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This article refers especially to articles published in 1980–83, as I have earlier published the following expositions of archaeology between 1972–80: *The Stones and the Scriptures* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), hereafter SS; 'A Decade and a Half of Archaeology in Israel and in Jordan,' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 42.4 (1974), 710–26; 'Documents from Old Testament Times: A Survey of Recent Discoveries,' *WTJ*, 41.1 (1978), 1–32; 'Archaeology and the New Testament,' *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. F. E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), I, pp.645–69; with D. J. Wiseman, *Archaeology and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979); 'Archaeology and the Scriptures,' *The Seminary Review*, 25.4 (1979), 163–241; *The Scriptures and Archaeology* (Portland: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1980), hereafter SA. Where no author is listed the reference is to one of my own writings. [p. 139](#)

Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology

James Stamoolis

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It is very unfortunate that there is so little dialogue between Evangelicals and representatives of Eastern Orthodox Churches. This article gives illuminating insights into the Orthodox Church's understanding of mission, that are often missing in Protestant missions. On a recent visit to Egypt this Editor was challenged by evidences of renewal in mission in some of the local churches of the Coptic Orthodox Church.
(Editor)

When Protestants and Roman Catholics look at the Eastern Orthodox Church's mission history, they are often puzzled. They find some missionaries to admire,¹ some practices to question,² and much that is difficult to comprehend. The general viewpoint seems to be that the Orthodox mission experience is a chapter in the history of the expansion of the faith, but is of little relevance today. Since the late 1950s, however, there has been considerable rethinking about mission within the Orthodox church.³ It is the purpose of this study to show that Orthodox missiology has more than historical interest, and p. 140 that there are valuable contributions to be gained from an understanding of Orthodox mission theory and practice.⁴

ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Historians conveniently use A.D. 1054 to mark the schism between the East and the West, but the separation started as early as the fourth or fifth century.

The developing distance in theological frameworks was apparent in two contemporaries, John Chrysostom and Augustine, who were both interpreters of St. Paul. Chrysostom looked to Paul for directions in living; Augustine drew out of Paul a theology of grace. While these positions are obviously complementary to each other, they are also in their extreme development foreign to each other.

The different biblical emphases appear with the development of the Pauline concept of justification in what might be termed Roman legal terminology. Whereas the doctrine of justification occupied the West, the East found a theological centre in the idea of union with God. The great theme was the incarnation and the consequences of this event for the believers. 'God became man, that man might become God.'⁵ First found in Irenaeus, this concept is repeated in Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, and many other patristic authors.

This theme at once encompasses redemption and goes beyond it as it is often understood in the West. What is in view is not only humankind's standing before God with

¹ See, e.g. Bishop Tucker's judgment that Nicholas Kasatkin was 'the outstanding missionary of the nineteenth century' (Henry St. George Tucker, *The History of the Episcopal Church in Japan* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938], p.103). Cf. the similar sentiments found in Richard Henry Drummond, *A History of Christianity in Japan* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), p.354.

² It was not uncommon for Russian missionaries to dispense baptism as a mere legal formality without any Christian instruction, to bribe potential converts with gifts, and even on occasion to resort to the use of physical violence. See Nikita Struve, 'The Orthodox Church and Mission,' in *History's Lessons for Tomorrow's Missions* (Geneva: World's Student Christian Federation, 1960), pp.109–11.

³ The historical circumstances of Orthodoxy, for the Greek church since the Ottoman oppression and for the Russian church since the Communist revolution, have made the questions of pastoral care and survival more urgent than missionary expansion. However, there is a growing interest in missionary work. *Porefthendes* was for a decade (1959–69) the publication of the Inter-Orthodox Missionary Centre in Athens. The Apostoliki Diakonia of the Church of Greece commenced publishing in 1982 *Panta Ta Ethni*, a quarterly missionary magazine to provide information 'on Orthodox missionary efforts throughout the world.' The editor is Anastasios Yannoulatos, who had served as the director of *Porefthendes*. For information on *Panta Ta Ethni*, write to Apostoliki Diakonia, 14 lo. Gennadiou St., Athens (140), Greece.

