



# St. Catherine Greek Orthodox Church

## Summary – Early Christian Heresies – Then and Now

Heresy	Orthodox Teaching	Sects Teaching this Heresy
<p><b>Dualism:</b></p> <p>The religious or theological system which would explain the universe as the outcome of two eternally opposed and coexisting principles, conceived as good and evil, light and darkness, or some other form of conflicting powers.</p>	<p>Orthodox teaching holds that God created the world and it was <i>good</i>. Physical evil is the result of the necessary limitations of finite created beings, and that moral evil, which alone is evil in the true sense, is a consequence of the creation of beings possessed of free wills and is tolerated by God. Both physical and moral evil are to be conceived as some form of privation or defect of being, not as positive entity</p>	<p><b>Religions of modern non-literate peoples.</b></p> <p>Religious dualism manifests itself among non-literate peoples, especially in the concept of a "second" figure, an ambivalent demiurge- trickster who can be both a collaborator and rival of the supreme being and independent of the latter in origin. Such tricksters include the Coyote (in North American Indian mythology), the Raven (among Paleosiberians), or the Crow (among the Southeast Australian tribes). To these animal figures are attributed the origin of such negative aspects of life as death and illness. But they are also credited as benefactors; e.g., in creating utilities in the cosmos and in the invention of fire. The demiurge-trickster is typically ambivalent, tremendously frightful and efficacious, but also frequently limited in power.</p>
<p><b>Gnosticism</b></p> <p>Gnostic theology is as follows. The unknowable God was far too pure and perfect to have anything to do with the material universe which was considered evil. Therefore, God generated lesser divinities, Aeons (or emanations). One of these Aeons, Sophia (Wisdom) desired to know the unknowable God. Out of this erring desire the demiurge an evil god was formed and it was this evil god that created the universe. He along with Aeons kept the mortals in bondage in material matter and tried to prevent the pure spirit souls from ascending back to god after the death of the physical bodies.</p> <p>Since, according to the Gnostics, matter is evil, deliverance from material form was attainable only through special knowledge revealed by special Gnostic teachers. Christ was the divine redeemer who descended from the spiritual realm to reveal the knowledge necessary for this redemption. In</p>	<p>We believe that the created world itself is a 'mystery' originating in the sovereign will of God accomplished by the action (energia) of the Holy Trinity. We confess in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed (325/381) that the Father is the "Creator of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible", the Son "He through whom all things were made", and the Holy Spirit, the "Creator of life." Thus, the three persons created together the world, which is the fruit of the common action of the Holy Trinity issuing out of the one essence.</p> <p>The value of the creation is seen not only in the fact that it is intrinsically good, but also in the fact that it is appointed by God to be the home for living beings. The value of the natural creation is revealed in the fact that it was made for God (something which is beautifully expressed in Orthodox iconography), i.e. to be the context for God's Incarnation and</p>	<p>In the United States there are several Gnostic churches with diverse lineages, one of which is the Ecclesia Gnostica, based primarily in Los Angeles, which is affiliated with the Gnostic Society, an organization dedicated to the study of Gnosticism. The current leader of both organizations is Stephan A. Hoeller who has also written extensively on Gnosticism and the occult. Parishes of the Ecclesia Gnostica and educational organizations affiliated with the Gnostic Society are active in Portland, Oregon, Seattle, West Virginia, Sedona, Arizona, Salt Lake City, Utah, and Oslo, Norway.</p> <p>Many New Age types of thought or religions espouse certain Gnostic ideas and ideals.</p> <p>Masonic and similar organizations likewise have Gnostic tendencies.</p>



