

Christ's eternal divine nature as the Word (pp. 114-15); discusses special topics: the Holy Spirit, unbelief, miracles, etc. (pp. 140ff.); includes many outline studies on the paragraphs of John's Gospel (pp. 154ff.).

**West, Edward.** *Meditations on the Gospel of St. John.* New York: Harper, 1955. 189 pp.

Liberal devotional studies. He stresses the need for Christian love (pp. 32f.) and also our need of the pouring out of Jesus' lifeblood (p. 76); holds that the family is a "unity modeled after the nature of God himself" (p. 93); teaches that "the mighty Lamb of God" could have stopped the crucifixion at any time, but went through it in love for men (p. 157); defends the Lord's resurrection (pp. 163ff.).

**Zeller, George W., and Renald E. Showers.** *The Eternal Sonship of Christ.* Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux, 1993. 126 pp.

A formal defense of the eternal sonship of Christ. They attack incarnational sonship (pp. 10ff.); defend the deity and pre-existence of the Son (pp. 17-22); list numerous Scriptures that teach the eternal sonship (pp. 26ff., 36ff.); criticize those who deny the eternal sonship: F. E. Raven, *Dake's Annotated Reference Bible*, John MacArthur, Jr. (pp. 30ff.); discuss the meaning of the term "Son of God" (pp. 49ff.); deal with objections (pp. 65ff.); stress the necessity and importance of the doctrine (pp. 78ff.); conclude with testimonies to the doctrine by Spurgeon, Ironside, Charles Hodge, Warfield, John Murray, Scofield, Walvoord, etc. (pp. 110ff.).

**Zodhiates, Spiros.** *Was Christ God?* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966. 350 pp.

An exegesis of the Greek text of John 1:1-18. He stresses that Jesus Christ who walked the streets of Palestine was the God of heaven (p. 2); uses many interesting illustrations (pp. 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, etc.); holds that the reading "only begotten God" in 1:18 proves the deity of Christ (p. 23); argues that Christ was preexistent (pp. 37ff.) and that *monogenes* means "the same kind as" the Father (p. 54); stresses the reality of the human nature of the Lord (pp. 69f.) and the fact that He was not merely "divine" but God Himself (pp. 107ff.); defends the virgin birth of Christ (pp. 268ff.).

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## The Attraction of Eastern Orthodoxy

by David Beale

In 1987 Peter Gillquist, a former Campus Crusade for Christ staff member, led two thousand evangelicals to convert to Orthodoxy and join the Antiochian Orthodox Church. Since that time, thousands of Protestants, including vast numbers of clergymen, have continued this move towards the various Eastern Orthodox Churches.<sup>1</sup> Frank Schaeffer, for example, son of the late prominent evangelical Francis Schaeffer, joined the Greek Orthodox Church and established a newspaper, *The Christian Activist*, devoted primarily to the promotion of Orthodoxy. Many evangelical educational institutions such as Biola University, Columbia Bible Seminary, Fuller Theological Seminary, and Oral Roberts University have had to decide whether they could retain faculty members who converted to Orthodoxy.<sup>2</sup> On March 25, 1998, the well-known Lutheran scholar Jaroslav Pelikan announced his conversion to Orthodoxy.<sup>3</sup> This "pilgrimage" from Protestantism to Orthodoxy has not been limited to any single denomination. Scores of Episcopal clergy and laymen, for example, have turned to Eastern Orthodoxy, largely due to their own denomination's liberalism, which led to a severe alteration of their liturgy and *Book of Common Prayer*. Conservative Episcopalians are especially attracted to the Western Rite of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America, which is similar to the traditional Episcopalian liturgy. The above illustrations only begin to describe the impact that the various Orthodox groups are making on American Protestantism. The exodus from evangelical Protestantism to Eastern Orthodoxy is real, and Fundamentalists must understand the issues involved in this attraction to Orthodoxy.<sup>4</sup>