⁴ See Stamoolis, annotated survey of Orthodox missiology, 'A Selected Bibliography of Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology,' *Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research* 1, no.3 (1977): 24–27. A more comprehensive bibliography appears in Stamoolis, 'An Examination of Contemporary Eastern Orthodox Missiology' (D. Theol. dissertation, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, 1980), pp.276–308.

⁵ Vladimir Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God* (London: Mowbrays, 1975), p.97. Lossky's entire essay on 'Redemption and Deification' (pp.97–110) clearly contrasts the Orthodox view of *theosis* with the Western preoccupation with justification.

regard to its sinfulness, but humankind's ultimate standing before God in the heavenly places. Christ's descent makes possible humanity's ascent into God's presence. However, it is not solely the work of the Second Person of the Godhead that secures the ascent. In the present age the ascent to God's presence is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The full realization of being partakers of the divine nature ([2 Pet. 1:4](#)), or *theosis* as it is properly called in Orthodox theology, must await the final consummation of all things in Christ. Nevertheless, through the mediation of the Holy Spirit, this ascent into God's presence is the [p. 141](#) experience of the church at worship.⁶ While it would appear that worship does not pertain directly to mission, yet in this joining of incarnation (and its consequent *theosis*), liturgy, and the church, we have the three major elements of Orthodox missiology. In the words of Alexander Schmemmann: 'Nothing reveals better the relation between the Church as fullness and the Church as mission than the Eucharist, the central act of the Church's *leiturgia*, ... The Eucharist is always the End, the sacrament of the *parousia*, and, yet, it is always the beginning, the starting point: now the mission begins.'⁷

THREE THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

There are abundant references to the centrality of the incarnation in the Orthodox faith. The liturgical witness and the local community as the key elements in the missionary witness of Orthodoxy are themes that have been stressed in recent reflections on the subject.⁸ As these three concepts are studied in the context of Orthodox thought, fresh insights can be gained for the church's missiological task.

INCARNATION AND THEOSIS

The obvious connection between the theme of union with God and mission is that God desires all humankind to be in union with himself through Christ. This theme is worked out by Orthodox theologians in their discussions on motives for missionary work.⁹ God's love for humankind forms the strongest motive for mission, since it was God's love that mandated the incarnation.

The Orthodox understanding of the incarnation does have a feature that was unique to missionary thinking in the earliest period of the church: the Orthodox maintained that each race, each culture, each identifiable group had the right to receive the gospel in its own language. As Christ became incarnate in the word of humanity in order [p. 142](#) to bring God's Word to the human condition, so must the Word of God be translated into every language to become incarnate in the lives of the people. The stress on communication of the divine message so that the people could understand and participate is a direct result of the Orthodox theological framework. By way of contrast, the Latin missionaries refused to use the vernacular. Their theological system did not depend on an incarnational model

⁶ 'Through the sacrament of the Eucharist, human nature enters into union with the divine nature of Christ' (Demetrios J. Constantelos, *Understanding the Greek Orthodox Church* [New York: Seabury Press, 1982], p.65).

⁷ Alexander Schmemmann, 'The Missionary Imperative in the Orthodox Tradition,' in *The Theology of Christian Mission*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (New York: McGraw-Hill, and London: SCM, 1961), p.255.

⁸ Ion Bria, 'On Orthodox Witness,' *International Review of Mission* [cited subsequently as *IRM*] 69 (October 1980–January 1981): 527–28.

⁹ Cf. Anastasios Yannoulatos, 'The Purpose and Motive of Mission,' *IRM* 54 (1965): 281–97.

of relationships but on juridical justification before God's law, even if the one being justified was ignorant of the exact terms of release. In Moravia, where the Byzantine brothers Cyril and Methodius were working among the Slavs, the Latin missionaries so opposed the use of the vernacular that they eventually forced the missionaries who were using it out of the country.¹⁰

Orthodox theology counts of utmost importance the real participation of the believer. For real participation to take place, the fundamentals of the faith, and especially the worship services, must be intelligible to the congregation. Thus in historical and contemporary practice, great efforts have been expended on the translation and explanation of the Liturgy. Modern Greek missionaries have diligently worked on translations into the languages in which they are ministering.¹¹ Commentaries are also prepared for the nominal Orthodox so that they can understand and participate in the services they have been attending.¹²