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<p>conclusion, Gnosticism is dualistic. That is, it teaches there is a good and evil, spirit and matter, light and dark, etc. dualism in the universe.</p>	<p>humankind's deification, and as such, the beginning of the actualization of the Kingdom of God. We may say that the cosmos provides the stage upon which humankind moves from creation to deification. Ultimately, however, the whole of the creation is destined to become a transfigured world, since the salvation of humankind necessarily involves the salvation of its natural home, the cosmos.</p>	
<p><b>Marcionites</b></p> <p>Marcionism is the dualist belief system that originates in the teachings of Marcion of Sinope at Rome around the year 144. Marcion taught that there were two gods, proclaiming that the stern, lawgiving, creator God of the Old Testament, and the good, merciful God of the New Testament were different. He considered the creator god the inferior of the two. Marcion also rejected the real incarnation of Christ, claiming that he was a manifestation of the Father.</p> <p>He believed in salvation by faith rather than by gnosis; he rejected the Gnostic emanation theory; and he sought truth in his own truncated version of the New Testament, which included only 10 of the so-called Pauline Epistles and an edited version of St. Luke.</p> <p>He completely rejected the Old Testament. He explained in his Antitheses that since Jewish law was often opposed to St. Paul, all passages in the Bible that suggested the Jewish foundation of Christianity should be suppressed, even including such statements by St. Paul. Marcionism emphasized asceticism and influenced the developments of Manichaeism, by which it was later absorbed.</p> <p>Its effect on Orthodox Christianity was to cause a</p>	<p>The fundamental truth of the Orthodox Church is the faith revealed in the True God: the Holy Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is in reality the declaration of the Christian faith, formulated and pronounced by the Ecumenical Synods of the One Undivided Church.</p> <p>The Holy Scriptures are highly regarded by the Orthodox Church. Their importance is expressed in the fact that a portion of the Bible is read at every service of Worship. The Orthodox Church, which sees itself as the guardian and interpreter of the Scriptures, believes that the books of the Bible are a valuable witness to God's revelation. The Old Testament is a collection of forty-nine books of various literary styles, which expresses God's revelation to the ancient Israelites. The Orthodox Church regards the Old Testament to be a preparation for the coming of Christ and believes that it should be read in light of His revelation.</p> <p>The New Testament is centered upon the person and work of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the early Church. The four Gospels are an account of Christ's life and teaching centering upon His Death and Resurrection. The twenty-one epistles and the Acts of the Apostles are devoted to the Christian life and the development of the early Church. The Book of Revelation is a very symbolic</p>	



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<p>canonical New Testament to be assembled and promulgated and the fulfillment of the Old Law in the New Law to be clearly enounced.</p>	<p>text, which looks to the return of Christ. The New Testament, especially the Gospels, is very important to Orthodoxy because here is found a written witness to the perfect revelation of God in the Incarnation of the Son of God, in the person of Jesus Christ.</p>	
<p><b>Montanists</b></p> <p>A group of Christians who broke away from the main Church in the second half of the second century. Montanus, their founder, who appeared in Phrygia about the year 156 AD, claimed to be in line with the succession of prophets. His declared mission was to bring about a return to the simplicity of the early Church and to announce the fulfillment of the prophecy of Pentecost.</p> <p>The dispensation of the Holy Spirit was to replace that of Christ The final outpouring of the Spirit, the Montanists believed, was happening at that very moment in Phrygia. All who `had the Spirit' were called prophets. They aimed at a freer, more emotional form of religion, requiring ecstasy in worship, prophetic visions from their leaders and a `speaking with tongues' by the `faithful' - not unlike some of the `charismatic' groups today.</p> <p>Montanus sought a higher standard of morality. He wanted to impose stricter rules for fasting and marriage and, for the `true Christian' entire separation from the world. The underlying question seemed to be - should the Church be a society of separated religious devotees or should its members be free to follow worldly occupations? The Montanists saw the Christian Church as the former but the Great Church, as a whole, decided for the latter</p>	<p>The Church is the Body of Christ with Christ as the Head and the believers as the Body. There is a balance of living “in” the world but not being “of” the world that is necessary and challenging. There will not be perfection in the living out of Christianity in this world, yet the Church is not limited to this world.</p> <p>There is the <u>Church militant</u>, believers struggling in this realm, and the <u>Church triumphant</u>, the Church in the next realm. Even though there is a distinction between the levels of the Church, there is not a separation.</p> <p>The Church allows for ascetic practices, sometimes very austere, within the Body and not separated from the Body. (Example, monastics can live by themselves but periodically must gather in community for worship, sacraments—check and balance).</p>	<p>Some of the `charismatic' groups</p>



