

Q & A



The Thrill of Orthodoxy *Rediscovering the Adventure of Christian Faith*

November 15, 2022 | \$24, 240 pages, hardcover | 978-1-5140-0500-2

"Trevin Wax shows that 'orthodox thrill' is not an oxymoron. He explains with clear metaphors why Christian doctrine is important: imagine 'a football field where no one measured the yards.' . . . *The Thrill of Orthodoxy* is an excellent overview for all who want their churches to be both hospitals for sinners and schools for saints."

—Marvin Olasky, senior fellow, Discovery Institute

Devoted to the Beauty of Sound Doctrine

What do you want the next generation of Christians to discover?

Trevin Wax: I want the next generation of Christians to rediscover a joyful confidence in the essential teachings of Christianity, as agreed upon by believers from the time of Jesus until now, and believers all over the world today.

Every era brings challenges to the Christian faith, with theological errors and heresies dressing themselves up as more attractive than orthodoxy. In this book I want to express—with beauty, kindness, and conviction—why Christian doctrine matters and why the drama of the Christian life is not in denying, dismissing, or downplaying these dogmas but in discovering and submitting to the truth that makes us free.

What thoughts about Christian orthodoxy are shared in unique ways in your book?

Trevin: In a world of personalized spiritual paths, Christian orthodoxy can sound stuffy and stifling, while doctrinal change and innovation seem exciting. *The Thrill of Orthodoxy* turns the tables, illuminating and inspiring Christians by contrasting the narrow and dull principles of heresy with the electrifying, unchanging paradoxes that form the heart of the gospel.

Many apologists, however, focus primarily on rational arguments that make space for Christian truth claims. *The Thrill of Orthodoxy* seeks to appeal to readers of apologetics, but because this book makes its point in a way that is aesthetically adventurous, its appeal will likely go beyond normal works of apologetics to a broader swath of evangelical Christians.

To what would you say this book is devoted?

Trevin: This a book devoted to the beauty of sound doctrine, the wonders of our theological inheritance, and the breadth and depth of the church, as opposed to the narrowness of error and heresy. The main point is that the church drifts not when new errors start to win but when old truths no longer wow. The goal of this book is to show how the old truths still thrill the heart, and I lift up the Scriptures and the pivotal players in the first millennium of the church to do so.

Do you believe your book might have a particular appeal to specific audiences?

Trevin: This book will appeal to thoughtful evangelical Christians who care about seeing the faith remain vibrant in their own lives and also passed to the next generation in compelling ways. It will be of special interest to evangelicals who are engaged in discussions with non-Christians and with churchgoers who may be wavering on particular issues of controversy. Pastors and church leaders will be attracted to the book because it presents Christian truth in a fresh and engaging manner.

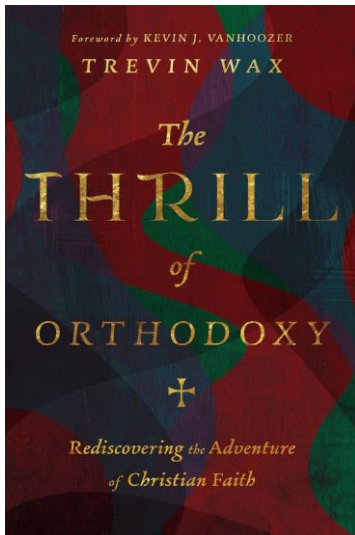


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"Trevin Wax shows that traditional orthodox Christianity might not be as glossy and glamorous as Christianity gone worldly, but it is ancient, majestic, global, and glorious. It is a tried and tested alternative to the faddish and fragmentary fakes that masquerade as Christianity in some places. Trevin is not pushing dry doctrine but passing on fresh fire that is thousands of years old."

—**Michael F. Bird**, academic dean and lecturer in New Testament at Ridley College in Melbourne, Australia

What do you hope readers take away from your book?

Trevin: I hope readers take away five key ideas from my book. May they

- Experience a renewed sense of wonder at the marvelous paradoxes at the heart of Christian theology.
- Regain confidence in the goodness and truth of Christianity's historic doctrines and ethics.
- Discern doctrinal teachings and ethical positions that are "load-bearing walls" in the structure of Christian orthodoxy. We remove these at our peril.
- Learn new and creative ways of expressing old and enduring truths.
- Understand why orthodox Christian theology endures.

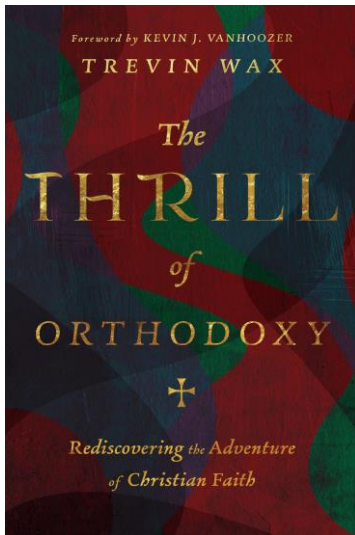


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EXCERPT



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Every generation faces the temptation to wander from Christian teaching, and so every generation must be awakened again to the thrill of orthodoxy. Returning to the church's creeds, Trevin Wax beckons us away from the broad yet ultimately boring road toward the straight and narrow path, where true adventures can be found.

