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## **Christian Mission, Proselytism and Religious Liberty: A Protestant Appeal for Christian Tolerance and Unity\***

KENT R. HILL

Did you forget that tranquillity and even death are dearer to man than free choice in the knowledge of good and evil? There is nothing more seductive for man than the freedom of his conscience, but there is nothing more tormenting either.

Fedor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*<sup>1</sup>

In this classic passage from one of the greatest writers of the Western world, Dostoyevsky confronts the difficult problem of freedom.

Freedom, after all, is a problem. As the Grand Inquisitor puts it in his attack on Christ, as recorded in *The Brothers Karamazov*, ‘nothing has ever been more insufferable for man and for human society than freedom!’<sup>2</sup> Freedom sounds so good, but as any student of history knows – indeed, any human being who has lived long enough to reflect on life – freedom is at best a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it defines and gives meaning to all that is most important about being ‘human’. On the other hand, freedom need not serve, indeed often does not serve, the cause of truth or human dignity. The Grand Inquisitor is so disillusioned with ‘freedom’ that he is willing harshly to chastise the God of the universe for granting that freedom. He is arrogantly going to correct the divine mistake and take back the freedom which God granted to humanity.

On the surface it would appear that the nineteenth-century Dostoyevsky is displaying some animus towards Catholicism and the papacy. But when one considers the text more closely, it becomes obvious that the potent critique can be applied to any religious group (including the Russian Orthodox Church) which might succumb to the temptation of seeking to protect and provide for the people by depriving the people of the freedom to choose among religious alternatives.

Secular embodiments of the Grand Inquisitor are also fundamentally hostile to freedom, for human freedom, in their view, blocks the victory of truth and economic justice – the advent of the ‘workers’ paradise’. The communist era in Russia and Eastern Europe was a lethal experiment in applying the Grand Inquisitor’s ideas to life – the attempt to barter human freedom for utopia and human happiness. The experiment was one of the most costly failures in human history. But still the ‘totalitarian temptation’ besets us – the temptation to create or preserve truth and

\* This article is an expanded and updated version of a paper presented at the second Keston Institute conference on Proselytism and Religious Liberty, Oxford, 12–16 May 1997.

tranquillity by dispensing with the messy, uneven and unpredictable consequences of human freedom.

The task of this essay is twofold. First, to propose a defence of 'religious freedom' which all can relate to – the religious and the non-religious alike. And second, to appeal to the Christian community for greater Christian tolerance and unity, making this appeal from within a Christian framework of authority and argumentation. Regarding the first task, I unapologetically invite the Christian to consider arguments for the defence of religious liberty which do not rely on religious authority, because Christians need to be able to advance their views in the broader world without appealing to religious authority, and I invite the non-Christian to be informed by a Christian appeal for Christian tolerance and unity, because the tranquillity of the broader society will be affected by how faithful Christians are to Jesus Christ and the tradition they claim as their own.

Christians should seek unity – not in terms of ecclesial authority and organisation, but in spirit and common mission. Unity, it must be remembered, is not uniformity. This essay argues that at the very least our common interest as Christians in advancing the work of Jesus Christ and our common commitment with people of goodwill everywhere to advance the prospects of peace require that we work for genuine, mutual toleration.

Finally, there is a quite practical dimension and purpose to this essay. It is to consider the tensions and conflicts surrounding the debate over Christian mission and proselytism in historically Orthodox lands just emerging from the long dark night of communism. The central thesis of this essay is that the defence of religious liberty in general and the advance of Christian tolerance and unity in particular are twin components of the potential emergence of peaceful and democratic postcommunist societies which will benefit all, Christian and non-Christian alike, and which will simultaneously serve the Church Universal and the Russian Orthodox Church in particular.

### **A Universal Defence of Religious Liberty**

The first justification for religious liberty is that the quest for meaning is fundamental for human beings, and is intimately related to human dignity and freedom.

There can be no discussion of the importance of religious liberty without rooting it in a particular definition of human beings. When we survey all living creatures, it quickly becomes clear that there is something utterly unique about human beings. We share much with other members of the animal kingdom, but there is much which is different about us. To talk about the religious freedom of animals would be ludicrous. To suggest that a dog would give its life because of a particular belief about the meaning of life or the nature of ultimate reality is simply silly. Birds may be communicating when they chirp, but no sane person has suggested that they are expounding on the nature of beauty and the definition of the good. Human beings, like other living creatures, spend much of their life seeking to nurture and sustain physical existence, and yet they have the capacity, indeed the need, to think about themselves, their place in the world, and the 'meaning' of their existence. If they are dissatisfied with their sense of the 'meaning' or lack of it in their lives, they can in despair choose to end their own existence, even though the material circumstances for continuing their existence are readily at hand.

These unusual capacities of human beings to reflect on their existence, quite independently of any material need to do so, help define what many have referred to as

the 'religious' dimension of human beings. Even those who profess no particular religious belief reflect these unusual human capacities, for even to reject religious faith is to be conscious of religious questions. The ability to reflect on one's existence and to 'choose' one's course in life beyond simply responding to material stimuli is at the heart of what we call 'human dignity'. It is tied up with the capacity to love and withhold love from individuals and ideas. Religious liberty is the cornerstone of human rights not because other human rights are not important, but because without religious liberty that which is most precious and unique to human beings – that which is related to dignity, freedom, choice – is lost.

A second justification for religious liberty is that international understandings support a view of humanity that requires religious freedom.

The first paragraph of the Preamble to the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* declares that the 'recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world'. Article 1 asserts that 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.'<sup>3</sup>

Though there is no appeal to transcendent authority for the elevated view of humanity found in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* – and the absence of such an appeal occasioned some debate in religious circles of that day – still there is a bold affirmation of humanity's 'inherent' dignity and 'inalienable' rights. Whether consciously rooted in transcendent authority or not, there is a universal sense that that which is uniquely human has dignity and that that dignity is somehow interwoven with rights and freedom. There is a clear sense that where the dignity is denied, there 'freedom, justice and peace' will be jeopardised. Article 18 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* insists: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes the freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance.'<sup>4</sup> Many international laws and covenants defend religious liberty.<sup>5</sup> No nation or people can be a respected part of the international community of nations and reject the nearly universally recognised importance and value of religious liberty.

A third reason to defend religious liberty is that religious conflict has been and still is one of the main sources of international tension in the world.

It is not surprising that – as prominent human rights' scholars have recognised – long before systematic protection of civil and political rights evolved religious freedom was treated as a fundamental right recognised in bilateral treaties, for example in the Peace of Westphalia (1648) which ended the Thirty Years' War. This was essential because religious conflicts lay at the centre of so much of the bloodshed.<sup>6</sup> In short, there is a direct and unmistakable connection between international peace and religious liberty.

A fourth reason to defend religious liberty is because it is the best way to ensure that totalitarianism will be avoided.

This justification should be of particular interest to the peoples who suffered so much under the cruel repression of the communists. It is no accident that the Russian Orthodox Church and other religious believers were singled out for persecution. Sergei Bulgakov, who was an early Russian Marxist, but who later renounced Marxism and became a Russian Orthodox priest, insisted that what was behind Karl Marx's entire philosophy was a 'militant atheism'.<sup>7</sup> Lenin, to whom fell the task of trying to create a society 'blessed' by the absence of religion, insisted that 'Marxism

is materialism. As such, it ... is mercilessly hostile to religion. ... We must fight against religion. This is the ABC of all materialism, and consequently, of Marxism.’<sup>8</sup> It is no wonder that Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn wrote in 1973 that ‘ferocious hostility to religion is Marxism’s most persistent feature’.<sup>9</sup>

Another former Marxist, who also returned to Russian Orthodoxy, is Nikolai Berdyayev. His pungent view of communism as a ‘pseudo-religion’ in opposition to all competing religions provides graphic testimony as to how threatening to true religion religious or pseudo-religious intolerance can be.

Communism in actual fact is the foe of every form of religion and especially of Christianity, not as a social system, but as itself a religion. It wants to be a religion itself, to take the place of Christianity. It professes to answer the religious questions of the human soul and to give a meaning to life. Communism is integrated; it embraces the whole of life; its relations are with no special section of it. On this account its conflict with other religious faiths is inevitable.<sup>10</sup>

No religious group suffered more during the Soviet period than did the Russian Orthodox Church, and ironically it suffered so painfully precisely because it was victimised by a pseudo-church which refused to allow religious liberty. The surest safety net for all religious groups against the pretensions of any secular totalitarianism or any other religious or pseudo-religious entity is precisely religious liberty. As the prominent sociologist Peter Berger has put it, ‘religious liberty is fundamental because it posits the ultimate limit on the power of the state’.<sup>11</sup>

### **A Protestant Appeal for Christian Tolerance and Unity**

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16<sup>12</sup>.

