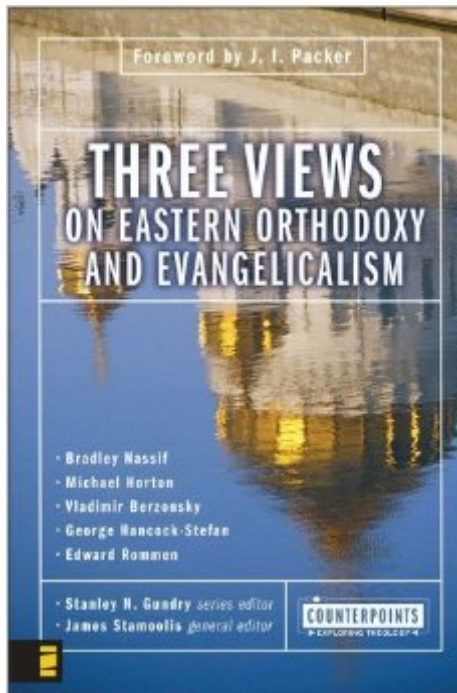


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# Three Views On Eastern Orthodoxy And Evangelicalism (Counterpoints: Bible And Theology)



## Synopsis

To some Western evangelicals, the practices of Eastern Orthodoxy seem mysterious and perhaps even unbiblical. Then again, from an Orthodox perspective, evangelicals lack the spiritual roots provided by centuries-old church traditions. Are the differences between these two branches of Christianity so sharp that to shake hands is to compromise the gospel itself? Or is there room for agreement? Are Eastern Orthodoxy and evangelicalism at all compatible? Yes, no, maybeâthis book allows five leading authorities to present their different views, have them critiqued by their fellow authors, and respond to the critiques. Writing from an Orthodox perspective with a strong appreciation for evangelicalism, Bradley Nassif makes a case for compatibility. Michael Horton and Vladimir Berzonsky take the opposite stance from their respective evangelical and Orthodox backgrounds. And George Hancock-Stefan (evangelical) and Edward Rommen (Orthodox) each offer a qualified âperhaps.â • The interactive Counterpoints forum is ideal for comparing and contrasting the different positions to understand the strengths and weaknesses of these two important branches of Christianity and to form a personal conclusion regarding their compatibility. The Counterpoints series provides a forum for comparison and critique of different views on issues important to Christians. Counterpoints books address two categories: Church Life and Bible and Theology. Complete your library with other books in the Counterpoints series.

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## Customer Reviews

This book gets four stars because of both the great idea of comparing the two Christian traditions and Bradley Nassif. The other authors were very unprepared for the book. Michael Horton does the best job of the evangelicals but still gets some aspects of Orthodox theology wrong. Vladimir Berzonsky was the worst writer by far because he equated all evangelicals with Anabaptists in their theological views (particularly with the Sacraments). This is not his fault though, because the book itself does a horrible job explaining what evangelicalism is. The two evangelicals are (I think) Baptist and Presbyterian (or Reformed), but there are huge differences in these traditions, and I am truly shocked that none of the writers were Confessional Lutherans even though the historical meeting between the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Lutheran scholars of Tübingen is brought up in nearly every chapter. This means no writer defends the view of Lutherans that the bread and wine in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper have the real presence in them after they are blessed (with the exception of Dr. Nassif who also understands that the term usually applied for this which is Consubstantiation is a very poor term nearly no competent Lutheran and/or Episcopal scholar uses)! Nassif also used the best methodology in his analysis of doctrine (that of Christological Maximalism) thus showing many views, particularly of the Sacraments (if I may dare call them that) in the evangelical churches were argued over in the past by councils who found such views contrary to the doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation which all branches of non-heretical Christianity accept. My review should not be seen as a praise of just the Orthodox.

Books comparing rival theological systems should primarily be about translating across schemes. This is what people want in reading these kinds of books. They are in one view and they want to understand the other view. To effectively meet this end, one has to be familiar with both sides, that is, one has to know how to speak the language of the other guy. Unfortunately this isn't accomplished. While the two Orthodox writers give a basic overview of Orthodox teaching, they fail in two basic ways. First, they fail to grasp the language and system of their Protestant interlocutors and therefore do not adequately address their objections. They show a very superficial

understanding of Reformation theology. Second, they fail to get to the heart of the differences which lie in Trinitarian theology, Christology and theological method. A much more effective exposition and hence argument could have been made. The Protestant participants suffer from the same kinds of problems plus others. The baptist contributor focuses on abuses mainly in the Russian jurisdiction. This is hardly a fair tactic, for the abuses, theological, moral or administrative are anecdotal, that is, they are limited to his experience. Second, considering that the Russian Church was practically exterminated by the Soviets, it is understandable if its laity/clergy who were prohibited from learning the Bible or going to seminary are ignorant of basic Christian teaching and moral praxis. In fact the baptist contributor ultimately confesses ignorance as to what the real issues are between Reformation and Orthodox soteriology, indicating that he shouldn't even be a participant.

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