and direct revelation vary widely among these networks, and the disputed label "New Apostolic Reformation" should not be used as if it denotes one centralized organization. The master tree therefore uses a network symbol rather than a branch ending in a single denominational box.

Digital religion has intensified this pattern. Churches now participate in transnational worship cultures, podcast ecosystems, livestream networks, social-media teaching, conferences and informal ministerial alliances. A pastor can be formally Baptist or Anglican while drawing preaching methods, worship songs and prophetic vocabulary from independent charismatic networks. Influence can now travel faster than institutional membership. Genealogically, the twenty-first century is increasingly reticular: the image of a tree must be supplemented by a web.

**Table 4. Denomination, renewal and network: three different organizational logics**

| Organizational form | Typical authority pattern                                                           | Genealogical behavior                                                                  | Illustrative examples                                                                                                     |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Denomination        | Constitution, recognized offices, doctrine, credentialing and membership structures | Produces relatively traceable institutional branches, mergers and schisms              | Lutheran synods; Baptist conventions; Assemblies of God bodies; Methodist conferences                                     |
| Renewal movement    | Shared experience, spirituality or reform concern across existing institutions      | Crosses branches without necessarily creating a new church                             | Pietism; Evangelical Revival; East African Revival; Catholic Charismatic Renewal                                          |
| Network             | Voluntary relationships among leaders, ministries, churches and media platforms     | Creates overlapping influence lines that may change quickly and lack stable succession | Vineyard-related networks; Word of Faith ministries; apostolic-prophetic networks; many independent charismatic alliances |

## 14. African and Global Independent Christianities: When the Tree Becomes a Forest

A global Christian genealogy becomes distorted if Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania appear only as destinations to which European denominations were exported. Missionary transplantation is part of the story, but so are ancient African Christianity, indigenous appropriation, African-initiated reform, revival, secession, prophetic movements and new transnational churches. The modern family tree therefore needs regional agency as a category, not merely geographic color-coding.

### 14.1 Ancient African roots and the danger of treating African Christianity as a modern import

Christianity in Africa long predates modern European colonialism. Alexandria and Egypt were major centers of early Christian theology; North Africa produced Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine; Aksum embraced Christianity in late antiquity; Nubian Christian kingdoms flourished for centuries; and the Coptic and Ethiopian Orthodox traditions survived into the modern era. These ancient lineages belong in the upper sections of the tree, not as nineteenth-century missionary offshoots. Their presence also corrects the false equation of "ancient Christianity" with Europe.

Modern sub-Saharan Christianity, however, was also profoundly shaped by nineteenth- and twentieth-century Catholic and Protestant missions. Anglican, Reformed, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Adventist, Brethren, Pentecostal and other mission bodies established churches, schools, hospitals and training institutions. African converts and clergy did not merely receive these traditions passively. They translated Scripture, reshaped worship, evangelized beyond mission stations, challenged racial hierarchy, founded schools, disputed missionary control and created new ecclesial institutions. The genealogical result is a layered field in which mission ancestry and indigenous initiative must be shown together, a pattern central to scholarship on African Christian agency and the renewal of a non-Western Christianity (Bediako, 1995; Kalu, 2008).

### 14.2 Ethiopianist, Zionist, Aladura and other African Instituted Churches

The broad category African Independent, Initiated, Instituted or Indigenous Churches includes movements with very different origins and theology. Some "Ethiopian" churches in southern Africa emerged from mission-founded Protestant churches through disputes over racism, leadership and African ecclesial autonomy. Their liturgy and doctrine could remain close to the parent tradition even after institutional separation. Other movements developed prophetic, healing and symbolic practices that interacted more extensively with African religious worlds. Zionist churches in southern Africa, Aladura churches in West Africa and other prophetic formations exhibit varying combinations of biblical interpretation, healing, prayer, sacred dress, dreams, visions, exorcism and indigenous leadership.

The World Council of Churches notes that many African independent denominations had formed by the end of the nineteenth century and that the label itself encompasses substantial variety. Its examples also demonstrate why "independent" must not be

translated automatically into "non-orthodox" or "Pentecostal" (World Council of Churches, n.d.-a). Some AICs explicitly confess historic Trinitarian faith and remain doctrinally close to Anglican, Methodist or Reformed parents; others have distinctive prophetic or theological systems that require separate examination.

African Instituted Churches therefore need several genealogical symbols. A solid branch can show a documented schism from a mission-founded church. A dashed influence line can represent indigenous religious or revival influence. A merger line can represent coalitions. A dotted network line can represent translocal prophetic relationships. A single box labeled "AIC" cannot carry this diversity without becoming misleading.

### 14.3 African Pentecostalism and neo-Pentecostal independence

African Pentecostalism likewise has multiple genealogies. Some churches are direct descendants of North American or European Pentecostal missions. Others developed from indigenous revivals, holiness movements or prophetic churches. Still others emerged in the late twentieth century through university fellowships, urban evangelism, deliverance ministries and independent church planting. Ogbu Kalu (2008) demonstrates that African Pentecostalism must be interpreted not merely as an American religious export but as an African religious history shaped by local questions, agency and worldviews.

The growth of neo-Pentecostal and charismatic churches has further complicated denominational ancestry. Some use the names and doctrines of global Pentecostalism while operating independently. Some are connected to Word of Faith or prosperity networks. Some emphasize deliverance and spiritual warfare; others concentrate on leadership, entrepreneurship, media and megachurch organization. Cross-border conferences, satellite television, migration and digital platforms create influence lines that do not correspond to formal membership.

This is where the national case study of Rwanda becomes analytically valuable. Rwanda's Christian field contains ancient global families received through mission, revivalist currents that crossed denominational boundaries, Adventist and Baptist developments, Pentecostal institutionalization, charismatic and independent networks, and restorationist or prophetic currents. The Rwandan case is not a miniature copy of Europe. It demonstrates how global genealogies are localized, recombined and subjected to new political, social and theological pressures. Similar patterns can be observed in many parts of Africa.

### 14.4 Reverse mission and the globalization of former "mission churches"

The old map assumed Christian mission flowed from Europe and North America toward Africa, Asia and Latin America. Contemporary migration and mission have made the flow multidirectional. African Pentecostal, evangelical and independent churches establish congregations in Europe and North America; Korean, Brazilian, Nigerian and other churches operate transnational mission networks; ancient Oriental and Eastern Orthodox diasporas now have major communities far from their historic centers. The modern tree therefore cannot be mapped as a European trunk with peripheral overseas twigs. It is a global, polycentric Christian ecology.

The demographic evidence reinforces this point. Mennonite World Conference's current compilation places about two-thirds of the global Anabaptist-related family in Africa, Asia or Latin America; the Anglican Communion describes the vast majority of active Anglicans as living in the Global South, especially sub-Saharan Africa; and Catholic statistics show especially rapid recent growth in Africa, including an increase from 272 million baptized Catholics in 2022 to 281 million in 2023 (Anglican Communion Office, n.d.; Mennonite World Conference, n.d.; Vatican News, 2025). Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity is likewise deeply embedded in African, Latin American and Asian religious landscapes. The genealogy of Christianity is therefore no longer geographically centered in the same regions where many of its major institutional branches first formed.

## 15. Mergers, United Churches, Ecumenical Communions and Cross-Branch Identities

Family trees are easiest when one parent yields one child. Christian history repeatedly violates that pattern. Some modern churches are products of merger rather than schism. The United Church of Canada was formed in 1925 from Methodist, Congregational and most Presbyterian bodies. The Church of South India, inaugurated in 1947, united Anglican, Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian and Reformed streams after prolonged ecumenical negotiation. The Church of North India followed a comparable union in 1970 involving Anglican and several Protestant traditions. Such churches must be represented by converging lines from multiple parents.

