

For the Seeker

My Final Words on Early Church History

My thinking about early Christianity and the history of the church has evolved over the years, as I have learned more information about church history in my reading. The first thing that made me realize that there was a church in Asia came from my reading in High School about Lebanese Maronite Christians. In my studies over the last 10 years after I stopped going to school, I have learned much more about global Christianity and the history of Christians in the Asian “golden age”. I have found out along the way that, instead of having to draw from only the Bible in creating an early Asian Christianity, that there was a very large Christian community, in both Asia and Africa, well before all of Europe adopted Christianity.

When people think of Christianity, they most often just think of the Roman Catholic Church or various Protestant branches. Some people have even heard of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Even less have heard of the Coptic and Ethiopian churches. Almost no one has heard of the Nestorian and Jacobite churches. Most people agree that the Roman Catholic church was the original church, but this is not historically accurate. The original church had 4 equal and independent heads, in order of importance: Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Rome. Out of Alexandria, came the Egyptian Coptic church and the Ethiopian church, out of Antioch came the Nestorian and Jacobite churches, out of Constantinople came the Eastern Orthodox church, and out of Rome, came the Roman Catholic church.

The Roman Catholic church was one of the least tolerant, as they were unopposed, in the areas that they dominated. The Roman Catholic church forced everyone to use their language in the church, instead of their local language. The Roman Catholic church never had to deal with its members having to live under rulers, who practiced a different religion. The Catholic church also was the least interested in cooperating with other Christian churches and persecuted, not only those who represented heresies, but even churches, who remained Biblical in their doctrines, were persecuted as well. A lot of the rivalry between the churches was political in nature, as the church and the state were the same thing, until the last couple centuries in Europe and America.