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## Historical Background

The full story actually begins with the first millennium of the Christian church. The development of what would become the Roman Catholic Church was gradual, Pope Gregory I (590-604) being perhaps the earliest bishop of Rome to embrace the same basic doctrines that Roman Catholicism has held since his time. Until A.D. 1054 the Eastern Orthodox Churches were united with the Roman Catholic Church. When the Great Schism of A.D. 1054 officially divided the two groups, the major standard of authority for Roman Catholicism continued to be the bishop of Rome. By definition, "Orthodoxy" also must assume some standard. While the word orthodoxy (ορθοδοξος) is not in the Bible, it comes from *orthos* ("right") and *doxa* ("belief" or "praise"). The major standard for Eastern Orthodoxy became the patriarchal oligarchy as a whole, but more particularly the creeds, canons, and decrees of the first seven ecumenical councils. This was a natural development, since those earliest councils were affairs of the east and were held in the east.

During the early church councils, beginning with Nicea in A.D. 325, the primitive church was struggling for theological definition in the face of threatening heresy. These councils took place among the eastern churches, where the Greek language was used almost exclusively and where there was a bent towards philosophical speculation and mysticism. In the western Latin Churches, there was more of a bent towards law, order, logic, and practice. It was in the east, during the theological debates of the seven councils, that the term *orthodox* (as opposed to heretical) was first used as we know it.

The Orthodox Churches have no single "pope-like" authority figure. After the division of A.D. 1054, the Eastern Orthodox community became a family of thirteen "autocephalous," or self-governing, churches, the five largest Orthodox Churches being the Russian, the Romanian, the Greek, the Serbian, and the Bulgarian. The head of each autocephalous church is called a "patriarch" or "metropolitan." The patriarch of Constantinople (Istanbul) is considered the "ecumenical," or universal, patriarch, enjoying special honor, but holding no power to interfere with the other twelve Orthodox Churches.

## Differences Between Orthodoxy and Fundamentalism

### *The Bible, the Church, Tradition, and Authority*

There are major differences between Fundamentalism and Orthodoxy on topics such as the Bible, the church, tradition, and authority. First, Orthodoxy traditionally accepts the Septuagint (LXX), including the Apocrypha, as authoritative for the Old Testament. In fact, Orthodoxy believes that God in-

spired the LXX even in its frequent changes or departures from the original Hebrew text.<sup>5</sup> Second, Orthodoxy teaches that the Bible is never an authority set up over the church, that the Bible actually derives whatever authority it has from the Orthodox Church, that it can be interpreted correctly only by the Orthodox Church, and that it is on par with tradition. Orthodox spokesman Timothy Ware expresses their position clearly:

The Bible is the supreme expression of God's revelation to the human race, and Christians must always be "People of the Book." But if Christians are People of the Book, the Bible is the Book of the People; it must not be regarded as something set up over the Church, but as something that lives and is understood within the Church (that is why one should not separate Scripture and Tradition). It is from the Church that the Bible ultimately derives its authority, for it was the Church which originally decided which books form a part of Holy Scripture; and it is the Church alone which can interpret Holy Scripture with authority.<sup>6</sup>

To that statement, however, one must inquire, Which church originally received the canon? Was it the Eastern Orthodox? Was it the Roman Catholic? This is a dilemma, not only for the Orthodox but for the Roman Catholic. An honest view of the primitive period of church history provides the clear answer. The earliest churches were in no way "Roman Catholic" or "Eastern Orthodox." Out of the primitive church of the first five centuries, there gradually developed a powerful court of appeal and an ecclesiastical structure which ultimately became the Roman Catholic Church. This gradual process unfolded in the wake of the power and structure vacuum left in Rome after the Emperor Constantine moved his royal palace to Constantinople in the fourth century. The eventual end of the empire itself would leave even more of a vacuum in Rome. Early fathers, such as Tertullian, cried out against the moral corruption of the church in Rome, which was gladly filling the power vacuum left by the secular state. The church in Rome even borrowed much of its own imperial structure from the declining secular state. In strictly theological terms, Pope Gregory I (590-604) was the first Roman Catholic bishop. He was the first of them to believe doctrinally what Roman Catholicism basically believes today. Catholicism's structural form would continue developing for centuries after Gregory, but nothing resembling today's "Roman Catholic Church" existed prior to this man. From Gregory I to the Great Schism of A.D. 1054, which separated the Eastern Orthodox Churches from the Roman Catholic Church, they were all regarded as one.<sup>7</sup>

