



Becoming Orthodox: A Journey to the Ancient Christian Faith

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This is the story of a handful of courageous men and their congregations who risked stable occupations, security and the approval of life-long friends to be obedient to God's call. It is also the story of every believer who is searching for the Church. Where Christ is Lord. Where holiness, human responsibility, and the sovereignty of God are preached. Where fellowship is more than a covered-dish supper in the church basement. And where fads and fashions take a backseat to apostolic worship and doctrine. This is a book, for Orthodox Christians, looking for ways to bring new life to their own Churches. It's also a book for those completely dissatisfied--those on their own search. And it's a book for Orthodox Christians, looking for renewal.

Becoming Orthodox: A Journey to the Ancient Christian Faith Details

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From Reader Review *Becoming Orthodox: A Journey to the Ancient Christian Faith* for online ebook

Tiana Dalichov says

Fantastic book for anyone considering Orthodoxy.

Marianne Ogden says

For those who think that the early church is no more, look again. The earliest traditions have continued for two thousand years through the Orthodox church. If you are curious about it, here is the book for you.

Marc says

Anecdotally engaging but lacking in academic rigor and real depth. It's the story of Peter and his friends, who wanted to find the new testament church. This admirable journey culminated in joining the Orthodox Church. Much better authors to read instead for the seeker after *The Orthodox Way*- Frederica Mathewes-Green, Metropolitan Ware, Schmemmann.

Leo and Suz says

This book is one that keeps to a very simple purpose and executes it well. It's casual, easy reading that at times can be cheesy, but there lies the book's genius. It lends itself to a surprisingly greater level of take-away on major theology tenets separating Orthodoxy and Protestantism, whereas other books, for me at least, I find myself bunkered down carefully slaving over every paragraph like it were an Orthodox treatise. Fr. Gillquist discusses these tenets subjectively as it relates to his group's journey from a contemporary, culturally-influenced Protestant organization (Campus Crusade for Christ) to discovering the authentic New Testament church, which they found in Orthodox Christianity. What's remaining is a desire to further pursue the topic of Orthodoxy and the theological issues raised even further. Thus, it is a good book from which to begin one's reading on Orthodoxy, especially if it's a whole new world like it is for me.

Jerry says

What do you get when a sentimental and provincial Protestant (Gillquist was a Campus Crusade director in the 60s), ignorant of his own tradition, falls in love with the smells and bells of Eastern Orthodoxy? This testimony. Protestants really need to recover the beauty and maturity of the liturgy and our ancient church. Sadly, Eastern Orthodoxy believes it's the only true church and cuts of fellowship (and communion) from other churches. Which of course, like other spots and blemishes, will be loved away one day by Jesus.

Chad Lynch says

Disappointing. I've wanted to read this for years, but the author seemed rather Cage stage, and made several polemical statements and arguments against Protestants in particular that were simply ludicrous.

I wish she had tried harder to simply focus on what he loved about Orthodoxy, instead of making ridiculous statement, such as when he essentially said Sola Scriptura, in dividing Scripture from Tradition, was "dangerously close" to the unpardonable sin.

Jon says

Growing up, and spending most of my young adult life in, American Evangelicalism, Fr. Gillquist's book was a great read while on my inquiry into Orthodox Christianity. If you've ever been around evangelicals that talk about getting back to the "ancient church" or the "church in Acts" but you feel like, more often than not, something just isn't quite right with the execution, read this book. Like Fr. Gillquist and so many former evangelicals, you may find (to steal a quote from a Roman Catholic priest) that "to be deep in history is to cease to be Protestant." Fr. Gillquist holds no grudge against his former religious tradition, and simply, kindly, tells his story, or to borrow the familiar term, his testimony. Good stuff.

Christopher says

BECOMING ORTHODOX is a personal testimonial by Fr Peter Guilquist written to track the conversion of nearly a thousand Evangelical Protestants to Orthodox Christianity in 1987. This mass conversion was one of the biggest events in modern American Orthodoxy, and Fr Guilquist's book paints a vivid picture of the theological wrestling and jurisdictional complications which ended in the reception of the converts in the Antiochian Orthodox Church.

Fr Guilquist and many other leaders of this movement started their Christian occupations in the 1950s and 1960s as activists for Campus Crusade for Christ. They travelled widely, trying to organise rallies at such universities as the uber-liberal Berkeley and Roman Catholic Notre Dame. Their focus was entirely on bringing young people to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, not on building community, which they saw as denominationalism. Over time, however, they became jaded by their work, because many converts fell away after the initial dedication. They understand the need for a Church which would provide lasting support. Yet, they had no idea what such a church should look like.

In the early 1970s these former CCC leaders came together to begin a study of what the Church looked like in the decades after Pentecost, using only the Bible and early Fathers, so that they might form a community mirroring it entirely. They found that the early Church was liturgical, retaining a Judaic structure of worship after the expulsion from the synagogues, and that it was built around the Eucharist, which was seen as no mere commemoration but as a true mystery of faith. They discovered that the Church had a three-tiered division of authority, with bishops defending the faith, and priests and deacons serving the flocks of faithful. In the end, they felt that the only place today that this ancient Church was continued and contained fully was the Orthodox Church. Over time, they discovered that many of the exotic qualities of Orthodox Christianity, such as veneration of Mary and icons, and the liturgical use of incense, were entirely in keeping with the Gospel that gave them strength.

