

Eastern Orthodoxy: An Evangelical Assessment

In recent years, Eastern Orthodoxy has become an increasingly significant feature on the radar of Christians worldwide, exerting a strong attraction for many evangelicals. How are we to understand this tradition properly, and what should evangelicals make of it? This session will give a theological analysis and assessment from an evangelical perspective.

Michael Reeves is President and Professor of Theology at Union School of Theology in the UK. Previously he has been Head of Theology for UCCF and an associate minister at All Souls Church, Langham Place, London. He is the author of *Introducing Major Theologians*, *Why the Reformation Still Matters*, *The Unquenchable Flame*, *The Good God*, and *Christ our Life*, co-editor of *Adam, the Fall and Original Sin*, and holds a doctorate in systematic theology from King's College, London. He is married to Bethan, and together they have two daughters, Lucy and Mia.

I. The attraction of Eastern Orthodoxy for evangelicals today

II. The defining strands of EO theology

A. Icons

1. The incarnation and God's use of the physical

2. Gregory Palamas and the 'Light of Tabor'

B. God's incomprehensibility

1. Eastern and Western understandings of incomprehensibility

2. Pseudo-Dionysius and apophatic theology

3. God's 'essence' and 'energies'

III. Assessing EO's theology of icons and incomprehensibility

A. How are we to understand the incarnation?

B. How can we know the unknowable God?

IV. Further issues to assess

A. Authority: Scripture and tradition

B. Soteriology: *Theosis*, justification, and synergism

Suggested Readings:

Donald Fairbairn, *Eastern Orthodoxy through Western Eyes* (Louisville, KY.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002)

Robert Letham, *Through Western Eyes. Eastern Orthodoxy: A Reformed Perspective* (Fearn: Mentor, 2007)

Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1957)