A vital fact which Orthodoxy, as well as Roman Catholicism, has conveniently and totally ignored is that during its first six hundred years "the church" collectively was "catholic" only in terms of being the "old primitive church." With its many geographical and cultural expressions, including the seven churches of Revelation, this primitive church was the church of the martyrs: It was the church of the early councils, the one that condemned

heretics and pursued purity. It was *orthodox*, although it made many mistakes as it struggled for theological refinement. To *that* church all true believers are related. *That* was the church which was forced by persecution to recognize properly which books were canonical and worth dying for. *That* church knew that the Bible must be both within and over the church. The Holy Spirit was the giver of the Bible, and the Bible is the only basis on which one can evaluate the original doctrine of the apostolic church. Mere ecclesiastical acceptance of a doctrine or practice is not authoritative to the Fundamentalist. Whatever agrees with the Bible is correct; whatever contradicts the Bible is wrong, no matter what the churches later added and dogmatized into "tradition." Contrary to Catholicism and Orthodoxy, Scripture and tradition are not the same.

The word *γραφη* is used in the New Testament, not for "tradition," but exclusively for "Holy Scripture."<sup>8</sup> In 1 Timothy 5:18, Paul uses *γραφη* to introduce two citations—one from Deuteronomy 25 and one from Luke 10. Paul did not wait until a church council determined that the Gospel of Luke belonged in the New Testament canon before he called it "Scripture." Peter did not wait for a church council before he described the epistles of Paul as "Scripture" (2 Pet. 3:15-16). To the Orthodox, the Bible cannot be the sole authority. Ware expresses the Orthodox position:

Orthodox are always talking about Tradition.... It means the books of the Bible; it means the Creed; it means the decrees of the Ecumenical Councils and the writings of the Fathers; it means the Canons, the Service Books, the Holy Icons—in fact, the whole system of doctrine, Church government, worship, spirituality and art which Orthodoxy has articulated over the ages.... Among the various elements of Tradition, a unique pre-eminence belongs to the Bible, to the Creed, to the doctrinal definitions of the Ecumenical Councils: these things the Orthodox accept as something absolute and unchanging, something which cannot be canceled or revised.<sup>9</sup>

What has God given for determining what to believe and what to practice? Is it the church? Is it a series of councils? Is it the clergy? If so, by what criterion can one know that what the bishops "recognize and proclaim" is indeed the truth? The Bible teaches that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God [God-breathed], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). God has given the all-sufficient Holy Scripture for determining the beliefs and practices of His church. God's Word provides the proper tools not only for identifying and "rebuking" that which is wrong, but for "correcting" and making it right. He has given that which fully "equips" believers. He has given the Scriptures as the only absolute authority.

Ware argues that the teaching of an "authentic" ecumenical council is "verified by the assent of the whole Christian people." He admits, however,

that even the Council of Chalcedon (which Orthodoxy accepts as genuine and ecumenical) was rejected by Syrian and Egyptian Christendom. Contrary to Orthodoxy, believers must never regard councils or creeds as any final authority. A major problem for Orthodoxy is trying to determine which councils are indeed "authentic." Recognizing this dilemma, Ware acknowledges that Orthodoxy's ultimate authority actually rests solely in "the life of the church":