Christians throughout the ages, regardless of skin colour, gender, economic and social class, geographic region, or what particular Christian theological communion they may have been born into or have voluntarily associated themselves with, have affirmed the Apostle John’s succinct statement about God’s love and the role his Son Jesus plays in demonstrating that love to humanity. John 3:16 is not theology for the faint of heart, for the great diluters of our time. It must not be watered down as Theodore O. Wedel once charged that ‘modernist Christianity’ had done: ‘God so loved the world that He once inspired a certain Jew to inform His contemporaries that there is a great deal to be said for loving one’s neighbour.’<sup>13</sup> How different John 3:16 is from what H. Richard Niebuhr has complained so often passes for modern Christianity: ‘A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross.’<sup>14</sup> No, the theology wrapped up in John 3:16 forcefully distinguishes Christianity from other world religions and from those perspectives which do not acknowledge sovereignty beyond that of human autonomy. God is personal – he loves. He loves enough to sacrifice his own son. Human beings are part of a drama whose central players include divine personages. Much is at stake – destruction or eternal life!

### *Reflections on the Origins and Consequences of Christian Diversity*

One would think that all who really believe what John bears witness to would,

despite whatever differences might exist between them, be noticeably kin, even be 'brothers and sisters in Christ' with a bond of affection that is warm and strong. But the passage of time, the ebb and flow of historical processes, has invariably divided people, even Christians whose sacred canon of Scripture includes John 3:16.

By the early fourth century Constantinople and Rome were split politically and from then on evolved separately. In time that part of the Christian world which centred on Rome became 'Roman Catholic' while that part which centred on Constantinople came to be known as 'Orthodox'. To be sure, most of the theology remained the same, apart from differing conceptions of how and where to view the 'head' of the Church, and over whether the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone (Orthodox) or from the Father *and* the Son (Catholic). As the centuries slipped by, other cultural and ecclesiastical differences formed and coloured the Roman Catholic and Orthodox worlds as well. And yet, John 3:16 was the central belief in both worlds, that is, where genuine Christianity was really believed. Sadly in an increasing number of situations the term 'Catholic' or 'Orthodox' came to reflect much more about the national, political or ethnic characteristics of those claiming the term than about the basic theological or ethical beliefs of the primitive Church and its founder.

When Martin Luther nailed his *Ninety-Five Theses* to the door of Wittenberg Cathedral in 1517 his goal was to charge that the Catholic Church had strayed from its roots, from Scripture, from the primitive Church. He had no way of knowing then that the result of his protest would be a split, indeed a splintering, of Western Christendom. To be sure there was reformation within the Catholic Church, but over the course of several centuries there was the founding of a myriad of Protestant churches such as Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican and Anabaptist. Now the differences in worship style and the theological details emphasised tended to be even more pronounced. No one disagreed with John 3:16, but the differences and tensions between competing Christian churches continually grew, forcing that which was held in common to recede further and further into the background.

Tragically, the way Christians have treated each other through the centuries has caused as much division between them as have their respective theologies. The split between the Western Church and the Eastern Church, at first so relatively slight, became much more serious when the Crusaders from Western Europe sacked Constantinople during the early thirteenth century, taking much precious booty back home. It was the Crusades, not theological controversy or even reciprocal excommunications, which drove a stake into the heart of East–West Christian relations.

In Western Europe itself, the differences between Catholics and Protestants, and between Protestants themselves, often resulted in violence. The Religious Wars in France in the sixteenth century and the Thirty Years' War in Europe in the seventeenth century provided no ringing endorsement of the sweet truths of the Gospel. Indeed, the failure of Christians to be Christian is precisely what helped fuel that secular part of the Enlightenment programme whereby social peace and harmony were associated with political arrangements which deliberately disconnected religion from the state and with understandings of the world focused on man, not on God or theologies about Him.

Christianity at its best has taken seriously Jesus' command as recorded in Matthew 28:19–20: 'Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.' In time, of course, missionaries representing different historical branches of the Christian world found themselves struggling in the same

foreign lands to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel. Missionaries from both the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic worlds sought to make converts in Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Indeed, to this day one can draw a line in former Yugoslavia between the Orthodox and the Catholic regions. Of course it is much more complex than that. There is also the presence of Islam, and there have been migrations of peoples back and forth, leaving the regions of today as a complex patchwork quilt of religious, ethnic and national elements. Since Protestants made inroads into Eastern and Central Europe as well, it is not uncommon to find in many regions Christians of many different stripes living side by side.

Russia has its own very special history. As an ancient chronicle tells the story, the people of Rus' considered several religious options – Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Islam and Judaism. But it was Orthodoxy which they chose in the tenth century, in part, as we are told, because when the emissaries of Prince Vladimir visited St Sophia's Cathedral in Constantinople they did not know whether they were 'in heaven or on earth'. Whether this story is accurate or not, no one who has been immersed in the 'other-world' beauty of an Orthodox service would fail to testify that one of Orthodoxy's precious gifts to the Church Universal is in the beauty and depth of the worship experience. Indeed in the land of the Rus' it was the splendour and distinctiveness of Orthodoxy which shaped more than a millennium of history in what came to be known as the Russian Empire. As the Russian playwright Griboyedov put it in the early nineteenth century, 'a Russian feels fully Russian only in his Orthodox church'.<sup>15</sup>

#### *Orthodox/Non-Orthodox Tensions in Contemporary Russia*

In Russia Orthodoxy's relations with non-Orthodox Christians have often been laced with tension. The Orthodox resented special religious freedoms given to foreigners living in their midst, and did not look kindly on non-Orthodox Christians spreading their ideas within Russia, viewing them as heretical, and hostile to Orthodox authority. In the nineteenth century there was great nervousness about, and intolerance of, Protestants distributing Bibles among the common people. In the twentieth century Nicholas II very reluctantly granted more rights to non-Orthodox Christians. In short, on the eve of the Bolshevik Revolution there was no firmly established appreciation either from a Christian or from a civil perspective of the value of granting and defending full religious freedom within the Russian Empire. Like nations in the rest of Europe, Russians also struggled with antisemitism and hostility to non-Christian world religions. It was not an age of religious tolerance.

The era of communist repression of all religious confessions actually helped to break down some of the barriers which had previously existed between Christian groups. In the Gulag Orthodox, Baptist and Pentecostal prisoners often came to respect each other deeply, and to provide each other with comfort and support. Genuine ecumenism, in fact, was born in part in the purifying fires of persecution.

The collapse of communist power in the Soviet Union between 1989 and 1991 has been both a tremendous gift and a difficult challenge. Finally, the era of atheist domination has come to an end, but now the Commonwealth of Independent States and the formerly communist states of Eastern Europe are compelled to come to terms with the question of how to establish new political systems. Democracy and full religious freedom, though often praised initially, have had but limited development in these areas of the world, and they are still viewed with suspicion by many. Former habits supporting favoured status for particular Christian groups (Catholicism in

Lithuania or Poland; Orthodoxy in much of the rest of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union) still exercise great influence. Meanwhile, into the vacuum formed by the sudden departure of communism has flowed a bewildering variety of non-Orthodox Christian voices. Some have been culturally sensitive and informed; others have not. Some have come with profound respect for Orthodoxy and even a willingness and desire to cooperate with the Orthodox in proclaiming the Gospel; others have assumed an aggressive posture, arguing that to be 'saved' it is necessary to leave the Orthodox fold. The Orthodox response has been mixed as well. Some Orthodox have welcomed the proclamation of the Gospel and the distribution of religious literature, even by non-Orthodox Christians. Others within the Orthodox world, often priests or members of the hierarchy, have seemed more interested in protecting their lands from religious competition than in the proclamation of the Gospel to people who have been deprived of Christian education for three generations. Catholics and the Vatican are often viewed by the Orthodox with much disdain and distrust as well, in part because of the painful history of the 'Uniate Church' – a product of the Union of Brest-Litovsk in 1595–96 which resulted in Byzantine (Orthodox) Christians in the province of Kiev retaining their liturgy, and their discipline as regards celibate and married clergy, while coming into communion with Rome. In turn, Eastern-rite or Ukrainian Catholics, as the Uniate Christians are now called, are slow to forget, indeed are often unwilling to forgive, the way that the Orthodox cooperated with Stalin to force Ukrainian Catholic churches to become Orthodox churches during the Soviet era. There is, then, deep suspicion in some Orthodox circles of much that is new about the postcommunist climate with its diversity, democracy and unfamiliar freedom. As Fr Artem, a Moscow priest, opined in late 1991:

The most dangerous thing for Russia is religious and spiritual pluralism. Moscow isn't a Babylon for ... cults, for protestant congregations who resemble wild wolves rushing in here or Catholics like thieves using their billions to try to occupy new territory. Democracy is an idol that will be broken like communism was.<sup>16</sup>

The Orthodox sometimes caricature Protestants as heretics and sectarians, failing to distinguish traditional Protestants from the Unification Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons and other similar groups. The result is an atmosphere of religious agitation replete with charges and countercharges.

