

The Early Church and Church History

Heavenly Father, as you are great and powerful and most deserving of our love.

We thank you for bringing us together today to listen and discuss the scriptures and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

We ask that you open our minds and our hearts to each others discussions and to each others thoughts as we learn about the history of the Catholic church.

We ask that the spirit within each of us help us walk in the footsteps of your son and our savior, Jesus Christ, who reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God forever and ever.

Amen

Church History video

The Early Church

- Who started the Catholic Church?
 - Jesus of course
- Who was the first leader of the Church?
 - Simon, son of Jonah
 - Or better know as Peter
 - Name means rock in Aramaic
 - [Mathew 16:17-18](#)
- What day is the birthday of the Church?
 - Pentecost, 33AD
 - [Acts 2:2-4](#)

Early Christians

- The early followers of Jesus were JEWS ?
 - They prayed in the temple as a good Jew would do
 - But they also privately met for the Breaking of Bread
 - The sacrifice that the Savior had left them
- Who was the first Christian martyr?
 - Stephen
 - Acts 7:59-60
 - This act was essentially the day Christians separated from Judaism

Christianity Spreads

- Persecution against believers in Jesus broke out in Jerusalem
 - [Acts 8:1-3](#)
- The zealous Pharisee Saul was determined to crush the followers of Christ.
 - [Acts 9:1-2](#)
- Paul's conversion
 - [Acts 9:3-9](#)
- Why Paul?
 - Very educated. Spoke well and in different tongues.



People were looking for Good News

- The public cult of mythological gods didn't foster morality or offer hope in the face of death.
- Reaction against immorality and brutality caused many people to welcome the good news of Christ and salvation.
- Nero blamed the Christians for the burning of Rome and thus started the persecution of Christians to squelch their beliefs.
- Persecution led to more Believers
 - Several million believers by year 300

Life in Early Church

- The ceremony of the breaking of bread bound the Christian community together in the real flesh and blood of Jesus.
- Bishops shepherded the Church in their communities. In large communities they ordained priests and deacons to assist them.
 - Bishop of Rome was seen as having central authority in the wider Church.
- In 313, emperor Constantine decreed that no one “should be denied the opportunity to give his heart to Jesus”
 - Ending persecution of Christians

Religious Freedom

- Heresies - Beliefs or opinions that directly contradict official Church teaching
- Rome empire eventually fell; Barbarians invaded
- Christians worked to civilize and convert the new invaders
- Christianity became the center of community life
- Invaders became kings in their own region and hand selected the next bishops , men that aligned to the nobleman instead of the gospel

Schism of 1054

- In 1054, a schism (or division) of the Eastern (Orthodox) Church from the Western (Roman) Church
 - a disagreement about the pope's role and a difference in understanding of how we talk about the Holy Spirit in the Creed.
 - The procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father OR from the Father and Son (Roman version)
 - Also clerical celibacy and Sacrament of Confirmation reserved for the Bishop
 - Mutual excommunications by both Pope Leo IX and Patriarch Cerularius
 - Lifted in 1965 by Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras

SCHISM OF 1054

- Separation of Western and Eastern Christianity, 1054
- Centres of the spread of Christianity



