Baptistic Theologies

Publication – Spring and Autumn each year

Editorial Office

International Baptist Theological Seminary
Nad Habrovkou 3, Jenerálka, Praha 6, CZ 164 00

ISSN 1803 – 618X

Publisher

Mezinárodní baptistický teologický seminář
Evropské baptistické federace, o.p.s.
Nad Habrovkou 3, 164 00 Praha 6, Česká Republika

In the winter of 2010 and spring of 2011, IBTS is offering these lectures for continuing professional development or theological refreshment:

'Baptist origins and development in continental Europe' (31 January – 5 February 2011)

Delivered by Dr Ian M Randall, author of the classic work on this subject, the course explores the different beginnings of Baptist life in continental Europe from the Anabaptists, J G Oncken and other important streams. It gives ample opportunity for participants to explore the beginnings of Baptist life in their own geographical contexts.

Youth Ministry and Faith Development (31 January – 11 February 2011)

Led by Dr Jeff Carter, EBF Youth Consultant, this course is being offered as part of the MTh in Applied Theology programme and can be taken as partial requirement towards an M-level degree, a Postgraduate Certificate in Youth Ministry, or as an audit. Participants will reflect on various circumstances of working with young people and will look at a variety of appropriate contextual and missiological approaches to youth ministry. They will also investigate the dynamics and challenges of relationships between the traditional ecclesial structures and contemporary youth with respect to generational differences.

Homiletics and Communication (March – April 2011)

What is the role of preaching in the lives of our churches? Led by Dr Keith G Jones and Lina Andronovienė, these weekly seminars explore how scriptural and theological resources can be used in shaping homiletical practice, and how effective communication relates to the particular cultural climate. This course can be part of your sabbatical stay at IBTS.

Though some of the participants will be doing these weeks as part of their degree at IBTS, the courses are open to anyone who would like to attend. However, places are limited.

To apply or find out more, please write to Registrar@ibts.eu

Baptistic Theologies
Volume 2, No. 2
Autumn 2010

Contents

Editorial

The second issue of volume 2 of *Baptistic Theologies* continues in the spirit of the discourse initiated by the previous issue on the challenges and opportunities of Christian witness in a predominantly culturally-Orthodox context. The conversation was initiated by discussions at an international conference hosted jointly by the Orthodox Faculty of the St Kliment of Ohrid State University, Sofia, Bulgaria, and the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague, Czech Republic, on the theme of "Christian Witness in the Orthodox context" (8-12 February, 2009). The participants in the conference and the contributors to the publications in the journal explored, among others topics of shared language, metaphors and the spiritual roots of embodied Christian theologies; Christian social ministries; Orthodox missional identities and the long lasting effect of the millet system on the understanding of the contemporary Orthodox mission in the territories of the former Ottoman Empire. Three key themes were considered critical to the unity of Christian witness in this context: the notions of canonical territories, religious freedom and issues of proselytism as viewed by the sisterhood of Orthodox churches and by the minority Christian communities. Contributions to the two issues of the second volume of *Baptistic Theologies* were solicited primarily but not exclusively from among the participants in the conference. The emphasis of this second issue of the volume is on the significance of the notion of canonic territories for Christian mission work.

We begin the articles in this issue with a rather lengthy investigation of Orthodox – especially Russian Orthodox – mission thinking by Dr Valentin Kozhuharov, one of the leading writers in this area today. This essay was commissioned by the editors with a particular task for Kozhuharov to examine the centrality of education and liturgical life in the Russian Orthodox Church, as it faces up to the challenges of the past twenty years of revitalising its missionary practices. In his careful reading of Russian Orthodox mission, based on his own experience and knowledge gained from working in mission for the church, he provides a solid grounding for future theological reflection on the task of mission in the Orthodox churches.

However, the phenomenon of Christian witness in Russia is clearly not one without a past. Our articles in this issue thus move between present and past, in a reflection on current Orthodox and Baptist and more generally Evangelical practices, focusing particularly on their roots and significance. So, in our second article, Timofei Cheprasov, offers a new perspective on some of the political and religious factors influencing the emergence of the Baptist movement in Russia.

Dr Darrell Jackson's article considers the current situation, addressing especially the often vexed issue of the notion of canonical territory, and showing both its roots and the dangers that can be associated with too unnuanced a use of this contested idea. Nevertheless, despite the differences which there undoubtedly are between Russian Orthodox and Russian Baptists, which the idea of canonical territory is often used to exacerbate, Constantin Prokhorov argues that these two Christian communions, owing to their common Orthodox heritage, have much in common than either might wish to admit.

Dumitru Sevastian draws on the life and work of Fyodor Dostoevsky to illustrate how this celebrated author's (Orthodox) Christian faith was lived out, both in what he wrote and in how he acted. Radoslav Spassov offers a sketch of contextual Orthodox witness by offering a brief introduction to a great eighteenth century Orthodox missioner, St Kosmas Aitolos, someone who recognised the need to revitalise the faith of the people of his time.

Our final article addresses the main theme from a rather different perspective. Taking on the pertinent topic of the significance of the embodiment of witness in social practices, the closing article investigates the different approaches to social work between Roman Catholics and Orthodox and seeks to account for these discrepancies.

Doc. Dr Parush Parushev and Dr Tim Noble

Christian Mission as Teaching and Liturgical Life: An Orthodox Perspective

Valentin Kozhuharov

Introduction

Christian mission has always been seen from the perspective of the Great Commission: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you'(Mat 28:19-20). The Lord also gave the commandment this way: 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation' (Mk 16:15). Thus, mission has always been connected with the notion of 'sending'. 'Sending out' means sending to non-Christian lands, to peoples who have never heard the Good News and who need to be enlightened in the truths of the Scriptures and be baptised and become members of the Lord's church – the community of Christian believers.

Teaching has been seen as an important task of the church in her missionary endeavours, too. Because 'making disciples' requires teaching, not only baptising. The focus on teaching is also reflected in various translations of these famous verses, such as King James' where the text says 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations…', or the Slavic translations (Russian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Church Slavonic, etc.) where again the text insists on teaching.

The missionary endeavour of the church over the centuries has shown that baptising and proclaiming the gospel were the most important tasks the missionaries struggled to fulfill while 'going out' to other peoples. Proclaiming the gospel was, in fact, teaching but often it was confined to only telling stories as found in the Old and the New Testaments. The internalisation of the meaning of the texts and of the message of the Good News usually took place through the individuals' participation in the services and the life of the parish. True Christian teaching, as understood by today's criteria – instruction in the dogmatic and doctrinal foundation of the faith – would rarely occur in the course of missionary 'expansion', and even if it did, this would be done only after the new converts had reached a higher stage in their spiritual development. The main task of the missionaries of the past was preaching, baptising and establishing churches (ecclesiastical communities, or church planting, to use modern terms).

The Orthodox Christian church in the past also used the same 'method of mission'. Yet, in her mission the church was very much

concerned with proper and correct teaching of the truths of the faith interwoven with the ministries of preaching and baptising (and church planting). The reason for this focus on teaching (alongside other important 'focuses') was found in the fact that Orthodox missions have always been theologically grounded. This affirmation may seem overstated but we need to understand what theology in Orthodox terms is and then we can go deeper into the issue of the theological foundation of mission as seen from the perspective of Eastern Orthodox churches.[1] As Orthodox, we maintain this specific content of theology that has always been interwoven with the liturgical life of the faithful in their struggle for salvation. 'Christian theology is always in the last resort a means: a unity of knowledge sub-serving an end which transcends all knowledge. This ultimate end is union with God or deification, the *theosis* of the Greek Fathers'.[2] For Orthodox believers, theology is not something abstract or unreachable: it is found in the believers' everyday life in the church, and especially in their participation in liturgical life. This makes the affirmation that 'theology is something in which all believers can and must participate'[3] true and evident in the lives of the Orthodox as they 'are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory' (2Cor 3:18).

Before we go deeper into the issue of teaching and liturgical experience as the mission of the Orthodox church, we need to find practical examples of mission that would reflect these theological considerations if we are to remain true to the principle of combining theory and practice. In this essay, it is not possible for us to bring evidence from many Orthodox churches or even from several of them. We believe that examples taken from one Orthodox missionary practice apply to the practice of mission of any Orthodox church just because they all are founded on and recognize the same faith tradition, dogmas, doctrine and practice. Good examples could be taken from the Orthodox Church in America, from the Greek Orthodox Church, and from many other Orthodox churches. We chose to focus on the missionary activity of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) because it has shown in the last fifteen years an amazing movement of mission which has made a big difference in its recent history and that of other Orthodox churches. Let us briefly present the main aspects of missionary activity of the ROC between 1994 and 2009 and then use the evidence to ground the theology of mission as teaching and as liturgical life.

---

[1] For the meaning of 'Eastern Orthodox Church' see James Stamoolis, *Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986), p. 131.

[2] Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Cambridge, UK: James Clarke & Co., 1968), p. 9; italics in the original.

[3] Stamoolis, p. 10.