In the midst of all this, Russia and the other states which have emerged from the former Soviet Union are struggling to determine how to order their collective lives politically and economically. What is being called capitalism often resembles mafia-controlled mercantilism far more than a system based on genuinely free markets. Politically there have been major attempts to move towards democracy, but there are great fears that democracy has not yet taken firm root. The Russian Freedom of Conscience Law of 1990 and the Russian Constitution of 1993 admirably defend religious freedom. However, Lawrence Uzzell, a researcher for Keston Institute, reports that 'these provisions have become largely meaningless in practice, as more than one fourth of provincial governments have adopted laws which openly contradict the constitution as well as international human rights pacts.'<sup>17</sup> The Russian Orthodox Church is often the main proponent of the new restrictive provisions, which are usually aimed at foreigners. Many of the new regulations read very much like old Soviet antireligious regulations: accreditation of a religious organisation can be withheld if the religious activities are deemed to cause 'psychological or moral



damage' (Urdmurtia); minors cannot be involved in certain religious groups without their parents' written permission (many provinces); some laws dealing with religion are kept secret (Vologda); some refuse accreditation to any who are structurally 'subunits of foreign religious organisations outside Russia' (Tver'); and in some places the non-Orthodox must have the permission of the Russian Orthodox Church to rent facilities (Tula). The Moscow Patriarchate proposed in April 1996 an amendment to the Freedom of Conscience Law which would have forbidden 'independent activities by foreign religious organisations'. Particularly disturbing is the *de facto* reappearance throughout the provinces of the notorious Council for Religious Affairs (CRA), under new names to be sure, but with many of the same personnel who worked during the Soviet era in the CRA and in close cooperation with the KGB.<sup>18</sup>

Just how tenuous religious freedom is in postcommunist Russia and how prominent is the Russian Orthodox Church's role in undermining it is illustrated by the sad events of 1997. With significant involvement of the Russian Orthodox Patriarchate the Russian Duma voted overwhelmingly on 18 June to send on to the upper house for approval new highly restrictive legislation on church-state relations – a federal law 'on freedom of conscience and religious associations'.<sup>19</sup> The 4 July vote of approval by the Federation Council was also overwhelming. Virtually every religious group in Russia, dozens of human rights groups around the world and the representatives of many Western nations, including the US Senate, expressed grave concerns and urged President Yel'tsin to veto the measure. Yel'tsin refused to sign the legislation, and on 22 July sent it back to the Duma and Federation Council for amendments. Initially, hopes were high that the 'compromise' version would restore full religious freedom, but those hopes were dashed when on 4 September Yel'tsin sent back a new version of the legislation for consideration which left in place the major provisions which cripple full religious freedom in Russia, and in some instances actually added new provisions which would make the situation worse for the non-Orthodox than the original version of the bill would have done.

The new legislation discriminates in significant ways against all religious organisations which have not enjoyed legal recognition for more than fifteen years, and particularly threatens groups like the Russian Baptist *initsiativniki* who do not wish to be registered with the state at all. Even those who are allowed and willing to register must do so annually, and this threatens to give the state (and the Russian Orthodox Church) tremendous latitude to discourage or disallow religious groups which they oppose. Religious organisations which are not registered do not have the right to own property, publish religious materials, conduct religious services in public places (hospitals, nursing homes, prisons or orphanages, for example), run seminaries, or receive military deferments for clergy or seminarians. At best, non-Orthodox Russian believers are second-class citizens.

In short, full religious freedom as guaranteed by international laws and covenants and as provided for by the 1990 Russian Freedom of Conscience Law and the 1993 Russian Constitution is under fundamental assault and the Russian Orthodox Church is leading the charge. Indeed, Patriarch Aleksii II stated publicly on 29 August 1997 that he does not believe Russia should be expected to conform to North American or European standards regarding freedom of conscience and religious freedom.<sup>20</sup>

These events are troubling not just for those who believe in the importance of religious liberty, but for those who care deeply for the Russian Orthodox Church as well. When the opportunities for the spread of the Gospel in the postcommunist era are so striking, when the needs and the openness of the population so obvious, to focus the Church's energy on limiting the freedom of others is a tragic misuse of

power. Unfortunately, one is reminded of the words of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in his 1990 book *Restructuring Russia*.

One would have liked to be encouraged by the positive potential of the church. But alas, even today, when everything in the country has begun to move, the stirrings of courage have had little impact on the church hierarchy. ... The church will become helpful to our social recovery only when it has found the strength to restore a living bond with the people.<sup>21</sup>

The courage to break boldly with the past – both the communist and the pre-communist eras of religious discrimination – would be a wonderful gift from the Russian Orthodox Church to the Russian people.

Tensions between different religious groups, and between different Christian churches, are clearly on the rise in the territories of the former Soviet Union, and dealing with these tensions is a major focus of this paper. There is no point in bemoaning a lack of Christian tolerance and unity without looking full in the face the causes of that absence of tolerance and unity. Only when we have done so can we consider how to handle the differences which have arisen. Only then can we discern the nature and extent of the common ground which exists.

Before dealing with the critical issues of ecumenism and ecclesiology, and the debate over proselytism, let us briefly consider several key areas of disagreement between Orthodoxy and other Christian communions.<sup>22</sup>

### *A Constellation of Disagreements*

Firstly, the 150 million Orthodox reject papal claims to supreme ecclesial authority. Since at least the Photian Schism of the mid-ninth century, when Pope Nicholas intervened in the internal affairs of the Eastern Church by choosing between two rival claimants for the post of patriarch in Constantinople, there has been resentment by the Orthodox of what they believe to be unjustified Catholic pretensions to sovereignty. Indeed, Pope Nicholas said in a letter of 865 that he intended to extend papal authority ‘over all the earth, that is, over every church’.<sup>23</sup> The Orthodox Church has never provided itself with one supreme ecclesial prelate, but instead has thirteen ‘autocephalous’ or independent, self-governing churches, each with its own head.

Secondly, the Orthodox consider the Western Church to be heretical at the point of the latter’s insertion into the Nicene Creed in the sixth century of the *filioque* – that is, the phrase ‘and the Son’, which was added to the statement describing the source of the Holy Spirit. Originally, the Creed simply affirmed that the Holy Spirit proceeded ‘from the Father’. When in the ninth century two Eastern hierarchs appealed to the people for recognition as patriarch of Constantinople, the one not chosen – Photius – responded by declaring the Western Church to be ‘heretical’ because of the addition of the *filioque* to the Creed. It was a power struggle that pushed what some consider a relatively minor theological point to the forefront as an occasion for one branch of the Christian Church to attack another.

Thirdly, the Orthodox, like the Roman Catholics, are critical of the emphasis Protestants place on individual religious autonomy. Whatever suspicions the Orthodox may harbour about the Catholics, they are even less enamoured of the way the Protestants conduct their affairs, with their continual splinterings and arguments over the ‘true’ reading of Scripture and interpretation of Christian truths. Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism view the Protestant penchant to interpret Scripture indi-

vidually as a prescription for chaos, invariably following from a lack of accountability to Tradition and the Church. Scripture is an important source of authority, argue the Orthodox and Roman Catholics, but its canon was in fact established by the Church itself, under the inspired guidance of the Holy Spirit. Thus it is highly inappropriate and even dangerous to divorce Scripture from the Church and Tradition, as the Protestants are so prone to do.

Fourthly, the Orthodox, like the Catholics, are distressed by the Protestant lack of appreciation for the importance of the Church and the centrality of the Sacraments as means of grace. Even some Protestants are aware that the Church is much more important in Christianity than many other Protestants seem to recognise. In his *Institutes*, for example, Calvin quotes more than once the rich words of third-century Cyprian: 'You cannot have God as your Father without the church as your Mother.'<sup>24</sup>

Fifthly, there are a host of smaller differences between the Orthodox and the non-Orthodox. For example, clergy are allowed to marry in the Orthodox Church, as they are among the Protestants, whereas the Roman Catholics (though not Catholics of the Eastern Rite) require that their priests be celibate. Neither the Orthodox nor the Protestants accept Catholic doctrines asserting papal infallibility or the immaculate conception of Mary. The list of differences can of course be extended.

#### *Ecclesiology, Ecumenism and the Russian Orthodox Church*

A serious mistake is made if we attempt to discuss the attitude of the Russian Orthodox Church to other Christians in Russia today without considering the fascinating and complex history of Orthodox interactions with other Christians, particularly since the sixteenth century. Protestants and Catholics would do well to acquaint themselves with the often surprising variety of Orthodox perspectives on issues of ecclesiology and ecumenism. No one in the twentieth century has more ably addressed these issues from historical and doctrinal perspectives than has the emigre Russian theologian Fr Georges Florovsky (d. 1979).<sup>25</sup>

As a backdrop to Orthodox responses and interactions with Catholicism and various forms of Protestantism is the historical fact of an enduring love-hate relationship between Russia and the West. Russian history is replete with examples of wide swings in the Russian response to the West, from extreme hostility to uncritical imitation, from claims of Russian superiority to an exaggerated sense of Russia's inferiority. Thus it is no surprise that the history of the Orthodox response to other Christian communions and theologies is diverse.