THE LITURGY

It seems strange that an event for the believing community, an event from which the unbaptized were excluded in the early church (the present form of the Liturgy continues the form of the exclusion, without its being practised),¹³ should be an element of missionary theology. **P. 143**

However, in contemporary Orthodox writings the Liturgy functions exactly in this way. There are two aspects to the missiological function of the Liturgy, the internal and the external. The internal aspect pertains to the life and sustenance of the church. During the Ottoman period, 'it was the Holy Liturgy which kept Orthodoxy alive.'¹⁴ Likewise, this identification with the language was part of the indigenization of the faith. As Ion Bria points out, this led to the 'transfiguration' of the culture and history by the gospel.¹⁵ Paradoxically, this close identification of culture and faith has prevented the Orthodox diaspora from reaching out in mission.¹⁶ This failing does not reflect so much a flaw in

¹⁰ Francis Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions among the Slavs* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1970), pp.115, 129–30.

¹¹ See *The First Five Years of Porefthendes, Activity Report 1961–1966* (Athens: InterOrthodox Missionary Centre, [1966]), p.20.

¹² Some examples are Nikon D. Patrinos, *The Orthodox Liturgy* (Garwood, N.J.: Graphic Arts Press, 1976); Stanley S. Harakas, *Living the Liturgy* (Minneapolis: Light and Life, 1974); and George Mastrantonis, *The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* (St. Louis: Logos, 1966). The last-named book contains a pictorial commentary on the liturgical text to enable the reader better to follow and understand the action.

¹³ See *The Priest's Service Book* (New York: The Orthodox Church in America, 1973), p.259. Some Orthodox churches repeat the prayer for the catechumens and their subsequent dismissal audibly before the congregation while in some other churches these prayers are repeated inaudibly by the priest at the altar.

¹⁴ Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1963), p.111.

¹⁵ Bria, in *Martyria/Mission*, ed. Ion Bria (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1980), p.10.

¹⁶ The attitude is shown in the multiplicity of ethnic jurisdictions that are common in the non-Orthodox countries to which the Orthodox emigrated. This ecclesiastical coexistence (which is contrary to the church canons) 'is considered by an overwhelming majority of the Orthodox people as something perfectly normal, as expressive of the very essence of that diaspora whose main vocation, as everyone knows and proudly proclaims, is the preservation of the various "cultural heritages" proper to each "Orthodox world" ' (Schmemmann, *Church, World, Mission* [Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979], p.13). The first chapter of Schmemmann's book is an excellent introduction to the problems facing Orthodoxy today.

Orthodox theology as a tendency not to look beyond one's own racial or cultural boundaries.

Orthodox missiologists increasingly see the Liturgy as a motivating factor for mission by providing both the context and the content of mission. The context is the return from the presence of God to the need of the world. The contrast between the state of humankind as God intends it to be and the state of humankind as it demonstrates the need of mission. The message from God gives the content of mission, the message that states God in Christ has come among us so that we may come to be with God. 'It is impossible to participate in Christian worship without reference to the world mission, and it is impossible to engage in real Orthodox mission without a living participation in Holy Communion,' writes Anastasios Yannoulatos.¹⁷

Since the Orthodox church is primarily a worshipping community, it is not difficult to see that worship is central to Orthodox mission. It is of the *esse* of the church. But it is harder to understand how the Liturgy can be a method of mission. Some help comes from the traditional p. 144 story of the conversion of Prince Vladimir of Russia. The Liturgy in Constantinople so impressed Vladimir's envoys that they recommended Orthodoxy to him.¹⁸ Is it so far removed from present experience not to expect the worship of God to produce awe, appreciation, and ultimately conversion?