I. Contemporary missionary activity of the Orthodox Church

1. Orthodox churches in Eastern Europe and mission

The involvement in and the capability of mission on the part of Orthodox churches has been (and still is) a debatable point. No matter which of the two assertions one may defend – the Orthodox do mission, or the Orthodox are not interested in mission – it is true that when Orthodox believers are told to 'do mission', this would mean nothing (or little) to them. 'Do mission' would only be grasped as 'doing/fulfilling ecclesiastical tasks', or at large – as witnessing to Christ in the world. It is the church community (the ecclesiastical body) that tells Orthodox Christians what tasks they must fulfil in order to acquire their own salvation and to help others come to salvation. This means that mission has never been well developed in the Orthodox Church and that Orthodoxy has never been interested in mission as it was developed in the West. In her witnessing to Christ, the church in the East has always paid special attention to the salvific role of the church in her unity with the source of salvation – the Lord Jesus.[4]

Thus the Orthodox church developed the so-called 'internal' mission, which in actual fact meant building the ecclesiastical body and strengthening each believer in the strict observation of ecclesiastical discipline (humbleness, prayer, worship, fasting, strictly keeping the teaching of the church, deeds of mercy, etc.) which would lead believers on the path of salvation. It is only a recent trend that Orthodox churches in some countries have started social and missionary activity as part of this social emphasis. Affirming that the decades of communism (and the five centuries of the Ottoman yoke in some Orthodox countries) prevented the churches in the East from fulfilling their social tasks seems untrue because even in times of freedom and relative concordance between state and church they nevertheless neither paid much attention to social issues nor to missions.

[4] There is the opinion among Orthodox theologians that the Orthodox church did mission in the past and we acknowledge, too, that missionary efforts have been undertaken by Orthodox Christian missionaries since the early centuries of the Christian era until now (compare Stamoolis, pp. 1 and 19, where he broadly considers all the pros and cons of the issue of the existence of Orthodox mission), but we also need to understand that the Orthodox would usually 'do mission' within their own boundaries of Orthodox presence (either national or other local). The examples which are usually given (those of Sts Cyril and Methodius, the Russian missions of the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, the missions to Japan, China, Korea, etc.) represent dual missionary endeavours undertaken by the church and the emperor, the so-called caesaro-papist approach to mission. A true Orthodox mission has only been the 'internal mission' of the church which has always been known as witnessing to the Truth, but not as mission. Today, although we could give examples of church planting by Orthodox churches in various countries on all continents, this internal witnessing continues to be the main concern of the Orthodox churches and their missionaries.

The changes of 1989 made it possible for the Orthodox churches in Eastern Europe to see a period of revival and growth. The first few years saw the churches struggling in many ways. They were making claims for their property to be given back by the state in order to restore themselves as well as to build new church buildings, monasteries and other ecclesiastical facilities. After this initial 'revival', the churches started restoring their teaching activity and social ministry. The ministry of worship and divine services started earlier, immediately after the changes took place, though there was an enormous deficit of priests, as a consequence of the communist regimes' attempts to completely destroy the church and to eradicate any faith and religion in the people. In almost all so-called 'Orthodox' countries in Eastern Europe (to mention some of them: Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldavia, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Georgia, etc.) the churches were filled with people and as a whole grew rapidly. Then in the next several years the enthusiasm diminished. In the church there remained mostly believers who had been strengthened in their faith and their Christian life. Property, to a large extent, was given back to the churches and this allowed them to undertake more in the way of social issues, especially as the churches gathered power and resources.

But it was not until the end of the twentieth century that the churches in this part of Europe could focus more seriously on social concerns. The Russian Orthodox Church was the first that appropriately and widely undertook social ministry. The other Eastern European Orthodox churches only proclaimed social activity as a priority of their ministry in a few lines in documents and in respective Holy Synod decisions but they could not adopt regular, well-grounded and efficient ways of social activity (though today good examples can be given from Ukraine, Romania, Serbia and Bulgaria). The period between 1990 and 2000 gave the ROC enough strength and power to allow her to undertake wide-spread social activity, the foundation of which was formulated in the 'Basics of the social concept of the Russian Orthodox church', adopted at the Holy Archbishop's Council in August 2000 and put into practice immediately after that.[5] Apart from the common Christian social tasks and responsibilities, the document also defined what social activity in connection with the mission of the church could be undertaken and what the ROC was expected to fulfil in Russian society in order to bring it back to Christianity. In fact, some of the

[5] 'Osnovy sotsialnoi kontseptsii Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi' [Basics of the social concept of the Russian Orthodox Church], in *Informatsionnyi bulletin Otdela Vneshnih Tserkovnyh Sviazei Moskovskoi Patriarchii* [Information Bulletin of the Department of External Ecclesiastical Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, Moscow], 8:2000, pp. 3-121. An English version of the document can be found at the official website of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church at http://www.mospat.ru/index.php?mid=90, last accessed in June 2009.

definitions in this 2000 document came from earlier documents on mission that were developed within the ROC, as will be shown below.

2. Mission restored and missionary documents adopted

To a Western Christian mind, it may sound strange to affirm that a new missionary movement of the modern type could appear within Orthodoxy but this is what happened in the mid-1990s when the Russian Orthodox Church undertook vast missionary activities on its territory. It is often circumstances and personalities that define specific historical developments, and the history of Russia especially abounds with examples of people and social conditions that have resolutely changed the direction of historical development. Changes of direction or development can also be ascribed to chance or coincidence. But Orthodox Christians within the ROC are convinced that what happened in the early 1990s and up until 2005 was within God's plan for the ROC and her ministry in the twenty-first century.

Here briefly is the 'story', in connection with the missionary movement of the ROC toward new expressions of witnessing to Christ in the new millennium. The 'circumstances' gave the church the possibility to regain strength and influence over people in the country after ROC property was returned and the church accumulated sufficient resources to allow her to make her voice heard within the Russian Federation. The 'person in history' who was destined to initiate a vast missionary activity on the territory of the federation (and beyond it, to some extent) was Bishop Ioann of Belgorod (or John of Belgorod, as Western readers would better recognise the name). In 1993 he was elevated to the dignity of Bishop of Belgorod. In early 1995 he was appointed head of a research missionary group (the so-called Missionary Planning Committee) that was seeking ways to revive the missionary activity of the ROC. The same year he became Bishop of the new Orthodox diocese of Belgorod and Stary Oskol. Because he fully understood the importance of resourcing missions, Bishop Ioann established a charitable missionary foundation. Again, in 1995 the Missionary Department of the ROC was established and Bishop Ioann was chosen to become its head. According to an Archbishop's Statement of December 1994, with the title 'Orthodox mission in the modern world'[6], and in compliance with the research and the definitions of the Missionary Planning Committee, he and his team developed and

[6] The Statement can be found in Protoirei Vladimir Fedorov, ed., *Pravoslavnaia missia segodnia* [Contemporary Orthodox mission] (Apostolskii gorod, Sankt-Peterburg, Russia: Pravoslavniy Issledovatel'skiy Institut Missiologii, 1999), pp. 7-10.

adopted in late 1995 the ROC's first missionary document: 'Concept on the revival of the missionary activity of the Russian Orthodox Church'.[7]

The Missionary Department and the new missionary concept enabled the Russian Orthodox Church to initiate a new stage in missionary practice and missionary theology. We should note that the ROC first started practically with missions (having in mind the rich heritage of the Irkutsk missions and missionary activity before 1995) and only then tried to formulate theologically what Orthodox mission was. Bishop Ioann himself was born in Irkutsk and was well educated and trained in the missionary tradition of Innocent Veniaminov (also named Ioann) and the missionaries who came after him. Now it appeared that the theology lying behind practical mission fully corresponded with the teaching of the Holy Fathers and modern Orthodox theological research on Orthodox missions. This means that the ROC's missionary activity confirmed again the true understanding of mission as interpreted and practiced in the Orthodox church for centuries, though it had never been called 'mission' but 'ecclesiastical discipline' and 'ecclesiastical tasks', and simply witnessing.

Earlier research on the missionary activity of the Russian Orthodox Church[8] showed that three important documents appeared to give a theological definition of missionary practice that had already occurred: the Concept of 1995, the Report of 2004 and the Concept of 2005.[9] The last of the three documents summarised the experience the ROC had acquired during the ten-year period of intensive missionary activity between 1995 and 2005 and formulated the ROC vision of her mission for the period 2005-2010. The document appeared in April 2005 and was immediately spread to dioceses and churches to urge them to follow its definitions and at the same time to get feedback from church leaders so that the document could be improved and put in concordance with all previous ROC documents and decisions, first of all with the 'Basics of the social concept of the Russian Orthodox church'.

---

[7] Fedorov, pp. 11-16.

[8] Valentin Kozhuharov, *Toward an Orthodox Christian Theology of Mission: An Interpretive Approach* (Tarnovo, Bulgaria: Vesta Publishing House, 2006).

[9] a) 'Kontseptsia vozrozhdeniia missionerskoi deiatel'nosti Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi" [Concept on the revival of the missionary activity of the Russian Orthodox Church], Moscow Patriarchate, Moscow, 6 October 1995; also in Fedorov, *Pravoslavnaia missiia segodnia*.

b) 'Doklad Vysokopreosviashtennogo Ioanna, archiepiskopa Belgorodskogo i Starooskol'skogo, predsedatelia Missionerskogo Otdela Moskovskogo Patriarchata na Archiereiskom Sobore Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi, 3-8 oktiabria 2004" [Report of His Eminence Ioann, Archbishop of Belgorod and Stary Oskol diocese, Head of the Missionary Department of the Moscow Patriarchate, at the Archbishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, Moscow Patriarchate, 3 - 8 October 2004].

c) 'Kontseptsiia missionerskoi deiatel'nosti Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi na 2005-2010 gody' [Concept on the missionary activity of the Russian Orthodox Church for 2005 to 2010], Moscow Patriarchate, 2005. None of the above documents have been translated into English and the quotations and excerpts are given according to the Russian texts as translated by the author of this essay.