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<p><b>Manichaeism</b></p> <p>Manichæism is a religion founded by the Persian Mani in the latter half of the third century. It purported to be the true synthesis of all the religious systems then known, and actually consisted of Zoroastrian Dualism, Babylonian folklore, Buddhist ethics, and some small and superficial, additions of Christian elements. As the theory of two eternal principles, good and evil, is predominant in this fusion of ideas and gives color to the whole, Manichæism is classified as a form of religious Dualism.</p> <p>The key to Mani's system is his cosmogony. Once this is known there is little else to learn. In this sense Mani was a true Gnostic, as he brought salvation by knowledge.</p> <p><i>Manichæan Theology</i></p> <p>Its starting-point is the irreconcilable antagonism between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. These two kingdoms of good and evil stood opposed to each other from eternity, remaining unmingled.</p> <p>Satan and his demons arose from darkness and then began to rage and make an assault upon the kingdom of light.</p> <p>The result of this battle was the present world, which exhibits a mixture of the two elements. Each individual man is at once a son of light and of darkness, has a good soul, and a body substantially evil, with an evil soul corresponding to it.</p> <p>The redemption of the light from the bonds of the darkness is effected by Christ.</p>	<p>For Orthodox teachings see the discussions on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation in the section on <u>Gnosticism</u> above</li> <li>• The Holy Trinity and the Holy Scriptures in the section on <u>Marcionites</u> above</li> <li>• The nature of Christ in the sections on <u>Nestorianism</u> and <u>Monophysitism</u> below.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Neo-Manichaeism</b></p> <p>Neo-Manichæism is a contemporary effort to revive the ancient faith of Manichæism. Because Manichæism has been extinct since as far back as the 13th century (though certain Manichaen beliefs persisted in China and in Europe through the Cathar and other dualistic religions), much of the ancient literature and knowledge of this faith has been lost.</p> <p>Like the ancient faith, Neo-Manichean Churches believe in a dualism between a light force and a dark force. Some believers also state that the Judeo-Christian God of the Old Testament is actually the God of Evil.</p> <p>In ancient times Manichaens were divided into two groups: The "Elect", who were clergy and the "Listeners" who were laymen. The Elect lived a life of self denial: they abstained from sex, would not eat from sunrise to sunset, prayed and avoided manual labor. Modern day Manichaens do not generally follow the strict asceticism of the ancient Elects, but do allow those seeking such a life to practice it.</p> <p>Like the ancient faith, Neo-Manichean believers revere both Jesus of Nazareth (commonly referred to as Jesus Christ) and Siddhartha Gautama, known as the Buddha (the founder of Buddhism), as well as Zoroaster (also known as Zarathustra or Zardoz).</p> <p>The Order of Nazorean Essenes, also called the <i>Manichæan Orthodox Church</i>, is an Oregon based Church seeking to revive Manichæism.</p>



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<p><i>Manichaeen Christology</i></p> <p>Christ is identical with the sun spirit, and the Holy Ghost has his seat in the ether. These two beings attract the light forces out of the material world, while the prince of darkness, and the spirits imprisoned in the stars, seek to keep them back.</p> <p>The Manichaeen presentation of Christ, like the Gnostic, is entirely docetic. By its perverted view of body and matter, it excluded the possibility and idea of an incarnation of God the Son.</p>		
<p><b>Donatism</b></p> <p>Donatism was the error taught by Donatus, bishop of Casae Nigrae that the effectiveness of the sacraments depends on the moral character of the minister. In other words, if a minister who was involved in a serious enough sin were to baptize a person, that baptism would be considered invalid. Donatism developed as a result of the persecution of Christians ordered by Diocletian in 303 in which all churches and sacred scriptures of the Christians were to be destroyed. In 304 another edict was issued ordering the burning of incense to the idol gods of the Roman empire. Of course, Christians refused, but it did not curtail the increased persecution. Many Christians gave up the sacred texts to the persecutors and even betrayed other Christians to the Romans. These people became known as "traditors," Christians who betrayed other Christians. (Note: traditor, not traitor)</p> <p>After the persecution of Diocletian ended, many of the traditors that were clergy asked to be reinstated. Great debate arose concerning the validity of the sacraments (baptism, the Lord's Supper, etc.) by these clergy who had sinned so greatly against other</p>	<p>Orthodox teaching is that no person is morally pure (without sin). The Fathers held that a sacrament does not cease to be effective if the moral character of the priest or bishop is in question or even demonstrated to be faulty.</p> <p>Rather, Orthodox understanding is that the sacraments are the outward and visible part of various ceremonies, words and symbolisms, inviting and representing an invisible action by the Holy Spirit. It is the action of the Holy Spirit that confers grace on an individual.</p> <p>Christ instituted all Sacraments for the salvation of the believer, and their efficacy is not dependent on the worthiness of the priest or bishop administering them, but rather on the action of the Holy Spirit. The powers and authority conferred by Christ on the apostles and their successors are not dependent upon the worthiness of those on whom they are conferred—think of Peter's threefold denial of Christ!</p>	<p>Generally most religions reject Donatism as a heresy. However in various denominations struggling with the ordination of women, some of their theologians are using an argument that the sacraments performed by a woman pastor are not valid sacraments, thus raising the specter of "Neo-Donatism."</p> <p>The proliferation of Protestant denominations in some cases may be a revival of Donatist-type thinking. Those who leave one Protestant Church (because of the sins of priests guilty of sex abuse or bishops guilty of enabling and covering up for them, or any number of issues with the way that their clergy behaves) and set up a new church generally do so with the idea that the wrongs or sins of the clergy at the church they are leaving invalidate their acts or status. Thus setting up a new "pure" church seems like the correct answer to them.</p>