Other relationships are communions without merger. The Porvoo Communion links Anglican and Lutheran churches in Europe while the participating churches retain their own identities. Full-communion agreements in other contexts recognize ministries or Eucharistic fellowship without creating a new denomination. Ecumenical dialogue between ancient communions can produce theological convergence without institutional reunion. Conversely, a body may leave one communion while preserving much of its liturgy and theology. The Old Catholic family illustrates this pattern: the Church of Utrecht had an earlier eighteenth-century separation from Roman jurisdiction, while German, Austrian and Swiss Old Catholic churches

organized after rejecting the First Vatican Council's 1870 definitions of papal infallibility and universal ordinary jurisdiction; these churches later formed the Union of Utrecht in 1889 (World Council of Churches, n.d.-f).

There are also ecclesial families created through migration and mission that later become autonomous. A church planted by one mission board may receive leadership, theological education or revival influence from several sources before attaining independence. Treating its current name as proof of one pure lineage can obscure a century of cross-pollination. This is especially common in regions where mission societies cooperated, divided territories or later formed national councils and united churches.

The most important conceptual result is that Christian genealogy is not purely arboreal. It contains braided rivers, grafts and networks. A professionally accurate master chart therefore needs at least six line types: direct descent, schism, reform, renewal/influence, merger/union and new religious formation. Without that legend, the image may be visually impressive but historically false.

## **16. The Complete Modern Taxonomy: Where the Major Families Fit**

The following synthesis classifies the principal modern families by both historical origin and present organizational form. It does not imply that all bodies inside a row teach the same doctrine. Nor does it imply that an ecumenical or scholarly category possesses ecclesiastical authority over the churches it describes.

**Table 5. Master taxonomy of major contemporary Christian families and Christian-derived movements**

| Family or category         | Historical parentage                                                                              | Mode of emergence                                                                             | Representative present forms                                                                                                        | Key taxonomic caution                                                                               |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Church of the East         | Early East Syriac Christianity in Persian/Mesopotamian world                                      | Ancient regional development and later estrangement from imperial Roman churches              | Assyrian Church of the East; Ancient Church of the East; East Syriac Catholic reunion lines such as Chaldean Catholicism            | Do not reduce the whole family to "Nestorianism" or derive it from 1054                             |
| Oriental Orthodox          | Ancient Alexandrian, Syriac, Armenian and related churches                                        | Non-reception of Chalcedon and later institutional consolidation                              | Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, Ethiopian, Eritrean, Malankara Orthodox churches                                                          | Not the same as Eastern Orthodoxy; "Monophysite" is an inadequate blanket label                     |
| Eastern Orthodox           | Chalcedonian eastern churches                                                                     | Long East-West estrangement, with 1054 as conventional milestone                              | Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Russia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece and other autocephalous churches | Autocephalous churches are not Protestant-style denominations                                       |
| Roman Catholic             | Latin Western church in communion with Rome                                                       | Western institutional continuity; medieval papal development; post-schism consolidation       | Latin Church and worldwide Catholic structures                                                                                      | Ancient continuity is historical fact, not automatic proof that every later definition is apostolic |
| Eastern Catholic           | Multiple ancient eastern traditions                                                               | Reunion or communion with Rome at different dates                                             | Byzantine, Alexandrian, Armenian, East Syriac and West Syriac Catholic churches <i>sui iuris</i>                                    | Not one branch founded at one moment; ancestry remains partly eastern                               |
| Lutheran                   | Medieval Western Christianity                                                                     | Magisterial Reformation                                                                       | National and regional Lutheran churches, synods and federations                                                                     | Lutheranism is not the parent of all Protestantism                                                  |
| Reformed/Presbyterian      | Swiss and continental Reformation                                                                 | Magisterial Reformation, later national and confessional development                          | Reformed, Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed and related churches                                                                         | Presbyterianism is a Reformed polity family, not a separate ancient root                            |
| Anglican                   | Medieval English church plus English Reformation                                                  | Jurisdictional break with Rome and doctrinal/liturgical reform                                | Church of England and 42-province Anglican Communion                                                                                | Combines institutional continuity with Protestant reform influences                                 |
| Old Catholic               | Western Catholic tradition, with Utrecht and post-Vatican I separations                           | Jurisdictional separation and resistance to later papal definitions                           | Union of Utrecht and related Old Catholic bodies                                                                                    | Not a Reformation-era Protestant family; contains more than one historical separation trajectory    |
| Anabaptist                 | Radical Reformation                                                                               | Voluntary-church reform and separation from magisterial/established churches                  | Mennonite, Hutterite, Amish, Brethren in Christ and related bodies                                                                  | Diverse origins; not all believer-baptist churches descend directly from Anabaptists                |
| Congregational             | English Reformed/Puritan and Separatist environments                                              | Ecclesiological reform and gathered-church development                                        | Congregational churches and descendants inside united churches                                                                      | Often becomes one parent among several in later mergers                                             |
| Baptist                    | English Separatist/Puritan Protestantism with continental contacts                                | Formation of General and Particular Baptist churches; later multiplication                    | Baptist conventions, unions and independent churches                                                                                | Anabaptist influence does not equal universal direct descent                                        |
| Evangelical/fundamentalist | Multiple Protestant branches, revivalism, Bible institutes and conservative confessional networks | Transdenominational coalition, controversy, institutional networking and sometimes separatism | Evangelical alliances, fundamentalist churches, parachurch agencies, Bible institutes and mission networks                          | A movement-network spanning denominations, not one denomination or single line of descent           |
| Quaker/Friends             | English radical Protestant environment                                                            | Spiritual renewal and independent movement formation                                          | Evangelical, conservative and liberal yearly meetings                                                                               | Considerable modern theological diversity within one historical family                              |
| Methodist/Wesleyan         | Anglican evangelical revival                                                                      | Renewal movement becoming separate churches                                                   | Methodist and Wesleyan communions                                                                                                   | Began within Anglicanism; later generated Holiness streams                                          |