For about two years church leaders in dioceses and parishes considered and discussed the document. In April 2007 the final edition of Concept 2005 appeared and was immediately sent to the dioceses for practical implementation. Not that missionary activity had stopped or was not being carried out full-time, but the document now required that its theological considerations be put into practice in each of the dioceses and parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church. The ten-year period of ROC mission between 1995 and 2005 showed that missionary activity was carried out mainly by clergy and seminary students from the Belgorod region. It is true that the missionary activity embraced vast territories in Siberia and the Russian Far East, not only the 'European' ROC dioceses. Nevertheless, only a small number of missionaries and church leaders were involved in mission as defined by the Missionary Department of the ROC. This department undertook a broad discussion process where Concept 2005 was considered and hotly discussed in many diocesan centres and parishes. Between April 2005 and the end of 2008, more than thirty presentations and discussions of Concept 2005 were carried out. This activity aimed not only at getting feedback but also at inspiring believers to 'go and make disciples'.

What is the meaning of 'going and making disciples' as understood by Concept 2005 and by the Russian Orthodox Church in her missionary activity and as a whole? It is exactly as expressed in the gospel and nothing more. It is the meaning of mission which Christianity has been carrying out for centuries. It is truly the meaning of 'forming and strengthening God's people'. Nevertheless, the specific circumstances of a local church, or a country, or a territory which 'sends out' missionaries, always attributes a specific meaning to the understanding of the Great Commission. This is the case of the 'Russian' mission: it reflects a specific Russian Orthodox approach to mission and to proclaiming the gospel, though we find all-Orthodox missionary elements and characteristics in the ROC mission.

3. Another missionary concept

The period between 1995 and 2005 saw vast missionary activity which naturally ended with the appearance of another missionary document to summarise the experience gained during ten years and to point out the new challenges the Orthodox Church faces in this millennium. The new Concept of Mission that appeared in April 2005[10] (which defined the main

[10] It should be noted that this concept was not published and only remained as an internal document of the Department for External Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church. It appeared on some websites between 2005 and mid-2008 when it was withdrawn and replaced by the new version of April 2007. This fact does not allow direct and precise quoting from it, but as almost all of its statements were restated in the new document of April 2007, and because the author of this essay had

goals of mission up to 2010) points to three main areas of consideration when forming the theology of mission today: the goals and tasks of mission, the forms and methods of mission and the main directions of missionary service.

a) Goals and tasks of mission.

Concept 2005 starts with a preamble that defines the ground of mission: 'the mission of the Orthodox church aims at the salvation of every human being'. This foundation requires that 'missionaries deeply realise that their activity is of great importance for the church and humanity' and that 'every Orthodox believer is responsible before God, the church, and his/her conscience as to proclaiming the Good News to every nation'. The conclusion to this affirmation is obvious: 'all the faithful children of the Orthodox church should take the path of Orthodox Christian witnessing'. In this way the preamble does not define what mission is but clearly says how mission is understood from an Orthodox point of view.

The first part of the document ('Goals and Tasks of Modern Mission'), clearly defines what mission is: 'it is the fulfilment of the Great Commission of Christ: "go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mk. 16:15)'. Preaching the gospel leads to the ultimate goal of mission, '*theosis* of the whole of creation', as stated in the document. *Theosis*, or divinisation, in the Orthodox understanding means the path to salvation and the spiritual struggle aimed at achieving salvation. It does not simply mean divinisation in itself (which is not possible for humans in this life). The ultimate goal of mission is closely connected with the purpose of mission.

'In the Orthodox understanding, the purpose of mission can be rightly grasped only if we consider the three important theological principles of being a Christian: soteriological, ecclesiastical and eschatological'.[11] Outside of these notions, no right understanding of Christian mission from an Orthodox perspective could be reached. Without understanding what the soteriological principle means in the lives of believers, no possible idea could ever explain the ardent wish for salvation of ordinary faithful Orthodox Christians in the churches. 'Without understanding the ecclesiastical structure of the Church – its hierarchical, sacramental and liturgical constitution'[12] – no proper comprehension of the

close contact with the missionary department of the ROC and used many of their resources, references to Concept 2005 will be made and the readers can only rely on the author's scholarly experience with the missionary documents of ROC. Relevant references may also be found in the new Concept 2007 version which repeats almost entirely the statements of Concept 2005.

[11] Anastasios Yannoulatos, 'The purpose and motive of mission from an Orthodox theological point of view', *Porefthendes*, 9 (1967), p. 2.

[12] Alexander Schmemann, 'The Missionary Imperative in the Orthodox Tradition', in Gerald H. Anderson, ed., *The Theology of the Christian Mission* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), p. 252.

sacrificial ministry and faithful life of believers in the local churches and within the apostolic succession (ecclesiastical hierarchy) could be achieved. Without understanding the eschatological purpose of believers' lives and of the Church as a whole, no sound understanding of the mission of Christ and the mission of the Church could be reached, because the mission of the Church is 'to announce the *eschaton* – salvation in Jesus Christ'.[13]

However, this ultimate goal should be more specifically defined by pointing out the immediate goals of mission, and one of them is 'building up Eucharistic communities by the example of the one founded by Jesus Christ'. This goal can be achieved by fulfilling specific tasks of mission, and in the document seven important tasks are set forth to clearly define how the goals of mission could be achieved.

b) Forms and approaches to mission.

There are four main forms of mission: informational and apologetic mission, the mission of church upbringing (*votserkovlenie* or 'in-church bringing')[14] and external mission. Without going into much detail, we need only mention that the direction of missionary activity starts with information and through apologetic witnessing brings people to Christ through catechisation and ecclesiastical discipline. Then the believers, being firmly rooted in Orthodox faith and practice, can 'go and make disciples' in the external mission of the church.

We should note that each of the four 'forms of mission' puts special focus on education and church teaching (catechisation). It is well understood that no healthy Orthodox parish can exist without proper and correct catechisation of its members. This shows that church members, although actively involved in the life of the parish, still need catechisation and spiritual strengthening. Not to mention the unchurched (as they are called by the faithful Orthodox and by the Orthodox hierarchy) Christians, who are only nominally church members. The fact of being a 'nominal Christian' makes the apologetic mission (as well as the in-church bringing mission) crucial to the missionary task of expanding the church and reducing the influence of the other non-Orthodox religious movements within Russia.

[13] Schmemann, p. 254.

[14] The Slavonic term '*votserkovlenie*' may be literally explained as 'bringing people to church by educating them and making them live in accordance with this education'. As the term is understood by Orthodox theologians and as it is used in Orthodox Church practice, *votserkovlenie* refers, first of all, to those who have not yet been baptised, and then to those who have been baptised but are still nominal Christians.

c) Main directions of missionary service.

Defining the main directions of mission gives the understanding of mission as interpreted by the Russian Orthodox Church in her specific circumstances. Ten main directions are defined in Concept 2005:

-Missionary service of the laity	-Mobile mission
-Missionary commissioning	-Establishing missionary camps and stations
-Missionary parish	-Mission amongst young people
-Missionary worship and services	-Mission among immigrants in Siberia and the Russian Far East
-Organisation of missionary schools	-Characteristics and qualities of contemporary missionaries

These directions were all well explained and defined earlier,[15] and here we need only add that the direction of mission starts with lay people and missionary commissioning and ends with the ideal image of a missionary whom the church needs to bring up and educate and prepare for effective missionary activity. Between them lies the internal organisation of a missionary church in the centre of which the missionary divine services occur, with the holy liturgy at their core. Special attention is given to immigrants coming mainly from China and Korea and settling intensively in the eastern regions of Russia which offer much consideration about the changing ethnic structure of society. This part of the document also defines the main directions of missionary service of the ROC in the near future: twenty specific 'fields of missionary activity' have been defined to encompass both the internal and the external mission of the ROC, first of all carried out within Russia and its 'territory of pastoral responsibility'.

There is a special paragraph in Concept 2005 about spiritual security. Unlike any other type of security, it means missionary activity done in a way that would safeguard the stable and sustainable development of Russian society in its movement toward higher spiritual levels of growth, as understood in their Orthodox form and content. No illusions are cherished and the ROC understanding of spiritual security embraces only those 'who have ears to hear', while other members of society need to listen more attentively (to the Orthodox Church) if they wish to be saved. The intention of the ROC is that every Russian citizen be saved if they come to believe in Jesus Christ and rightly follow the church's rules of ecclesiastical discipline.

[15] Kozhuharov, *Toward an Orthodox Christian Theology of Mission*, pp. 33-42; see also in Bulgarian, Valentin Kozhuharov, *Misionerskata deinost na Ruskata pravoslavna tsarkva dnes: Dokumenti i analizi* [Missionary activity of the Russian Orthodox Church today: Documents and analysis] (Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria: Vesta Publishing House, 2008), pp. 128-33.

