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*All things arise and cease due to
interdependent causes and conditions*

Origin of Major Christian Beliefs

Compiled and adapted by

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What do you think? What does it mean? What can be done?*

Origin of Major Christian Beliefs

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Chronological Table of the Twenty Ecumenical Councils so far held in the History of the [Early Christian] Church

[A group of men meet to decide what the rest of humanity have to believe in. Non-believers are condemned to eternal hell.]

1. **First Council of Nicaea**, 20 May to 25 [?] July, 325. Pope Sylvester I, 314-35. Nicene Creed against Arius; the Son consubstantial with the Father. Twenty canons. [*The belief in Jesus as the Second Person of the Blessed or Holy Trinity of God. From this stems the belief in Jesus as the Savior.*]

2. **First Council of Constantinople**, May to July 381. Pope Damasus I, 366-84. Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed: the divinity of the Holy Ghost. Four canons.

3. **Council of Ephesus**. Five sessions, 22 June to 17 July, 431. Pope Celestine I, 422-32. Mary, the Mother of God, against Nestorius. Six canons. [*The belief in Mary as the Virgin Mother of God who is Jesus. Ecclesiastically condemned doctrine ascribed to Nestorius, that divine and human persons remained separate in the incarnate Christ.*]

4. **Council of Chalcedon**. Seventeen sessions, 8 October to 1 November 451. Pope Leo I, the Great, 440-61. Two natures in the one person of Christ. Twenty-eight canons. [*The belief in Jesus as the Christ with a human and a divine nature.*]

5. **Second Council of Constantinople**. Eight sessions, 5 May to 2 June, 553. Pope Vigilius, 537-55. Condemnation of the "Three Chapters" of the Nestorians.

6. **Third Council of Constantinople**. Sixteen sessions, 7 November 680 to 16 September 681 (*in Trullo*). Pope Agatho, 678-81; Pope Leo II, 682-3. Condemnation of the doctrine of one will in Christ (Monothelism); Question of Honorius.

7. **Second Council of Nicaea.** Eight sessions; 24 September to 23 October 787. Pope Hadrian I, 772-95. Meaning and lawfulness of the veneration of images. Twenty canons.

8. **Fourth Council of Constantinople.** Ten sessions, 5 October 869 to 28 February 870. Pope Nicholas I, 858-67; Hadrian II, 867-72. Termination of the schism of Patriarch Photius. Twenty-seven canons.

9. **First Lateran Council,** 18 March to 6 April 1123. Pope Callistus II, 1119-24. Confirmation of the Concordat of Worms. Twenty-five canons.

11. **Third Lateran Council.** Three sessions, 5 to 19 (or 22) March 1179. Pope Alexander III, 1159-81. Twenty-seven chapters; two-thirds majority [vote] for papal election. [*Later on, fallible votes can elect an infallible Pope. See No. 16, Degree Sacrosanta, and No. 20.*]

12. **Fourth Lateran Council.** Three sessions, 11 to 30 November 1215. Pope Innocent III, 1198-1216. Seventy chapters: Profession of faith against the Cathari; change of substance in the Eucharist; annual confession and Communion. [*Condemned ascetic Cathari belief that matter is evil and that an angelic Christ did not really undergo human birth or death.*]

13. **First Council of Lyons.** Three sessions, 28 June to 17 July 1245. Pope Innocent IV, 1243-54. Deposition of the Emperor Frederick II. Twenty-two chapters.

14. **Second Council of Lyons.** Six sessions, 7 May to 17 July 1274. Pope Gregory X, 1271-6. Rules for Conclave, union with the Greeks, Crusade. Thirty-one chapters.

15. **Council of Vienne.** Three sessions, 16 October 1311 to 6 May 1312. Pope Clement V, 1305-14. Suppression of the Order of the Templars. Controversy over Franciscan poverty. Reform decrees.

16. **Council of Constance.** Forty-five sessions, 5 November 1414 to 22 April 1418. Termination of the Great Schism; resignation of the Roman Pope Gregory XII (1405-15) on 4 July 1415; deposition of the conciliar Pope John XXIII (1410-15) on 29 May 1415; deposition of the Avignon Pope, Benedict XIII (1394-1415) on 26 July 1417. Election of Martin V, 11 November 1417. Condemnation of John Hus. Decree *Sacrosancta* on the superiority of the Council over the Pope and decree *Frequens* on the periodicity of councils. Concordats with five conciliar nations. [*See Nos. 11 and 20.*]

17. **Council of Basle-Ferrara-Florence.** At Basle twenty-five sessions, 23 July 1431 to 7 May 1437. Translation to Ferrara by Eugenius IV (1431-47) on 18 September 1437, finally on 1 January 1438; from there to Florence, 16 January 1439. Union with the Greeks, 6 July 1439, with the Armenians, 22 November 1439, with the Jacobites, 4 February 1442. Translation to Rome 25 April 1442.

18. **Fifth Lateran Council.** Twelve sessions, 10 May 1512 to 16 March 1517. Pope Julius II, 1503-13; Leo X 1513-12. Against the schismatic Council of Pisa, 1511-12. Reform decrees.

19. **Council of Trent.** Twenty-five sessions, 13 December 1545 to 4 December 1563, in three periods: sessions 1-8 at Trent 1545-47; sessions 9-11 at Bologna 1547, all under Paul III, 1534-49; sessions 12-16 again at Trent 1551-52, under Pope Julius III, 1550-5, sessions 17-25 at Trent under Pius IV, 1559-65. Doctrine of Scripture and Tradition, original sin and justification, sacraments and sacrifice of the Mass, veneration of the saints, reform decrees.

20. **Council of the Vatican.** Four sessions, 8 December 1869 to 18 July 1870. Pope Pius IX, 1846-78. Definitions of Catholic doctrine, the Pope's primacy and his infallibility. [See Nos. 11 and 16.]

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This information is not meant to undermine anyone's faith in the Christian religion. We learn to understand the politics of any church organization operating as a religious sect and their dogmatic assertions of absolute authority for institutional survival. In a larger context, beliefs are a mix of mento-emotional fixations between wishful feelings and superstitious fallacies about unknown realities. When the human mind does not know, it falls for a belief as a substitute for knowledge; then the mind thinks it knows and, proselytizes.

The essential beauty of Christianity is in the ideal virtue of love and forgiveness as we relate to others and to humanity as a whole.

On the spiritual path, we grow from speculation to superstition; from belief to information; and finally, from knowledge into wisdom.

-- Compiler

Hans Küng, *The Council, Reform and Reunion*, translated by Cecily Hastings (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961). Originally published as *Konzil und Wiedervereinigung*, 3rd ed., 1961, by Verlag Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany. [Imprimi Potest : Dr. Knaupp, Vicarius Generalis, Rottenburgi, die 19 Aprilis 1961.] Pp. 202-204 Appendix 2.

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