One of the most intriguing and controversial figures in Russian/Ukrainian church history is Metropolitan Peter Mogila of Kiev (1596–1647). During his era and beyond Catholic, often Jesuit, ideas played a key role in shaping some Orthodox formulations of doctrine, Orthodox liturgy and the educational system. Latin Scholasticism and Aquinas had more impact for a time than did Patristic writings, and subsequent developments in Orthodoxy often emerged in reaction to what was perceived as too much 'Latin' influence. Florovsky notes, for example, the uncritical way in which the Orthodox sometimes used argumentation which was Protestant in origin in their critique of the Catholics and argumentation which was Catholic in origin in their critique of the Protestants, even when the argumentation in both cases was not fully faithful to Orthodox understandings and methodology.<sup>26</sup>

Another fascinating period of influence of non-Orthodox Christian ideas in Russian religious history is the first quarter of the nineteenth century under Tsar Alexander I. The Russian tsar, who had vanquished Napoleon, was the principal

architect of an ambitious, if unrealistic, European experiment in what Florovsky has called ‘utopian ecumenism’.<sup>27</sup> The Holy Alliance (1815), through a failure, sought to rebuild Christendom by bringing into a close working relationship the monarchs of three different countries and three different Christian communions: Roman Catholic (Austria), Orthodox (Russia) and Lutheran (Prussia). Alexander sought a federation of Christians, not a ‘reunion of churches’. He was clearly influenced by German mysticism and Pietism and attracted by the Pietist-inspired doctrine of the ‘Inner Light’. The Ministry of Spiritual Affairs and National Instruction was founded in 1817, and placed under the leadership of Prince Aleksandr Golitsyn. Openness to working with non-Orthodox Christians on a project which clearly reflected Protestant priorities was evident in the founding on a national level of the Russian Bible Society in 1814.<sup>28</sup> The president was Golitsyn and the vice-presidents were prelates from other churches, including even Roman Catholics and Uniates. The assumption was that distributing Bibles without annotations was of primary importance, because, as Florovsky puts it, the movement believed that the Bible was ‘the only source and only authority of true Christianity’.<sup>29</sup> There was major cooperation with Western Protestants through direct links with the British and Foreign Bible Society, representatives of which served on the Russian Bible Society board. The successes of the Russian Bible Society were notable: 700,000 Scriptures distributed, in 43 languages, in 10 years. Another major initiative which emerged during this period was the decision, approved by the Holy Synod, to begin the process of producing modern Russian translations of the full Bible – a project which came to fruition later in the century. Reminiscent of this period of cooperation in distributing Bibles is the contemporary *glasnost*’ period when individuals from a variety of Christian communions worked together in founding new Bible Societies in the former Soviet Union.

Florovsky points out that there was no allowance made under Alexander I for doctrinal criticism of the religious epistemology associated with the ‘Inner Light’, and there were many who felt that the Russian Bible Society was actually introducing a ‘new faith’ to Orthodox lands.<sup>30</sup>

As has so often been the case in Russian history, the pendulum soon swung back in the opposite direction. In 1824, near the end of Alexander I’s reign, the minister of education, Admiral Shishkov, put his views to the tsar:

Without qualified interpreters and preachers, what will be the effect when large numbers of Bibles and separate books of the Bible have been disseminated? Amidst such an unchecked (and one might say universal) deluge of books of the Holy Scriptures, where will room be found for the Apostolic teachings, practices, and customs of the Church? In a word, for everything which heretofore has served as a bulwark of Orthodoxy? ... All of these things will be dragged down, crushed, and trampled under foot.<sup>31</sup>

Shishkov successfully turned the tsar from his earlier support of the Russian Bible Society, though the Society was formally dissolved only in 1826, under the much more conservative Tsar Nicholas I. By the end of the century a very antagonistic attitude towards Protestants was the rule in Russia. In 1891 the Holy Synod decreed that anyone leaving the Orthodox Church to join another Christian group should suffer ‘the loss of all civil and personal rights’. In addition the distribution of ‘heretical’ (that is, ‘non-Orthodox’) materials was punishable by exile to Siberia.<sup>32</sup>

One further remarkable example of Russian Orthodox openness in the nineteenth century must be mentioned – in the person of Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow

(1782–1867).<sup>33</sup> Florovsky calls Filaret ‘probably the greatest theologian of the Russian Church in modern times’.<sup>34</sup> He was a biblical and patristics scholar, a religious leader with great spiritual sensitivity and warmth, and the metropolitan of Moscow for 47 years.

Partly in response to concerns expressed by some about how to respond to Roman Catholic materials aimed at the Orthodox early in the century, in 1832 Filaret published his thoughts on questions related to the nature and definition of the Church. He asserts that the Church is the Body of Christ, and that its fullness is known only to Christ. This is the ‘Church invisible’, but it includes the ‘visible Church’ – the Church in history with its ‘infirm’ members. Though Filaret asserts that the Church of Rome has deviated from the early Church, he still contends that the Catholic Church remains part of Christendom because of its Christological faith. Filaret insists that even ‘impure’ churches are somehow a part of the mystery of Christian Unity, though the Orthodox Church is in a very real sense the only ‘true’ Church. As Filaret puts it:

You expect now that I should give judgment concerning the other half of the present Christianity, but I just simply look upon them; in part I see how the Head and Lord of the Church heals many deep wounds of the old serpent in all the parts and limbs of his body, applying now gentle, now strong remedies, even fire and iron, in order to soften hardness, to draw out poison, to clean the wounds, to separate our malignant growths, to restore spirit and life in the half-dead and numbed structures. In such wise I attest my faith that in the end the power of God patently will triumph over human weakness, good over evil, unity over division, life over death.<sup>35</sup>

The spirit of these comments is remarkably ecumenical, and reflects a laudable recognition that the full parameters of the Church of God are something for God alone to determine.

At approximately the same time that Filaret was writing these words John Henry Newman, still several years from his conversion from Anglicanism to Catholicism, preached a sermon in St Mary’s in Oxford in which he talked about three broad branches of the one Catholic (Universal) Church: the English Catholics (Anglicans), the Roman Catholics, and the Greek Catholics (Orthodox).<sup>36</sup>

The issue of ecclesiology – the doctrine of the Church – is so central in any discussion of ecumenism or the quest for Christian unity, or even mutual tolerance, that we must address this issue in somewhat greater depth, looking now at the twentieth-century history of ecumenism and the Russian Orthodox Church.

It was an interest in world missions which fuelled the modern ecumenical movement. After all, beyond the borders of Europe the divisions between Christian churches often made much less sense than they did in the context of European history. The great missionary ecumenical gatherings of the last quarter of the nineteenth century lacked the participation of the Roman Catholics and the Orthodox, but the First World Conference on Faith and Order (no longer a strictly missionary conference), held in Lausanne in 1927, included the Orthodox among the 108 churches represented, though they refrained from voting on most of the reports.<sup>37</sup>

The Roman Catholic Church had been approached in 1919 about participating in a world congress, but politely declined. A Vatican spokesman reported that Pope Benedict XV ‘earnestly desires and prays that, if the Congress is practicable, those who take part in it may, by the Grace of God, see the light and become reunited to the visible Head of the Church, by whom they will be received with open arms.’ In

other words, the only unity foreseen by the Vatican at that time was unity on the Vatican's terms, and within the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>38</sup>

The Second Vatican Council (1962–65) was a major landmark in the history of the Catholic Church and of ecumenism. The Council explicitly recognised Christians outside the Roman Catholic Church as brothers and sisters in Christ who could be saved. This spirit of openness to non-Catholic Christians is also manifest in the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* published by the Vatican in 1992. The *Catechism* acknowledges that rifts within the Church date back to its very beginning, and that 'often enough, men of both sides were to blame' for the more serious dissensions which occurred in later centuries when whole communities became separate from the Catholic Church.<sup>39</sup> The *Catechism* continues, quoting the 1964 Vatican Council documents *Lumen gentium* and *Unitatis redintegratio*:

... one cannot charge with the sin of separation those who at present are born into these communities [that resulted from such separation] and in them are brought up in faith of Christ, and the Catholic Church accepts them with respect and affection as brothers. ... All who have been justified by faith in Baptism are incorporated into Christ: they therefore have a right to be called Christians, and with good reason are accepted as brothers in the Lord by children of the Catholic Church.<sup>40</sup>

'Furthermore', says the *Catechism*, 'many elements of sanctification and of truth' are found outside the visible confines of the Catholic Church. 'Christ's Spirit uses these Churches and ecclesial communities as means of salvation. ...'<sup>41</sup>

In recent years a growing number of evangelical Protestants have also adopted a more tolerant attitude towards Catholics and Orthodox than in past centuries. Protestants often continue to believe that their understandings and expressions of the faith are best, are truest, but they are nevertheless convinced that there is still Christian fellowship with non-Protestant Christians, and that there is salvation possible to all who put their faith in Jesus Christ regardless of whether or not they are members of a Protestant fellowship.

Many Orthodox are still very much wedded to the notion that the Orthodox Church is the 'one, true, fully apostolic church'. Though Catholics certainly also affirm that their church, as founded, they believe, by Jesus Christ himself, is the truest ecclesial embodiment of Christian truths and organisational structure, the meaning of that belief has been significantly tempered by understandings and attitudes expressed at the Second Vatican Council. Though individual Orthodox believers may well show warmth and tolerance towards non-Orthodox Christians, there has been no universally-accepted Orthodox pronouncement affirming 'salvation outside the Orthodox Church'.