It is all too obvious that the main concern of mission, as defined in the ROC missionary documents and in its practice of mission, is its internal mission: baptising, catechising (education) and living a Christ-like life through liturgical life in the parish and in society. Internal Christian growth (both of the church as a whole and of each individual church member) takes place in the so-called 'Eucharistic parishes' which lead the believers toward salvation, or more precisely, through *theosis* to salvation. Only when the Orthodox Church and her members feel that their true spiritual struggle bears good fruit, can they 'go forth and make disciples of all nations'. It is often confirmed in the Orthodox writings of the Holy Fathers that 'you must first heal yourself and only then heal others'. Many believers in the Russian Orthodox Church are convinced that if a Christian community is contaminated with unhealthy teaching and practices, this inevitably creates unhealthy parishes which are not able to draw people to Christ and cannot bring people's souls to salvation. This is why spiritual health and security are an immutable premise for healthy and 'correct' growth in Christ – a path most efficiently offered by the Orthodox Church, as the ROC claims. In fact, the Holy Fathers often pointed out Eucharistic communion as the centre of the Christian life, and Orthodox researchers and clergy define Eucharist as the foundation for missionary activity: the Eucharist is the mission of the church[16] and 'a motivating force for mission'.[17]

d) 'Theologies' of mission as understood and practiced by the ROC.

If we follow the definitions of Concept 2005, we can find three main missionary 'visions' (theologies) of the ROC's missionary activity: the theology of catechisation, the Eucharistic theology, and the theology of salvation.[18] The three visions give us the understanding that mission means catechisation, Eucharistic participation, and the path to salvation.

We have already mentioned that theological considerations came as a result of the practical missionary activity carried out by the ROC between 1995 and 2005, the year when Concept 2005 appeared to conclude and summarise practical experience in the field of mission. The new form of mission – the so-called 'mobile mission' – enabled missionaries to fulfil the Lord's command practically: 'go …and preach the Gospel' by teaching, Eucharistic participation, and salvific struggle in the believers' Christ-like life. What life is this? It is the life of acquiring the Holy Spirit within ourselves. 'We acquire the Holy Spirit through our celebration of the

[16] See Schmemann, p. 255.
[17] Stamoolis, p. 92.
[18] Kozhuharov, *Toward an Orthodox Christian Theology of Mission,* pp. 57-67, and Kozhuharov, *Misionerskata deinost…*, pp. 253-65.

Eucharist and the reception of Holy Communion, through our participation in the sacraments, through our discipline of daily prayer, of deeds of love, and through the practice of fasting, all of which result in a Christ-like life'.[19]

Mobile mission was carried out in the form of missionary pilgrimages by train at distances of more than 15,000 kilometres to Siberia and the Russian Far East, by so-called car-temples (trailer-truck-temples) where dozens of distant areas of Russia were covered, and also by plane and ship.[20] In addition, several missionary conventions and conferences were organised and carried out to discuss and summarise some practical issues of missiology; hundreds of missionaries were educated and spiritually prepared; dozens of missionary centres were opened; and hundreds of missionary parishes were reorganised to meet the requirements of the Missionary Department of the ROC in carrying out effective mission among Russian citizens. If we take into account the fact that most of the missionary activities were carried out in the time span of four to five years (mainly between 2000 and 2005), we can imagine the vast scale of missionary enterprise undertaken by the ROC and her missionaries on the 'territory of pastoral responsibility' of the church.

4. Third missionary concept of mission

The intensive missionary activity in the years between 1995 and the end of 2005[21] gave the Russian Orthodox Church an abundance of experience which had to be summarised and properly assessed. The ROC felt she needed a break to enable her to evaluate the outcomes and to again theologically ground the practical application of mission as carried out in the last ten years. Concept 2005 (April 2005 version) was reconsidered, widely distributed and hotly discussed in many Russian diocesan centres

[19] John Meyendorff, '*Theosis* in the Eastern Christian Tradition', in L Dupe and Don E Saliers, eds., *Christian Spirituality: Post-Reformation and Modern* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), p. 473.

[20] For example, four major missionary pilgrimages by train were carried out: the first pilgrimage took place 19-30 October 2000 to the Archangelsk region, the second 6-16 March 2001 to the Karelia region, the third (the largest ever) pilgrimage, from 7 August-2 September 2001 to Eastern Siberia and the Far East with seven of Russia's vast regions at a distance of more than 15,000 kilometres; the fourth 17-25 December 2001 to the Penzensk region, and other minor missionary pilgrimages carried out between 2002 and 2005. The car-temple (in fact, this is trailer truck with a temple inside) undertook several missionary journeys between 2003 and 2005, the majority of which were in February and March 2003, then another one 27 March-13 April 2004 to Russia's Kalmykia republic and the region of Adygeia. The third form of mobile mission – the so-called 'missionary camps and field stations' -- left hundreds of newly-built churches and chapels in many of Russia's territories in the east and hundreds of priests to serve there. This type of mission converted thousands of people to Orthodoxy – both Russians and other ethnic groups and language communities – and established hundreds of educational centres and schools to further spread the gospel amongst the local people. In this way the three theological 'visions' – catechisation, Eucharistic participation and salvific spiritual struggle – found practical implementation within Russia as a result of the ROC's missionary activity.

[21] The time that the last of this initial period of missionary pilgrimages, 7-17 October 2005 to the Far East Kamchatka region, took place.

and parishes. A huge amount of work was done by clergy and lay people to summarise the fruits of mission and missionary research which finally resulted in issuing a new version of Concept 2005, the version of April 2007[22] (further referred to as the ROC Missionary Concept).

Comparing the two documents, we may note that the character and the spirit of the new Concept remains the same as that of its predecessor, and do the theological grounds of mission. Nevertheless, the new assessment of missionary activity led to a restructuring of the vision of mission as practiced and theoretically developed in publications and at missionary conferences and conventions. The new structure of theoretical definitions of mission in fact shows a considerable reassessment of missionary activity and its theological foundation. In the April 2005 Concept, we find the following path of theological reflection concerning mission:

1. definition of the goals and tasks of mission today and on what grounds;
2. appropriate forms and method of mission;
3. practical missionary ministry of clergy and lay people.

The last of these three specifically reflects the aims of the first two.

The approach of the April 2007 Concept is different:

1. the battle field, the area of missionary activity is clearly shown to give Christians the understanding of what means and resources are needed to fulfil our missionary calling;
2. the main goals, tasks and methods of mission are defined to be used in this spiritual battle;
3. the practical implementation of the missionary task is presented to show the possible and the immediate forms of mission in practical terms.

The new vision more particularly lies in the following considerations. First, mission is clearly defined in the first sentences of the preamble: 'mission is witnessing and preaching that aims to arouse faith in those who listen… and to proclaim the Good News to all creation', and 'mission aims at sanctifying not only humanity but the whole world, as well'.[23] This spiritual postulate was confirmed by the Holy Fathers and by modern

[22] 'Kontseptsia missionerskoi deyatel'nosti Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi' [Concept on the missionary activity of the Russian Orthodox Church], *Missionerskoe Obozrenie* [Missionary review], No 4 (Belgorod, April 2007), pp. 4-19. The Concept is available only in the Russian language and can be found at http://www.bpdsmn.orthodoxy.ru/index.php?nma=mo&fla=index&page=1&id=9, last accessed in June 2009. As shown above, the new Concept almost entirely adopted the text of Concept 2005, by just restructuring the content and by adding a couple of new missionary statements. This is why the new Concept is often called 'a version of Concept 2005'.

[23] 'Kontseptsia missionerskoi deiatel'nosti…,' p. 5.

theologians: 'Christ has come to save humanity, and through the people Christ saves and redeems the whole world, the whole creation'.[24]

This understanding of mission is practically supported by defining the tasks leading to the achievement of sanctification and salvation: 'Orthodox mission aims at teaching people to be enlightened in the truths of the faith, at educating people to enable them to live a Christ-like life, and mainly at passing on the experience of communion with God through believers' personal participation in the sacramental life of the Eucharistic community.'[25] Again, the path of 'catechisation-Eucharistic participation-spiritual struggle for salvation' is seen as the main direction of mission.

Mission is also defined in terms of 'gospel and culture'. 'The Orthodox understanding of mission sees it as an eschatological event where the Gospel will be proclaimed "unto the end of the world" [Mt. 28:20], and it is this eschatological perspective that gives us the right understanding of the relations between mission and national cultures… requiring missionaries to approach the world, to sanctify and renew it, to transform the way of life of people through accepting local cultures and ways of cultural expression, provided they do not contradict the Christian faith, thus transforming them into means of salvation'.[26] This underscores the essential difference in understanding the issue of 'gospel and culture' as interpreted by the Orthodox Church (and by other Christian traditions, as well): local cultures and ways of cultural expressions can be accepted and lived only if they do not contradict the faith and life of a faithful Christian in a Eucharistic community. Only on this ground can local cultures be transformed into means of salvation.

Missionaries need to constantly acquire the Holy Spirit, that is to be spiritual, in order to differentiate between holy and profane, between Christian and pagan, between right and wrong. Spirituality, as well as many other Christian postulates and practices, seems to have obtained new characteristics in some Christian denominations, while the Orthodox Church has always affirmed the true meaning of spirituality: 'This is to be spiritual in Orthodoxy: 'being in Christ'. This means that we think, feel and wish what Christ thought, felt and wished. It means that we should have 'Christ's mind', 'the love of Christ'… if Christ wished that "all be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4), then we also must wish the same'.[27]

---

[24] Schmemann, p. 256.
[25] 'Kontseptsia missionerskoi deiatel'nosti…,' p. 5.
[26] Ibid., p. 6.
[27] Anastassios Yannoulatos, 'Orthodoxy and Mission,' *St Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*, 8:3 (1964), p. 144.