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<p>Christians. The Donatist issue was raised at several ecumenical councils and the validity of the sacraments was upheld.</p>		
<p><b>Arianism</b></p> <p>Arianism is a Christological view originally held by followers of Arius, a Christian priest who lived and taught in Alexandria, Egypt, in the early 4th century. Arius taught that God the Father and the Son were not co-eternal, seeing the pre-incarnate Jesus as a divine being but nonetheless created by (and consequently inferior to) the Father at some point, before which the Son did not exist.</p> <p>Arius described the Son as a second, or inferior God, standing midway between the First Cause and creatures; as Himself made out of nothing, yet as making all things else; as existing before the worlds of the ages; and as arrayed in all divine perfections except the one which was their stay and foundation. God alone was without beginning, unoriginate; the Son was originated, and once had not existed. For all that has origin must begin to be.</p> <p>Such is the genuine doctrine of Arius. Using Greek terms, it denies that the Son is of one essence, nature, or substance with God; He is not consubstantial (<i>homoousios</i>) with the Father, and therefore not like Him, or equal in dignity, or co-eternal, or within the real sphere of Deity. He taught that the Logos, which St. John exalts, is an attribute, Reason, belonging to the Divine nature, not a person distinct from another, and therefore is a Son merely in figure of speech.</p>	<p>For Orthodox teachings see the discussions on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Holy Trinity in the section on <u>Marcionites</u> above</li> <li>• The nature of Christ in the sections on <u>Nestorianism</u> and <u>Monophysitism</u> below.</li> </ul>	<p>Today's Arians, though, do not call themselves Arians; for the most part they are not aware that they are Arians. Yet a religion such as <i>Unitarianism</i> is nothing else but Arian in its denial of the divinity of Christ and of the Trinity. Similarly, a modern American religion such as <i>Mormonism</i> is wholly Arian in its account of a divine being, even if it is ignorant of Arianism historically.</p> <p>Because it is so easy to doubt that any human being could possibly be divine, Arianism was not only the most basic and persistent of all the ancient heresies; it also assumed a number of variant forms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Adoptionism</i> is the belief that Jesus was just a man to whom special graces were given when he was "adopted" by God.</li> <li>• <i>Modalism</i> held that there is only one Person in God who manifests himself in various ways or modes, including in Jesus.</li> </ul> <p>The Monarchians (Modalists) exaggerated the oneness of the Father and the Son so as to make them one Person; thus the distinctions in the Holy Trinity are described as "energies" or "modes," not Persons: God the Father appears on earth as Son; hence the Monarchians made the Father suffer and die. In the West they were called Patripassians, whereas in the East they are usually called Sabellians.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Semi-Arianism</i> held that the Son was of like substance with God (<i>homo-i-ousios</i>), though</li> </ul>