At the 1974 Bucharest consultation on 'Confessing Christ Today,' the question of whether or not the Liturgy is a suitable form of witness was discussed. The main thrust was the witness of the liturgical community in the world after that community has participated in worship. This is often referred to as the liturgy after the Liturgy. The actual witness of the Eucharist itself was also noted: 'Conversions still take place through the magnetic attraction of the Eucharistic service. The casual visitor slowly becomes a regular attendant and then studies the faith of the Church and asks for baptism.'¹⁹

The consultation stops short of recommending the Liturgy as a method of mission. However, it does see a use for the non-Eucharistic elements of the Liturgy to be used in evangelism. These 'non-Eucharistic liturgical expressions, non-Eucharist liturgical prayers, liturgical Bible readings, icons, hymnology, etc. can and should be also used for proclaiming the Gospel and confessing Christ to the world.'²⁰ In point of fact, one wonders if the consultation's recommendations are really only a recognition of what Orthodox missionaries had been doing. Nicholas Kasatkin (1836–1912)—in Japan, better known as Father Nicolai—had his evangelists teaching the creed and the Lord's Prayer to the enquirers (both of which are in the Liturgy).²¹ Stephen of Pern (1340–96) attracted the

¹⁷ Anastasios Yannoulatos, 'Orthodox Mission and Holy Communion,' *Porefthendes* 6 (1964): 58. This article is a transcript of a draft contribution presented during the discussion in Section IV (The Witness of the Christian Church across National and Confessional Boundaries) at the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, Mexico City, 1963.

¹⁸ 'Vladimir Christianizes Russia,' in *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles and Tales*, ed. and trans. Serge A. Zenkovsky (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1974), pp.65–71.

¹⁹ Ion Bria, 'Confessing Christ Today: An Orthodox Consultation,' *IRM* 64 (1975): 69.

²⁰ 'Confessing Christ Today: Reports of Groups at a Consultation of Orthodox Theologians,' *IRM* 64 (1975): 85.

²¹ Otis Cary, *A History of Christianity in Japan*, 2 vols.; vol.1: *Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Missions* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1909), pp. 383–84.

Zyrians with the beauty of the church he built.²² Macarius Gloukharev (1792–1847) insisted on a long period of pre-baptismal instructions for his converts, during which time he taught the fundamentals of the faith.²³ Many other names could be added to this list. Perhaps it is in the liturgical elements that p. 145 the appeal of the Liturgy to the unconverted lies. The liturgical witness is not only talk about God, it is also talking with God. The method and the message become one.

THE CHURCH

The local liturgical community has long been regarded as the centre of the Orthodox religious experience.²⁴ The communal aspect of the Orthodox church is evident in its soteriology: 'We know that when any one of us falls, he falls alone; but no one is saved alone. He who is saved is saved in the Church, as a member of her, and in unity with all her other members.'²⁵

This concept of community is in accordance with the movement toward unity with God. In other words, the corporate nature of salvation is a direct result of the doctrine of *theosis*. If the ultimate goal is for man to be like God (*theosis*), then this goal must include the unity of all who profess the same purpose, since there can be no disunity in the Godhead. Indeed, N.M. Zernov can see division between Christians as a violation of the bond of love and the inevitable separation from the Holy Spirit, which ultimately endangers one's salvation.²⁶

It follows, then from the close identification of soteriology with ecclesiology that the church should play a central role in the missiology of Orthodoxy. Recent studies have focused on 'the importance of the local liturgical community as the basis of mission and evangelization.'²⁷ The stress, however, does not lie in the organization and structure of the church. For it is not structure, but nature and essence that are crucial. The local church is the visible and concrete expression of God's redeeming work in the world. Therefore, to be true to its nature, the local congregation must be active in mission and evangelism.²⁸ Anything less is a denial of the gospel. p. 146

In the development of the Orthodox idea of the local congregation, however, there is little concept of the foreign missionary who goes to areas where there is no established

²² George P. Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind (II): The Middle Ages, the 13th to the 15th Centuries* (Belmont, Mass.: Nordland, 1975), p.236. Fedotov has the best available description in English of Stephen's life and work.

²³ Nikita Struve, 'Macaire Gloukharev, A Prophet of Orthodox Mission,' *IRM* 54 (1965): 312. The period of instruction varied with each case.

²⁴ Various studies by Orthodox theologians have appeared. In addition to the ones cited below, cf. George Florovsky, 'The Church: Her Nature and Task,' in *The Universal Church in God's Design* (New York Harper & Brothers, 1948), pp.43–58; Vladimir Lossky, 'Concerning the Third Mark of the Church: Catholicity,' in his *In the Image and Likeness of God*, pp.179–81; and N. A. Nissiotis, 'The Ecclesiological Foundation of Mission from the Orthodox Point of View,' *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 7 (1961–62): 22–52.