| Family or category                            | Historical parentage                                                    | Mode of emergence                                                         | Representative present forms                                                       | Key taxonomic caution                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Holiness                                      | Methodist/Wesleyan tradition plus transdenominational revival           | Renewal and denominationalization                                         | Nazarene, Wesleyan, Free Methodist, Salvation Army, holiness churches              | Also functions as a theological influence across denominations                                                     |
| Stone-Campbell                                | Presbyterian/revival and restorationist environment                     | Restoration and later internal division                                   | Churches of Christ; Christian Churches/Churches of Christ; Disciples of Christ     | Restorationist but generally Trinitarian Protestant, not a new revelation movement                                 |
| Brethren                                      | British/Irish evangelical restorationism                                | Restorationist ecclesiology and later 1848 division                       | Open and Exclusive/Plymouth Brethren families                                      | Major influence on dispensationalism extends beyond Brethren membership                                            |
| Seventh-day Adventist                         | Millerite Adventism                                                     | Post-1844 restorationist reorganization                                   | Seventh-day Adventist Church                                                       | Contemporary official doctrine is Trinitarian; distinctive sanctuary/Sabbath teachings require separate evaluation |
| Classical Trinitarian Pentecostal             | Holiness, Keswick, healing, revival and restorationist antecedents      | Early twentieth-century Spirit-baptism revivals and denominationalization | Assemblies of God, COGIC, Church of God, Foursquare, IPHC and many national bodies | Multiple origins; not all lines descend institutionally from Azusa                                                 |
| Oneness Pentecostal                           | Early Pentecostal movement                                              | Doctrinal schism over Godhead and baptism in the 1910s                    | UPCI, PAW and other Oneness bodies                                                 | Genealogically Pentecostal but doctrinally non-Nicene                                                              |
| Charismatic renewal                           | Classical Pentecostal influence plus internal renewal in older churches | Transdenominational renewal from 1960s                                    | Protestant and Catholic charismatic movements                                      | Usually influence inside parent churches, not formal denominational descent                                        |
| Third Wave/Vineyard                           | Evangelical-charismatic convergence                                     | Late twentieth-century network/church movement                            | Vineyard and related networks                                                      | Does not require classical Pentecostal initial-evidence doctrine                                                   |
| Word of Faith/prosperity                      | Healing revival, positive-confession and charismatic networks           | Media-driven movement and network diffusion                               | Independent ministries, megachurches and transnational networks                    | A movement, not one denomination; doctrine and intensity vary widely                                               |
| Apostolic-prophetic/independent charismatic   | Neo-charismatic and restorationist network environment                  | Network formation around leaders and claimed offices                      | Independent apostolic, prophetic and ministry networks                             | Boundaries are fluid; "NAR" should not be treated as one centralized church                                        |
| African Instituted/Independent churches       | Mission-founded churches, indigenous revival and local religious agency | Schism, reform, prophecy, healing, indigenous institution building        | Ethiopianist, Zionist, Aladura and many other African churches                     | Not one theology or one genealogy; some are historic-Trinitarian, others require separate assessment               |
| Latter Day Saint traditions                   | Nineteenth-century American Christian restorationist environment        | New scripture, prophetic authority and restored-priesthood claims         | LDS Church; Community of Christ; smaller succession bodies                         | Common history does not mean identical modern doctrine; LDS Godhead differs from Nicene Trinity                    |
| Jehovah's Witnesses/Bible Student derivatives | Adventist and Bible Student milieu                                      | Restorationist Bible movement and later organizational transformation     | Jehovah's Witnesses; independent Bible Student groups                              | Christian-derived and self-identified Christian, but Watch Tower Christology is non-Nicene                         |
| Christian Science                             | American Christian/metaphysical healing environment                     | New religious formation under Mary Baker Eddy                             | Church of Christ, Scientist and related institutions                               | Christian vocabulary is interpreted through a distinctive metaphysical system                                      |

This table also clarifies an issue frequently confused in popular apologetics. "Catholic," "Orthodox," "Protestant," "Pentecostal" and "restorationist" do not occupy the same taxonomic level. Catholic and Eastern Orthodox commonly name communions; Protestant is a broad historical family containing many communions and denominations; Pentecostal is a movement-family with multiple denominations and networks; restorationist is a mode of reform found in movements of very different theology. Accurate comparison requires like categories to be compared with like categories.

### 17. Contemporary Scale and Presence: Numbers That Must Not Be Misread

Because the modern family tree is global, representative contemporary statistics help readers understand which branches remain institutionally substantial. Yet the figures below deliberately retain each body's own measurement term. A baptized Catholic, a Baptist baptized believer, an Assemblies of God adherent, a UPCI constituent and a Jehovah's Witness publisher are not equivalent statistical units. The figures should therefore be read horizontally as snapshots of organizational scale, not vertically as a ranking of religious vitality.

Table 6. Selected contemporary global bodies and their self-reported scale

| Body or communion                               | Most recent official figure used here                                                                                 | Reporting unit and date                                                           | Genealogical significance                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Roman Catholic Church                           | Approx. 1.406 billion                                                                                                 | Baptized Catholics, 2023 data published in 2025                                   | Largest ancient Western communion; includes Latin and Eastern Catholic churches    |
| Lutheran World Federation                       | More than 78 million in 153 member churches across 99 countries                                                       | People represented by member churches; official site retrieved September 19, 2026 | Demonstrates worldwide Lutheran plurality within one global communion structure    |
| Anglican Communion                              | Approx. 90 million in 42 autonomous provinces across more than 165 countries                                          | Official Communion estimate; site retrieved September 19, 2026                    | Shows a communion of autonomous provinces rather than centralized denomination     |
| Baptist World Alliance                          | Approx. 53 million baptized believers in 283 conventions/unions and 180,000 churches across 138 countries/territories | Official BWA membership page; retrieved September 19, 2026                        | Represents much, but not all, of global Baptist Christianity                       |
| Global Anabaptist-related family                | Approx. 2.03 million baptized believers in 87 countries                                                               | MWC statistical compilation, September 2026                                       | About two-thirds of the compiled global family is in Africa, Asia or Latin America |
| World Assemblies of God Fellowship              | Approx. 88 million adherents in more than 451,000 churches and more than 180 member bodies                            | Official WAGF figures; site retrieved September 19, 2026                          | Illustrates the scale of one Trinitarian classical Pentecostal family              |
| United Pentecostal Church International         | Approx. 6 million constituents in 49,000 churches in 203 nations and many territories                                 | Official UPCI leadership page; retrieved September 19, 2026                       | Illustrates global scale of one Oneness Pentecostal organization                   |
| The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints | 17,887,212 members; 32,046 wards and branches                                                                         | Institutional membership at Dec. 31, 2025                                         | Largest body in the Latter Day Saint movement                                      |
| Jehovah's Witnesses                             | Peak 9,205,326 publishers; 119,652 congregations in 241 lands                                                         | 2025 service year                                                                 | Uses active publisher metric rather than conventional church membership            |

*Note. Figures retain each body's own reporting unit and therefore should not be read as directly comparable measures of active participation, membership or adherence.*

The table's most important finding is not which number is largest. It is that Christian family identity is institutionalized differently. Some communions count infants through baptism; some free-church traditions count only professing baptized members; some networks cannot generate a reliable membership total at all. Statistical comparison without ecclesiological context can create as much confusion as a false genealogy.

### 18. The Master Genealogy: Reading the Whole Christian Family Tree

The master genealogy in Figures 1 and 2 condenses the book's historical argument into two landscape charts. The first chart follows the apostolic root through the ancient communions and the major Reformation families. The second follows post-Reformation renewal, restorationism, Pentecostalism, charismatic networks, African/global independent developments and

