

Describe three controversies that led to the distinctions between orthodox and we...

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Distinctions between Orthodox and Western Christianity Distinction between the Eastern Christianity (the orthodox) and the western Christianity dates back as early as the fourth century A. D. The separation is attributed to sociological, cultural, linguistic, and political differences between the groups. Studies show that while the western Christians used Latin language their Eastern counterparts communicated in Greek. In addition, Christians in the Eastern were headed by a group of bishops based in areas such as Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople, and Alexandria, which had a common cultural background and language. On the other hand, the bishop of Rome governed the western group implying its administration was under a single bishop. As a result, basic theological differences emerged between the eastern and the western Christians (Vidmar 47).

Separation between the Roman Catholic Church rather the western Christianity and the Eastern Orthodox Christianity was primarily based on deviation by Rome from the seven ecumenical councils' original conclusions. This included the universal papal supremacy claim. Similarly, " Filoque controversy" is noted as another contributing factor to the difference between the two religions. The insertion of the phrase into the Nicene Creed changed the implication of the Holy Spirit source. Rather than in the usual perception of its origin from the Father, the " Filoque" which meant from the son, changed the Creed to imply both the Father and the Son were the source of the Holy Spirit. Despite the western emphasis of Christ's divinity, the Orthodox Christians were against the alterations and the emerging meaning after the insertion. According to the Eastern Christians, the Father defines the origin of both the Son and the Holy Spirit (Ware 56).

The concept of “Sola Scripture” is another area that distinguishes the western Christianity from the Orthodox. According to the western Christians, the “Scripture alone” rather than the “Sola Scripture” claim that God’s word can be clearly comprehended and construed by an individual believer. Therefore, it is sufficient to be defined as the final authority under the western Christianity; however, the Orthodox posits that the Holy Scripture in the Holy tradition are of equal importance and value. Their definition of the Holy Scripture stems from the definition and interpretation affirmed in the first seven ecumenical council’s teachings by the church.

In addition, the difference in theological approaches explains the distinction that exists between the Western Christianity and the Eastern Orthodoxy.

Cultural influences have been dictated as the cause of theological differences. The Eastern Orthodoxy mind is more inclined towards ideology, mysticism, and philosophy, while the Western Christians are guided by the legal and practical mentality. This exemplifies the difference in approaches to spiritual truth that the Western and the Eastern Christians possess. The precise definition of truth is least emphasized by the Orthodoxy Christians since their main point of focus is the personal experience. In regards to worship, the Eastern Orthodox places more emphasis as the pivot point of a Christian church life rather than its Divine Liturgy (Pinson and Quill 102).

Mystical and Priestly nature characterizes worship. Moreover, the Eastern Orthodox incorporated a numinous form of medieval prayer and veneration of icons in their religious rituals. However, the Western Christianity views worship as a form of glorifying God that is mass centered. Though Latin language was used in worship, greater emphasis is placed on vernacular use

(Weinewright and Tucker 45).

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