However, they had no personal experience with the Orthodox Church, which in the North America of the time was still seen as an ethnic conclave, in spite of a steady stream on individual conversions. They attended various offerings at Orthodox churches, met with Orthodox apologists such as the famed Fr Alexander Schmemmann, and tried themselves to follow Orthodox traditions in their own worship. For a long time they were unsure of how to enter the Church which seemed to fulfill the discoveries of their investigations, and the division of Orthodoxy in North America along numerous ethnic lines was a sad complication. The Greek Orthodox Church was disapproving of their entering the Church, afraid that so many Americans would "dilute Greek traditions", a shameful blot of nationalism on the Church. Their attempt to meet the Patriarch of Constantinople for guidance was shrugged off. In the end, many of them were losing hope that Orthodoxy could provide a lasting home for them. Then, the Metropolitan of the Antiochian Orthodox Church in America invited them to enter under his guidance, and wished that they would all come in within only a few months. The book ends with a recounting of the mass charismations and ordinations which brought these travellers home after a journey of over a decade. A new afterword written in 1992 talks about the victories made by these converts and their fellow Orthodox in the years since.

Fr Guilquist's writing is entertaining and smooth-flowing. Theological arguments are not very deep, but friendly to Evangelical Protestants without much formal training. I am reluctant to criticise a work of such admirable zeal and which is so spiritually uplifting. I wish, however, that the book could have enjoyed some tighter editing and academic typesetting. There is a profusion of exclamation points and italics, and the formatting of the text is not up to professional standards. As it is, the work looks unfortunately amateurish.

If you are curious about the Orthodox Church, an academic work like Kallistos Ware's *THE ORTHODOX CHURCH* (a modern classic) is a must. However, personal testimonials like *BECOMING ORTHODOX* are also worth reading, and many readers will Fr Peter Guilquist's story quite inspiring.

David says

The most interesting section was the first section describing how so many Campus Crusade for Christ staff reverse engineered Apostolic Christianity by analyzing primary sources with an open mind.

The second section argued many theological points in pretty simplistic terms. It was tough for me because I believe the things Fr. Gilquist was arguing, but didn't think the arguments were particularly intellectually honest or charitable.

The third section, which details the assumption of the EOC by the Antiochian Orthodox Church, was also rather interesting (though it dragged at times). It was moving to read about how all these spiritual wanderers finally found peace and fulfillment in the Orthodox Church.

Christian Hamilton says

An extraordinary journey into Orthodox Christianity.

Fr. Peter Gillquist describes his journey from Campus Crusades into Traditional Christianity. Over the course of this text, he clearly lays out to the reader his experiences in dealing with what he assumes to be the more "ritualistic" (as most Protestants claim) form of Christianity.

Over the course of it, he falls in love with the faith, joins the Evangelical Orthodox Church, and eventually

finds a home with the Orthodox Church in America.

For anyone following the path to Orthodoxy, or perhaps interested in seeing a convert's journey to the faith, this is a great book to read!

David says

An interesting account of what eventually became a mass conversion. However, Gilquist, I believe, can at times be a bit simplistic and anachronistic. Perhaps he is carrying over quite a few Evangelical prejudices. History and theological development are a tad more complicated than Gilquist makes them seem.

Dimmy-jimmy says

I knew little of the orthodox faith, the book was good but, it dealt more with his journey than the faith itself. the orthodox faith seems to fill a void the catholic faith cant fill, one day iam going to act on it

Lisa Wuertz says

I think this book does the best of all I have read of addressing the many issues Protestant converts and their families would face. Gillquist does it in a manner that is very down to earth and easy to read. I think this is also just a great book for Christians to read in general even if they are not remotely considering Orthodoxy. There is a lot to be gleaned from these pages. The book specifically addressed several things that have come up as walls for me, but was very brief and as such unfortunately silent about many other things.

While I appreciate and like many things about the Orthodox church and now feel a greater understanding of my faith and the practice of that faith as it relates to church history and tradition, I am still not convinced about specifically cultural practices in the Orthodox church from music styles, to Byzantine chanting for reading scripture and praying, to interpersonal greetings and such. I just find much of it very Eastern and not at all like Western culture or appealing to Western culture. It isn't that these cultural practices offend me or that I think people are wrong for practicing them, they just are not my culture.

One of the things I learned as a communications major about interpersonal communication, particularly when you are going to be communicating with those of another culture is you learn about them and adapt to their preference. Everything from approximate personal space preference, to proper titles, forms of address, mannerisms, proper clothing, colors, expectations of gifts, etc is studied prior to communicating with those of another culture on a business level.

I think some Protestant churches in many ways have done an excellent job of this in missions and learning about another culture before sending people out (to be sure they have made made serious mistakes, but I'm just saying my own experience has seen otherwise). I think the Orthodox church is failing miserably in this even with the efforts of Gillquist and others involved in the AEOM. Our experience in Orthodox churches in the last few months has found them to be still very Eastern. We are not Eastern!

I think if the Orthodox church wants to be more effective they need to stop trying to preserve the cultural identities of the jurisdictions like Antioch, Greece, Russia, etc. and embrace and realize that American

culture is different and that it is OK (I am not saying they should embrace all of American culture because we all know that has its problems).

I am not of Byzantine heritage, so why do I need to chant my prayers and scripture in the Byzantine style? Most American music is in the major scale and that is what we are used to, why at church do we need to submit to the harmonic minor scale in order for it to be proper worship to God? Because I don't think these really are the things that make or break the faith. Some may argue then why not submit to them while I argue why should I.

Dustan Holland says

The parts about orthodoxy itself was pretty interesting. The rest was just about how this group of priests joined the orthodox church. I thought it was going to be a more general book about joining the orthodox faith, as I will soon be crismated into the church. Didn't hate it, liked parts of it. It was ok. Which is what Goodreads says 2 stars are for. Feels low though.

Christopher Hall says

An excellent summary of Fr Peter's journey to the Orthodox faith. This was a quick and enjoyable read.