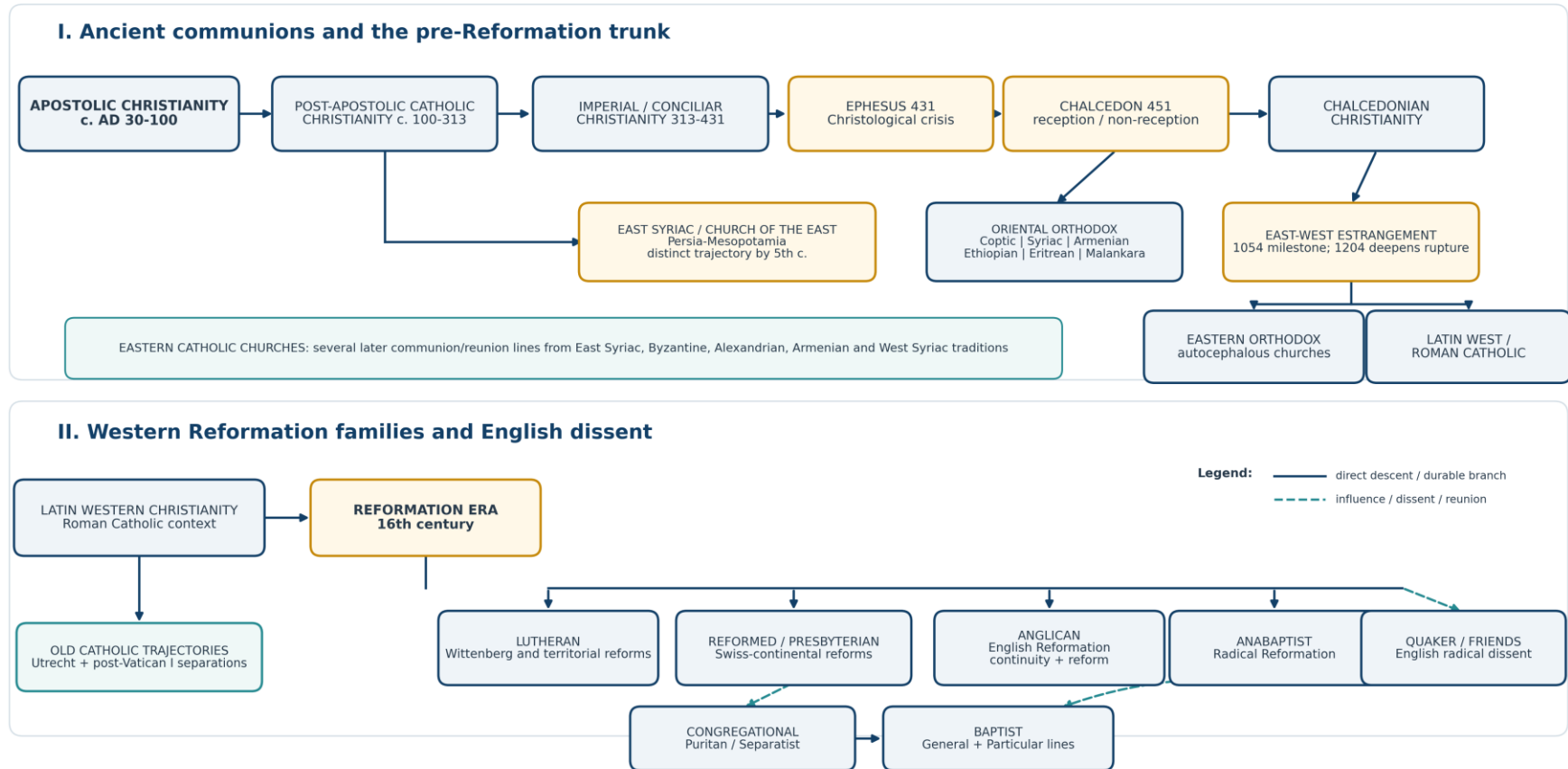
Christian-derived new religious movements. Figure 3 adds a chronological branching timeline so the reader can correlate major family-tree transitions with their historical periods. The division into multiple visual panels is purely editorial; the genealogy itself is continuous.

Several conventions govern the diagrams. Solid lines indicate primary historical descent or durable institutional branching. Dashed lines indicate major influence, dissent, renewal or reunion without direct institutional succession. Dotted lines mark restorationist appropriation or a shared restorationist milieu in which a movement consciously appeals past its immediate institutional setting to an earlier apostolic pattern. Where merger or union is represented, converging lines indicate multiple parentage. A red-outline theological marker identifies movements whose present doctrine of God or Christ lies outside historic Nicene Trinitarianism, or whose Christian-derived authority structure requires separate classification. That marker is theological rather than genealogical: a group can be historically Pentecostal or restorationist while being doctrinally non-Nicene.

The diagrams also resist three common oversimplifications. First, the Church of the East and Oriental Orthodox families appear before the East-West division. Second, Anglicanism is shown as a reformed continuation of the English medieval church rather than as a daughter of Lutheranism. Third, Pentecostalism is shown as a convergence of Holiness, Keswick/higher-life, healing, revival and restorationist influences rather than as a single line beginning at Azusa Street.

# MASTER CHRISTIAN GENEALOGY I

From the Apostolic Root to the Reformation Families



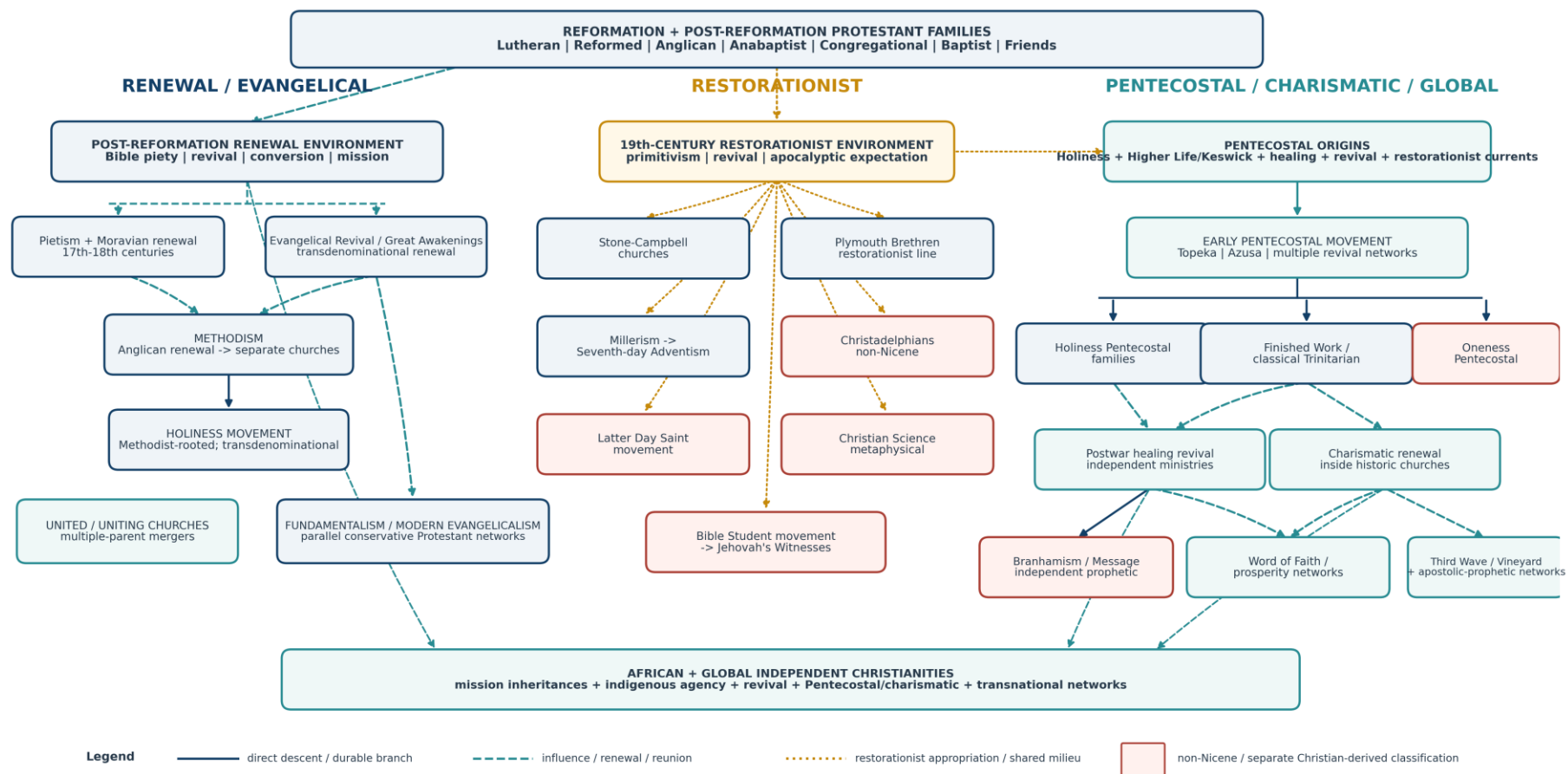
Genealogical proximity does not imply doctrinal identity. Dates mark conventional milestones; reception and institutional separation often developed over time.

