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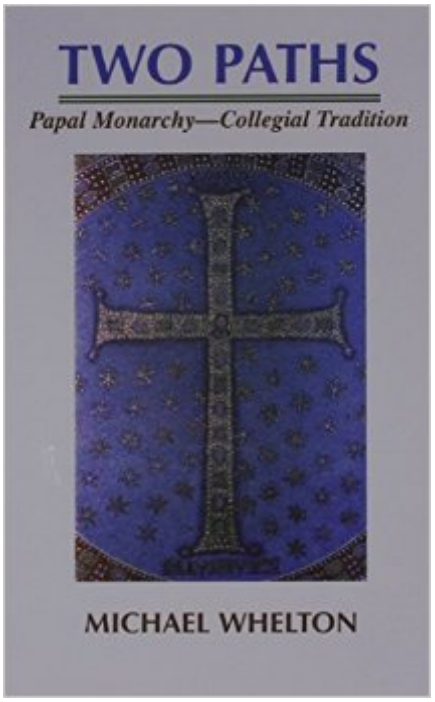
Two Paths: Papal Monarchy - Collegial Tradition



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Synopsis

An ardent, thorough examination of the devolution of Rome's legitmate primacy fo honor in the ancient Christian Church into the ill-founded, problematic and divisive doctrine of papal infallibility. ? synthesize the welter and important evidence on the issue of papal authority.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The strongest point of this book is that it gets a lot of information into a book that isn't overly lengthy or complicated. I'd guesstimate that the book comes in at under 45,000 words, so we're talking about a book that one could easily read in a night's sitting. The information contained in the book, however, might take much longer to digest if you don't already subscribe to the beliefs put forward. The book is, essentially, an Orthodox apologetic against the idea that the Pope of Rome holds special powers (supremacy, infallibility) simply because he is the successor of Peter, sits on Peter's throne, presides over the Roman See, or for some other such reason. The book does a good job at touching a lot of historical evidences through the centuries that help put the papal doctrines into a proper context. It also touches upon what are--from an Orthodox perspective--other dogmatic Roman Catholic errors.The problem with any Orthodox apologetic regarding the papal doctrines is that the Orthodox view is harder to define than the Catholic one. Orthodoxy can come off looking vague, or even plain chaotic, compared to the highly systematic and well proof-texted beliefs of Roman Catholics. As someone who converted to Orthodoxy and not Catholicism, I obviously was persuaded by the Orthodox thought on the matter. But, I have to admit that it is not an easy case to

make to those who are on the outside looking in. This is not to say that there are no evidences in support of the Orthodox position: quite the contrary, there is a ton of evidence, and Mr. Whelton mentions some of it in this book. The problem is that there are no "big guns," so to speak; there are no evidences that just knock you on your feet.

I am an Orthodox Christian who attended a Catholic University, so I have been very interested in the Catholic/Orthodox "debate," of sorts, regarding which is the True Church of Christ. For quite some time, I have been disappointed by the lack of Orthodox books aimed specifically toward Catholics, besides Clark Carlton's "The Truth" which, I have heard, is a bit harsh and not entirely welcoming in tone, though I have yet to read it. I was thus very glad to come across Michael Whelton's "Two Paths" which, though dealing solely with the issue of papal claims in the West, is a very good place to begin investigating the Orthodox response to those claims. The greatest advantages of Whelton's examination of this issue are two-fold: first, unlike what some critics of the book say, the book is not the work of an over-zelous convert who writes a diatribe. I wonder if those who do not like the arguments of the book would not say such things about any such writing in a knee-jerk defense... In truth, Whelton explains early on that his path to Orthodoxy from Catholicism took 2 years of intense searching and research. He displays gratitude to the Latin Church for her contributions to Western society in the first chapter and expresses worry that he will offend his friends who remained Catholic when he left. The tone is anything but angry or aggressive; however, this is a truth that Whelton says he has found, even though he once rejected it and tried all he could do to avoid it. Therefore, it is a truth he felt he had to share. Secondly, because the transition to the Orthodox Faith was difficult and one that Whelton wanted to avoid, his two years of research were well spent.

In Two Paths, author Michael Whelton chronicles the fall of the Church from the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic church into the mess we see today, with over 22,000 denominations of Christianity. Aided by a ï¿ life-long interest in historyï¿ , the author takes the reader on a journey of the history of the Church up to and slightly after the Great Schism in 1054. For those unversed in the history of the church, the Great Schism refers to the split between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. While there were many complicated social, cultural, and geographic variables that aggravated the situation, there were two key issues internal to the church at issue. These two were Papal ..., the view that the pope is the head of the Church, and the Filioque, or the insertion of the phrase ï¿ and the Sonï¿ into the Creed.The book is well documented and researched, and the conclusions that Whelton draws were apparently difficult for him to come to terms with. He

describes his struggle and feelings of alienation when he first began attending Orthodox Liturgy. He uses quotes to effectively support his thesis, and limits footnotes to citing sources rather than explaining material. The book is a sort of chronicle of his personal journey of eventually converting to Orthodoxy. Writing from the perspective of a convert, Whelton offers the alternative to Rome. He saves his conclusions for the last two chapters, where he shows resistance to the Papal Monarchy within the ranks of Roman Church herself. He then brings in the Orthodox Church and itï¿ s form of government, and how that cohesion has prevented Her from sharing the torrid history of the Roman Church, from the time of the Protestant Reformation, to the Counter Reformation, to the more modern changes in Vatican II.

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