Secondly, the main part of the Missionary Concept of the ROC gives five characteristics of the missionary field of activity of the ROC today that need to be understood very well if we are to 'go and make disciples'. Here are the main points of these characteristics:

- Most Russian people traditionally belong to the Orthodox culture of this country but nevertheless remain indifferent to the Orthodox Church and the Orthodox culture as a whole and tend to neo-pagan practices or secular orientation.

- The country has experienced large-scale expansion of non-traditional religious and non-religious worldviews, of destructive cults and totalitarian sects that powerfully influence Russian people today; the ROC needs to bring Russians back into the parish in order to prevent them from perishing.

- Newcomers and those still not firmly rooted in the Orthodox faith need new approaches and new ways of pastoral work in order to come and to remain in the church; this requires that new missionary imperatives be developed in the area of pastoral care and spiritual guidance.

-There is a great need for creating and developing new teaching materials to help people become acquainted with Christianity and bring them into the Orthodox Church.

- Russian society needs unity and a healthier spiritual-moral environment, because the new challenges of today lead society to reject traditions and traditional moral values.

These new challenges are eroding Russian society today, the ROC claims. Each challenge needs a reciprocal response. Here are the challenges and the missionary tasks:

- Loss of cultural identity: the task is to seek ways for the Christianisation of national cultures.

- Social-economic reforms and their consequences for society: the task is the protection of people whom the state does not protect.

- The advance of sciences that question issues of morality and the essential foundations of life itself: the task is to oppose and counteract the practice of using science for ideological reasons or to allow occultism and attempts to divinise knowledge, especially in the field of humanities.

- Informational violence and its influence: the task is to oppose the informational aggression of destructive cults and organisations against the Orthodox church, individuals, family and society.

- The plurality of religions and worldviews: the task is to oppose attempts to substitute the absolute and the only Truth of Christ with a 'unified and universal' religion.

Thirdly, as we now know the battlefield very well, we need to define the main goals, tasks and methods of mission, and this is what the April 2007 Concept presents. As in the earlier version of the ROC Missionary Concept (April 2005), the ultimate goal of mission again is formulated thus: mission aims at the fulfilment of God's primordial provision – the *theosis* of humankind and of all creation. Unlike the April 2005 Concept, however, the immediate goal of mission is defined in terms of spreading the Orthodox faith: (1) *votsercovlenie* or bringing people into church and teaching them to live the life of the church[28]; (2) passing on the experience of communion with God; (3) building Eucharistic communities to be spread 'unto the end of the world'. The immediate goal of mission is then achieved through the fulfilment of eight primary tasks of mission, as made manifest in the document.

In order to carry out specific tasks a person or a group needs organisation and responsibility. The document further defines the responsibilities of the missionary bishops (four main tasks of responsibility), the missionary priests (five tasks), and the missionary lay people (three tasks of responsibility).

The forms and the methods of mission are declared as follows:

- Mission of bringing up people to become active members of the church (or so-called in-church bringing)
- Apologetic mission
- Informational mission
- External mission

Unlike the April 2005 Concept, in the new one there is a fifth important form of mission – the Mission of reconciliation – which is connected with the task of reconciliation between generations, between political and other type of opponents, between former enemies, both peoples and their territories, and between secular and religious culture. For the first time the new Concept defines several types of dialogue: 'dialogue of life', 'dialogue of social responsibilities', and 'mission of dialogue'.[29] It is worth noting that dialogue does not mean retreat but mutual understanding and tolerance.

---

[28] For a comment on this term, see footnote 14. (Editors' note.

[29] 'Kontseptsia missionerskoi deiatel'nosti…,' p. 13.

The second main part of the ROC Missionary Concept concludes with the characteristics and the qualities of the modern missionary in which the characteristics of the synodal missionary and the diocesan missionary are defined. The ministry of the former is closely related to the commissioning tasks the Holy Synod gives to a missionary, while the latter is closely connected with the commissioning tasks the local bishop gives to missionaries, missionary centres, and organisations.

The practical issues of missionary ministry in the ROC Missionary Concept summarise the first two theoretical parts into a unified specific practice of mission as already found in the ROC mission in the last ten to twelve years. There are several forms of missionary activity which differ from the April 2005 Concept.

The first concerns the young people of Russia. In the new version, special attention is given to defining types of young people. These definitions give missionaries wider knowledge about the appropriate approaches and methods of work with them. The following types of young people have been identified:

- Youngsters who are church members but still do not take any active role in the parish life. The missionary task requires that new ways of individual work with them be found in order to put their potential into action and use it for the benefit of the church and believers.

- New believers, or neophytes, who need much catechisation and education. They need to be properly educated through their inclusion in various forms of catechisation, mainly through catechetical courses and adult Sunday schools.

- Non-believers who have a positive view of the Orthodox Church but who have never thought of becoming members. The most appropriate work with them would be fulfilling creative tasks or organising their rest and holidays in appropriate ways and forms.

- Young people who have chosen to belong to other Christian traditions or to other traditional religions but who still keep a positive attitude to the Orthodox Church and would agree to a dialogue of reconciliation. Such youngsters could be included in the activities of special-interest clubs, for example on issues of ecology, drug rehabilitation, etc.

- Non-believers who are not interested in any relation to the Orthodox Church or to any other type of religious life. These make up the greatest number of young people in Russia and this makes the work with them most important. The missionary task lies in breaking those young people’s false stereotypes and visions of the Christian church as a whole

and on religious life more specifically, in forming in them new images of life and attitudes, and in preparing their mind and heart to accept the truths of the Christian faith.

- Young people who negatively relate to the church. Missionaries should seek dialogue with such youngsters only on the foundation of love and on relying on God's help to turn their hearts.

The second important difference concerns the definition of a missionary parish. There are eight main characteristics of a missionary parish:

- the parish organises missionary activity on the territory of its own pastoral responsibility;

- parishioners should be educated in missiology and get experience in missionary work;

- it is recommended that parishioners get higher secular education;

- the parochial council should include members who are missionaries in spirit and who understand very well what mission is and how it needs to be fulfilled;

- ecclesiastical social activity (*diakonia*) is also one of the main features of a missionary parish;

- the parish should establish a body of missionary catechists who are to organise the teaching ministry of the parish;

- divine services should be based on the missionary imperative of accessible worship and serving God;

- the parish should keep constant contact with the Missionary Department of the Russian Orthodox church in order to regularly receive methodological and other types of help and support.

The third point of the April 2007 Concept concerns the missionary ministry of lay people where, for the first time, the role of women in the field of mission has been clearly defined. The role of women in Orthodoxy witnessing to the truth has been made equal with that of men. There are four main areas of women's missionary ministry:

- founding charitable organisations and bodies to serve those in need;
- missionary ministry in hospitals;
- missionary and teaching ministry in social homes, mainly children's homes, nursing homes and boarding schools;
- missionary ministry in prisons for women.

The last important part of the ROC Missionary Concept concludes with defining the most important areas of missionary work of the ROC in the near future. Most of the affirmations concern the future of the Russian nation as a whole and the role of believers in improving the spiritual climate in the country. One important affirmation seems quite significant in assessing the current situation in Russia (and maybe in the world as a whole): 'For the last 800 years, the Russian Orthodox church has never been exposed to the necessity of apostolic preaching on a large scale in areas and territories where millions of people, through the violence of the atheistic communist regimes of the past decades, have lost their faith and tradition and have acquired other types of culture and history. Now we face a paradoxical situation in which Russia needs a second Christianisation of the peoples living in the territory of the pastoral responsibility of the Russian Orthodox Church'.[30]

II. Mission as teaching

Human beings learn throughout all their life, from birth to death. There are things that we do learn and many more that we do not. There are many things we do not need to know but there are things we must know. The truths of faith are among them because they are potentially given to every human being and need to be 'revealed' and acquired individually by each of us in order that we get to know this life and the life to come. Most often, people acquire knowledge about this life, and this would seem to suffice. But the Lord reminds us that we need to know about the life to come, as well, in order to properly and rightly live our present life. Hence the Christian perspective on teaching and learning: we do not learn things simply in order to know about the world around us and how to live: we learn about the life which is to come and it is that life that defines the way we live and the way we get to know the world. What can be seen is not the 'teacher' to teach us how to live but what is unseen is the true 'teacher'. Because what is unseen can be either good or evil, we need direction and guidance. This is what the Son of God, the Word of God, told us in His gospel. He tells us truths through words (Holy Scripture) and through tradition (Holy Tradition).

It is not only Christianity that maintains this truth in the world, but we as Christians believe that it is the only truth. Christian truths have been passed on from generation to generation so that we may not perish but have life eternal (cf. Jn 3:16). Teaching the truths of the church has been essential from the very first day of her existence. It has always been one of the most important tasks of any ecclesiastical activity of the Christian

[30] 'Kontseptsia missionerskoi deiatel'nosti…,' p. 6.

parishes and theological schools. But as was mentioned above, teaching was not always the primary task of the missionaries who mostly ascribed importance to baptising and preaching the gospel (mostly through story-telling). As new converts take part in the life of the church and become strengthened in their faith, they are taught the truths of Christianity expressed in dogmas, doctrine, canons, etc. These are the truths that tell Christians about the life to come and affirm us in our current life by requiring from us specific attitudes to the material and the spiritual world, and to God.

