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## Eastern Orthodoxy An Introduction and Overview

by J. Greg Sheryl

On April 9, 2017, to the surprise of many in the evangelical Protestant world — and seemingly out of nowhere — Hank Hanegraaff, host of the well-known radio program, *The Bible Answer Man*, and head of what had been the evangelical Protestant organization, the Christian Research Institute, joined the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Nearly two decades before Hanegraaff's conversion to Eastern Orthodoxy, in 1998, the renowned Lutheran church historian Jaroslav Pelikan had joined the Orthodox Church. Still earlier, in 1990, Frank (Franky) Schaeffer, son of the late Christian philosopher Francis Schaeffer, left evangelicalism for Eastern Orthodoxy. And, further back, in 1987, Peter Gilquist, formerly of Campus Crusade for Christ (now simply "Cru"), along with about 2,000 fellow-seekers, had

joined the Orthodox Church. Conversions such as these raise questions as

to what Eastern Orthodoxy is, what they believe, and what to make of it.



### INTRODUCING EASTERN ORTHODOXY

It is commonly asserted that there are three great branches of Christendom in the world: Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism. In this article, we will examine what is likely, to most Americans, the least familiar of these three ostensibly Christian branches, "the Eastern Orthodox Church, also known as the Greek Orthodox Church."<sup>1</sup> (We will use the terms "East-  
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