**Figure 1. Master Christian genealogy I: From the apostolic root to the Reformation families.**

*Note. Solid lines show primary descent or durable institutional branching; dashed teal lines show influence, dissent or reunion without direct institutional succession. The chart places the Church of the East and Oriental Orthodox divisions before the later East-West estrangement and treats Eastern Catholicism as multiple communion/reunion trajectories rather than one branch founded at a single date.*

# MASTER CHRISTIAN GENEALOGY II

Renewal, Restoration, Pentecostalism, Networks, and Christian-Derived Movements



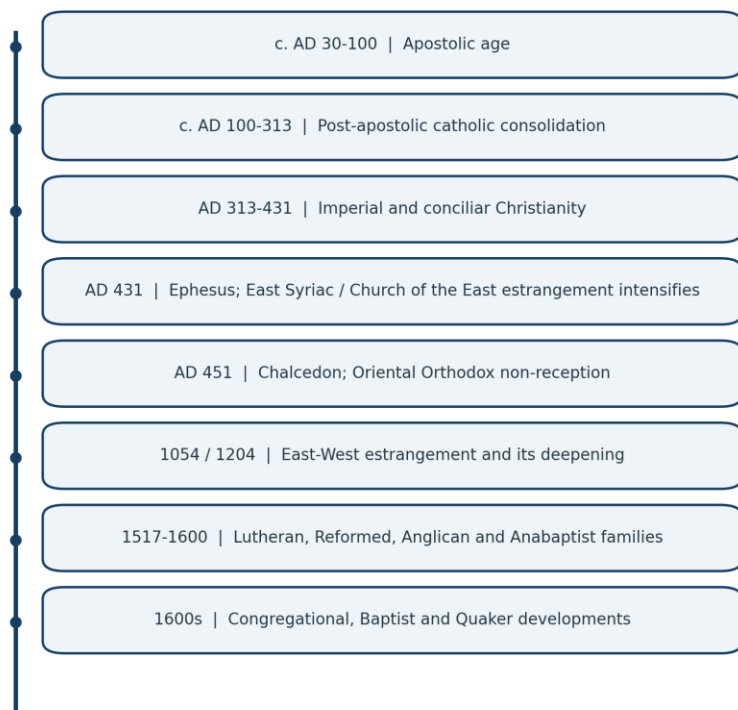
**Figure 2. Master Christian genealogy II: Renewal, restoration, Pentecostalism, networks, and Christian-derived movements.**

*Note. Solid lines indicate direct descent or durable branching; dashed teal lines indicate influence, renewal or reunion; dotted gold lines indicate restorationist appropriation or a shared restorationist milieu. Red outlines identify non-Nicene or otherwise separately classified Christian-derived trajectories. Network arrows indicate influence, not centralized institutional succession.*

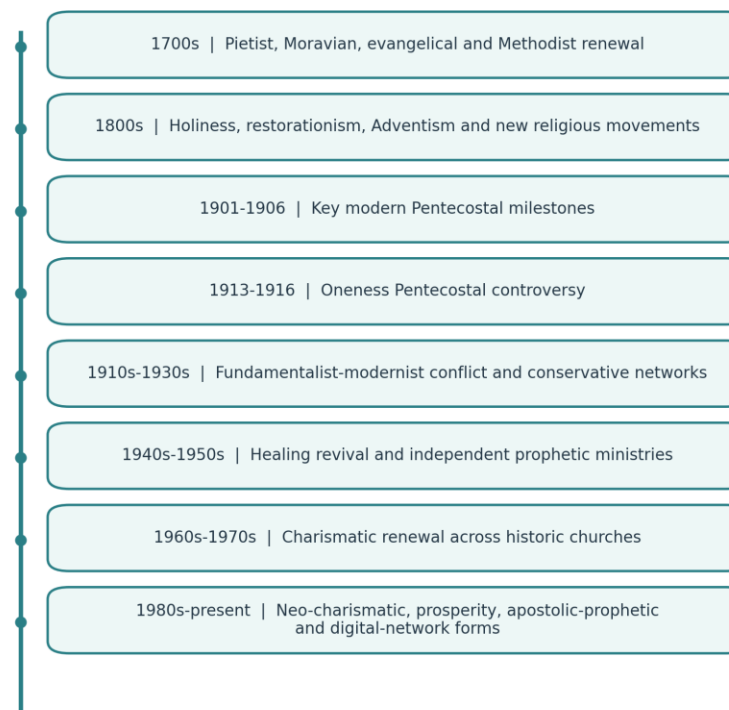
# CHRONOLOGICAL BRANCHING TIMELINE

Selected turning points from the apostolic age to contemporary network Christianity

## I. APOSTOLIC AGE TO POST-REFORMATION MULTIPLICATION



## II. REVIVAL, RESTORATION, PENTECOSTALISM AND GLOBAL NETWORKS



Dates identify conventional milestones or branching periods, not instantaneous worldwide transformations. Reception, resistance, and institutional development often continued across generations.

**Figure 3. Chronological branching timeline: Selected turning points from the apostolic age to the present.**

*Note. Dates identify conventional milestones or branching periods, not instantaneous worldwide transformations. Reception, resistance, and institutional development often continued across generations.*

## **19. Genealogical Profiles of the Major Modern Families**

The master charts necessarily compress complex historical relationships. The profiles below therefore restate each major lineage in continuous prose, emphasizing the character of descent, the principal modern forms and the caution needed to prevent a visual line from being mistaken for a doctrinal verdict.

### **19.1 Ancient East Syriac Profile**

The ancient East Syriac family developed among Christian communities in Mesopotamia and the Persian world, where ecclesiastical life acquired forms partly independent of the Roman imperial church before the fifth-century Christological controversies hardened separation. Its principal direct continuations are the Assyrian Church of the East and the Ancient Church of the East, while East Syriac communities that entered communion with Rome contributed to the Chaldean Catholic Church. The critical genealogical point is that this family is neither a post-1054 Orthodox schism nor a church created by Nestorius; its institutional history precedes both simplifications.

### **19.2 Oriental Orthodox Profile**

The Oriental Orthodox family arose from ancient Alexandrian, Syriac, Armenian and related Christian traditions that did not receive the Council of Chalcedon as it was interpreted and enforced within the imperial church. Over time this non-reception became durable ecclesial separation, producing the Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, Ethiopian, Eritrean and Malankara Orthodox churches. Their common family identity should not erase real historical and liturgical differences among them, and it must remain distinct from Eastern Orthodoxy despite the shared English adjective "Orthodox."

### **19.3 Eastern Orthodox Profile**

Eastern Orthodoxy descends from the Chalcedonian churches of the Greek and eastern Roman world and became durably distinct from the Latin West through centuries of jurisdictional, linguistic, political and liturgical estrangement conventionally marked by 1054 and deepened by 1204. Its modern form is a communion of autocephalous and autonomous churches rather than a centralized global denomination. National and regional jurisdictions therefore represent ecclesial self-government within an Orthodox communion structure, not denominational multiplication in the Protestant sense.

### **19.4 Roman, Eastern Catholic, and Old Catholic Profile**

Roman Catholicism represents the Latin Western trajectory centered on communion with the bishop of Rome, while the Eastern Catholic churches preserve several Byzantine, Alexandrian, Armenian, East Syriac and West Syriac inheritances joined to Rome through different historical processes. This means that Catholic genealogy contains both Western institutional continuity and multiple eastern communion or reunion lines rather than one uniform Latin descent. Old Catholic bodies represent a different relationship again: they are later Western separations, especially through the Utrecht tradition and post-Vatican I resistance to papal definitions. The three trajectories should therefore be distinguished even where they share substantial sacramental and historical inheritance.

### **19.5 Lutheran Profile**

Lutheranism emerged from late medieval Western Catholicism through the Wittenberg Reformation, the controversy surrounding Luther, and the subsequent formation of territorial and national churches. Its descendants include German, Scandinavian, Baltic, African, Asian and other synods and churches linked more by confessional inheritance than by one global juridical center. Pietism later arose as a renewal current within this family and then influenced wider Protestantism, so it should be shown as renewal and influence rather than as a separate ancient root.