1. The teaching ministry of the Orthodox Church: The example of the Russian Orthodox Church

A. Mission as teaching: The Concept 1995 view

In all three missionary documents of the Russian Orthodox Church we find that teaching is the priority of any mission. In Concept 1995, three of the four forms of mission – the informational, the apologetic, the educational, and the external mission – are directly connected with teaching. The informational mission requires that missionaries 'enlighten' the people working in the Russian mass media so that they can deal more professionally with religious issues while discussing or showing them in the public area. The apologetic mission aims at exposing the false teaching of religious sects and other non-Orthodox religious movements and organisations and at showing the correct teaching (that is, the teaching of the Orthodox Church); and finally the mission of 'in-church bringing' (or 'in-churching' of people, which is what the Slavic term means) requires that the teaching of the Orthodox Church be organised at every possible level in Russian society: in schools, colleges and universities, in Sunday schools and other ecclesiastical educational establishments (seminaries, spiritual academies, Orthodox spiritual schools and colleges, the whole structure of the Moscow Patriarchate, etc.), at libraries and other state educational centres, among various professional groups of the society – secular teachers, medical professionals, military personnel, in legal institutions and the whole legal system, within all governmental institutions and local organisations of the authorities, and so on.

Central for the catechetical work of the church is the core ecclesiastical establishment – the parish. Teaching should both start and end in the parish. The main goals of mission – proclaiming the gospel and baptising – cannot be reached other than through teaching. The Concept clearly points out that in the parish the Orthodox Church does not simply

educate people, but brings them up.[31] This upbringing must follow the example of the ancient Christian church where 'in-churching' occurs only when three important stages have been reached:

- the new converts should be catechised,
- then they should be baptised,
- and then they again should be catechised (taught the truths of the faith).[32]

In discussing the missionary tasks of the Orthodox Church, Concept 1995 defines seven important activities which are being done on an all-church level, of which five relate to teaching:

- gathering educational materials on Christian mission (both Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christian, and both pre-1917 revolution and later) and using them in the teaching ministry of the ROC;

- studying and researching in the field of methodology of working in non-Orthodox contexts (mainly Islamic and Buddhist) with the aim of creating appropriate teaching programmes and manuals for missionaries;

- gathering information about the activity of non-Orthodox religious organisations and sects and their missionaries on the territory of the Russian Federation and using the information in the teaching ministry of the church;

- developing teaching programmes, curricula and syllabuses on missiology to be used in Orthodox educational establishments;

- organising the publication of missionary magazines, newspapers and other publications[33].

B. Mission as teaching: The Concept 2005 view

This document restates in general the statements of Concept 1995 and further develops the teaching of the Orthodox Church on mission. The

[31] There is a difference in Russian (and other Slavic languages) between 'educate' (*obrazovat'*) and 'bring up' (*vospitat'*), though the English term for both would be 'educate'. The first is connected more with acquiring knowledge through intellectual reflection and the latter is connected more with acquiring knowledge through psychological and spiritual reflection on the meaning of every piece of knowledge. It is a postulate that at state schools children are educated and at Sunday schools they are brought up: the children may learn the same facts and acquire the same knowledge at both places (state school and church school) but the approach and method of acquiring the knowledge are quite different.

[32] See 'Kontseptsiia vozrozhdeniia missionerskoi deiatel'nosti…,' p. 15. Unlike the 'first' catechisation, where those who are being prepared for baptism need to acquire basic knowledge about Holy Scripture and the Orthodox catechesis, the second one (the 'second' catechisation) in fact means teaching the dogmatic, doctrinal, canonical, patristic, etc. foundations of the Orthodox faith to help them become full members of the church (or to become 'in-churched' members, as the Slavic term denotes).

[33] "Kontseptsiia vozrozhdeniia missionerskoi deiatel'nosti …, p. 16.

following Concept (that of the April 2007 version, or the ROC Missionary Concept) restates most of this document. Because of this, and also because of the fact that Concept 2005 (the April 2005 version) has not been published anywhere (it remains an internal document of the Department for External Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate of the ROC) and has not been translated into English (and therefore specific portions cannot be quoted from it), we will only refer to those statements that cannot be found either in Concept 1995 or in the ROC Missionary Concept of April 2007.

The first main part of the document ('Goals and tasks of mission') states seven missionary tasks, of which three relate to the teaching ministry of the church:

- education and upbringing of children and young people in order to be baptised and made active members of the parish; education and upbringing of those baptised Orthodox Christians who are only nominally Christians and have never received proper Orthodox education;

- education of clergy among the local (non-Russian) people and helping them further their worship and teaching ministries;

- education in the language of the local people and translation of necessary liturgical texts and texts of the Holy Scriptures (and the Scriptures as a whole).

The second main part ('Forms and approaches to mission') again focuses on the four forms of mission (informational, apologetic, educational and external) and most of the statements are also to be found in the April 2007 version of the Concept. There are several elements which differ from the later version.

Among the four forms of mission, the educational form (the mission of in-church bringing) is given as much space as the other three taken together. As in Concept 1995, we see the three stages of 'in-churching': catechisation, baptism, and teaching. Catechisation is now called 'catechetical instruction before baptism'[34] and includes teaching the basics of the Christian faith to those who are going to be baptised. This catechetical instruction may be carried out over a long period (one, two or more years) or a shorter one, but it is strictly forbidden that people be baptised before they have properly learned the basics. In the case of baptising little children (even infants and newborn), the responsibility before God and the congregation is taken by the godfather/godmother who must be strong in their faith and confirmed Orthodox Christians well

[34] The old Slavonic word is '*oglashenie*' which literary means 'allowing a person to hear' (to hear the Good News, the teaching of the church, etc.).

known to the parish as active members of the church and devout and pious people. The godparents are considered guardians of the newly baptised infant before God and the congregation until the child reaches ‘mature Christian knowledge’.

There are several characteristics which catechisation must follow:

- any catechising and preaching must have Jesus Christ alone as its centre and foundation;

- the catechumens must admit and accept in themselves that the Holy Scriptures are inspired by God and that they are the main guide for Christians in their lives;

- the catechumens must see the church as the Body of Christ and church members as part of this Body whose only Head is Jesus Christ the Lord;

- the Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Church must be acquired in its fullness by the catechumens;

- the church and the life in the church should be seen as the joy of life in Jesus Christ;

- the catechumens must realise that the Eucharist is the centre and foundation of the Christian life;

- they should also be fully convinced that individuality and personality are not destroyed in the church but are nourished by her, and that it is the church community that allows these things to be developed in fullness.

It is strictly forbidden by Orthodox teaching and Orthodox tradition that a person be baptised before they have learned the basics of the faith, that is, before they have been properly and appropriately catechised. After a person has been baptised, the parish takes the obligation to further teach them the truths of the faith. This can only be achieved if the parish organises appropriate teaching activities at every possible level. The document states six activities to help the newly baptised learn and further grow in their faith.

The third main part of Concept 2005 (‘Main directions of missionary service’) describes ten major ‘fields’ of mission on the territory of the Russian Federation. In each of them education occupies the primary position. As most of the text of this part of the document reappears in the April 2007 version of Concept 2005, we will only mention what is different.

In the April 2005 version, special attention was given to mission among newcomers from China and Korea who have been settling in Siberia and the Russian Far East since the changes in 1990 and who seem to have

changed the ethnic cultural structure of society in some regions. In connection with this, important educational tasks were considered in the document:

- analysing the culture and the rites of the newcomers and making them known to those Orthodox Christians who could be easily influenced by some 'appealing' features of the eastern religions and beliefs;

- organising youth centres where newcomers' children are welcomed and educated in the Orthodox culture and tradition (not necessarily in the Orthodox faith);

- educating and preparing Orthodox missionaries among Christians in the Orthodox parishes which are now functioning in these regions;

- carrying out Orthodox educational initiatives on a mass scale within the local societies in order to prevent assimilation of the traditional ethnic groups by the newcomers' culture and religion.

Another specific feature of Concept 2005 is found in its definition of the 'missionary field' in today's Russia. Unlike Concept 1995, which stated that it is the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church, this document confirms that the 'field of mission' embraces the 'territory of pastoral responsibility' of the ROC, which obviously goes far outside the borders of the Russian Federation. In affirming that the main principle of mission is only found in the ontological unity of the church in Christ, and consequently in the single and universal witnessing (namely the Orthodox witness to Christ), Concept 2005 resolutely rejects any notion of ecumenical understanding of witnessing to Christ in various ways by different Christian denominations. Mission, as looked on from this perspective, can only be 'external' mission with the aim of proclaiming the gospel and baptising in the name of Jesus Christ.

By 'external', it is understood that what is referred to as the 'territory of pastoral responsibility', is the territory of the Russian Federation. This is why the Concept further considers the current situation in Russia. Two main problems are found in society today: demographic problems and non-religious (non-Orthodox) attitudes in society. In describing the rapid rate at which the Russian population is diminishing and the fact that most Russian people are either unbelievers or believe in unhealthy teachings and gods (specific statistical data are given in the document), the Concept develops the idea of spiritual security, much of which depends on the teaching ministry of the church.