“We Need the ‘Old, Old Story’”

What the church needs today is to recapture *the thrill of orthodoxy*. For a philosopher like Aristotle, the word *orthodoxy* meant “right” or “correct” opinion, but the early Christians repurposed it to mean “having right belief,” and they saw right belief as vital because of its connection to right worship of the one true God. Over the centuries, *orthodoxy* has come to mean conformity with Scripture, as agreed upon by the church.

You may think of orthodoxy as nothing more than a dry and dense list of doctrines. Necessary perhaps but thrilling? Sounds a little like expecting your math book to give you heart palpitations. But these two words belong together. I agree with the English crime writer and poet Dorothy Sayers who responded to the idea that empty churches are a result of preachers insisting too much on “dull dogma.” They get it backwards, she wrote, “It is the neglect of dogma that makes for dullness.” It’s boring to adapt the Christian faith to better fit people; what’s exciting is to adapt people to better fit the Christian faith. “The Christian faith is the most exciting drama that ever staggered the imagination of man—and the dogma is the drama.”

Orthodoxy is an ancient castle with spacious rooms and vaulted ceilings and mysterious corridors, a vast expanse of practical wisdom handed down from our forefathers and mothers in the faith. Some inhabit the castle but fail to sift through its treasures. Others believe the castle stands in the way of progress and should be torn down. A few believe the castle’s outer shell can remain for aesthetic purposes, so long as the interior is gutted. But in every generation, God raises up those who see the value in the treasure, men and women who maintain a deep and abiding commitment to recognize and accentuate the unique beauty of Christian truth so that future generations can be ushered into its splendor.

The world finds it thrilling to follow the suggestion of the old song from the 1960s—to “make your own kind of music” and “sing your own special song.” You decide what song to sing, what path to follow, what traditions to cast off, and what beliefs work for you “even if no one else sings along.”

But the truth is that the reverse is more thrilling: we need the “old, old story” of “how a Savior came from glory.” We need to be part of a courageous choir of Christians—reawakened to the beauty and majesty of the Christian melody, committed to right belief and right worship. To join our voices with the apostles of two thousand years ago, singing the one song that by the power of the Spirit still resonates today.

This is the adventure: to bind our hearts to something ancient and enduring, with faith that *the faith* will outlast all fads and fashions. We’re not digging in but digging *down* to the bedrock of our faith so that we can stand. The church marches on, not because we are faithful in every respect—we haven’t been, and we won’t be—but because Jesus himself is faithful. He promised to build his church, and the gates of hell will not prevail. And so, shaking off our spiritual slumber, we join hands with millions of others across space and time, saying with boldness and confidence, “This I believe.”

—Adapted from chapter one, “This I Believe”



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BIO



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"Trevin celebrates the treasures of the Christian faith and sound doctrine. Being dazzled by the old truths is the best means to deepen our understanding of the Christian faith, increase our dependence on God's revelation in Jesus Christ and Holy Scriptures, fuel our worship of God, increase our love for each other, and motivate mission to the world."

—Justin S. Holcomb, seminary professor, Episcopal minister, and author of *Know the Creeds and Councils*

Missionary, Professor, and TGC Columnist

"As the culture has become decadent, the church in the modern West has often followed suit, dull to the things of God and often worked up about pursuits that in the end are 'wood, hay or straw' (1 Cor 3:12). Like the Corinthian church of old, we've become fleshly in our divisions and fixated on peripheral squabbles. If we're honest, we've become bored by the things 'of first importance' (1 Cor 15:3)—we lose sight of the gospel and forget God. In *The Thrill of Orthodoxy*, Trevin Wax argues that the church faces her biggest challenge not when new errors start to win but when old truths fail to wow. With Chestertonian wit, joy, and incisiveness, he invites us into the great adventure of orthodoxy. If you're wavering in your faith or seeking a renewed wonder in the Christian life, then let Wax be your guide."

—Ivan Mesa, editorial director, The Gospel Coalition

Trevin Wax is vice president of research and resource development at the North American Mission Board and a visiting professor of theology at Cedarville University. A former missionary to Romania, Trevin is a regular columnist at The Gospel Coalition and has contributed to the *Washington Post*, *Religion News Service*, *World*, and *Christianity Today*. He has served as general editor for The Gospel Project and has taught theology courses at Wheaton College. He is the author of several books, including *The Multi-Directional Leader*, *Rethink Your Self*, *This Is Our Time*, *Eschatological Discipleship*, and *Gospel-Centered Teaching*. He lives in middle Tennessee with his wife, Corina, and their three children.



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