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		<p>not of identical in substance with him.</p> <p>All of these variants of Arianism were sometimes classified under the name <i>Subordinationism</i> (i.e., Christ as "subordinate" to the Father). Even today, poorly instructed Christians can be found espousing one or more of these variants when they are examined closely concerning who and what they think Jesus Christ was and is.</p>
<p><b>Apollinarianism</b></p> <p>Apollinarianism is a Christological theory, according to which Christ had a human body and a human sensitive soul, but no human rational mind, the Divine Logos taking the place of this last.</p>	<p>Orthodox teaching is that the Word of God is the Son Himself. He did not come in the flesh to replace it, but rather to assume and preserve it from sin, and save the rational and intellective soul of man.</p> <p>(See more under Monophysitism, below.)</p>	
<p><b>Docetism</b></p> <p>Docetism is a heresy dating back to Apostolic times. Its name is derived from dokesis, "appearance" or "semblance", because it taught that Christ only "appeared" or "seemed to be" a man, to have been born, to have lived and suffered. Some denied the reality of Christ's human nature altogether, some only the reality of His human body or of His birth or death.</p>	<p>This heresy, which destroyed the very meaning and purpose of the Incarnation, was combated by the Apostles. St. Paul's statement that in Christ dwelt <i>the fullness of the Godhead</i> (Colossians 1:19, 2:9) has some reference to Docetic errors. Beyond doubt St. John (1 John 1:1-3, 4:1-3; 2 John 7) refers to this heresy.</p>	
<p><b>Macedonianism</b></p> <p>Macedonianism is an Anti-Trinitarian heresy taught by a group of people known as the Pneumatomachi (Combators of the Holy Spirit) and was so named after Macedonius, who was Patriarch of Constantinople.</p> <p>Macedonius and his followers were semi-Arian, and taught that though the Son was eternal, He was not of one essence (<i>homoousios</i>) with the Father but of like essence (<i>homoiousios</i>) with the Father. They</p>	<p>For Orthodox teachings see the discussions on:</p> <p>The Holy Trinity in the section on <u>Marcionites</u> above</p>	



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<p>also taught that the Holy Spirit was not eternal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son but a creation of the Father and an action of the Son. Thus, the Macedonians denied that the Holy Spirit was a <i>hypostasis</i>, or person, of the Holy Trinity.</p>		
<p><b>Nestorianism</b></p> <p>Nestorius, (c. 386–c. 451) was Archbishop of Constantinople from 10 April 428 to 22 June 431. He received his clerical training as a pupil of Theodore of Mopsuestia in Antioch and gained a reputation for his sermons that led to his enthronement by Theodosius II as Archbishop following the death of Sisinnius I in 428. Nestorius is considered to be the originator of the Christological heresy known as Nestorianism</p> <p>Nestorianism originated in the Church in the 5th century out of an attempt to rationally explain and understand the incarnation of the divine Logos, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity as the man Jesus Christ.</p> <p>Nestorianism teaches that the human and divine <u>essences</u> of Christ are separate and that there are two persons, the man Jesus Christ and the divine Logos, which dwelt in the man.</p> <p>Thus, Nestorians reject such terminology as "God suffered" or "God was crucified", because they believe that the man Jesus Christ suffered.</p> <p>Likewise, they reject the term Theotokos (Giver of birth to God) for the Virgin Mary, using instead the term Christotokos (giver of birth to Christ) or Anthropotokos (giver of birth to a man).</p>	<p>The Council of Ephesus was convened in 431 to settle the matter. This council (reinforced by the Council of Chalcedon in 451) clarified Orthodox doctrine, pronouncing that Jesus, true God and true man, has two distinct <u>natures</u> that are inseparably joined in one person (of one <u>essence</u>) and partake of the one divine substance.</p> <p>Its chief dogmatic pronouncement was that from the very words of the Nicene Creed from this it follows that Mary may be called Mother of God, for the perfect coherence of godhead and manhood in Christ prevents any separation of essences such as Nestorius implied.</p> <p><b>Essence and Nature</b></p> <p>The following definitions clarify the distinction between the terms "essence" and "nature" as used by the Church Fathers:</p> <p><i>Essence and nature express the same reality envisaged in the two points of view as being or acting.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Essence</u> is that whereby any given thing is that which it is, the basis of its characteristics and the principle of its being.</li> <li>• <u>Nature</u> is that whereby it acts as it does, the essence considered as the foundation and principle of its operation.</li> </ul> <p>(See more under Monophysitism, below.)</p>	<p><b>Nestorian Communities Today</b></p> <p>The Assyrian Church of the East is a Nestorian body with jurisdiction in Iraq and Eastern Iran. It is sometimes referred to as the Assyrian Orthodox Church, not to be confused with the Syriac Orthodox Church, a Non-Chalcedonian body, the Chaldean Catholic Church, a Uniate body, or the Orthodox Church of Antioch, an Orthodox local church.</p> <p><b>Protestant Theology as a form of Crypto-Nestorianism</b></p> <p>In their refusal to venerate the Virgin Mary, modern Evangelical Protestants deny the use of the term Theotokos. In defending this, many Evangelical Protestants argue that the Virgin Mary could not have given birth to God but only to the man Jesus. They thus again separate in the Theandric Godman Jesus a human and a Divine person and teach Nestorianism.</p> <p>The error of this thinking lies in the failure to understand the intricacies of Christology and the doctrine of Incarnation. A proper understanding of the Virgin Mary is required for a proper understanding of Jesus Christ. If Mary is not Theotokos, then Christ is not Godman. Likewise, if Christ is Godman, then Mary is Theotokos. If Mary is not Ever-Virgin, then Christ is not God Incarnate. If Christ is God Incarnate, then Mary is Ever-Virgin. If Mary is not the Queen Mother, then Christ is not King; if Christ is King, then Mary is Queen Mother.</p>



