

HOW OLD IS THE ORTHODOX CHURCH?

By

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If you are a Lutheran, your religion was founded by Martin Luther, an ex-monk of the Roman Catholic Church, in the year 1517. If you belong to the Church of England, your religion was founded by King Henry VIII in the year 1534 because the Pope would not grant him a divorce with the right to re-marry.

If you are a Presbyterian, your religion was founded by John Knox in Scotland in the year 1560. If you are a Congregationalist, your religion was originated by Robert Brown in Holland in 1582.

If you are Protestant Episcopalian, your religion was an offshoot of the Church of England, founded by Samuel Senbury in the American colonies in the 17th century. If you are a Baptist, you owe the tenets of your religion to John Smyth, who launched it in Amsterdam in 1606.

If you are of the Dutch Reformed Church, you recognize Michelis Jones as founder because he originated your religion in New York in 1628. If you are Methodist, your religion was founded by John and Charles Wesley in England in 1744.

If you worship with the Salvation Army, your sect began with William Booth in London in 1865. If you are Christian Scientist, you look to 1879 as the year in which your religion was born and to Mary Baker Eddy as its founder.

If you belong to one of the religious organizations known as Church of the Nazarene, Pentecostal Gospel, Holiness Church or Jehovah's Witnesses, your religion is one of the hundreds of new sects founded by men within the past hundred years.

If you are a Roman Catholic, your church shared the same rich apostolic and doctrinal heritage as the Orthodox Church for the first thousand years of its history, since during the first millennium they were one and the same Church. Lamentably, in 1054, the Pope of Rome broke away from the other four Apostolic Patriarchates (Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem), by tampering with the Original Creed of the Church, and considering himself to be infallible. Thus your church is 1,000 years old.

If you are an Orthodox Christian, your religion was founded in the year 33 by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It has not changed since that time. Our Church is now almost 2,000 years old. And it is for this reason, that Orthodoxy, the Church of the Apostles and the Fathers, is considered the true "one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church."

This is the greatest legacy that we can pass on to the young people of the next millennium.

Metropolitan Ephraim's Note: To Father Efthimiou's very informative article, we can only add the following remarks: As far as the year of the founding of the Orthodox Church is concerned (A. D. 33, according to Father Efthimou), that particular date is, according to the Holy Fathers, off by a few eons. For example, St. Clement, the Bishop of Rome, says that the Church existed from the creation of the Angels, for the Angels came into existence before the world, and they have always been members of the Church. The Church, says St. Clement "was created before the sun and the moon" (2nd Ep. to the Corinthians 14).