Councils of bishops can err and be deceived. How then can one be certain that a particular gathering is truly an Ecumenical Council and therefore that its decrees are infallible? Many councils have considered themselves ecumenical and have claimed to speak in the name of the whole Church, and yet the Church has rejected them as heretical: Ephesus in 449, for example, or the Iconoclast Council of Hieria in 754, or Florence in 1438-9. Yet these councils seem in no way different in outward appearance from the Ecumenical Councils. What, then, is the criterion for determining whether a council is ecumenical? This is a more difficult question to answer than might at first appear, and though it has been much discussed by Orthodox during the past hundred years, it cannot be said that the solutions suggested are entirely satisfactory.... [Some] gave an answer which at first sight appears clear and straightforward: a council cannot be considered ecumenical unless its decrees are accepted by the whole Church.... (One might object: What about Chalcedon? It was rejected by Syria and Egypt—can we say, then, that it was "accepted by the Church at large"?).... At a true Ecumenical Council the bishops recognize what the truth is and proclaim it; this proclamation is then verified by the assent of the whole Christian people, an assent which is not, as a rule, expressed formally and explicitly, but lived.... The ecumenicity of a council cannot be decided by outward criteria alone: "truth can have no external criterion, for it is manifest of itself and made inwardly plain."<sup>10</sup>

Ware's proposed solution to the Orthodox dilemma is hardly a defensible solution. To Orthodoxy, the assent that verifies the decisions of a council normally is not expressed in an explicit and formal manner, but is *lived!* Such a criterion, however, does not even exist. As Ware himself admits, Orthodoxy's only real authority is an alleged "infallible" church:

Unlike Protestantism, Orthodoxy insists upon the hierarchical structure of the Church, upon Apostolic Succession, the episcopate, and the priesthood; it asks the saints for their prayers and intercedes for the departed. Thus far Rome and Orthodoxy agree—but where Rome thinks in terms of the supremacy and the universal jurisdiction of the Pope, Orthodoxy thinks in terms of the five Patriarchs and of the Ecumenical Council; where Rome stresses Papal infallibility, Orthodox stress the infallibility of the Church as a whole.<sup>11</sup>

A major error in Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism is the assertion that there is a single visible "holy, catholic [universal] and apostolic" church. However, in the New Testament, the only universal church is the invisible body of Christ consisting of all true believers from Pentecost to Christ's return.

The Holy Spirit "baptizes" each member into this body of Christ (1 Cor. 1:2; 12:13). In the New Testament, the only visible church is the local church, and no hierarchy exists among its officers. Contrary to the teaching of Orthodoxy and Catholicism, the word *bishop* in the New Testament never refers to anyone other than pastors or elders. The elders at the church at Ephesus, for example, were the pastors or bishops. Paul admonishes these Ephesian elders (πρεσβυτερος), "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over [among] the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers [bishops—επισκοπους], to feed [shepherd, pastor—ποιμαινειν] the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:17, 28). In 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Paul reveals and describes the two local church officers—the bishop and the deacons. Paul left Titus in Crete to "appoint elders in every city" (Titus 1:5); these same "elders" were the pastors or bishops whose qualifications (vv. 6-9) include the requirement that "a bishop must be blameless" (v. 7). Simplicity obviously characterizes the structure of Christ's church.

#### Baptismal Regeneration

In Orthodox Churches, confirmation and communion are closely associated with triple-immersion baptism. Ware explains in detail the precise form and essence of Orthodoxy's sacrament of baptism as absolutely necessary for salvation, and with only Orthodox Churches having the proper authority to administer it. Infants receive both baptism and communion:

In the Orthodox Church today, as in the Church of the early centuries, the three sacraments of Christian Initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, First Communion—are linked closely together. An Orthodox who becomes a member of Christ is admitted at once to the full privileges of such membership. Orthodox children are not only baptized in infancy, but confirmed in infancy, and given communion in infancy.... There are two essential elements in the act of Baptism: the invocation of the Name of the Trinity, and the threefold immersion in water.... Through Baptism we receive a full forgiveness of all sin, whether original or actual; we "put on Christ," becoming members of His Body the Church.... Immediately after Baptism, an Orthodox child is "chrismated" or "confirmed." The priest takes a special ointment, the Chrism (in Greek, *myron*), and with this he anoints various parts of the child's body, marking them with the sign of the Cross.... The child, who has been incorporated into Christ at Baptism, now receives in Chrismation the gift of the Spirit.... Chrismation is also used as a sacrament of reconciliation. If an Orthodox apostatizes to Islam and then returns to the Church, when accepted back he or she is chrismated. Similarly if Roman Catholics become Orthodox, the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Church of Greece usually receive them by Chrismation; but the Russian Church commonly receives them after a simple profession of faith,

without chrismating them. Anglicans and other Protestants are always received by Chrismation. Sometimes converts are received by Baptism.<sup>12</sup>

