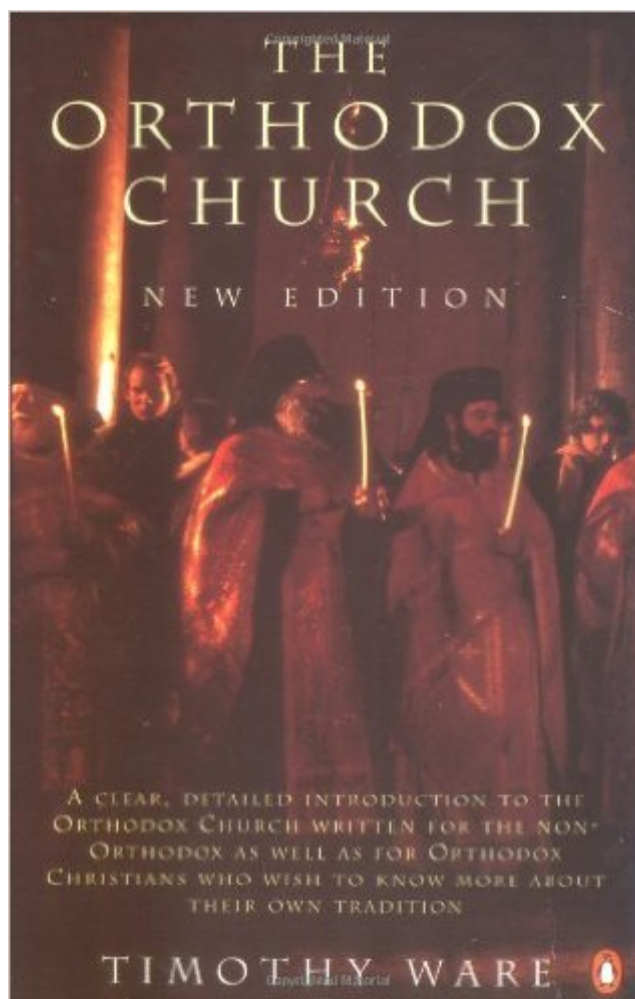


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The Orthodox Church: New Edition



Synopsis

Since its first publication thirty years ago, Timothy Ware's book has become established throughout the English-speaking world as the standard introduction to the Orthodox Church. Orthodoxy continues to be a subject of enormous interest among Western Christians, and the author believes that an understanding of its standpoint is necessary before the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches can be reunited. He explains the Orthodox views on such widely ranging matters as ecumenical councils, sacraments, free will, purgatory, the papacy and the relation between the different Orthodox churches.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The Orthodox Church," by Timothy (Bishop Kallistos) Ware, is (and has been for decades) the number one book in the English language on the Eastern Orthodox Christian faith. It appears on virtually all recommended reading lists and bibliographies. (Not surprisingly, the number two book is "The Orthodox Way," by the same author.) The cover states that this title is "a clear, detailed introduction to the Orthodox Church written for the non-Orthodox as well as for Orthodox Christians who wish to know more about their own tradition." I couldn't have said it better myself. This volume is divided into two sections. Part one covers the history of the Church from the beginnings at Pentecost through Byzantium (the Seven Councils and the Great Schism), then the conversion of the Slavs, the Church under Islam, the Russian Church, and on into the twentieth century. Especially sobering is the author's summary of events surrounding the eastern European Orthodox

Churches under communism. Coverage of the growth of the Orthodox Church in North America helps explain the current state of things. Part two discusses faith and worship and covers such important topics as: Holy Tradition, God and humankind, the theology and structure of the Church, and detailed explanations of various components of Orthodox worship (including sacraments, feasts, fasts and private prayer). The final chapter, entitled "The Orthodox Church and the Reunion of Christians," explains various views within the Church concerning the ecumenical movement and the World Council of Churches, and highlights dialogues with various church bodies including Roman Catholics, Old Catholics, Anglicans, and other Eastern Christian bodies such as the Coptic Church and the Armenian Orthodox Church.

There has been a great surge of interest in Eastern Orthodoxy in recent years. Partly owing to the turn towards liturgical worship and historic Christianity by disenchanted Evangelicals, many have explored this great Christian tradition with a sizable number swelling its ranks. Almost without exception, one of the starting points on any such journey is *The Orthodox Church* by Timothy Ware (now Bishop Kallistos Ware). Books listed as entry points for conversion are often polemical works but this is not the case here. Instead, Ware calmly states the position of Orthodoxy on issues facing the Church without any hint of rancor towards other Christian traditions. It is a mature understanding of the Faith of the Church that is Ware's greatest strength. The irenic approach should not lead one to believe Ware is indifferent towards ecclesial affiliations. It is quite apparent he holds Orthodoxy as the one true Christian Faith. However, this does not lead him to wholesale condemnations of Christians in other traditions, but rather a clear contrast of the Orthodox position to those of the Western Churches. Originally written when Orthodoxy had few converts in the West, Ware (who became Orthodox in 1958) gives an overview of Orthodox Christianity for those in the West who might find its beliefs and practices alien. Intertwining theological and historical developments in the Church, Ware gives a highly readable analysis of the development of Orthodox doctrine and spirituality. The book is divided into two parts. The first of these presents an Orthodox view of Church history.

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