²⁵ Alexy Stepanovich Khomiakov, *The Church Is One* (London: Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, 1968), p.38. The Russian original was written around 1850.

²⁶ N. M. Zernov, 'The Church and the Confessions,' in *The Church of God, an Anglo-Russian Symposium*, ed. E. L. Mascall (London: SPCK, 1934), p.214.

²⁷ Bria, 'On Orthodox Witness,' p.527.

²⁸ Cf. M. A. Siotis, 'Thoughts of an Orthodox Theologian on "The Missionary Structure of the Congregation"' *Concept* 3 (1963): 1.

congregation. Because the picture of the corporate nature of the church is drawn so strongly, it excludes the pioneer missionary. Ultimately there should be no conflict, since the missionary's role is precisely that of establishing local congregations.

While the emphasis on the corporate nature of the church may be seen as a welcome corrective to what the Orthodox term the excessive individualism of the West,²⁹ the real value of Orthodox ecclesiology lies in the concept of the worshipping community as the goal of mission. The work of evangelism is not accomplished until a worshipping, witnessing community has been established. Here Orthodox ecclesiology returns full circle. The congregation is the focus of mission work and witnesses to the gospel both in its own locale and through its representatives to the wider world. Its representatives, or missionaries, endeavour to establish other local congregations that can repeat the process. Mission does not end until the whole world is praising the Lord of all creation.

THREE ELEMENTS OF MISSION PRACTICE

In looking at the history of Orthodox missions, one can isolate three distinct elements of mission practice, present since early Byzantine times.³⁰ All three derive from the theological understanding of the Orthodox church. All three account for the success of Orthodox missions in transmitting the faith to an ever-increasing number of linguistic and cultural groups.

USE OF THE VERNACULAR

All Orthodox missions that have in any way been successful in establishing a church have translated the Liturgy and the Scriptures into the vernacular. This, more than any other aspect of Orthodoxy, accounts for the deep penetration that the Orthodox church has made **P. 147** into diverse cultures.³¹ In dealing with nonliterate cultures, Orthodox missionaries first devised an alphabet. Language study was and still is the key element on the missionary's agenda.³²

It is misleading to give the impression that all Orthodox missionaries were interested in translation, however. The use of Christianity to 'Russify' the non-Russian peoples of the eastern regions of the Czarist empire is by no means a highpoint in the history of Orthodox mission.³³ Mass baptisms in the absence of any serious Christian instruction were the order of the day. As might be expected, so were mass apostasies.

²⁹ See Zernov, 'The Church and the Confessions,' pp.215–18, for a most enlightening perspective on Western individualism.

³⁰ See, e.g., Serge Bolshakoff, 'Orthodox Missions Today,' *IRM* 42 (1953): 275; Nectarios Hadjimichalis, 'Orthodox Monasticism and External Mission,' *Porefthendes* 4 (1962): 13:12–15; and Anastasios Yannoulatos, *Monks and Mission in the Eastern Church during the 4th Century* (Athens: Porefthendes, 1966).

³¹ 'The greatest contribution which the Orthodox Church can make to the African Churches is the Holy Liturgy ... Not only for the Greek Orthodox, but also for the African Orthodox, the Liturgy is the strongest appeal of the Church' (D. E. Wentink, 'The Orthodox Church in East Africa,' *The Ecumenical Review* 20 [1968]: 42–43).

³² Anastasios Yannoulatos, 'Initial Thoughts toward an Orthodox Foreign Mission,' *Porefthendes* 4 (1968): 19–23; Elias Voulgarakis, 'Language and Mission,' *Porefthendes* 4 (1962): 42–43.

³³ See Glazik, *Die russisch-orthodoxe Heidenmission seit Peter dem Grossen* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuch Handlung, 1954), passim.