Strangely enough, even though Orthodoxy insists that water baptism is absolutely necessary for salvation, and that Orthodox Churches alone are true churches, Orthodox Churches regularly receive Roman Catholic and Protestant converts without rebaptizing them. Even strict Orthodox congregations, on rare occasions, receive converts by chrismation, without requiring rebaptism. Orthodox Churches make this possible by what their theologians call an act of *economy* (oikonomia), whereby the church "creates" at will any grace that might be lacking from heretical baptism: "When the Orthodox Church 'recognizes' the empty form of the sacraments of the heterodox, she does not attribute to them Grace, as Metropolitan Anthony so clearly states in his appeal to the sixty-eighth Canon of the Council of Carthage. The Church creates Grace where it was lacking. There is no idea of 'partial Grace' outside Orthodoxy."<sup>13</sup>

#### Mysticism

One might recall "Zossima the elder" in Feodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. This Russian novel offers accurate glimpses of Orthodox monastic mysticism. To understand Orthodox mysticism, however, one must remember that it is derived from the symbolism of the ancient heathen mysteries. George P. Fisher explains how such paganism passed into the Eastern Orthodox ritual through the cultus (worship) ceremonies:

In the rites or worship it was increasingly the aim to realize through sensuous representations divine realities, and to gain a foretaste of heavenly good. Hence a sacredness was attached to every feature of the ritual. The entire cultus was enveloped in an atmosphere of mysticism. In the East, in the domain of Greek Christianity, there was thus established a punctilious ritualism like that of the Romans under the heathen system. This all-pervading, sacred symbolism linked itself to the doctrine of the Incarnation, the manifestation of God in visible humanity. The consequence in the Greek world was a petrification both in doctrine and the ceremonies of worship.<sup>14</sup>

In eastern theology, the fall of man is not nearly so large and deep as it is in the western theology of Augustine. Eastern Orthodoxy believes that all that is, is good; evil is merely the absence of good (similar to "cold" being the "absence of heat").<sup>15</sup> Completely absent is the doctrine of justification by faith alone. In its place is the mystical theology of *apotheosis* (apo = "complete;" theosis = divinization), the completion or deification of man, through a gradual and mystical process. Such communion and union with God comes not through reflection—not through any process of the intellect—but through the illumina-

tion and purification derived through the symbolism of Orthodox art. This is the heart of Orthodox worship; it feeds on the visual symbolism depicted on icons, ornate tapestries, and the colorful pictures of saints on church walls and ceilings.<sup>16</sup> Complex symbols act as visual ladders upon which the soul climbs to a direct union with God. It is this type of exercise in worship which brings the Orthodox into union with God and allows them to "become partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4). The Orthodox love to cite Athanasius' assertion, "God became man so that men might become gods."

A major source of Orthodox mysticism is "the Areopagite"—the collected Greek writings of the mysterious Pseudo-Dionysius (late fifth to early sixth century). These writings were first cited in A.D. 553 at the Second Council of Constantinople. The author was reputed to have been the Dionysius converted under Paul in Athens following his sermon on the "unknown God" (Acts 17:34). Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus (c. 1469-1536) would be among those who first cast doubt upon the assumption that Dionysius actually wrote these works. Perhaps Dionysius' true identity may never be known. Among the most influential of his works is *Mystical Theology*, which addresses the relationship between God and the human soul. His *Celestial Hierarchy* describes three triads of angelic orders, nine ranks of angels who work as intermediaries between God and the world. His *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* treats their earthly counterparts. The transition from the hierarchy below to the hierarchy above is by the continuing incarnation of Christ in the Orthodox believer. Other highly regarded mystics of Orthodoxy include Maximus the Confessor (late sixth to early seventh century) and John of Damascus (seventh to eighth century).

