ST. PAUL’S GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Religious Education Discussion

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*Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy*

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Introduction: Doctrine Matters

1. What “tool” do we need for spiritual knowledge and discernment and what does it begin with?

2. How might our struggle with pride and humility affect our approach to objective truth?

3. If the Truth, Christ himself, can be known, at least to some extent, what is the most direct and robust way to experience it? Should we expect the truth to conform to our expectations or should we expect to conform to its beauty?

4. What are some common false statements we hear about theology that are based on relativism?

5. What is a basic yet obvious question about religious truth our culture tends to ignore?

6. What does this book hope to illustrate about the differences between Orthodoxy and other faiths?

7. How does the author define secularist philosophy? How is this opposite to the Christian viewpoint?

8. What does the word religion mean and is it static or dynamic?

9. What is a fundamental truth of all religious practice according to the author? What is its corollary?

10. An Orthodox Christian’s life has one goal, what is it?

11. How is our experience of God in this life a foretaste of what we can expect in the next life?

12. Define Orthodoxy.

13. What does Tradition mean?

14. What cities represented the five great spiritual centers of the early Church?

15. What do we know about their worship and sacraments?

16. Which came first, the Church or the Bible?

17. What was the primary question that separated Rome from the others?

18. Name two issues that Martin Luther objected to.

Chapter One: Orthodoxy, Heterodoxy, Heresy, and History

1. What does Orthodox theology have to say about the non-Orthodox?

2. Historically speaking, are the Orthodox unique in believing their Church is the one Church?

3. How would you describe the concept of the *spermatikos logos*?

4. Why is discussing comparative theology in terms of completeness preferable to using terms of truth?

5. Why is it important to make the distinction between individual persons who hold heterodox positions and organizations that do?

6. Is it possible that some may not be a member of the Church in this life, but in the next?

7. The three Persons of the Trinity are all absolutely equal in what?

8. Who is the eternal source of the Godhead?

9. What is another term used for the energies of God?

10. Who is the only person (human or divine) who has two natures?

11. According to the author, which is the only Church?

12. What does Theosis entail?

13. What does synergy mean and how does it interplay with our salvation?

14. As Orthodox, we believe the Holy Mysteries (sacraments) truly communicate what?

15. Now that you have read about various heresies, have you ever run across someone whose beliefs struck you as Gnostic or Marcionite?

16. Did you know that an over-emphasis on highly emotional religious experiences, or a belief in a literal 1,000 year kingdom of Christ on earth, or the belief that all will be saved in the end are errors that have been around for centuries?

17. Did you know that the Orthodox Church suffered much during the Iconoclasm controversy in the seventh century as it worked out the veneration versus worship approach to icons? What is the difference between worship and veneration?

18. Have you ever noticed that Western Churches include the phrase “and the Son” in the Nicene Creed?

19. What is Ethnophyletism?