Not all the advances in vernacular translations were made by pioneer missionaries. The most notable corrective to the return to Islam of the baptized Tartars was made by the linguist Nicholas Ilminski. Working at the Ecclesiastical Academy at Kazan, Ilminski discovered that the literary language of the Tartars was not their common language, but the language of Islam. The only Tartars who understood the literary language were those educated in Islamic schools, Ilminski severed the link with Islam by translating the Liturgy and the Scriptures into the vernacular, and in the process raising it to a written language.³⁴

INDIGENOUS CLERGY

Generally Orthodox missions operated with very few 'foreign' personnel. There was a great reliance placed on the converts early in each missionary enterprise. In some cases, funds to pay the national workers came from the missionary's home base. Possibly the reliance on indigenous clergy was necessary because it was difficult to obtain missionary recruits for some areas,³⁵ but the use of national workers fits P. 148 in very well with the incarnation of the gospel. Even today it is regarded as a matter of policy that clergy be nationals.³⁶ In the Russian Orthodox mission to Japan, several benefits of this policy can be seen. The church survived the Russo-Japanese War because only three of the thirty-nine clergy were Russian.³⁷ The adaptation of Orthodoxy to Japanese customs is further testified to by the experiences of a convert in 1880, who saw Orthodoxy as a new fulfillment to Japanese tradition.³⁸

Part of the reason that indigenization of the clergy succeeds at an early stage of church development arises from the Orthodox view of clerical duties. The priest is primarily responsible for the liturgical services. If these are in the vernacular, then the priest only needs to be able to read the various offices. The homily can be given by another member of the congregation, as is the case in some rural sections of Greece where the schoolteacher may be more educated in theology than the priest.³⁹ Or, the priest can read a homily prepared for him by the bishop. This is not to imply that the Orthodox church places a low value on theological education, since this is not the case. Well-trained clergy have been a hallmark of the church, and promising candidates were often sent from the mission church back to the 'homeland' for training.⁴⁰ The point is that there are levels of clerical training in Orthodoxy which permit converts, relatively untrained in theology, to

³⁴ Eugene Smirnoff, *A Short Account of the Historical Development and Present Position of Russian Orthodox Missions* (London: Rivingtons, 1903), pp.30ff.

³⁵ See, e.g., the story of how John Veniaminov at first declined, as did all the other clergy in the diocese, the call to mission work in Alaska (Paul D. Garrett, *St. Innocent, Apostle to America* [Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979], pp.32–36).

³⁶ Chrysostomos Konstantinidis, 'New Orthodox Insights in Evangelism,' in *Martyria/Mission*, pp. 14–15.

³⁷ Serge Bolshakoff, *The Foreign Missions of the Russian Orthodox Church* (London: SPCK, 1943), p.78.

³⁸ See the story of Sergei Seodzi in Martin Jarrett-Kerr, *Patterns of Christian Acceptance, Individual Response to the Missionary Impact 1550–1950* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1972), pp.142–51.

³⁹ See Mario Rinvulcri, *Anatomy of a Church, Greek Orthodoxy Today* (London: Burns & Oates, 1966), pp.13–44.

⁴⁰ Most of the training these days takes place at the theological faculties of the universities of Athens and Saloniki, though some candidates have trained at St. Vladimir's Theological Seminary in Crestwood, New York, and Holy Cross School of Theology in Boston.

minister the sacraments. This system does not correspond to a lay-minister programme but, rather, has full, recognized priests serving the developing mission work.

THE SELFHOOD OF THE CHURCH

The third characteristic of Orthodox missions was the selfhood of the mission church. The supposed goal of all Orthodox mission work was P. 149 the creation of an autocephalous church that could run its own affairs.⁴¹ This was in keeping with the other two elements just discussed, because it signified a church that spoke one language, spanned one culture, and was the incarnation of the gospel message to one people. Therefore, while these national churches usually corresponded to political boundaries, in their conception they were first of all cultural and linguistic entities. National churches were to share the common tradition and faith of Orthodoxy while maintaining ecclesiastical independence.

