

The Orthodox Churches

Sources

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

Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom* (1974)

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

David Beale, "The Attraction of Eastern Orthodoxy," *Biblical Viewpoint* 34, no. 1 (April 2000): 89-104

I. Character

A. Terms

1. *Orthodoxy* = "straight (or true) doctrine"
2. *Orthopraxy* = correct practice, particularly worship
3. Names
 - a. "Eastern" Orthodox
 - b. "Greek" Orthodox

B. Use of Icons

1. Two-dimensional paintings of Christ, Mary, saints used in worship
2. "Window" to the heavenly

C. Government

1. Autocephalous (self-governing) churches
2. Patriarch of Constantinople → "First among equals" ("Chairman of the board")
3. Collegiate rule of bishops
4. History of Caesaropapism (Byzantine, Russian)

D. Emphases & Practices

1. Mysticism
 - a. Essentially, desire for direct experience of God
 - b. Less specific or defined than Catholics or Protestants
 - c. Mystic withdrawal = mark of holiness
2. Importance of Aesthetics
 - a. Correct worship is as important as correct doctrine
 - b. "Feast for the senses"
3. Various matters of form (bearded & married priests, leavened bread, infant baptism by immersion)

II. Historical Development

A. Roots in Eastern Roman Empire

1. Greek in culture
2. Even today, mostly East European

B. Emperor Justinian (527-65)

1. Greatest Byzantine emperor
2. Deeply involved in Monophysite Controversy (Caesaropapism)
3. Built Hagia Sophia cathedral

C. Iconoclastic Controversy (8th and 9th cent.)

1. "Iconoclasm" = "icon breaking"
2. Resulting from influence of Islam?
3. Course of the Controversy
 - a. Emperor Leo III ordered destruction of icons

- b. Iconoclasm wildly unpopular with the people and monks
 - c. Reversed by Empress Irene, an *iconodule* (“icon venerator”)
 - d. Council of Nicea II (787) vindicated icons
 - e. Arguments for Icons
 - 1) Honor not to icon but to person who is represented
 - 2) *Worship* God vs. *venerate* Mary, saints, icons, etc.
 - 3) Christ’s incarnation justifies representation (John of Damascus)
- D. Conversion of Russia (988)
- 1. Cyril & Methodius
 - a. Background: Greek brothers who went as missionaries to Moravians (Czechs)
 - b. Pioneer mission to the Slavs
 - c. Worked in vernacular of people
 - 2. Vladimir of Kiev: “Baptism of Russia”
 - a. Converted to Orthodoxy and took his entire kingdom with him
 - b. Sought ties w/ Byzantines
 - c. Attracted by Caesaropapism?
 - 3. “Third Rome” theology: “Two Romes have fallen, but the third stands & a fourth there will not be” (from a Russian monk)]
 - a. Moscow = Third Rome
 - b. Russia center of Orthodoxy after fall of Constantinople
 - c. Russian Orthodox still largest Orthodox body
- E. The Great Schism (1054)
- 1. Split between Rome and Orthodoxy
 - 2. Mutual excommunication by pope & patriarch
 - 3. Rooted in cultural/political differences (e.g., Greek vs. Latin)
 - 4. Major Disagreements with Catholicism
 - a. *Filioque*: Phrase meaning “and the Son” added to the Nicene Creed in West but rejected by East
 - b. Papacy (monarchy, infallibility)
 - c. But just as traditional & ritualistic
 - 1) Tradition & Church as authorities
 - 2) Confuses justification & sanctification
- F. Disasters
- 1. Fourth Crusade (1204): Crusaders sack Constantinople
 - 2. Fall of Constantinople (1453)
 - a. Captured by Muslim Ottoman Turks
 - b. Empire falls under Muslim control