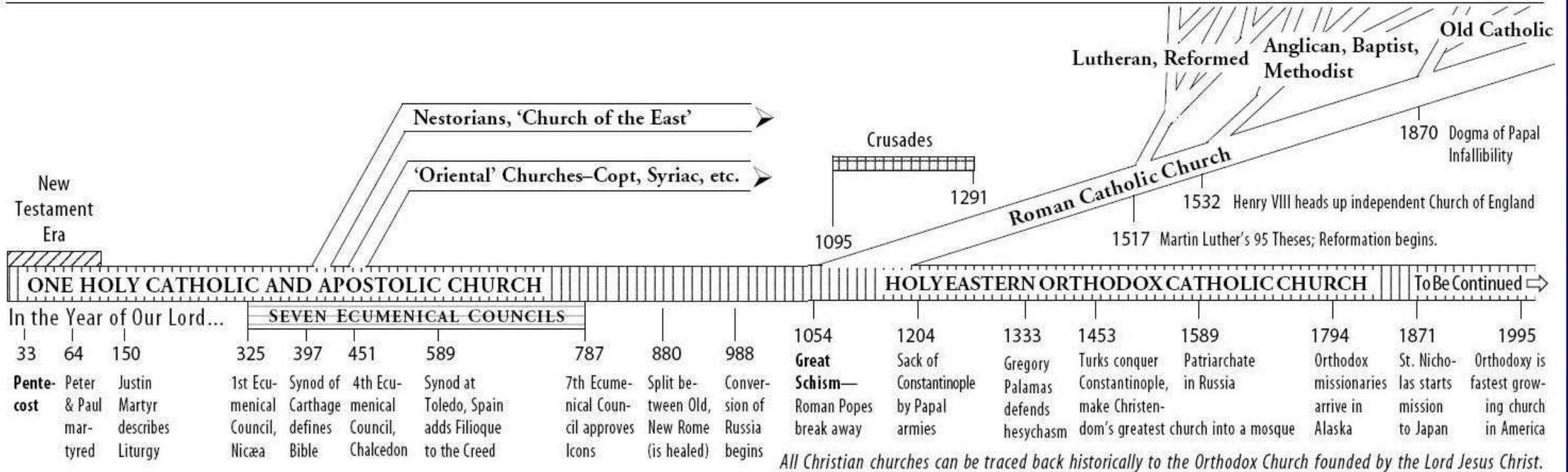
Church Reform

- In 1517, Martin Luther, a Catholic monk called for the end of abuses in the Church. His first 2 thesis
 - That God intended believers to seek repentance
 - That faith alone, and not deeds, would lead to salvation
- 1545-1563 Council of Trent, clarified Catholic belief, corrected abuses, and setup a seminary system to educate clergy

21st Century Church

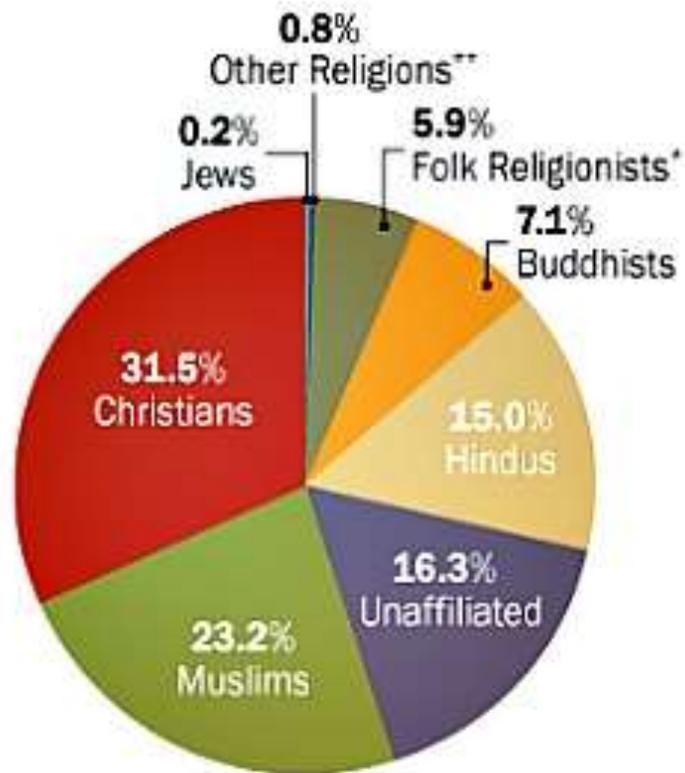
- 1962-1965, the 2nd Vatican Council
 - Updates in the ways Catholic worship and practice the faith
 - Teaching “universal call to holiness”
 - Encouraged the laity to become more involved in the work of the Church
 - Renew efforts to follow Christ