The ninth-century Scottish theologian John Scotus Erigena translated the Areopagite writings into Latin, making them more accessible to influence Scholastic theologians, most notably the Catholic theologian Thomas Aquinas. From the Areopagite, theologians and artists were introduced to the ideas of neoplatonism and derived their conceptions of angels. The influence of these writings is plainly discernible in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and in the works of the English poet John Milton.

### Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism

#### *How Orthodoxy Differs from Roman Catholicism*

Orthodox Churches reject the pope's infallibility and, instead, lodge infallibility in the seven ecumenical councils, in the patriarchal oligarchy, and in the Orthodox Churches as a whole. The Orthodox Churches reject the immaculate conception of Mary, proclaimed as dogma by the pope in 1854. With their synergism, the Orthodox see no need of this doctrine, since they

deny that Adam's sin and guilt are transmitted to anyone. Likewise, baptism does not wash away "original guilt," because there is no guilt in any newborn baby; people are born with only a bent towards sin. Orthodox Churches teach that Mary could have committed sins prior to the Day of Pentecost, but not after. They reject the doctrine of the *Filioque* ("and the Son"), a Western addition to the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. The word denotes the procession of the Holy Spirit from both the Father "and the Son." Neither the word nor its teaching belonged to the original creed of A.D. 381, but derives from the Council of Toledo in A.D. 589 and is seen in the *et filio* of the so-called Athanasian Creed. The Eastern Orthodox Churches have always considered the word as an unnecessary western interpolation.

There are other ways in which the Eastern Orthodox Churches differ from the Roman Catholic Church, especially in form. Orthodox lower clergy (presbyters and deacons) may marry before ordination, for example, and Orthodox clergy must wear beards. Orthodox monasteries (male and female) have no "orders" as the Roman Catholics do (Jesuits, Dominicans, Benedictines, Cistercians, etc.). Orthodox Churches offer the eucharistic cup to laity, and they practice threefold immersion, instead of single pouring or sprinkling. The Orthodox anoint (chrismate or confirm) baptized infants and practice infant communion. They use leavened bread in the eucharist and invoke the Holy Spirit in the benediction of the elements. The Orthodox worship towards the east. They use flat icons, rather than three-dimensional statues. The Orthodox do not fast on Saturday (except Holy Saturday) or Sunday, do not kneel on Sunday, and have no "Stations of the Cross." Orthodox Churches allow divorce in the case of adultery, as a concession to human weakness. They also permit second and third marriages as a further concession to human weakness (e.g., after the death of a spouse). The Orthodox do not restrict Holy Unction to the time of death, but practice its repetition in sickness. Orthodoxy is largely silent in regard to any "purgatorial treasury of merits." Orthodoxy teaches that, after the soul leaves the body, it journeys to the abode of the dead (hades). One must remain in this condition of waiting, which is called "Particular Judgment." When Christ returns, the soul will rejoin its risen body to be judged by Him. The "good and faithful servant" will inherit eternal life, while the unfaithful, with the unbelievers, will spend eternity in hell. Their sins and their unbelief will torture them as fire.<sup>17</sup>

#### *How Orthodoxy Is Similar to Roman Catholicism*

Orthodoxy and Catholicism agree on several points.<sup>18</sup> First, monasticism and mysticism are essential elements of the church's spiritual life. While mysticism is less prominent in Roman Catholicism than it was during the Middle Ages, it remains a vital part of Orthodoxy. Second, the authority of

ecclesiastical tradition is a joint rule of faith with Scripture, and the Apocrypha as part of the canon. Third, the Orthodox worship the virgin Mary as mother of God (θεοτοκος) and agree that she never died, but rather was borne by the angels directly into the heavens, body and soul, and that she now sits at the feet of her Son, making intercession for all those who implore her mercy. The Orthodox Church honors the "miracle of her assumption" with an August 15 feast. Fourth, the Orthodox Churches believe in the intercessions of not only the virgin Mary but also all the saints.