### **19.6 Reformed-Presbyterian-Congregational Profile**

The Reformed family developed from interconnected Swiss, south German, French, Dutch, Scottish and English reform movements, then diversified through confession, polity and national history. Presbyterianism expresses the representative rule of elders characteristic of important parts of this family, while Congregationalism developed from English Reformed, Puritan and Separatist settings by locating primary ecclesial authority in the gathered congregation. Their overlap is historical and theological rather than terminological identity: Reformed doctrine, Presbyterian government and Congregational polity belong to intersecting but distinguishable genealogical lines.

### 19.7 Anglican Profile

Anglicanism combines institutional continuity with deliberate Reformation change. The Church of England retained episcopal structures and much inherited ecclesial organization after its break with papal jurisdiction, while its doctrine and liturgy were substantially reshaped through the sixteenth-century English Reformation. The later Anglican Communion consists of autonomous provinces linked by communion rather than central government, and it subsequently generated or hosted evangelical, Anglo-Catholic and charismatic currents. Methodism is one of its most consequential later descendants, beginning as an Anglican renewal before becoming institutionally distinct.

### 19.8 Anabaptist Profile

The Anabaptist family arose within the Radical Reformation through movements that emphasized a voluntary church, believer's baptism, disciplined discipleship and, in significant branches, nonviolence and separation from coercive state religion. Mennonite, Hutterite and Amish traditions preserve different trajectories within this wider family, while Brethren in Christ history reflects additional Pietist and Wesleyan influences. The resemblance between Anabaptists and later believer-baptist churches should not be converted into universal lineal descent, since historical contact and theological similarity do not always equal institutional ancestry.

### 19.9 Baptist Profile

Modern Baptists emerged most directly from English Separatist and Puritan Protestant settings in the early seventeenth century, initially through General and Particular Baptist lines with different soteriological emphases. The family later multiplied through mission, migration, revival, national history and congregational autonomy into conventions, unions and independent churches worldwide. Contact with Dutch Mennonites and other continental radicals belongs in the story, but the most defensible genealogy treats Anabaptism as an influence on some early Baptist contexts rather than the single institutional parent of the entire Baptist family.

### 19.10 Quaker/Friends Profile

The Religious Society of Friends emerged from seventeenth-century English radical Protestantism around George Fox and early Quaker networks rather than from Baptist or Anabaptist institutional succession. Its characteristic emphases included immediate spiritual illumination, simplicity, truthfulness, pacifism in major streams, and forms of worship that did not depend on a professional priesthood or sacramental rites. Later Friends divided into evangelical, conservative and liberal yearly meetings, creating substantial theological diversity within one historical family. Quakerism therefore belongs on the English dissenting branch but requires its own line rather than placement beneath Baptists.

### 19.11 Wesleyan-Holiness Profile

The Wesleyan-Holiness family begins with an eighteenth-century renewal inside Anglicanism. John and Charles Wesley's Methodist societies combined conversion, disciplined small groups, Arminian theology and an intense emphasis on sanctification; political and missionary circumstances then contributed to the formation of independent Methodist churches. Nineteenth-century Holiness movements intensified Wesleyan teaching on entire sanctification and generated bodies such as the Wesleyan, Free Methodist and Nazarene traditions, together with the Salvation Army. That Holiness stream later became one of the principal theological sources of early Pentecostalism, so its genealogy includes both direct ecclesial descent and wider doctrinal influence.

### 19.12 Restorationist Profile

Nineteenth-century restorationism is best understood as a mode of religious reconstruction rather than one denomination. Stone-Campbell churches, Plymouth Brethren, Sabbatarian Adventism, Christadelphians and other movements all appealed in different ways to primitive or apostolic Christianity, yet their authority claims and doctrinal outcomes were not equivalent. Some remained within recognizably Trinitarian Protestant Christianity; others adopted non-Nicene doctrine or new revelatory claims. The category must therefore identify a common restoration impulse while preserving separate genealogical and theological classifications.

### 19.13 Evangelical-Fundamentalist Profile

Modern fundamentalism and evangelicalism form a transdenominational conservative Protestant line rather than a single denomination. Fundamentalism crystallized around resistance to theological liberalism and modernist reinterpretations of Scripture, drawing participants from Presbyterian, Baptist, dispensational, Holiness, revivalist and Bible-institute settings. Postwar evangelicalism retained many conservative doctrinal commitments while pursuing broader intellectual, cultural and

institutional engagement, and it now crosses Anglican, Reformed, Baptist, Methodist, Brethren, Holiness and Pentecostal boundaries. The correct genealogical symbol is therefore a wide band of influence and network formation, not a parent-child denominational arrow.

#### 19.14 Pentecostal Profile

Pentecostalism emerged from a convergence of Wesleyan-Holiness, Keswick or higher-life, divine-healing, revivalist and restorationist currents rather than from one institutional source. Early twentieth-century revivals associated with Topeka, Azusa Street and multiple regional networks produced both Holiness Pentecostal and Finished Work/classical Trinitarian families, while the Oneness controversy generated a historically Pentecostal but non-Nicene branch. Later Pentecostal missions became deeply indigenous in many world regions, and the movement in turn supplied major influence to charismatic and neo-charismatic Christianity. Azusa Street is therefore a decisive hub and symbol, but not the sole organizational ancestor of every Pentecostal church.

#### 19.15 Charismatic and Neo-Charismatic Profile

Charismatic and neo-charismatic Christianity developed when Pentecostal-type experiences moved across inherited denominational boundaries and later generated new churches, ministries and relational networks. Catholic and Protestant charismatic renewals generally remained inside older communions, while the Third Wave, Vineyard, Word of Faith, prosperity and apostolic-prophetic streams developed more independent organizational forms. Because these movements often spread through conferences, media, personal relationships and ministry networks rather than stable denominational succession, their genealogy is increasingly reticular. Labels such as "New Apostolic Reformation" must therefore be used descriptively and cautiously rather than treated as the name of one centralized church.

#### 19.16 Christian-Derived New Religion Profile

Christian-derived new religious movements generally arose in nineteenth-century American restorationist, Adventist or metaphysical environments but developed authority structures or doctrines that require classification apart from ordinary Protestant denominationalism. The Latter Day Saint movement added scriptures and restored-priesthood claims; the Bible Student trajectory generated Jehovah's Witnesses with a non-Nicene Christology; Christian Science interpreted biblical language through Mary Baker Eddy's distinctive metaphysical system. These movements remain historically Christian-derived and often self-identify as Christian, but genealogy alone cannot erase the doctrinal discontinuities by which they differ from classical Nicene Christianity.

#### 19.17 African and Global Independent Profile

African and global independent Christianities do not share one parent or one theology. Depending on the movement, their ancestry may include ancient African churches, mission-founded Catholic or Protestant bodies, local revival, Holiness and Pentecostal missions, indigenous prophetic initiatives, deliverance ministries, or transnational charismatic networks. Their modes of emergence likewise include schism, reform, indigenization, revival, new church planting and network formation. The category is therefore geographical and sociological rather than doctrinal, and any accurate genealogy must trace individual movements from evidence instead of treating "African Independent Church" as a single denominational lineage.

### 20. Biblical-Theological Assessment: What a Family Tree Can and Cannot Prove

The historical genealogy now established permits several biblical conclusions, but it cannot substitute for exegesis. A family tree can show that a doctrine developed late, that an institution has ancient continuity, that one movement borrowed from another, or that a founder claimed restoration. None of those facts, by itself, determines whether the doctrine is true. Under *Sola Scriptura*, Scripture remains the final norm by which every branch, including traditions that appeal to antiquity and traditions that appeal to restoration, must be tested.