TIMELINE OF CHURCH HISTORY



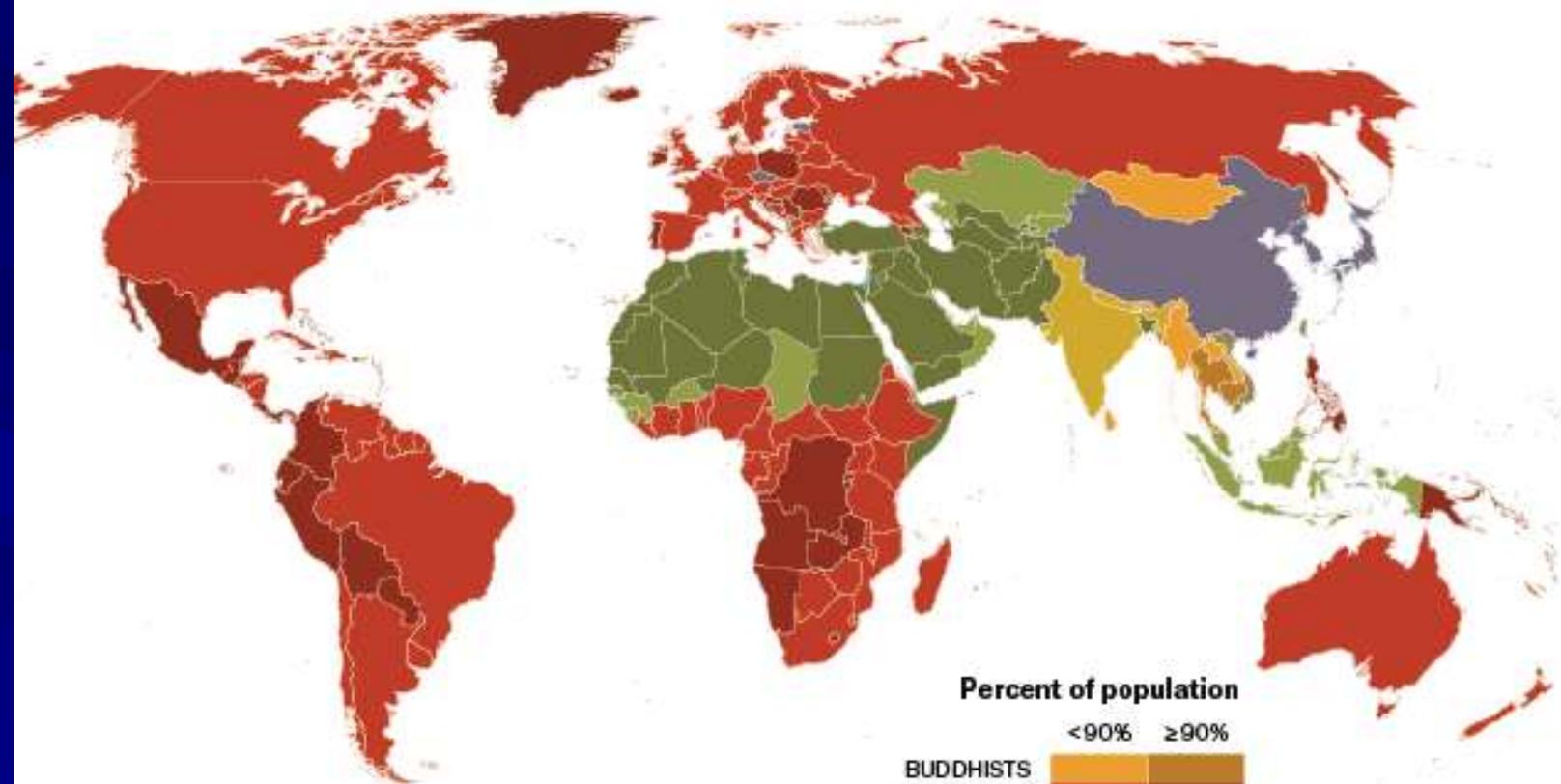
Size of Major Religious Groups, 2010

Percentage of the global population



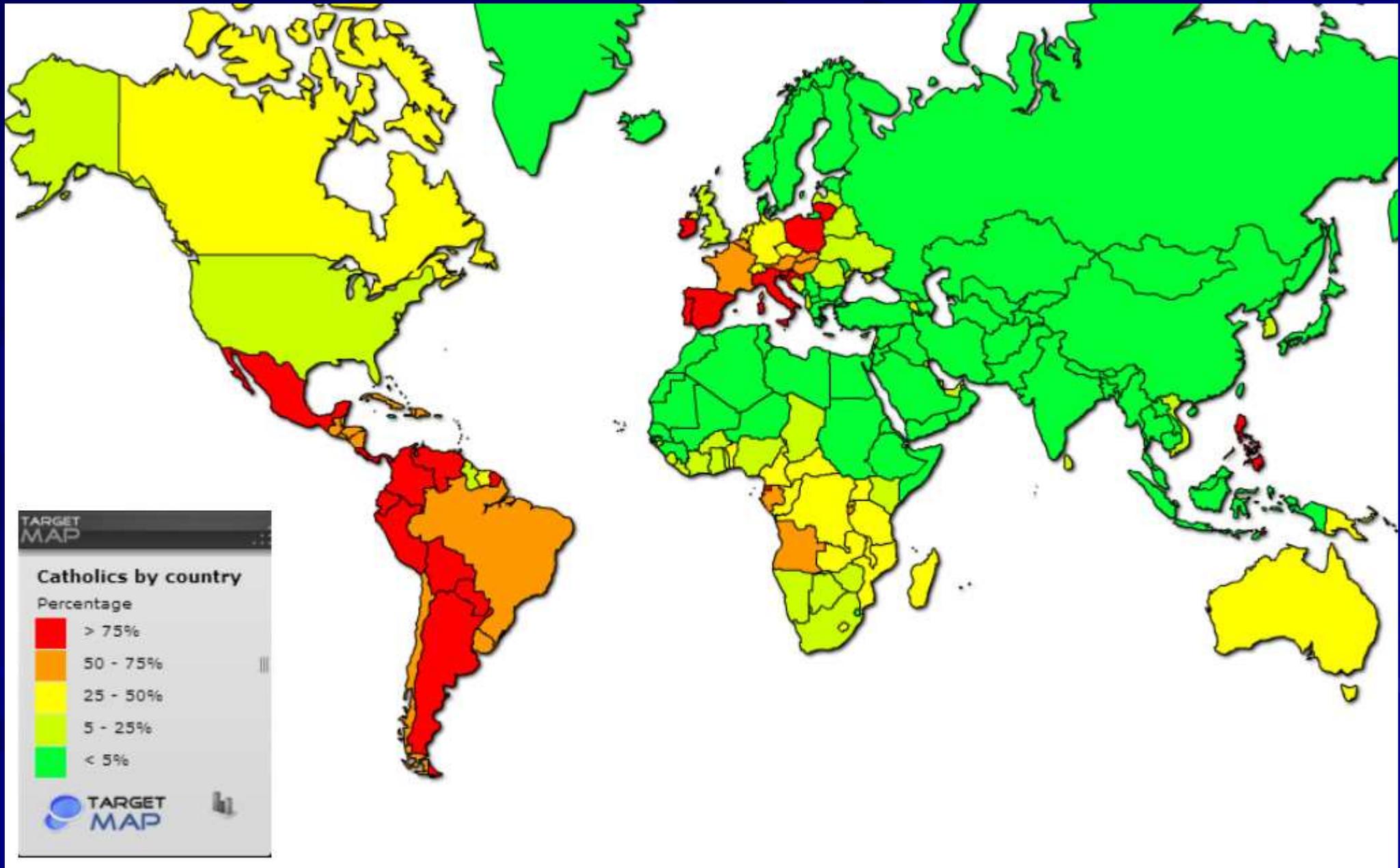
Largest Religious Group, by Country

Colors represent the largest religion in each country. Darker shading represents a greater prevalence of the largest religion.