It was in this third element that Orthodox missions most often failed. The creation of autocephalous churches had political overtones that often prevented the appointment of native bishops. The close connection between the church and the state during both the Byzantine and the Russian periods of missionary work often prevented the natural transition of authority. Even today the issue of supposed suppression of emerging national churches is keenly debated within Orthodox circles.⁴²

The historical inability to follow through on all elements of Orthodox theology should not detract from the total scope of Orthodox missiology. The fact remains that the theoretical base and the vision can be found both in the history of Orthodox missions and in contemporary missiological writings by Orthodox.⁴³ Perhaps the Orthodox are in a better position now, since the church, both in the diaspora and in Greece, is not linked to any colonial power. It can fulfill what it sees to be its calling by God, that of having Orthodoxy, 'the right praise' of God, fill the whole earth.

IMPLICATIONS

When the elements of Orthodox missiology are viewed in isolation, it P. 150 is possible to draw parallels to a number of concepts in Western theology. But it must be noted that parallels do not exist at every point, nor do they match precisely. However, to regard the aspects of Orthodox missiology as independent points is to miss the congruity of the theological position, for it is in its wholeness that Orthodox missiology makes an impact on the study of missions. The framework of the approach is as important as the approach. There is a cohesiveness inherent in Orthodox theology that leads to mission work. It is being recognized that to deny mission is to deny Orthodoxy.⁴⁴

⁴¹ In Orthodoxy, an autocephalous church is one that selects its own head and is therefore independent from the control of another church.

⁴² John Meyendorff discusses the attempts at the Hellenization of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church (*The Orthodox Church: Its Past and Its Role in the World Today*, trans. John Chapin [London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1962], p.169). Demetrios J. Constantelos maintains that had Hellenization been the aim, the Greek church could have used many opportunities, especially during the Ottoman period, but chose the path of toleration and diversity (*Understanding the Greek Orthodox Church* [New York: Seabury Press, 1982], pp.86–87).

⁴³ Anastasios Yannoulatos, 'The Purpose and Motive of Mission,' *IRM* 54 (1965): 281–97. A fuller revision of this article with very complete notes appears under the same title in *Porefthendes* 9 (1967): 2–10, 34–36.

⁴⁴ 'Can a Church that for centuries now has had no catechumens, but jealously guards the treasure of faith for itself, totally indifferent to whether other people are being born, breathe, live and die, within the Lie—

Thus, if one is to understand and learn from Orthodox missiology, it is imperative to begin with a holistic approach to Orthodox theology. The framework of Orthodoxy provides the starting point for mission. The richness of the Orthodox tradition, obscured from the West by long centuries of theological isolation and historical separation, offers a vital contribution to Christian knowledge.

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Gospel Definitions of Adultery and Women's Rights

G. J. Wenham

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This article argues that Jesus taught that remarriage following divorce is adultery. A number of important corollaries follow.

(Editor)

Christian readers of the OT are usually surprised to learn that in pre-Christian times the seventh commandment applied only to married women and not to married men. If a married man indulged in sexual relations with a single girl or patronized a prostitute, that did not count as adultery against his wife. If on the other hand a married, or even a betrothed, woman had sexual intercourse with anyone except her husband that counted as adultery, so she and her partner were liable to be put to death ([Lev. 20:10](#), [Dt. 22:22–24](#)).

This definition of adultery, which sees it essentially as an offence against a husband, was not peculiar to ancient Israel. It was common to the legal traditions of the ancient Near East, Greece and Rome. This view of adultery tied a woman exclusively to one man, whereas men were legally free to contract several unions. Hence polygamy was possible under Mesopotamian and OT law, while Roman law allowed men to keep a concubine as well as a wife. But women could not be polyandrous.

However it should not be supposed that in OT times polygamy was common: the cost of marriage effectively made polygamy the prerogative of kings and rich patriarchs. Nor did the law encourage married men to have affairs with single girls, as the penalties for such behaviour show ([Ex. 22:16–17](#), [Dt. 22:28–29](#)). Nor was resort to prostitutes approved by wisdom teachers or prophets ([Prov. 5](#), [Jer. 3](#), [Am. 2:7](#), etc.). Nevertheless

which therefore is alien to the feelings of world love and justice—be really “Orthodox”? (Anastasios Yannoulatos, ‘Orthodox Spirituality and External Mission,’ *IRM* 52 [1963]: 300). For a review of recent mission work, see Alexander Veronis, ‘Orthodox Concepts of Evangelism and Mission,’ *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 27 (1982): 44–57.