Spiritual security is paralleled with the physical security of persons, and it is stated that it is the former which defines the latter and the whole security of the state. In proposing specific measures to ensure the spiritual

security of Russian society, ROC missionaries are mostly concerned with the activity of various religious sects within the territory of the country, and also of other harmful non-Orthodox religious organisations and movements. This fact brings the teaching ministry of the church to the fore, and the Concept concludes that specific measures should be taken so that society is protected from the harmful influence of non-Orthodox teachings and practices. Among them are the following:

- the ROC missionary organisations should further develop and strengthen their apologetic work in society;

- analysing mass media opinions and proposing specific activities to include them in the work of ensuring the spiritual security of Russian citizens;

- analysing the legal issues of carrying out missionary activity in society;

- seeking ways of cooperation between the ROC and some state structures and bodies in promoting spiritual security in society.

As we can see, the teaching ministry of the ROC in this Concept is given much more space and importance than in the Concept of 1995. The next Concept, that of April 2007, further strengthens the position in the document of the ecclesiastical education of the Russian people in order to bring them back to the teaching of their forebears, that is, to the teaching of the Orthodox Church.

C. Mission as teaching: The ROC Missionary Concept view

The new document appears consistent and well-coordinated with other ROC ecclesiastical documents which aim to resolve many of the problems which the ROC currently experiences and which have prevented Russian society from regaining its spiritual and cultural position among the other leading nations of the world.

The first main part of the document (‘Specific features of the ROC missionary field today’) reaffirms the facts of the religious illiteracy of Russian society, of the secular tendencies at every level, and states the primary task of ROC missionaries: through teaching and catechisation to bring back the truths of the church into the minds and the hearts of the people. The main goal is the unity of the Russian nation which is today torn between secular and unhealthy religious teachings and practices.

The second main part (‘Methodology of Orthodox mission’) deals with two major issues: the goal and tasks of mission and forms and methodology of mission. While stating that the ultimate goal of mission is the *theosis* of all creation, the document further affirms: ‘Mission is an

activity which aims at spreading the Orthodox faith and the in-church bringing of people so that they will start new lives in Christ and acquire the experience of communion with God'.[35] It can be easily seen that mission is mostly understood as spreading the gospel and catechising people. This again gives the teaching ministry of the church immediate priority. This goal is further specified through eight missionary tasks, of which five are directly connected with the teaching of the church:

- preaching the gospel to those who have not yet heard it, and inspiring Christian faith in them so that they will desire to be saved;

- educating (bringing up) all those who have been baptised but have not received proper and appropriate Orthodox instruction;

- using national (or artificial, or special) languages in preaching the gospel and in the worshipping ministry of a church;

- organising special catechisation courses to fully explain the meaning of the Holy Sacraments;

- educating and preparing clergy and missionaries among the local people in the various regions.[36]

The document further describes the missionary responsibilities of the bishops, the priests, and the lay people, and many of them are also connected with catechisation and education.

The statements of the forms and methodology of mission reaffirm the issues as stated in the previous missionary document, that of Concept 2005. The only difference is the fifth form of mission, the 'mission of reconciliation', and the tasks ascribed to the two types of missionary as they operate under the different church authorities. These are the synodal missionary and the eparchial missionary, the former having their responsibilities under the authority of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the authority of the Missionary Department of the Moscow Patriarchate of the ROC, and the latter having their responsibilities under the authority of the local diocesan bishop. Much of their responsibility is connected with the teaching ministry of the church, most of all preaching the gospel and affirming the baptised in their Orthodox faith through teaching and giving personal examples of life in Christ.

The third (and last) part of the ROC Missionary Concept, 'Practice of missionary service', deals with seven main 'missionary issues', four of which concern teaching: commissioning of missionaries, education and

[35] 'Kontseptsiia missionerskoi deiatel'nosti…,'p. 7.
[36] Ibid..

preparation of new missionaries, mission among young people, and 'missionary worship'.

Missionary commissioning includes several educational tasks (along with others not directly related to education):

- including church members in mission through engaging them with the work of catechisation (especially the 'first' catechisation, that of instruction in the basics of Orthodox teaching) and of organising pilgrimages to holy places;

- encouraging church members to participate in church conferences, radio and TV programmes, internet forums and discussions, and other educational activities;

- organisation of various parochial education centres.

New missionaries can only be educated and prepared in appropriate missionary schools. This is why it is now urgent that new missionary schools of various levels (primary, secondary and higher) be established in many regions of the country. New missionary curricula and syllabuses need to be developed and used in the new schools. It is well stated that this type of education is, in fact, a holistic spiritual education which is now so much needed in Russia.

Mission among young people is almost entirely based on educational (and to some extent social) activities. The Concept defines six main types of young people in Russia today in connection with their attitude to religion as a whole and to the Russian Orthodox Church more specifically, as shown above. The approach to each of them is very specific. One does not teach those who are already members of the Orthodox Church in the same way as those who are not or who are against any religion at all.

Each group of youngsters needs a special missionary educational approach, and these are well developed in the Concept. The in-churched young people need to be further educated in the truths of Orthodox teaching so that they more actively participate in the worship and social activities of the parish. The young people who have recently become members of the church need much more attention in their catechisation by experienced Orthodox catechists and missionaries. Young people who have not yet been baptised need special forms of work, such as the organisation of various types of youth clubs and other types of educational activities which would appeal to them and enable them to easily accept the truths of the faith and increase the desire in them to become Christians. The other three types of young people, as described above, need more careful attention and a special attitude on the part of the missionaries in order not

to directly confront their worldview and at the same time to find ways of dialogue and reconciliation so that they feel the care the Orthodox Church has for them.

Missionary worship, or the missionary-oriented divine service, is a new notion which has been recently developed and which is mostly connected with the liturgical aspect of life of Orthodox Christians. Nevertheless, the foundation of a missionary divine service lies in teaching and upbringing so that Christians can fully understand and accept it as a God-human communion. A divine service is missionary if all the members of the congregation fully participate in it in their hearts and minds. One of the most evident elements of full participation is the understanding of the meaning of any single act during the service. Understanding comes if one understands the words and every act that takes place during the service, which ultimately means that one must understand the language and meaning of the various liturgical acts.

For the Russian Orthodox Church specifically, language has been an issue for a long time. The Old Church Slavonic language, as it has been used throughout the last four centuries, is no longer understood by the people in the churches. Those who have been church members for many years have acquired the meaning of everything that happens in the church and during the services by experience. The people who now enter an Orthodox church in Russia first need to be educated in this old language and only then come and participate. Education in a language, however, takes years and so the initial resolution of the problem would be a service where much of what is happening is explained in modern Russian. This approach is one of the elements of a missionary service: explaining all the moments of the service that are difficult to understand in modern language.

Thus, newcomers to the church need to be taught and at the same time fully 'included' in the service. The Concept even admits the possibility of reading the gospel in Russian, or in the language of the local people,[37] which is still strictly forbidden within all the ROC structures throughout the country. However, there are new movements within the Russian Orthodox Church that have been using modern Russian in their services for quite a few years now, such as the churches belonging to the *Preobrazhenskie* (Holy Transfiguration) brotherhood parishes of the St Philaret Orthodox Institute in Moscow. New developments are now expected within the ROC in connection with the language of services.

Another 'teaching' element of the missionary service is the role and place of the sermon within the structure of the liturgy. The sermon should be said immediately after the gospel has been read and it should be mostly

[37] 'Kontseptsiia missionerskoi deiatel'nosti…,' p. 11.

an exegetical sermon. At a missionary service, it is possible that the gospel itself be read in the Russian language, or in the language of the local people.[38] In connection with the missionary service, the Concept recommends that liturgical teaching courses be organised to acquaint newcomers with the liturgical tradition of the Orthodox Church and the moments of Orthodox services that are most difficult to understand (the liturgy, as well as all the other services of the daily cycle).

Summarising the teaching ministry of the ROC as presented in the missionary documents of the church, we can again affirm that it is namely this teaching ministry which would enable the 'second Christianisation' of Russia. It would raise the level of meaningful devotional participation of Orthodox Christians in the holistic life of the church as she aims to be the missionary church the Lord wants established and kept strong, preaching the gospel 'unto the end of the world'.

2. Theological reflections

Undertaking a teaching ministry has always been a difficult task. Difficulties arise when teaching is not properly grounded, both as to content and approach to teaching. To teach, one must be firmly rooted in the area of knowledge that is taught. To teach, one must be firmly rooted pedagogically in the educational tradition of a given social environment, or country.

In today's circumstances, the difficulties in teaching theological subjects (such as the teaching of the Christian church) are present in teaching religious education, both at the church level and in the state schools. We often see devoted Christians who try to pass on their faith to children and teach their subject in the same way that they would preach in the church. Children in state schools would not like this approach; neither would they properly learn what they have been taught. This is because such teachers possess the proper content but not the proper approach to the children's hearts and minds. At the same time we can see teachers who are qualified and professional in their pedagogical attitude and who would use the best approach to teaching and would touch children's hearts and minds in the most efficient way but who would find it difficult to answer the students' simplest questions concerning the religion the teachers are teaching, because teaching religious education (theological subjects) means that one must possess both the religious content ('religious') and the pedagogical skills ('education').

[38] Ibid., p. 13.