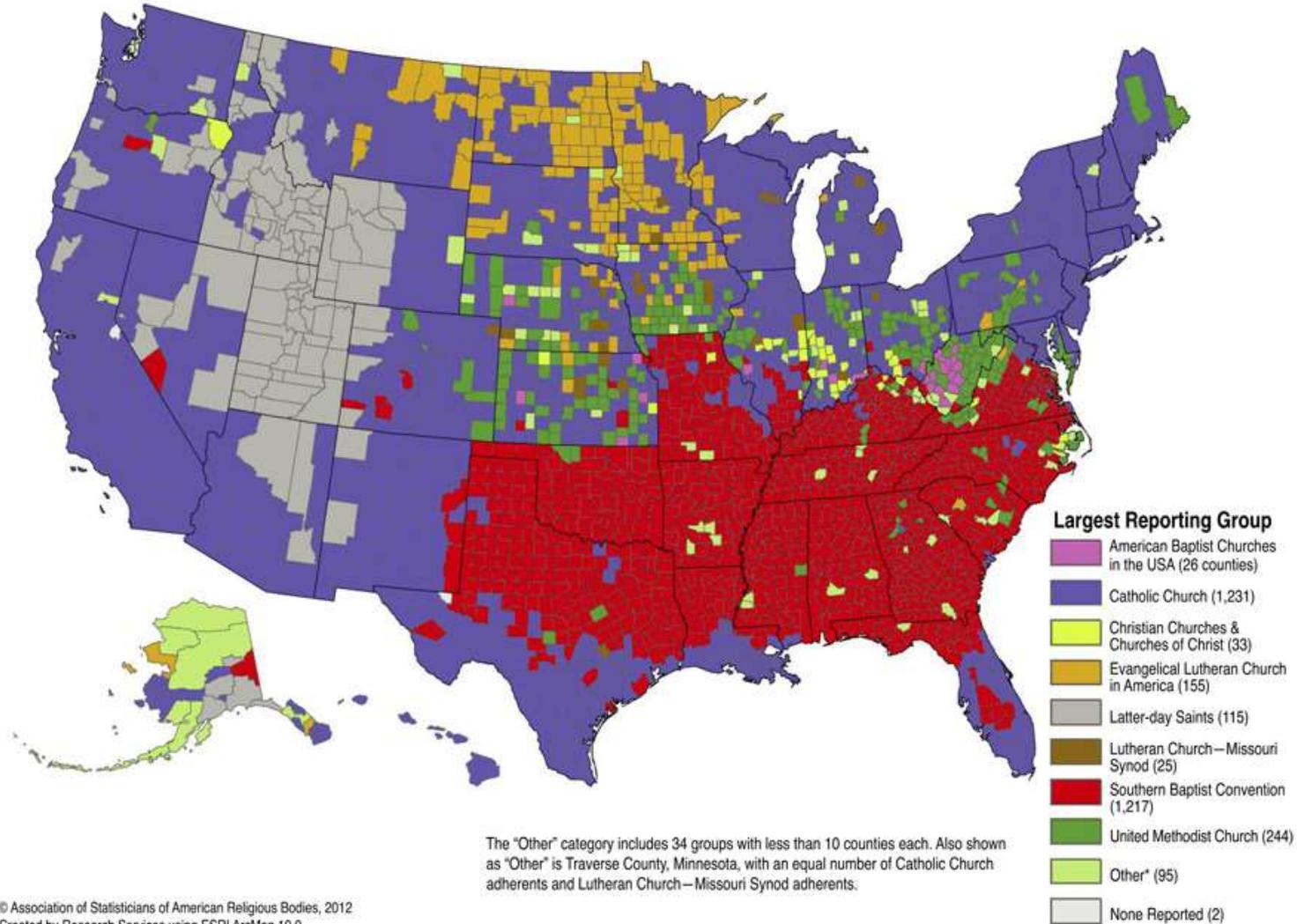


Source: The Future of World Religions, April 2015.
Estimates for the year 2010. Followers of other religions do not make up the largest religion in any country.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



Largest Participating Religious Group Group with the Largest Number of Adherents by County, 2010



Florida residents identify as mostly of various Protestant groups. Roman Catholics make up the single largest denomination in the state.

- Protestant (generic), 40%

- Roman Catholic, 26%

- Baptist, 9%

- Methodist, 6%

- Pentecostal, 3%

- Jewish, 3%

- other religions

(including Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, Taoism, Shinto, and Bahá'í), 3%

- non-religious, 10%



Questions & Discussion

ACT OF CONTRITION

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life.

Mathew 16:17-18

¹⁷Jesus said to him in reply, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.

¹⁸And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.



Acts 2:2-4

²And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were.

³Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them.

⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.



Acts 7:59-60

⁵⁹As they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

⁶⁰Then he fell to his knees and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them”; and when he said this, he fell asleep.



Acts 8:1

¹Now Saul was consenting to his execution. On that day, there broke out a severe persecution of the church in Jerusalem, and all were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

²Devout men buried Stephen and made a loud lament over him.

³Saul, meanwhile, was trying to destroy the church; entering house after house and dragging out men and women, he handed them over for imprisonment.



Acts 9:1-2

¹Now Saul, still breathing murderous threats against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest

²and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, that, if he should find any men or women who belonged to the Way, he might bring them back to Jerusalem in chains.



Acts 9:3-6

³On his journey, as he was nearing Damascus, a light from the sky suddenly flashed around him.

⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”

⁵He said, “Who are you, sir?” The reply came, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

⁶Now get up and go into the city and you will be told what you must do.”

Acts 9:7-9

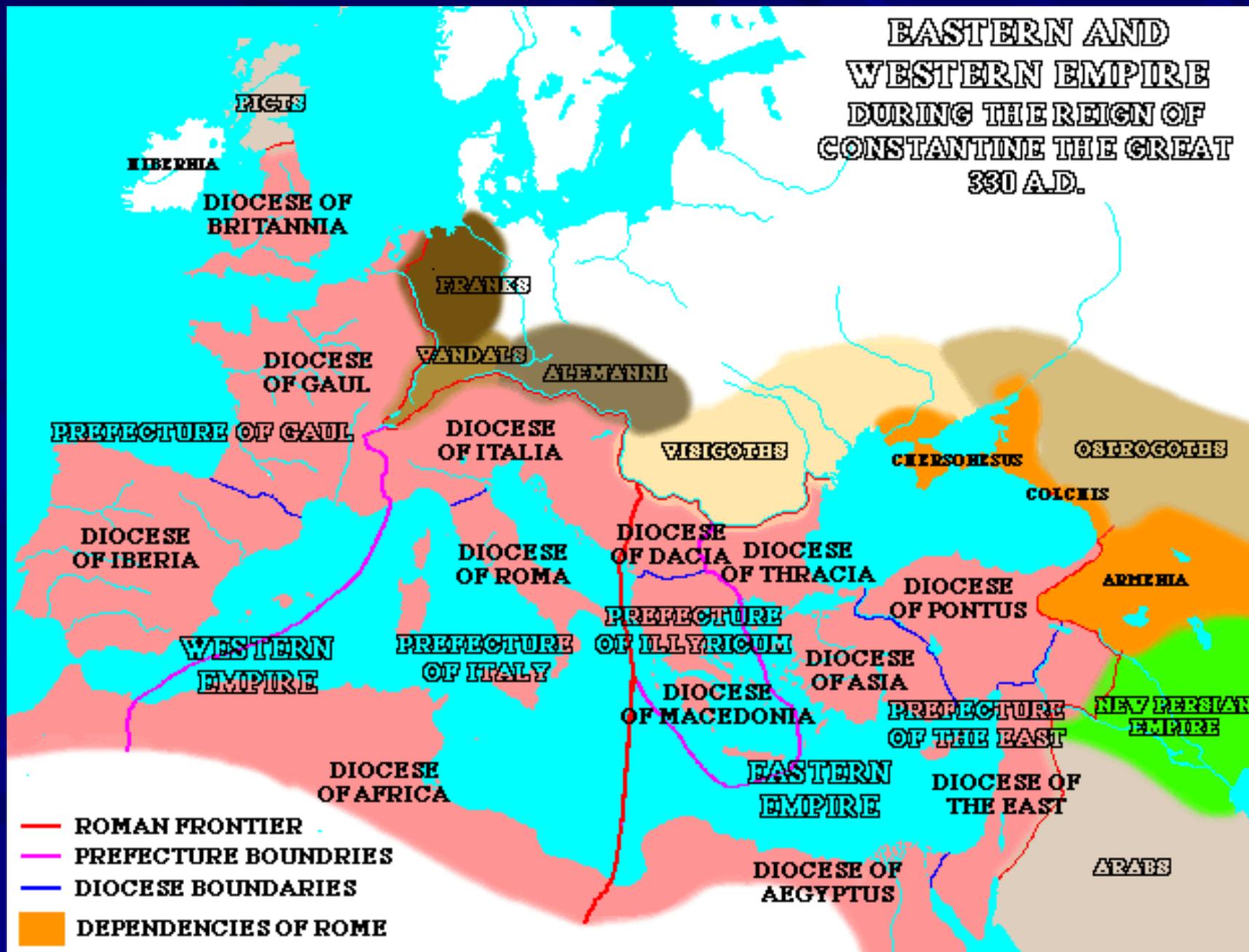
⁷The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, for they heard the voice but could see no one.

⁸Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him to Damascus.

⁹For three days he was unable to see, and he neither ate nor drank.



EASTERN AND WESTERN EMPIRE DURING THE REIGN OF CONSTANTINE THE GREAT 330 A.D.



**ROMAN EMPIRE
DURING THE SACK OF ROME
410 A.D.**

