

The Reformation and Eastern Europe

Sources

Timothy (Kallistos) Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (1980)

Steven Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity* (1968)

Nicholas Zernov, *The Russians and Their Church* (1997; 3rd ed.)

George A. Hadjiantoniou, *Protestant Patriarch: The Life of Cyril Lucaris (1572-1638) Patriarch of Constantinople* (1961)

[Overview in González, 373-77]

I. Background

A. The Orthodox Churches

1. “Greek Catholic” Church
 - a. Churches of Eastern Europe
 - b. Differs from Rome but has many of the same errors
 - 1) Rejects papal claims and *filioque* (“and the son”; addition to Nicene Creed)
 - 2) Sacramental, hierarchical, liturgical
 - 3) Stresses authority of church & tradition
2. Several national churches (e.g., Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox)
3. Patriarch of Constantinople the nominal head
4. Orthodox churches had no Renaissance or Reformation

B. Political & Cultural Setting

1. Byzantine roots (Eastern Roman Empire)
2. Caesaropapism
 - a. “Caesar is pope”
 - b. Leading role of the emperor in the church
3. Key events
 - a. 800s: Mission work of Cyril and Methodius in Slavonic
 - b. 988: Conversion of Russia (Kiev)
 - c. 1453: Conquest of Constantinople by Turks
 - 1) End of Byzantine Empire
 - 2) Orthodoxy (except Russia) subjected to Islam

II. Russia

A. Setting

1. Center: Moscow
2. “Third Rome”: Claim as new seat of Orthodoxy
3. Received Patriarchate (1589): Russian Orthodox autonomy

B. Nikon and Great Reform (later 1600s)

1. Controversy
 - a. Chief figure: Nikon, Patriarch of Moscow
 - b. Fight over correcting liturgical books
 - c. Complicated by Nikon’s efforts to assume dominance
2. Results
 - a. Created split: “Old Believers”
 - b. Changes made but Nikon ousted
 - c. Form-centered → no doctrinal change

C. Peter the Great (early 1700s)

1. Refused to choose a new Patriarch of Moscow
2. Set up the Holy Synod to run church under his direction
3. True example of “Caesaropapism”

D. Imperial dominance until World War I and Communist Revolution

III. Turkish Territories

A. Orthodoxy’s Situation

1. Greek Orthodox now a “millet” (nation) under Turks
2. Did not change until 1800s/World War I
3. Anti-papal but not pro-Protestant

B. Cyril Lucaris, “Protestant Patriarch”

1. Patriarch of Constantinople (1621-38)
 - a. Had earlier embraced Protestant views
 - b. Reforms
 - 1) Translated NT into modern Greek
 - 2) Attempted to establish a printing press
 - 3) Issued a Protestant creed (1629)
 - c. Motives
 - 1) Political maneuvering?
 - 2) Sincerity?
2. Fate
 - a. Catholic diplomatic opposition
 - b. Executed by the sultan on trumped-up charges
 - c. Expressly repudiated by Orthodox Church
 - d. No lasting effect on the Orthodox Churches