

The member bodies do not accept the Chalcedonian Creed but do receive the Nicene and Constantinopolitan Creed. Their division followed Chalcedon in 451 AD.The Greek Orthodox is the better known group, accepts all the ecumenical creeds and is the parent organization of most of the other orthodox bodies. ...Most of these other (Russian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox, etc.) were historic spinoffs from the Greek church...mostly over matters of rite and ritual and ethnic substance than doctrine. As with later Protestant divisions, most of the divisions claim to carry the authority of the "true church. Many of the orthodox bodies have been trying to shed the image of ethnic order and the Russian Orthodox church in the United States recently changed its name to simply "The Orthodox Church"

- Leadership in the Orthodox bodies is patriarchal and there is a strong tendency towards mysticism and monasticism. The clergy are not required to be celibate and the local clergy are almost always family persons. As with the Roman church a garb or habit marks the orthodox clergy.
- No other part of Christendom has suffered as much persecution as the orthodox bodies. The Islamic caliphs were vigorous (at times) in the persecution of the Greek and Serbian churches as well as their satellite bodies. Communism in Russia has been extremely persecutionistic of the Russian church save where the leadership would compromise with the atheistic state. In my opinion the orthodox bodies have contributed more martyrs to paganism than all of the other bodies combined. No statistics, just my educated opinion.

c. The "Old Churches"

These do not constitute a major block but you should know they are there. For the Roman and Orthodox bodies there are a number of "old" churches...church bodies unhappy with later developments and who claim to continue the full and proper apostolic succession and teaching. Most of them are small but vocal and their claims and powers are not very well documented historically --so far as I can tell. It seems that they tend to be even more sacerdotal although many of the official credal statements sound evangelical. One needs to learn in time that the words of a doctrinal statement are not so important as is the understanding given it.