Fr John Meyendorff, one of this century's most irenic Orthodox voices, commented in a 1967 editorial to fellow Orthodox believers: '... the Orthodox Church is neither a "sect" nor a "denomination", but the true Church of God. This fact defines the necessity and the limits of our evolvment in ecumenism.'<sup>42</sup> He goes on to assert that

since the Lord established only One Church, since our being Orthodox implies that we are members of it, and since, therefore, the fullness of Truth is accessible to us ... there cannot be, on our part, any compromise in matters of faith. Our essential responsibility in the ecumenical movement is to affirm that true Christian Unity is not unity on the basis of a 'common minimum' between denominations, but a unity in God.<sup>43</sup>

Six years later, Meyendorff put it like this:

The Orthodox have always believed – and have said so at ecumenical gatherings – that the Orthodox Church is the One Church of Christ to which Christ promised that ‘the gates of hell will not prevail against it’. ... However, the Orthodox Church has also recognized the sincerity, the devotion, the Christian achievements of non-Orthodox Christians: those who invoke the Name of Jesus cannot be considered as foreign to Him and thus foreigners to His Church, especially when they are sincerely ready to listen, to search, to seek unity in Christ.<sup>44</sup>

Meyendorff comes close to a Vatican Council-like acknowledgement of Christian faith genuinely existing outside the boundaries of the Orthodox Church. Yet he proudly asserts that the Orthodox is the ‘One Church of Christ’, and he expressly contends that ‘true Christian Unity is not unity on the basis of a “common minimum” between denominations’. It is not entirely clear why Meyendorff is so nervous about a ‘common minimum’. Is it because he does not believe that such a ‘minimum’ would be sufficient to deserve the description of ‘Christian’?

There can be little doubt that the Orthodox Church’s assertion that it is the ‘one, true Church’ has both made it difficult for the Orthodox to accept as equals other Christians and made it more likely that the non-Orthodox will view the Orthodox as arrogant and intolerant. Exclusivist claims to be the ‘one, true Church’ can create formidable barriers to fellowship or collaboration.

It must not be concluded that the Orthodox have not wrestled with the question of ecclesiology and ecumenism. In the nineteenth century Aleksei Khomyakov recognised an important Augustinian-like distinction between the visible and the invisible Church. He wrote:

The Church is one, notwithstanding her division, as it appears to a man who is still alive on earth. It is only in relation to man that it is possible to recognize a division of the Church into visible and invisible; her unity is, in reality, true and absolute.<sup>45</sup>

In an encyclical in 1902 Ecumenical Patriarch Joachim II insisted that the Orthodox Church must primarily attend to its own doctrines, but he went on to insist that

we must nevertheless also be concerned for our Christian brothers and never cease our prayers for the union of all into ONE ... for they also believe in the all-Holy Trinity and take pride in being called with the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, hoping also to be saved by the grace of God.<sup>46</sup>

The Orthodox played a key role in the founding of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, had the question of ecclesiology not been handled to their satisfaction in intense discussions at a Central Committee Meeting in Toronto in 1950 they clearly would not have remained within the WCC.<sup>48</sup> It is significant that the Toronto Statement which resulted was partly the product of discussions with Roman Catholics and WCC officials which took place in 1949 at the Istina centre in Paris.

At issue in the Toronto discussions was the question of how to deal with the differing conceptions of member churches of themselves, each other, and notions of the Universal Church. Morris West, a British theologian, has described well the problem and the outcome.

The Orthodox churches, in particular, regarded the other churches as

*essentially* incomplete. Others acknowledged that they did not consider their own church as a full, true and complete church and were not afraid of being told the same thing by others. As the statement was finally received at Toronto, it reflects the very originality of the WCC in that it sought to create a fellowship between churches who were not yet able to give full recognition to each other.<sup>49</sup>

The Toronto Statement did not require agreement on a specific doctrine of the Church. However, it was clearly stated that all relationships were to be based upon the headship of Christ, the New Testament understanding of the Church as one, a mutual recognition that in churches other than one's own there are to be found elements of the true Church, and a willingness to help and learn from each other. The Toronto Statement declares:

The member churches of the World Council consider the relationship of other churches to the holy catholic church which the creeds profess as a subject for mutual consideration. Nevertheless, membership does not imply that each church must regard the other member churches as churches in the true and full sense of the word.<sup>50</sup>

There can be no doubt that the impoverished reputation of ecumenism and the World Council of Churches today is tied to the extremely left-wing political position taken by the WCC particularly between 1975 and 1986.<sup>51</sup> These later failings of the WCC do not, however, discredit much of the excellent work and thought involved in its founding. Indeed, the contemporary attempt to revive and restore a genuine ecumenism can learn much from a careful study of the early days of ecumenism. Though the Russian Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union was not involved in the formative stages of the WCC, one of the most prominent figures in the formulation of the Toronto Statement was Fr Georges Florovsky, who lived in Paris from the early 1920s until the late 1940s. The Russian Orthodox hierarchs were for a time uncertain whether it would be possible for them to participate in the WCC; it was Florovsky more than any other figure who bridged the gap between them and the emerging ecumenical movement.

For many Orthodox today who are angered by and ashamed of the way that the Soviet government manipulated for partisan political purposes both the Russian Orthodox Church and the WCC during the 1970s and 1980s there is a great temptation to turn away from ecumenism. The problem is not ecumenism, however, but a false, politicised ecumenism. In an era of heightened religious tensions in the wake of the collapse of communism it would be highly desirable to consider anew the wise counsel and inspired examples of Patriarch Joachim II at the turn of the century, of Fr Florovsky half a century later, and more recently of Fr Meyendorff. They point the way towards an ecumenical involvement for the Orthodox which has integrity.

A credible, genuine ecumenism will focus on theological and spiritual points of unity. At the very least, it will promote mutual respect and toleration. It will not sweep theological differences aside as non-existent, or unimportant, though it will insist that these differences should not block our witness to a secular world regarding important common points of belief. Genuine ecumenism is willing to join forces on basic cultural and even political matters provided the agenda is faithful to scriptural values affirming life and human dignity. There can and ought to be common work to advance human rights, religious freedom, and the development of political and economic structures which allow people to be clothed and fed and have their material



needs met in the here and now. Finally, genuine ecumenism never loses sight of the fact that to a secular person the differences between the historic Christian branches of the faith are slight, but that they can become a tremendous distraction to confronting without escape those life-giving truths about which Orthodox, Catholics and Protestant Christians do, in fact, agree.

Today in many Russian Orthodox circles even genuine ecumenism, untainted by political leftism, has fallen on hard times. Those who believe that the Russian Orthodox hierarchy (the 'older generation') is the prime enemy of religious freedom often fail to understand that many younger clergy are if anything much more conservative and chauvinistic in their attitudes toward other Christian groups than are the present hierarchs of the Church. In fact, there is a concerted effort by conservative young priests to force the Russian Orthodox Church to abandon its membership in the World Council of Churches. At the Council of Bishops meeting in Moscow from 18 to 23 February 1997 the bishops agreed to put off for the time being a final decision on membership. Metropolitan Vladimir (Kotlyarov) of St Petersburg and Ladoga, a friend of the ecumenical movement since the 1960s and the metropolitan of the second most important diocese in Russia, has stated that avoiding a schism over the issue of ecumenism is a top priority for the Russian Orthodox hierarchy today.<sup>52</sup> All of this bodes badly for good relations within Russian borders between Christians of different communions.

### *Contrasting Orthodox Understandings of Missiology*

Because the Russian Orthodox Church has so often seemed hostile to the efforts of other Christians to evangelise or proselytise, people sometimes conclude that the Orthodox themselves are not strongly committed to spreading their particular understanding of the Christian faith. In fact, according to Fr George Liacopulos, within Orthodox tradition there are both 'exclusivist' and 'inclusivist' understandings of mission.<sup>53</sup> An evangelical convert to Orthodoxy, Peter Gillquist, published a book in 1984 entitled *Making America Orthodox*, in which he boldly argued that America should become Orthodox by 2010.<sup>54</sup> Even the highly regarded twentieth-century Russian Orthodox thinker Georges Florovsky wrote: 'I am compelled to regard all other Christian churches as deficient, and in many cases I can identify these deficiencies accurately enough. Therefore, for me, Christian reunion is simply universal conversion to Orthodoxy.'<sup>55</sup> Though Florovsky was an important figure in the ecumenical movement it is easy to see why this perspective could lead to an Orthodox missiology which is anything but self-effacing.

There are other Orthodox voices, however, which emphasise a more 'inclusive' view of the Church. Archbishop Germanos asserts that 'a conception of reunion amounting to the absorption of the other churches is in every way opposed to the spirit existing in the Orthodox Church, which has always distinguished between unity on the one hand and uniformity on the other.'<sup>56</sup> Another Orthodox writer, Nikos Nissiotis, claims that differences between churches should be accepted as 'external signs of the inner riches of the infinite and unbounded grace of the Holy Spirit'.<sup>57</sup>

Thus it is essential that we understand that the Orthodox, like Catholics and Protestants, have within their midst quite divergent streams, though of course they do not always flow with equal intensity.