Fifth, the Orthodox use images in worship. An icon is an artistic depiction of Christ, the Holy Spirit, Mary, or the saints. God the Father cannot be painted, because He has never been seen. Since the Holy Spirit has appeared as a dove and as "tongues of fire," He may be shown in these ways. Since God the Son became a man, He may be painted in human form. The liturgy for the annual Feast of Orthodoxy includes a condemnation on all who reject icons. The Orthodox honor and kiss icons, a devotion which they believe passes from the icon to the person or persons represented. (Unlike Catholicism, Orthodoxy always has flat icons, never three-dimensional.)

Sixth, the church is infallible, especially its teaching hierarchy. Seventh, the priest has the power to absolve, i.e., the clergy has divine authority to absolve sin and to assign works of satisfaction. Eighth, faith and works are joint conditions of justification.<sup>19</sup> Ninth, there are seven sacraments, or mysteries—eucharist, baptism, chrismation, ordination, penance, marriage, and holy oil for the sick (often called in Catholic circles "extreme unction"). There are also minor differences regarding chrismation, which Catholicism calls "confirmation." Orthodoxy links chrismation with baptism and communion; Catholicism links it solely with the eucharist. Tenth, the Orthodox affirm baptismal regeneration (in an unqualified sense), i.e., the necessity of water baptism for salvation. Eleventh, the Orthodox give a central place to the eucharist. Orthodox Churches teach the doctrine of transubstantiation, without explaining this "reality" in Aristotelian categories of "essence" and "accidents." The technical word which they use is "transmuting." Finally, the Orthodox offer prayers for the dead.

### **Orthodoxy in America**

Orthodoxy claims about 215 million members worldwide, nearly six million of them being in the United States. The various Orthodox groups that exist in the United States have created an inconsistency in American Orthodoxy, allowing a condition that does not conform to the church canons. There is no Orthodox Church universally recognized as a national entity in the USA. Instead, there are American "jurisdictions," or "archdioceses." During the

mass immigrations of Orthodox people from Europe and Asia, the national Churches in the home countries simply considered America as a mission field and established parishes here. Founding matters, however, in 1970 the Moscow Patriarchate granted an American group autocephalous status and proclaimed them "The Orthodox Church in America" (OCA). While this "church" cooperates with many other Orthodox jurisdictions or archdioceses in America, very few of the others actually recognize the OCA as the autocephalous church in America. In other words, Orthodoxy's American practice is inconsistent with the denomination's official practice.

There are Orthodox people—especially zealous converts—who speak of their church as unified and unchanging. Such a view, however, is not true to fact. Orthodoxy is not even united on which calendar they should use. Some use the Gregorian calendar, while most still use the old Julian calendar. Some parishes use an organ during the liturgy and have chairs so that the congregation may sit while they worship. Other parishes, on the other hand, have actually separated from their parent jurisdictions because of their opposition to such "innovations."<sup>20</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Eastern Orthodoxy differs significantly with Fundamentalism over such vital issues as the nature of Biblical authority and baptismal regeneration. Orthodoxy advocates teachings concerning tradition and mysticism that Bible-believing Protestants reject as unscriptural. Although Orthodoxy does differ from Roman Catholicism on several matters, mostly of form, the Orthodox Church unites with Catholicism against Protestantism in teachings such as the use of images, the exaltation of the virgin Mary, and the intercession of saints. Today, Orthodoxy is proving attractive to many evangelicals, but its attraction is not that of Scriptural truth. The Orthodox Church is not, Biblically speaking, truly orthodox.

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> See Peter E. Gillquist, *Becoming Orthodox: A Journey to the Ancient Christian Faith* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1989). A former Campus Crusade for Christ leader and a graduate of both Dallas Theological Seminary and Wheaton Graduate School, Gillquist chronicles his pilgrimage and what ultimately led him and his friends in Campus Crusade to the Eastern Orthodox Church. See also Peter E. Gillquist, ed., *Coming Home: Why Protestant Clergy Are Becoming Orthodox* (Ben Lomond, CA: Conciliar Press, 1992); and Frederica Mathewes-Green, *Facing East: A Pilgrim's Journey into the Mysteries of Orthodoxy* (San Francisco: Harper, 1997). The idea for and initial approach to this present study stems from Myron J. Houghton, "Orthodoxy in

Our Midst" (Faith Baptist Theological Seminary, Ankeny Iowa, n.d. ); both in profitable conversation and in this helpful ten-page paper, I especially appreciated his pointing me to Timothy Ware's book, *The Orthodox Church*, referenced in this article.

