

You Should Be Orthodox

by Anna Bee



Hipster Christians, I'm going to help you out. I see you are grasping at something, trying to find the ironic Church of your dreams, where men can grow beards of foolish proportions and women can dress like their grannies' grannies, a place where scarves are worn in every unfashionable fashion imaginable, a place where people do shots and eat hummus at community gatherings, enjoy rooms filled with a fog of incense and prefer to read books that pre-date industrialization. I would like to direct your attention to "[The Orthodox Church](#)."

We Orthodox were Christians before it was cool. We started following the Apostles' teachings hardcore before the Bible was even written. Actually, we read the books of the Bible before they were officially published. And not to brag or anything, but we spoke in tongues before it was "a thing." Stuff like that.

In addition to enjoying long beards, drinking and the occasional cigarette, we are super mellow. This is called being "dispassionate" but you will simply recognize it as being extremely cool...without trying too hard. You know what I mean.

We do enjoy the ringing of Church bells, but we prefer the more organic tone that is produced from hammering a piece of wood – oh, you've never heard of that? Check out [this track](#) then; it's so raw, you'll love it.

We Orthodox don't need to explore "vintage faith;" we invented vintage faith, but it wasn't called vintage back then, it was just called "faith."

Why oh Hipster Christian do you keep on seeing but do not perceive? The Orthodox Church IS the authentic Christian experience. And seriously, you would fit right in (although if you decide to attend long-term, the priest is going to ask you to stop wearing skinny jeans to liturgy – the handlebar moustache can stay, however.)

Oh, and we don't just drink coffee after liturgy, we drink Turkish coffee. It's pretty good. Yes, that's right, we say call our gatherings "liturgy" instead of "church" and sometimes we use other more obscure terms such as vespers, akathist and orthros. You should come to vespers sometime, Hipster Christian. Then you could hear "Lord I Call" in the eighth tone – oh you haven't heard of that either....?

Really, you should be Orthodox. Because some day calling your parish a “tribe” and having Sunday meetings at a pub will be completely overdone, yet the Orthodox Church will still be operating in this world as

unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. (2 Cor 6:9-10)

I think the church you are looking for has been there all along. Ironic, isn't it?

Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly—and indeed you do bear with me. For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it! 2 Corinthians 11:1-4

A confession

Sometimes I'm a bit nutty. When I see Evangelical Protestant groups in my area that are active in the community I get the strong urge to ask them “why aren't you Orthodox??” I know, I know, I should just go to liturgy, say my prayers and mind my own business, but it irritates me.

I mean, they are passionate Christians looking for a genuine, dynamic faith experience and I want to grab them by the shoulders, stare into their eyes and say “*follow me, I know the Church you are seeking.*”

I would then thrust a copy of “*The Orthodox Way*” by Kallistos Ware into their hands and whisk them off to liturgy. Alas, this is just not socially acceptable behavior.

This week my social decorum, well, shall we say, waned slightly? I went ahead and did something a bit nutty. I emailed the pastor of a local “post-modern” church, a Baptist off-shoot doing the whole inner-city-we-call-ourselves-a-tribe-and-meet-in-a-hotel thing. And yes, they inspired my previous post.

The pastor, a very nice young guy, replied right away, inviting me to meet him for a chat over coffee. I may take him up, but I will more likely attend their discussion group called “Pub Theology” in the fall...and see if my husband and priest want to tag along too.

And Hipster Christian, if you are reading this, seriously, why aren't you Orthodox? Orthodoxy is so obscure, heck, when I say I'm Orthodox most people think that means I'm Jewish. Then they look at my head scarf and think I'm a Muslim, but do a double take when they see the gold crucifix around my neck. The opportunities for smugness are endless!

We do tons of obscure things like carry pussy willows on Palm Sunday, we don't paint icons we "write" icons, (oh yes and we have *icons*. Have you heard of Nicea II? We have), we read the Septuagint, or should I say the LXX, we get to pick a new name when we are baptised, preferably something archaic such as Polycarp, Xenophon, Photini or Thekla, we call Easter "Pascha" and much like your children, Hipster Christian, our churches have old-fashioned names, such as "St. Sophia's" or "The Prophet Elias."

But for much more than the desire to avoid the mainstream, you should ask yourself *why* you are not Orthodox because there *must* be a good reason for it. Why is that? Because there is a Church today that was founded by Christ through his Apostles and has carried His teachings by the power of the Holy Spirit for over 2000 years. You maybe hadn't heard of it before because you lived in the West and it was in the East. In fact it was greatly oppressed, persecuted first by the Ottomans for 500 years and later by the Communists for 70. Meanwhile in the West, Roman Catholics and Protestants were duking it out over control of Europe. By the time of the Renaissance, the Roman Catholics had evolved to be utterly incompatible with their cousins in the East and the Protestants had already started their exponential dividing into a multitude of sects and sub-sects. Yet the Orthodox Church held its line.

Now, if you think you are "orthodox" without having to actually be "Orthodox" you should ask yourself these questions (taken from [Unintentional Schism? A Response to Peter Leithart's "Too catholic to be Catholic"](#) by Robert Arakaki on the blog [Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy](#))

- Does your church accept the Nicene Creed as authoritative? (Many Evangelicals today [have] never heard of the Nicene Creed.)
- Does your church celebrate the historic Liturgy or is your order of worship something recently concocted? (Most Protestant churches do not celebrate the Eucharist every Sunday. Those who celebrate the Eucharist regularly do not have a received liturgical tradition that goes back to the Apostles, e.g., the Liturgy of St. James, St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, St. Mark.)
- Does your church accept the doctrine of the real presence of Christ's body and blood as taught by the early church fathers and the ancient liturgies? (Most Protestants today believe that the bread and wine are just symbols. The Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation and the Reformed doctrine of the spiritual feeding in the Lord's Supper have no counterpart in the teachings of the early Church.)
- Who is your bishop? What is his line of succession? (Virtually all Protestants lack bishops in the historic sense.)
- Does your church accept the Seventh Ecumenical Council's decision about the veneration of icons? (No Protestant denominations and none of the Reformers venerated icons as decreed by Nicea II.)
- Does your church reject the novel doctrines of sola fide (justification by faith alone) and sola scriptura (the Bible alone)? (None of the early church fathers taught these Protestant doctrines.)

If you answered “no,” “I don’t know,” “probably not,” or “maybe” to any of the above questions, you are definitely not orthodox or Orthodox. This should be considered a problem for anyone who considers himself a Christian. From my own personal experience, when I read about Orthodoxy and learned pre-Reformation Church history (something that a lot of Protestant Bible colleges either gloss over or avoid all together) it was evident to me that the Orthodox Church was and is THE CHURCH that Christ calls His Body. As a Christian, a devoted follower of Christ, I knew I had to be united to Him through His Church. I didn’t see how there could be any other option: I became Orthodox.

And because of the joy this had brought me and the great gratitude I have to God for bringing me to His Church where I can eat the Bread of Life and drink the Living Water, I want to share the beauty of Orthodoxy with everyone.

Please forgive me for being so bold.

Ge the word out! Share this right now!