### *The Debate over Evangelism and Proselytism*

There is a major dispute about who constitutes the Church and how membership is

obtained. Protestants frequently connect church membership with a conscious conversion to Jesus Christ as Lord by an individual who has reached the age of accountability, whereas the Orthodox will point to the moment of regeneration occasioned by 'infant baptism'. The Roman Catholics hold a view similar to the Orthodox, and it was this issue in part which was a particular challenge in initial discussions which in 1994 led to the joint Catholic/Evangelical Protestant document *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium*.<sup>58</sup>

At stake here is more than a question of who is saved (soteriology), but of what is considered to be proselytism. There is a major disagreement between the Orthodox and Evangelical Protestants on the appropriate definitions of 'proselytism' and 'evangelisation'. The English term 'proselyte' comes from the Greek word meaning 'one who has arrived'. Philo of Alexandria used the term to refer to someone who had left polytheism to join Judaism.<sup>59</sup> Of course today the key issue is not the 'arrival' at a new theological or ecclesial home, but 'arrival from where'. In the contemporary understanding of the term, 'proselytism' specifically means the effort to win a person actively engaged in one faith to another. It does not refer, in the opinion of Evangelical Protestants, to that missionary process which leads a person to accept a particular faith who was not already firmly attached to another. The Orthodox consider it proselytism for Evangelical Protestants to proclaim the Gospel to those whose only contact with the Orthodox Church may have been infant baptism, while Evangelicals view any with an inactive faith as in need of 'evangelisation'. Since Russia is historically Orthodox, the Orthodox consider virtually anything Protestants do among the Russians to be 'proselytism'. Protestant missionaries resent the charge of 'proselytism', which they believe does not apply to them since most in Russia today are not active 'Orthodox'. These Protestants insist that they are involved in 'evangelisation' – taking the Gospel to those who are not actively involved with any religious group.

Survey data published in early 1996 by the Russian newspaper *Segodnya* confirm the fact that the great majority of Russians are not active Orthodox: 49 per cent believe in God, while 51 per cent consider themselves Orthodox; 30 per cent assert that they are nonbelievers. Only 6–7 per cent attend church services at least once a week; 67 per cent very rarely go to church.<sup>60</sup> A pre-election survey in June 1996 reported that 38 per cent of Russian women and 67 per cent of Russian men do not identify themselves as religious believers.<sup>61</sup>

Fr Stanley Harakas, an Orthodox priest, believes that 'no believer ought to be silenced in the sharing of religious faith and that conversion to a religious tradition is a legitimate exercise of human self-determination.'<sup>62</sup> According to Fr Harakas

Within Orthodoxy, then, there is a paradoxical tension between two possible approaches. On the one hand is the need to reach out with the truth of Orthodoxy to others, to proclaim the message and to witness to the Orthodox truth. On the other is the sensitivity that not only do others have this same right, but that perhaps in the contemporary scene there is need for a dialogic approach, a mutuality and shared witness that will overcome the internecine conflicts of Christian Churches.<sup>63</sup>

Many Orthodox, particularly those who do not live and work in the West, are far less likely than their Western counterparts to endorse the right of all to share their faith with others, and they are far more nervous about any notion of 'shared witness'.

It is helpful to define proselytism not just as the attempt to convert a believer in one

faith to belief in another, but as a particularly negative and unfair way of doing so. For example, deliberately choosing the least attractive characteristics of one faith and contrasting the resulting negative portrayal with an idealised portrait of another faith is not in keeping with Christian charity or civility. A good working definition of a negative understanding of proselytism is to be found in a 1970 document of the Joint Working Group (of the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches) on Common Witness and Proselytism, according to which proselytism means

improper attitudes and behavior in the practice of Christian witness. Proselytism embraces whatever violates the right of the human person, Christian or non-Christian, to be free from external coercion in religious matters, or whatever, in the proclamation of the gospel, does not conform to the ways God draws free men to himself in response to his calls to serve in spirit and in truth.<sup>64</sup>

In *Ad gentes*, a document of the Second Vatican Council, there is a clear condemnation of negatively-defined 'proselytism'.

... non-Christians may believe and be freely converted to the Lord, and may sincerely cling to Him. ... The Church strictly forbids forcing anyone to embrace the faith, or alluring or enticing people by unworthy techniques. By the same token, she also strongly insists on a person's right not to be deterred from the faith by unjust vexations on the part of others.<sup>65</sup>

As in so many issues, it is critical that all parties be working with the same definition of what is under discussion. This is why all serious debates begin with a definition of terms. Few will defend proselytism which is coercive and unfair, yet many who would never stoop to unfair tactics or coercion may yet be bound by integrity to seek conversions of those already committed to another faith.

The notion of religious freedom is a relatively young idea in the history of the world. It would appear that within the Christian community Roman Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants have only slowly come to tolerate it or appreciate its potential. In the New World the recognition of religious freedom seems to have been as much a matter of pragmatic necessity as a consequence of genuine commitment to the rights of others. Since no one religious group in America's Thirteen Colonies seemed to have the capacity to force its will on the rest, and since many had been victimised in the Old World by a dominant religion, the guideline 'You leave me alone, and I'll leave you alone' made good sense. In time, a more principled justification for such toleration would emerge.

Fundamental to religious freedom is the right to express one's religious beliefs and to seek to persuade others of the truth of those beliefs. International and national law ought to protect this religious freedom, including the right to proselytise. Many, perhaps most, of us within the Christian community would argue that we believe it to be a poor utilisation of our resources and time to focus on converting already committed fellow-Christians from one branch of the Christian Church to another; but we should defend the right of others to proselytise if they feel compelled by conscience to do so. In any case, we must strongly advocate tolerance, fair play and civility in any contact between believers from different religious communions. The Christian world ought to formulate understandings of engagement across Christian community lines to shape our dealings with each other, and these understandings ought to be based on mutual respect, fair play, and a rejection of all forms of coercion. International and national law should allow both free expression of religion

and proselytism, so long as coercion is not involved.

There is a temptation for societies just emerging from the repression of communism to return to the precommunist arrangement of state religions. This temptation should be resisted because it violates full religious freedom, a complete affirmation of human dignity as faithful to the Created Order, and because Christian churches which rely on state favouritism become insipid and weak. Human beings were created by God to be free, to respond without coercion to a quest for religious significance. All people, religious and non-religious alike, have the right to come to their own conclusions, in their own ways, about religious meaning in life.

Marx significantly underestimated the complexity of the human person. The human being is far more than a conglomerate of material needs. He or she longs for something which is beyond this world, something which often appears to be beyond human grasp. Stable societies, healthy societies, are ones which recognise this religious dimension to the human person, and provide freedom for it to breathe and live. Within this larger human drama, the Christian Church has a major role to play in defence of religious freedom, but its success in this endeavour will depend in large part on whether Christians can affirm those basic life-giving truths so that they soar beyond the differences created by time and historical circumstance which so often divide and defeat them.

The life and witness of the Russian Orthodox Church will actually be enhanced in an atmosphere which promotes religious liberty and which recognises and fosters Christian unity and at least tolerance between Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant communities. Why? Because the spiritual principles which undergird freedom and promote Christian unity and tolerance are woven into the Created Order of the Sovereign God of the Universe. Where the principles are acknowledged and embraced, our part in that Created Order is blessed. When the principles are ignored or rejected, our part in the Created Order is frustrated and defeated.

### *That Which Unites*

Is the Christian Church, with all its diverse streams, condemned to enter the twenty-first century hopelessly divided? Are the differences regarding who is the 'true' Church so profound as to obliterate any hope for genuine Christian fellowship, for any joint witness to the world about Jesus Christ? Are our arguments over territory and authority destined always to take precedence over concern for a world lost in sin and alien to the Gospel? Have we become like the Pharisees of Jesus' day who surrounded themselves with the trappings of religion, but lost hold of its essence?

Protestants and Catholics need to understand that Orthodox liturgies are deeply interwoven with Scripture. Indeed, 25 per cent of the liturgies of the Presanctified Gifts, of St Basil the Great and of St John Chrysostom, as well as of the sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation, Holy Unction and Matrimony, are composed of citations from Scripture.<sup>66</sup> But the Orthodox must understand that their faithfulness to Scripture in the liturgies and the ancient creeds of the Church often seems pharisaical to many Christians around the world when the Orthodox hierarchy pursues policies which discriminate against other Christian communions and which undermine the human rights and freedom of conscience of all peoples – religious and non-religious alike.

The cause of Jesus Christ and his Church is seriously compromised when either Evangelical Protestant proclamations of the Gospel or Orthodox claims to be the 'one' true source of 'orthodox' teachings are not infused with the loving spirit of

Jesus Christ. The cause of Jesus Christ and his Church is seriously compromised when we bear witness to the God of love in our missionary message, but not in our missionary spirit. The cause of Jesus Christ and his Church is seriously compromised when we bear witness to Him in our liturgies, but not in our relations with others. Jesus instructs us that we are not to judge a tree by what it is called, but by what fruit it does or does not bear (Matthew 7:16–20). It is the same for churches which claim to represent the Son of God and the most ancient creeds of the Church. Jesus warns us that ‘Not everyone who says to me, “Lord, Lord”, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven’ (Matthew 7:21). Liturgy without love no more resembles God’s truth than a stuffed bird resembles the beauty of a bird in flight. Correct doctrine is never enough.