#### 20.1 Institutional continuity is not the same as apostolic fidelity

The New Testament values continuity in faithful teaching. Paul instructs Timothy to entrust what he has heard to faithful people who will be able to teach others also ([2 Timothy 2:2](#)). Elders are charged to guard the flock because destructive teachers can arise even from among church leaders themselves ([Acts 20:28-31](#)). Succession of ministry is therefore meaningful, but its biblical purpose is continuity in truth, not the creation of an authority immune from doctrinal testing.

The Bereans examined even apostolic preaching against the Scriptures they possessed ([Acts 17:11](#)), while Paul declared that even an angelic messenger must be rejected if he proclaims a different gospel ([Galatians 1:8-9](#)). These texts do not authorize historical amnesia or private individualism. They establish the priority of God's revealed truth over institutional prestige. An

ancient communion may preserve apostolic truth at many points and still require correction at others. A recent church may recover neglected truth and still introduce novel error.

## 20.2 Nicene classification is historically useful because Scripture itself requires a judgment about Christ

This chapter uses "Nicene" as a historical-theological classifier because the fourth-century controversy concerned claims already forced by Scripture: whether the Son belongs on the Creator side or the creature side of reality. The Gospel of John identifies the Word as with God and as God and states that all things came into being through him ([John 1:1-3](#)). Paul says all things were created through and for the Son and that he is before all things ([Colossians 1:15-17](#)). Hebrews applies language of eternal divine rule and creation to the Son ([Hebrews 1:5-12](#)). The risen Jesus receives Thomas's confession, "My Lord and my God" ([John 20:28](#)).

The Spirit likewise acts personally and divinely: he speaks and sends ([Acts 13:2](#)), distributes gifts as he wills ([1 Corinthians 12:11](#)), can be grieved ([Ephesians 4:30](#)), and is identified in the Ananias narrative with lying to God ([Acts 5:3-4](#)). Father, Son and Spirit are named together in baptism ([Matthew 28:19](#)). The term "Trinity" is post-biblical, but the theological task it names is imposed by the biblical data.

Accordingly, a movement that places the preexistent Christ among created beings or collapses Father, Son and Spirit into one person does not merely choose a different denominational style. It departs from a central biblical confession about the identity of God and Christ. The Nicene boundary is therefore useful in this genealogy not because a council is infallible, but because the creed's central distinction between "begotten" and "made" protects a scriptural truth.

## 20.3 Restoration claims must be tested by apostolic revelation, not by the magnitude of the claimed apostasy

Restoration movements repeatedly argue that the visible church became corrupt and that lost truth or authority had to be restored. Scripture certainly predicts false teachers and apostasy ([Acts 20:29-30](#); [1 Timothy 4:1](#)). It also commands believers to contend for the faith delivered to the saints ([Jude 3](#)). Those warnings make reform and vigilance necessary.

They do not, however, automatically validate a later prophet, additional scripture, restored priesthood or new chronology. The theological question is not whether corruption occurred. History demonstrates repeatedly that it did. The question is whether the proposed restoration corresponds to the apostolic revelation already given. Scripture is God-breathed and equips the believer for every good work ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)). The apostolic gospel is sufficiently fixed that Paul can reject later contradictory revelation regardless of the messenger's charisma ([Galatians 1:8-9](#)). A restoration claim therefore bears the burden of demonstrating continuity with Scripture rather than merely diagnosing failures in historic churches.

## 20.4 The gospel is a stronger boundary than denominational ancestry

The New Testament defines the gospel around the saving work of Jesus Christ: his death for sins, burial, resurrection and appearances ([1 Corinthians 15:1-5](#)). Justification is God's gracious act received through faith apart from works of law as a basis of boasting ([Romans 3:21-28](#)); salvation produces good works but is not earned by them ([Ephesians 2:8-10](#)). These texts provide a theological axis that cuts across historical families.

Consequently, a reader should not infer that everything inside the broad Protestant branch preserves the gospel equally, nor that every doctrine in an ancient communion is false because Protestant reformers criticized it. The gospel must be assessed claim by claim. Institutions, confessions, sacraments, moral systems and spiritual experiences become dangerous when they alter the sufficiency of Christ, introduce another ground of justification or place a human mediator where Scripture locates the unique mediation of Christ ([1 Timothy 2:5](#); [Hebrews 10:10-14](#)).

## 20.5 Renewal and spiritual gifts require discernment, not automatic acceptance or rejection

Pentecostal and charismatic history reminds the church that the New Testament expects the Holy Spirit to empower witness, distribute gifts and edify the body. Paul tells believers not to despise prophecies, but he immediately commands them to test everything and hold to what is good ([1 Thessalonians 5:19-22](#)). John similarly commands believers to test the spirits because false prophets have gone out into the world ([1 John 4:1-3](#)). In Corinth, gifts are ordered toward intelligibility, edification and peace rather than status or spectacle ([1 Corinthians 14:26-33](#)).

The genealogical lesson is that charismatic vitality and doctrinal fidelity are separate questions. A movement may recover neglected prayer, mission, expectancy or mutual ministry while also developing unbiblical prosperity claims, unaccountable prophetic authority or manipulative practices. Conversely, institutional suspicion of charismatic abuse does not justify extinguishing every biblical category of spiritual gifting. Scripture supplies both openness and tests.

## 20.6 Unity is commanded, but unity is not institutional absolutism

The family tree can provoke either triumphalism or despair. Some may conclude that only their branch is the church; others may conclude that division makes truth inaccessible. The New Testament permits neither response. Jesus prays for the unity of his people ([John 17:20-23](#)), and Paul commands believers to preserve the unity of the Spirit ([Ephesians 4:1-6](#)). Factionalism rooted in pride is sin.

Yet apostolic unity is unity in truth. Paul publicly opposed Peter when conduct compromised the truth of the gospel ([Galatians 2:11-14](#)), and churches are instructed to avoid teachers who produce divisions contrary to apostolic doctrine ([Romans 16:17-18](#)). The Christian goal is therefore neither endless fragmentation nor unity purchased by doctrinal indifference. The proper pursuit is visible fellowship under Christ through truth, holiness, humility and love.

## 20.7 Not every disagreement belongs at the same theological level

A disciplined genealogy must also resist treating every branch as evidence of apostasy. Paul allows diversity of conviction on disputable practices while commanding believers not to despise or judge one another ([Romans 14:1-12](#)). By contrast, denial of the resurrection empties the gospel of its saving content ([1 Corinthians 15:12-19](#)). Church polity, liturgical form, calendar and some eschatological questions can be serious without occupying the same level as the identity of God, the person of Christ, the resurrection or justification.

This hierarchy does not make secondary doctrine irrelevant. Secondary disputes have caused real schisms, shaped worship and influenced Christian mission. It does prevent the historian-theologian from treating a disagreement over instruments in worship, for example, as equivalent to the confession that Christ is a created being. The final chapter will develop this hierarchy of doctrinal seriousness more fully.

## 21. Contemporary Significance: What the Genealogy Explains About Christianity Today

The modern family tree helps explain why contemporary Christians can share vocabulary while meaning different things by it. "Apostolic" can refer to ancient episcopal succession, fidelity to apostolic doctrine, restoration of New Testament offices or a contemporary charismatic network. "Catholic" can mean universal in an early patristic text, communion with Rome in modern usage or a creedal attribute of the church in Protestant confession. "Orthodox" can refer to Eastern Orthodoxy, Oriental Orthodoxy or simply doctrinal correctness. "Evangelical" can identify a transdenominational theological movement rather than one church. Without genealogy, readers can assume equivalence where none exists.