<sup>2</sup> "Universities Question Orthodox Conversions," *Christianity Today*, 10 August 1998, pp. 18, 21.

<sup>3</sup> As Sterling Professor Emeritus of History at Yale University, Jaroslav Pelikan wrote extensively; his works include the five-volume *Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*. Especially helpful on the history and theology of Orthodoxy is volume two, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700)*.

<sup>4</sup> The Orthodox are becoming increasingly Internet savvy; see [www.links2go.com/topics/Orthodox](http://www.links2go.com/topics/Orthodox), for example, and discover dozens of additional related links.

<sup>5</sup> Timothy (Kallistos) Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (NY: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 200. While Orthodox scholars view the Apocrypha as canonical, many of them view it as less authoritative than the rest of the Old Testament.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>7</sup> Both Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism wrongly describe themselves, in the words of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, as "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church." The creed, however, was composed (A.D. 381) centuries prior to the development of the Roman Catholic Church, and its framers were simply describing the old primitive church of the first four centuries. Unwittingly, the framers of the creed sowed seeds of Roman Catholicism by describing all true visible churches as "Catholic." The Bible teaches no such concept of the church. The universal church is not visible; it is the one body of Christ from Pentecost to its completion.

<sup>8</sup> For example, see Walter Bauer, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 166.

<sup>9</sup> Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 196-97.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 251-53. In the last sentence of the citation above, Ware is quoting Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (London, 1957).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 277-79.

<sup>13</sup> Archbishop Chrysostomos, "The Reception of Converts and Related Matters," *Orthodox Tradition*, XV, 2 and 3, p. 50.

<sup>14</sup> George Park Fisher, *History of Christian Doctrine* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1896), p. 173.

<sup>15</sup> In a similar negative way, Orthodoxy normally describes God as what He is not. This is called apophatic theology (from the Greek *apophasis* "denial," or negative). For example the statement "God is not finite" is an apophatic statement. While Westerners normally describe God in more positive or cataphatic language (*cata* or "without" the negative), Orthodoxy emphasizes, with John of Damascus, that all that is comprehensible about God is His incomprehensibility. Cataphatic (positive) description is like the work of the artist who adds paint to his canvas until the true image is complete; apophatic (negative) description is like the work of the sculptor who strips away from his block of marble until the true image is complete.

<sup>16</sup> In the eighth century, this type of worship was especially disgusting to the Muslims, who could see its pagan origin. Their opposition to it helped to give rise to the iconoclastic controversies and to the Second Council of Nicea (A.D. 787), which allowed for the offering of worship (*προσκυνησις*) to icons, pictures, tapestries, and relics of saints. Such worship is thought to pass on to God!

<sup>17</sup> Compare with the shorter list in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* (NY: Harper and Brothers, Publishers 1919), 1:922-23.

<sup>18</sup> Again, compare with Schaff's shorter list (1:921-23).

<sup>19</sup> Even though justification by faith alone is lacking in Eastern Orthodoxy, its proponents often speak of salvation by "Jesus Christ alone": "Set your salvation on nothing else but on Christ Jesus alone, the Saviour of the world. If you would truly believe that He suffered and died for you and is your Saviour, then love Him with all your heart, obey Him and please Him, as your Saviour, and lay and confirm all your hope of salvation on Him alone. We must unfailingly do good works as Christians, but we must ask and await salvation from Christ alone." The citation is from Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk, *Journey to Heaven* (Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1991), p. 44.

<sup>20</sup> See Shelly Houston, "A Long, Slow Fall," *Christianity Today*, 4 October, 1999, p. 24. While this article deals primarily with the recent resignation of Archbishop Spyridon of the Greek-American Orthodox Church, it gives a good review of the problems facing the Orthodox in America. The Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the Holy Synod replaced Spyridon with the appointment of the popular Metropolitan Demetrios Trakatellis of Greece and there is growing talk of a proposed "pan-Orthodox church in America."

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