All our divisions, all our questions, all our confused wanderings in search of and in defence of the truth are located within the area illuminated by the apostle’s words as recorded in John 3:16: ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life’. Despite their divisions and disagreements, the Nicene Creed stands at the centre of Catholic and Orthodox liturgies, is mandated for Holy Communion in the Anglican churches, and is increasingly respected and used by non-liturgical Protestants. Apart from the *filioque* clause, which could be put in parentheses with an asterisk to explain the difference between the Orthodox and non-Orthodox on this point, the Nicene Creed ought to be and is the central focus of agreement between Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Christians. It is a marvellous distillation of basic Christian belief.

I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried, and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father (and the Son), who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one universal and apostolic church; I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.<sup>67</sup>

It is surely noteworthy that in a world which is losing faith in the very notion of truth all Christians can, despite their differences, affirm together such a remarkable set of convictions about the nature of ultimate reality.

At the end of the twentieth century the very notion of ‘truth’ is under siege, at least in much of the Western world among the cultured and educated. There is a deep suspicion among many that even if there is such a thing as ‘objective’ truth, the highly subjective and time-bound human being has no chance of discovering it. We are, it is asserted, hopelessly imprisoned in our particular background, education and environment. At best we can reflect a particular perspective; we cannot really aspire to attain knowledge that transcends our very limited human vantage point. Relativism,

often masked behind the much-praised notion of 'tolerance', reigns supreme. At the end of this millennium, one cannot but be reminded of the words of Jeremiah so very long ago: 'This is the nation that has not obeyed the Lord its God or responded to correction. Truth has perished; it has vanished from their lips' (Jeremiah 7:28). Regarding the character of those who have experienced such a total epistemological and moral collapse, Jeremiah exclaims: 'Each pursues his own course' (Jeremiah 8:6) and 'They have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush' (Jeremiah 8:12). Indeed, this is a contemporary picture of much of the modern Western world. To lose confidence that there is such a thing as truth, or to believe that even if it exists it is beyond the grasp of mortal beings, is literally to 'perish', both in the here and now and in the world beyond time. But John 3:16 flies in the face of such scepticism. It talks of a reality beyond humanity. It talks of love of human beings by a personal God. It talks of the ultimate divine sacrifice made in order to bring eternal life to human beings bound to perish apart from that sacrifice. These are ultimate truths which shatter time and despair but about which the self-proclaimed autonomous world knows nothing. And these are truths which all true Christians, regardless of which Christian community they happen to find themselves in, affirm.

That Christian communions and individuals are so often locked in conflict with each other is not just disappointing, it is a scandalous affront to God and his will for his world. It is to spit into the very face of Jesus Christ.

In perhaps the most beautiful passage ever written describing the meaning of the Incarnation and its relationship to ultimate truths which transcend and liberate, the Apostle John writes at the very beginning of his Gospel:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

These are audacious, all-encompassing truths – but truths which *all* genuine Christians must take seriously. According to John, 'the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us' (John 1:14). It was Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God, who died that we might have life. As his earthly ministry came to an end, just hours before his arrest, trial and execution, Jesus himself expressed unambiguously his will for his followers in the future. Following the Last Supper, just hours before his betrayal, Jesus prayed as follows (John 17:20–23):

My prayer is not for them [i.e. the disciples who were with him]. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

This is a prayer about all of us – all who have come to believe in Jesus. He prays for Christian unity, and he pleads for this unity 'so that the world may believe that you have sent me'. He repeats the reason twice in the passage. Jesus, the Saviour of the World, connects Christian unity with the spread of the Good News. If there is unity, then the world will know that it was God himself who sent Jesus. It is no accident

that the seeds of the ecumenical movement late last century reflected a desire ‘that the world may believe’. But the reality is so very different. Christians are disunited, and sometimes spend more time squabbling among themselves than carrying out the Great Commission. We selfishly quibble over territorial jurisdiction. We have decided that the places wherein we disagree are so significant that our integrity, that our commitment to Christian truth compel us to defend the ‘true’ Church, the ‘true’ beliefs. Jesus told Pilate that he came into the world to testify to the ‘truth’ (John 18:37), to which Pilate retorted with almost late-twentieth-century cynicism: ‘What is truth?’ The divisions within the earthly Christian Church, however, are not over whether there is such a thing as truth, but over whether we can find a way to overcome our differences for the sake of truths which we do, in fact, hold in common.

For the sake of the Gospel, for the sake of the Kingdom, all orthodox catholic Christians (i.e. those who truly affirm the Nicene Creed) should celebrate their unity with fellow Christians with whom they share a common conviction that transcendent, objective truth does exist, that God has revealed to humanity through revelation and his son Jesus Christ truths which unite us all and promise salvation and eternal life to humanity. Pope John Paul II recently noted that Pope John XXIII was fond of saying ‘What separates us as believers in Christ is much less than what unites us.’<sup>68</sup> At the very least, we have no excuse for not supporting and manifesting a genuine Christian tolerance towards each other – one that honours the human dignity invested in each of us by the Father Himself. To be sure, there is still much to disagree about, but what possible excuse do we have for not at least acknowledging this crucial common ground? Jesus himself prayed that we would be One ‘so that the world would know’ that God the Father sent his Son to save us. Our goal is not a Church united in hierarchical structure or in all points of doctrine or practice, but a widespread Christian understanding transcending the diverse Christian communions which recognises that in some profound and real sense, despite our differences, we are all part of Christ’s bride – the Church of Jesus Christ – God’s reconciling agent to the world bringing the promise of salvation, of full and eternal life.

It is the obligation of each Christian to seek that church to worship and serve in which each of us believes best represents Christian truths. Surely that is a given; and yet can we not be humble enough to recognise that all individuals, all churches, have particular strengths and weaknesses, particular gifts and blind spots? In his book *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* Pope John Paul II provides some provocative musings on this possibility: ‘Could it not be that these divisions have also been a path continually leading the Church to discover the untold wealth contained in Christ’s Gospel and in the redemption accomplished by Christ? Perhaps all this wealth would not have come to light otherwise ...’<sup>69</sup> Christians of all communions need to recapture a healthy dose of the humility found in the statement often repeated in church history: ‘Though we know where the Church is, we cannot be sure where the Church is not.’<sup>70</sup> We must exercise our faith fully aware that the grace of God is far-reaching indeed, extending to believers in Christian communions other than our own. Father Meyendorff is correct to insist that real Christian unity cannot be simply a product of human initiative. He asserts that ‘religious seriousness in the ecumenical dialogue’ implies ‘that one understands unity of Christians, not as a man-made, organizational unity only but, first of all, as a unity in Christ, in His Truth, in His Spirit.’<sup>71</sup> As Christians seek to be faithful to the basic theological truths which unite them with brothers and sisters in Christ across Christian communion lines, they would do well to use as a motto the ancient Christian admonition ‘In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity’.

## Notes and References

- <sup>1</sup> Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky) (North Point Press, San Francisco, 1990), p. 254.
- <sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 252.
- <sup>3</sup> *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948. Text from the United Nations Server, [gopher://gopher.undp.org:70/00/unearth/rights](http://gopher://gopher.undp.org:70/00/unearth/rights) (28 March 1997).
- <sup>4</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>5</sup> For example, Article 18 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1996) affirms in almost identical language the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Article VII of the *Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe* (approved in Helsinki in 1975) includes the following: 'The participating states will respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.' Article I of the *Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief* (adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1981) contains similar guarantees of religious freedom to the documents already mentioned. For these texts and other international law provisions regarding religious freedom, see Kent R. Hill, *The Soviet Union on the Brink* (Multnomah, Portland, 1991), pp. 487–98. For the full text of the 1990 Russian Law on Freedom of Conscience, see pp. 475–85.
- <sup>6</sup> See Natan Lerner, 'Religious human rights under the United Nations', in Johan D. van der Vyver and John Witte, Jr. (eds), *Religious Human Rights in Global Perspective: Legal Perspectives* (Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1996), p. 83.
- <sup>7</sup> Sergei Bulgakov, *Karl Marx as a Religious Type* (Nordland, Belmont, MA, 1979), pp. 110, 62.
- <sup>8</sup> Quoted in Kent R. Hill, *The Soviet Union on the Brink*, p. 58.
- <sup>9</sup> Alexander Solzhenistyn, 'Letter to Soviet Leaders', *East and West* (Harper and Row, New York, 1980), p. 123.
- <sup>10</sup> Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Origin of Russian Communism* (University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1960), p. 158.
- <sup>11</sup> Quoted in George Weigel, 'Religious freedom: the first human right', *This World*, no. 21 (Spring 1988), p. 34.
- <sup>12</sup> Biblical citations are from the New International Version.
- <sup>13</sup> Quoted in Robert S. Bilheimer, *Breakthrough: The Emergence of the Ecumenical Tradition* (William Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1989), p. 27.
- <sup>14</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America* (Harper and Row, New York, 1959), quoted in Bilheimer, *Breakthrough* ..., p. 27.
- <sup>15</sup> Pedro Ramet, *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twentieth Century* (Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 1988), p. 7.
- <sup>16</sup> Quoted in Elisabeth Rubinfien, 'Russian Orthodox Church becomes stronger, more controversial voice', *The Wall Street Journal*, 20 January 1992.
- <sup>17</sup> Larry Uzzell, 'From our Moscow correspondent', *Frontier* (Keston Institute), no. 1, 1997, p. 6. See also 'Stifling the unorthodox', *Moscow Times*, 26 November 1996.
- <sup>18</sup> Uzzell, *op. cit.*, pp. 5–7.
- <sup>19</sup> Information on the 1997 legislation is based on the excellent press coverage by Larry Uzzell of Keston Institute.
- <sup>20</sup> 29 August 1997, ITAR-TASS, 'Pravoslaviye v Rossii'.
- <sup>21</sup> Quoted in Jane Ellis in *The Moscow Patriarchate's Attitude to Protestant Missionaries*, a paper presented at the second Keston Institute conference on Proselytism and Religious Liberty, Oxford, 12–16 May 1997, p. 6.
- <sup>22</sup> For an evangelical Protestant perspective on the differences between Orthodoxy and Protestantism, see Daniel B. Clendenin, 'Why I'm not Orthodox', *Christianity Today*, 6 January 1997, pp. 33–38. The 3 March 1997 issue of *Christianity Today*, pp. 8–9, contains some restrained and useful Orthodox comments on Clendenin's perspective. Also see



- Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective* (Baker, Grand Rapids, 1994).
- <sup>23</sup> Cited in Clendenin, 'Why I'm not Orthodox', p. 35.
- <sup>24</sup> Calvin's words are repeated twice in the early pages of Book IV of *Institutes*. Quoted by Clendenin, 'Why I'm not Orthodox', p. 38.
- <sup>25</sup> The best collection of Florovsky's work on ecumenism is *Ecumenism I: A Doctrinal Approach and Ecumenism II: A Historical Approach*, which are volumes 13 and 14, (1989), of *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky* (Nordland, Belmont, MA; Bücher-vertriebsanstalt, Liechtenstein, distributor).
- <sup>26</sup> On Russian ecumenism from the sixteenth century through the nineteenth century, see Florovsky, *Ecumenism II* ..., pp. 59–168. Peter Mogila is specifically discussed on pp. 59–62 and 78–87.
- <sup>27</sup> Florovsky, *Ecumenism II* ..., p. 110.
- <sup>28</sup> For a more detailed discussion of Russian Bible Societies from the early nineteenth century into the 1990s, see Hill, *The Soviet Union on the Brink*, pp. 282–86.
- <sup>29</sup> Florovsky, *Ecumenism II* ..., p. 111.
- <sup>30</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>31</sup> Quoted in Georges Florovsky, *Ways of Russian Theology, Part Two*, vol. 5, (1979), of *The Collected Works of George Florovsky*, p. 198.
- <sup>32</sup> Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (Augsburg Press, Minneapolis, 1972), p. 269. For a further description of discrimination and persecution of Protestants by the Orthodox at the end of the nineteenth century, see Walter Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals Since World War II* (Herald Press, Scottsdale, PA, 1981), p. 35, and *passim*.
- <sup>33</sup> Information on Filaret is taken from Florovsky, *Ecumenism II* ..., pp. 112–17.
- <sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, p. 114.
- <sup>35</sup> Quoted in Florovsky, *Ecumenism II* ..., p. 113.
- <sup>36</sup> John Henry Newman, 'Submission to church authority', in *Parochial and Plain Sermons* (Rivingtons, London, 1868), vol. 3, pp. 191–92.
- <sup>37</sup> Eric G. Jay, *The Church: Its Changing Image Through Twenty Centuries* (John Knox Press, Atlanta, 1980), pp. 295–98. Jay's work is an excellent source for considering ecclesiology in its historical context.
- <sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, p. 299.
- <sup>39</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Liguori Publications, Liguori, MO, 1994), section 817, p. 216.
- <sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, section 818, p. 216.
- <sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, section 819, p. 216.
- <sup>42</sup> John Meyendorff, *Witness to the World* (St Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York, 1987), p. 13.
- <sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, p. 14.
- <sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 42–43.
- <sup>45</sup> Alexey Stepanovich Khomiakov, *The Church is One* (The Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, London, 1968), p. 18.
- <sup>46</sup> Cited by Archbishop Iakovos, 'The contribution of the Orthodox to the ecumenical movement', *Ecumenical Review*, vol. 11, 1959, pp. 396ff. Quoted in Bilheimer, *Breakthrough* ..., pp. 54–55.
- <sup>47</sup> For a fascinating and perceptive first-hand account of the WCC between 1948 to 1963, see Bilheimer, *Breakthrough* ... It should be remembered that the Russian Orthodox Church was not allowed by the Kremlin to join the WCC until 1961.
- <sup>48</sup> For excellent discussion of the Toronto Declaration and bibliographical information on it, see Morris West, 'Toronto Statement', in Nicholas Lossky *et al.* (eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* (WCC, Geneva, 1991), pp. 1008–10. See also Bilheimer, *Breakthrough* ..., pp. 47–58.
- <sup>49</sup> West, 'Toronto Statement', p. 1009.
- <sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 1008–9.

- <sup>51</sup> See J. A. Emerson Vermaat, *The World Council of Churches and Politics: 1975–1986* (Freedom House, New York, 1989); Michael Bourdeaux, 'The Russian Church, religious liberty and the World Council of Churches', *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 13, no. 1, Spring 1985, pp. 4–27, and Hill, *The Soviet Union on the Brink*, pp. 135–65.
- <sup>52</sup> 'Russian Orthodox stay in WCC for now', *Christian Century*, 16 April 1997, pp. 385–86. See also Andrei Zolotov's 31 January 1997 interview with Metropolitan Vladimir, 'The risks of isolation: a Russian church leader reflects', *ENI Bulletin*, no. 3, 10 February 1997, pp. 16–18.
- <sup>53</sup> George P. Liacopulos, *Come and See*, a paper delivered at a conference of the Society for the Study of Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism, 28 September 1991, Wheaton, IL, p. 11.
- <sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, p. 5.
- <sup>55</sup> Florovsky, *Ecumenism I* ..., p. 134.
- <sup>56</sup> Quoted in Liacopulos, *op. cit.*, p. 9. The citation is from Nikos A. Nissiotis, 'The witness and the service of Eastern Orthodoxy to the One Undivided Church', in Constantin G. Patelos (ed.), *The Orthodox Church in the Ecumenical Movement* (World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1978), p. 239.
- <sup>57</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>58</sup> 'Evangelicals and Catholics together', *First Things*, no. 43, May 1994, pp. 15–22. See also a collection of essays on the document, as well as the document itself, in Chuck Colson and Richard Neuhaus (eds), *Evangelicals and Catholics Together* (Word, Waco, 1996).
- <sup>59</sup> Stanley Samuel Harakas, *Proselytism* (an unpublished MS which is a slightly revised version of a presentation made at the Orthodox–United States Roman Catholic Dialogue session of 29–31 October 1992).
- <sup>60</sup> 'Russia: a nation of Orthodoxy or atheism?', *The Right to Believe* (Keston Institute), October–December 1996, p. 1.
- <sup>61</sup> Reported in Mark Elliott and Sharyl Corrado, *The Protestant Missionary Presence in the Former Soviet Union*, in this issue of *RSS*, pp. 333–51. Elliott's source is Susan Goodrich Lehmann, *Religious Revival in Russia: Significant or Superficial?*, a paper presented at the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, Washington DC, 21 October 1996, Fig. 6.
- <sup>62</sup> Harakas, *Proselytism*, p. 5.
- <sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, p. 11.
- <sup>64</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 25.
- <sup>65</sup> Walter M. Abbot, S. J. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II* (Herder and Herder/Association Press, New York, 1966), p. 600. Quoted in Harakas, *op. cit.*, p. 12. Harakas also notes that similar statements can be found in the papal encyclical *Dignitatis humanae personae*, Abbot, *op. cit.*, pp. 674–96.
- <sup>66</sup> See Demitrios J. Constantelos, 'Holy Scriptures in Greek Orthodox worship (a comparative and statistical study)', *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 7–83. Also see Constanine Nasr, *Bible in the Liturgy* (N.P.C., Oklahoma City, 1988), which lists the prayers of the liturgy side by side with the complete scriptural verses for each. I am grateful to Rev. Stanley Harakas for providing portions of this information on Scripture usage in the liturgies.
- <sup>67</sup> *Sing to the Lord (Hymnal)* (Lillenas Publishing Co., Kansas City, MO, 1993), selection 14. Parentheses around 'and the Son' added by author.
- <sup>68</sup> John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1994), p. 146.
- <sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, p. 153.
- <sup>70</sup> Father Sergei Hackel has ascribed a similar remark to Metropolitan Sergi of Moscow and Kolomna (probably in a prewar issue of the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*). During the Second World War Sergi became patriarch. Hackel believes that Sergi may have been quoting the nineteenth-century metropolitan of Moscow St Filaret (Drozdov). Letter from Hackel to the author, 25 May 1997. For Hackel's version of the quotation cited, see *Our Orthodox Presence in Great Britain: A Conference of the Diocese of Sourozh* (Headington, London, 1996), p. 34. Rev. Stanley Harakas believes the quotation is so common in

Orthodox circles that it does not even need to be attributed, though he believes a form of this may be found in the Church Fathers. Phone conversation, 9 September 1997.

<sup>71</sup> Meyendorff, *Witness to the World*, p. 20.