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<p><b>Monophysitism</b></p> <p>The christological position that Christ has only one nature, as opposed to the Chalcedonian position, which holds that Christ has two natures, one divine and one human. There are two major doctrines that can undisputedly be called monophysite:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eutychianism holds that the human nature of Christ was essentially obliterated by the Divine, "dissolved like a drop of honey in the sea".</li> <li>• Apollinarianism holds that Christ had a human body and human "living principle" but that the Divine Logos had taken the place of the nous, or "thinking principle" (analogous but not identical to what might be called a mind in the present day.)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Jesus the Christ, the God-Man</b></p> <p>As taught by the Apostles: Anointed by the Holy Spirit of God, Christ's humanity is the humanity of the Messiah (the Anointed one) since the beginning of its existence.</p> <p>Christ is at the same time the son of the Virgin, but also the natural Son of God, by His very nature. His humanity is a real humanity, with a body and soul, which suffered hunger and thirst, which suffered humiliation and the Cross.</p> <p>Humanity and divinity are <i>hypostatically united</i> together: the two natures exist in the one person of the Word who became flesh, a divine person (or <i>hypostasis</i>). Christ exists "in two <u>natures</u>," without being of two <u>essences</u>; the two natures exist united together "without confusion, without change, without division, without separation." (Council of Chalcedon). The first two adverbs are addressed against the heresy of Eutyches and the monophysites who confused the natures and the last two against the Nestorians, who separated and divided humanity and divinity in Christ.</p> <p>Consequently, Christ has two wills also and two operations, one human and one divine; the two work together "to achieve man's salvation"; however, the human will and operation is always subjected to the divine (Third Council of Constantinople, the Sixth Ecumenical, against Monothelitism).</p>	<p>Even today some ill-instructed Christians will tell you that Christ, being the Son of God and hence divine, must also necessarily have a divine nature, without understanding that Christ had a fully human nature as well.</p> <p>Professing some form of Monophysitism is rather common among self-consciously "spiritual" people, as a matter of fact—people who, meanwhile, are not always prepared to affirm and follow Christian moral teaching as the Church defines it.</p> <p>Entire churches or communities broke away from the Church as a result of the christological definitions of Ephesus and Chalcedon. Some of these breakaway communions still exist today in the ancient churches of the East, such as the Assyrian, Armenian, Coptic, Syrian (Jacobite), etc.</p> <p>Today many of these ancient communions, in ecumenical dialogue with the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, are rethinking their positions and are close to agreement with the Catholic Church on doctrinal essentials, stating that their ancient disagreements stemmed at least in part from misunderstandings of exactly what Ephesus or Chalcedon had taught or affirmed.</p>
<p><b>Pelagianism</b></p> <p>Was constructed by Pelagius, a layman from Britain in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century, and Celestius, a priest. They denied that any sin of Adam was inherited by mankind and believed that each person is born completely innocent of sin. His position was that</p>	<p><b>Man's Fall and its Consequence</b></p> <p>Man's imperfection and innocence, or, better, naiveté, and his relative pride, cultivated by the "accuser," became the cause of man's fall from God's communion, due to his disobedience and rejection of God. <i>Man put his purpose in himself,</i></p>	<p>Pelagianism is really about humanism. It is placing faith in oneself to take care of sin, problems, (at a micro level) and in human beings to take care of war, famine, disease, corruption, etc., (at a macro level) without any form of divine guidance or</p>