The tree also explains why denominational names do not always predict current doctrine. A Baptist congregation may be Calvinistic, Arminian, charismatic or cessationist. Anglican provinces share historical and liturgical bonds while differing sharply on disputed ethical and ecclesiological questions. Quaker yearly meetings range from explicitly evangelical and Christ-centered to liberal theological forms. Independent churches may possess detailed confessions or almost none. The historical family provides context but does not replace examination of the current official teaching of a particular body.

Genealogy is equally important for ecumenical conversation. Reunion efforts often fail when participants assume the division was caused by only one doctrinal proposition. The East-West Schism, for example, involved theology, jurisdiction, language, empire, canon law and memory. The Chalcedonian division involved real Christological concern but also terminology, politics and reception. Protestant divisions include theology but also state formation, migration, class, ethnicity, race and institutional rivalry. Repair requires an accurate diagnosis of how separation actually happened.

For mission and theological education, the family tree offers another benefit. A new believer encountering dozens of churches does not need a list of thousands of names. The reader needs a map of the major families, their parentage, authority structures and doctrinal fault lines. Once the larger genealogy is understood, individual denominations become intelligible as local instances of wider traditions.

Finally, the tree exposes the modern crisis of accountability. Denominations can become bureaucratic, politically entangled or doctrinally complacent; networks can become personality-centered, opaque and unstable. Neither institutional age nor entrepreneurial flexibility guarantees faithfulness. Historic churches need continual reformation under the Word, while independent movements need accountable leadership, doctrinal testing and corporate memory. The genealogy shows that both ossification and uncontrolled novelty have repeatedly produced fragmentation.

## 22. Genealogical Summary

Table 7. Chapter 14 genealogical summary

| Field | Synthesis |
|-------|-----------|
|-------|-----------|

| Field                            | Synthesis                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Parent tradition                 | The apostolic church of the first century is the common historical root claimed by later Christian traditions; no modern denomination existed in fully developed form at the root.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Approximate emergence            | The genealogy spans c. AD 30 to the present, with major branching periods after Ephesus (431), Chalcedon (451), East-West estrangement culminating conventionally in 1054, the Reformation after 1517, post-Reformation renewal, nineteenth-century restorationism and twentieth-century Pentecostal-charismatic expansion.                                                                                                                                                     |
| Geographical origin              | Jerusalem and the eastern Mediterranean at the root; later major centers include Mesopotamia/Persia, Egypt, Syria, Armenia, Constantinople, Rome, western and central Europe, Britain, North America, Africa, Asia, Latin America and global diasporas.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Principal actors                 | Jesus Christ and the apostles at the root; later councils, bishops, reformers, revivalists, missionaries, founders, indigenous leaders and institutions. Representative figures include Cyril of Alexandria, Leo I, eastern catholicoi and patriarchs, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Cranmer, Menno Simons, George Fox, Wesley, Stone, the Campbells, Miller, Ellen White, Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy, Russell, Parham, Seymour and numerous global indigenous Christian leaders. |
| Immediate causes of branching    | Christological controversy; conciliar reception; papal and patriarchal jurisdiction; liturgical and political estrangement; Reformation disputes over authority, justification and sacraments; church-polity conflict; baptism; revival and holiness; restoration claims; prophetic revelation; Spirit-baptism controversies; racial, colonial and indigenous leadership struggles; modern network formation.                                                                   |
| Deeper causes                    | Competing authority structures; language and culture; empire and nation; canon law; clerical reform; printing and literacy; migration; revivalism; democratization of religious authority; apocalyptic expectation; media; globalization; colonialism and decolonization; urbanization; charismatic entrepreneurship; digital communication.                                                                                                                                    |
| Authority structures             | Scripture alone or Scripture as supreme norm in many Protestant bodies; Scripture and apostolic tradition in Orthodox traditions; Scripture, Tradition and magisterium in Roman Catholicism; confessions and church orders in many historic Protestants; additional scripture and prophetic authority in some Christian-derived movements; apostles/prophets and relational authority in some independent networks.                                                             |
| Principal doctrinal distinctives | Trinity and Christology; Scripture and tradition; papal and conciliar authority; justification; sacraments/ordinances; baptism; Eucharist; sanctification; spiritual gifts; Sabbath; eschatology; prophecy and revelation; church government; mediation; restoration claims.                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Immediate branches               | Church of the East; Oriental Orthodox; Eastern Orthodox; Roman/Eastern Catholic; Lutheran; Reformed/Presbyterian; Anglican; Anabaptist; Congregational; Baptist; Quaker; Methodist/Holiness; restorationist; Pentecostal Trinitarian and Oneness; charismatic and independent-network streams; Christian-derived new religious movements.                                                                                                                                       |
| Later descendants                | Thousands of national churches, denominations, synods, conventions, unions, communions, missionary churches, united churches, independent congregations and transnational networks. The number cannot be represented meaningfully by one global denomination count because classification criteria vary.                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Present-day presence             | Global. Ancient communions remain strong in historic homelands and diasporas; Protestant, evangelical, Pentecostal and charismatic traditions are present on every inhabited continent; Africa, Asia and Latin America are major contemporary centers of Christian demographic and missionary vitality.                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Major biblical questions raised  | What constitutes apostolic continuity? Is doctrine tested by Scripture or by an additional final authority? Who is God and who is Jesus Christ? What is the saving gospel? What role do baptism and the Lord's Supper play? How should prophecy and spiritual gifts be tested? When is separation required, and when does it become sinful factionalism? How should believers distinguish legitimate diversity from another gospel?                                             |

## 23. Conclusion: From Mapping the Tree to Testing Its Fruit

The modern Christian landscape did not arise from one original institution shattering into thousands of equally direct fragments. Its genealogy is far more structured. The apostolic root gave way to increasingly organized catholic and conciliar Christianity. Enduring eastern divisions appeared before the medieval split between Rome and Constantinople. The Reformation then produced several distinct Protestant families rather than one Protestant church. Post-Reformation renewal generated Pietist, evangelical, Methodist and Holiness streams; nineteenth-century restorationism produced both recognizably Protestant churches and movements that developed new scriptures or non-Nicene theology; Pentecostalism arose from a convergence of Holiness, healing, higher-life, revivalist and restorationist currents; charismatic renewal crossed old denominational boundaries; and modern network Christianity increasingly operates through influence rather than stable institutional succession. Africa and the wider Global South have become active centers of Christian agency, not peripheral recipients of a European religious tree.

The chapter's central historical conclusion is therefore methodological as much as descriptive: ancestry must be typed. Direct descent is not the same as influence. Schism is not the same as revival. Merger is not the same as restoration. Self-

identification is not the same as doctrinal continuity. Institutional continuity is not the same as fidelity to apostolic teaching. Once those distinctions are maintained, the apparently chaotic denominational landscape becomes intelligible without becoming artificially simple.

The theological conclusion is equally important. A family tree can establish where a teaching or institution came from; it cannot make that teaching true. Ancient lineage deserves careful historical respect but does not override Scripture. Successful reform can expose genuine corruption without guaranteeing that every corrective is biblical. Revival can restore neglected spiritual vitality while introducing new excesses. A restoration movement can correctly diagnose institutional failure while wrongly claiming additional revelation. A modern network can preach the gospel faithfully while lacking adequate accountability, or it can use biblical vocabulary while centering authority on a charismatic leader.

The final task of this book therefore cannot be another historical branch. It must be judgment at the root. The next chapter returns to the apostolic benchmark and tests the recurring doctrinal claims exposed by the genealogy: Scripture and tradition, succession and church authority, Trinity and Christology, justification and salvation, baptism and the Lord's Supper, Mary and the saints, prophecy and continuing revelation, spiritual gifts, eschatology, and the boundary between Christian unity and necessary separation. The historical map is now complete enough to ask the decisive question: where has the tree preserved the apostolic Word, where has it legitimately diversified, and where has it grown beyond what Scripture authorizes?

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