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Heresy	Orthodox Teaching	Sects Teaching this Heresy
<p>each person's sin is caused by his or her moral freedom to commit evil. He taught that Christ was an example of one who had avoided sin, and that it was possible for man to overcome sin by his own efforts.</p> <p><b>Augustinianism</b></p> <p>In an effort to confront teachings of Pelagius, who St. Augustine respected, some of Augustine's teachings seemed to go to another extreme. These teachings suggested that mankind was so corrupt after the fall that only by God's Grace could one be redeemed, with humans unable to do anything on their own. This opened the door for man's salvation being <u>only</u> by grace.</p> <p>Latter followers of Augustinian thought postulated that God <u>predestined</u> certain people to be recipients of that Grace and others not to be. This paved the way for Calvinistic thought that after the fall, man was so corrupt that he could do nothing for his own salvation, and that God simply predestined some men to salvation and others to damnation.</p>	<p><i>instead of putting it in God. Man's free will is responsible for his own decline.</i></p> <p>The consequences of this revolt against God, which the West calls "original" and the East "ancestral" (<i>propatorikon</i>) sin, are that man lost his original innocence; the image of God in him was tarnished, and even became distorted; man's reason was obscured, his will weakened, the desires and passions of the flesh grew wild; man suffered separation from God, the author and source of life. He put himself in an inauthentic kind of existence, close to death. The Fathers speak of "spiritual death" which is the cause of the physical one, and which may lead to the "eschatological," eternal death: for "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6: 23).</p> <p>This state of inauthentic life close to death, this status of "spiritual death" continues to be transmitted to all of man's progeny, even those who are born of Christian parents. The personal guilt of the first man belongs to him exclusively. However, the results of his sin are transmitted to the entire human race. <i>A personal commitment through an engagement of one's personal free will is required, in order for things to turn around. Christ, who requires this personal commitment, made this change possible through His coming and His work upon earth.</i></p>	<p>intervention. The teaching is that humans inherently have the ability to deal with these issues.</p> <p>Pelagius' initial goal was to challenge people to take responsibility for their own actions and to live a Godly life. He saw that many people were not acting responsibly and then blaming the consequences on the human condition. Whether he intended it or not, he got to an extreme area that suggested that people could be righteous on their own.</p> <p>In our culture, "Self-help" books, ideals and theories can minimize the recognition of "ancestral sin", encouraging instead that persons have a good self-esteem. A frequent motto of our culture is: "If I or we work hard enough, I or we can do anything or conquer anything."</p> <p>At the other extreme is what developed out of certain Augustinian thought that humans are totally depraved after the fall and separated from God, and that only God's Grace can reconcile and save humankind. This led in the extreme to certain Protestant thought that we are saved by faith alone and that certain people are predestined to be saved while others are not. Classic examples of this are in Calvinism.</p> <p>Orthodox teaching is that both of these extremes are incorrect and that the correct approach is the middle ground. Orthodoxy draws on the good aspects of each viewpoint and insists that persons maintain a balance by doing their best, but giving the glory to God rather than taking credit for their actions themselves. (I.E., Humility vs. Pride)</p>



# St. Catherine Greek Orthodox Church

## Summary – Early Christian Heresies – Then and Now

Each of the phrases in the Nicene Creed was written by the Fathers during the Ecumenical Councils to specifically express the fullness of the Orthodox Faith and to refute a heretical teaching prevalent at the time.

The following table identifies the specific heretical teaching being refuted by each phrase or group of phrases:

<b>The Nicene Creed</b>	
<b><u>Heresy being refuted</u></b>	<b><u>Text of the Creed</u></b>
Gnosticism & Marcionism	I believe in one God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.
Adoptionism	And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages.
Arianism	Light of Light; true God of true God; begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven,
Adoptionism	and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
Apollinarianism	and became man.
Docetism	And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried. And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father;
Sabellianism	and He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; whose Kingdom shall have no end.
Macedonianism	And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified;
Marcionism	who spoke by the prophets. In one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.
Donatism	I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.