The preparation of religious education teachers, especially those at the state schools, has been a difficult task for many decades now. The effectiveness of their teaching has often been questioned.[39] We pose this issue here in order to reveal the difficult 'dual' position of anyone who dares undertake Christian teaching. It is often admitted that teaching at ecclesiastical establishments (Sunday schools, seminaries and spiritual academies, religiously affiliated schools, etc.) is much easier for the teachers because they speak the same 'religious language' as the students they are teaching. They would expect the same attitude from their students as they expect from their own. Nowadays, however, teaching in seminaries and Sunday schools seems as difficult as teaching in the state schools. This is because the time is now different from what it was just two or three decades ago. Christian students, as well as all young people, now live in the same cultural environment as their peers in the state schools.

In Russia, religious education had always been well organised by the Orthodox Church in the centuries preceding the Revolution of 1917, at which time the tradition was broken. Only after 1990 has the church started the restoration of religious education. The Department for Religious Education and Catechisation of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church was established in February 1991 and has undertaken a vast activity of revival of teaching religion, both within the church and in the state schools. Although this activity has been successful in general, it has revealed the problem of the preparation of well-trained teachers, a problem which still exists. It is admitted that 'Russia's future lies in the hands of teachers and pedagogues'[40] because the future of any nation is directly dependent on the coming generation and its attitude to the world.

The Missionary Department of the ROC relies very much on the efficient work of the Department for Religious Education. The appeal of the three missionary documents for the preparation of well-educated missionaries of the church can only be fulfilled if both departments of the Moscow Patriarchate find a common ground of cooperation in their efforts to establish a true 'missionary approach' to such preparation. This may be one of the reasons that the new Russian Patriarch, who came to office in February 2009, appointed a new head of the Department for Religious Education in April. It was one of the few new appointments by the Patriarch, and suggested that the department needs 'revival' and new

[39] See Peter Schreiner, 'Religious Education in the European Context,' in Elza Kuyk et al. eds., *Religious Education in Europe: Situation and Current Trends at Schools* (Oslo: IKO Publishing House, 2007), pp. 9-16 where all the various problems of teacher preparation are discussed.

[40] Ioann Ekonomtsev, 'Puti vozrozhdeniia dukhovno-nravstvennykh osnov rossiyskogo obrazovaniia' [Ways of revival of the spiritual-ethical foundation of Russian education], in V Kozhuharov and V Melikov, *Aktualnye voprosy religioznogo obrazovaniia* [Contemporary issues of religious education] (Moscow: Russian Orthodox University of St John the Theologian, 2008), p. 14.

approaches in affirming the educational policy of the ROC within the vast territory of the Russian Federation (and beyond, if we are to extend the influence of the department also to the whole 'territory of pastoral responsibility').

The teaching ministry of the church requires new ways of expressing old truths and it needs highly educated teachers. 'Highly educated' in no way means a 'less spiritual' or a 'less churched' Christian: both – a person educated and firmly rooted in the Orthodox faith – are essential for the success of the missionary teaching ministry. This is why the missionary documents of the ROC put special focus on establishing new missionary schools at all levels: primary, secondary and higher. Missionaries must be prepared, and preparation takes years. The new missionaries must be the best example of Christians devoted to fulfilling the Lord's command to go and make disciples of all nations. That is, to be a teacher to those nations. It is not easy for Christians to be teachers. You cannot pass on to others what you do not possess; you cannot teach others if you do not possess the qualities of a teacher, of a disciple of Christ and an apostle of the Lord. 'A missionary is a preacher who is highly educated and specifically trained and who must proclaim the gospel to those who never knew Orthodox witnessing… Missionaries must be patient, humble, prayerful, firm, devoted, with zeal for God, and friendly'.[41] These are several of the qualities an Orthodox missionary must possess but there are others as well.

Missionaries must be teachers 'to all nations'. They need to know very well the culture of the local people among whom they are going to live and preach the gospel. Knowing the language of the people is crucial. Translation of Christian literature is crucial to mission, too. Forming the language of the local church is most essential for its growth. But which language of the local people can become the language of the church? Language can be literary, conversational, 'professional jargon', and of many other types. In his mission to the Tartars, Nikolai Ilminski discovered that the Tartar language was actually composed of two independent languages: the literary language and the conversational language. He also discovered that only when the conversational language became the language of the church did the real breakthrough occur in his efforts to Christianise the Tartars.[42] Literary language is used to translate literary works, to create new Christian literature, but in the church the language of the people is used, which is often quite different from the literary one. Missionaries need to be linguists, too.

[41] 'Kontseptsiia missionerskoi deiatel'nosti…,' p. 12.
[42] See Eugene Smirnoff, *A Short Account of the Historical Development and Present Position of Russian Orthodox Missions* (London: Rivington, 1903), pp. 31-34.

Being a teacher, the missionary must teach. Teaching may take various forms and it is the missionaries in their circumstances and the circumstances of the local people among whom they do their mission that will decide what and how to teach. Very often, as the missionary concepts point out, people are quite illiterate, and often even the Christians are only nominal Christians without much knowledge about their own faith. This is not merely the current situation – this has always been one of the characteristics of Christian societies. Russia is no exception. Note that even Macarius Glukharev found that 'the Russian masses were only superficially Christian, and therefore inadequate for the great apostolic task God had in store for them',[43] and he found it crucial for the 'masses' to be properly educated. Statistics today vary a great deal and one cannot be sure which are true and which are not. One European research study found that in Russia the percentage of Orthodox people is not more than 57% while the percentage of the atheists is still quite high – some 30%.[44] The missionary concepts admit, too, that the percentage of the Russian people who are only nominally Christian is quite high and that many people in the country have almost completely broken with the Orthodox cultural tradition which makes a second Christianisation of Russia necessary, 'and the scale of this second Christianisation is unprecedented'.[45]

Clergy-missionaries are teachers when they officiate during the services. Everything they do and say during worship is most closely observed and adopted by the congregation. Missionaries teach through their behaviour, words and gestures. All that they do during services should have a missionary meaning and should urge the believers to 'go and make disciples' in the same way in which they devotionally accept the Holy Gifts and pledge to further bring holiness into the world. In Orthodox liturgy, there is a special prayer for the catechumens which again represents an appeal to mission today: 'What the prayer for catechumens does is to focus the contemporary congregation's attention on the missionary tradition of Orthodoxy, a tradition which, however strongly professed, needs to be manifested in the present age…'[46] A teacher must be a missionary if they want others to follow their example, and the example of a missionary officiating and serving the Lord during the services is one of the most influential.

[43] Nikita Struve, 'Macaire Gloukharev: A Prophet of Orthodox Mission,' *International Review of Mission* 54 (1965), p. 314.
[44] Margarita Kostikova and Valentin Kozhuharov, 'Religious Education in Russia,' in Elza et al. *Religious Education in Europe*, pp. 155-161.
[45] 'Kontseptsiia missionerskoi deiatel'nosti…,' p. 6.
[46] Stamoolis, p. 92.

By teaching and personal example, missionaries must lead believers on the path of salvation. This ultimate goal of the Christian life and of any mission has very practical aspects for Christian church life. Believers and missionaries are united in their struggle for salvation; they are united in their prayers, in their love, in their communion with God. Missionaries can sometimes make mistakes, but they do this as individuals while they 'fall' and experience weakness. At the same time love, prayer, communion, and the urge for salvation are communal: 'We know that when any one of us falls, he falls alone; but no one is saved alone. He who is saved is saved in the Church, as her a member, and in unity with all her other members. If anyone believes, he is in the communion of faith; if he loves, he is in the communion of love; if he prays, he is in the communion of prayer. Wherefore no one can rest his hope on his own prayers, and every one who prays asks the whole Church for intercession, not as if he had any doubts of the intercession of Christ, the one Advocate, but in the assurance that the whole Church ever prays for all her members'.[47]

In this way, missionaries in the Orthodox tradition are true teachers 'to all the nations' while expressing (and practically applying) the three theological foundations of Orthodox mission[48] in their 'missionary zeal to share with others the joy of salvation which they have found in Christ',[49] in their being firmly convinced that 'if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel' (1 Cor. 9:16).

III. Mission as liturgical life

Orthodox Christians live their Christ-like life both in their churches and everywhere else: at home, at work, in the society as a whole. You cannot be two 'personalities' at the same time: you are Christian no matter the time or place, and you cannot live otherwise but as a Christian. If you say you are a Christian but you do not think and act like a Christian in your everyday life, then you are not a follower of Christ; you are probably just a nominal Christian.

Living a Christ-like life means living a liturgical life, a life in the liturgy. Again, you live this life everywhere: in the church and out of the church, in society. Is it possible for Christians to live a liturgical life in their everyday life? Liturgy is so much 'theology-bound'. Is it possible to

[47] Alexy Khomiakov, *The Church is One* (London: Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, 1968, originally written in 1850), pp. 38-39.
[48] That is, the catechetical, liturgical and salvific 'theologies' of mission. See Kozhuharov, *Toward an Orthodox Christian Theology of Mission*, pp. 57-67.
[49] 'Kontseptsiia missionerskoi deiatel'nosti…,' p. 12.

live one's theology? It is not only possible, but it is a living tradition in the lives of Orthodox Christians. In the Orthodox tradition there is no division between teaching and practice, between abstract and concrete, between the 'personal experience of the divine mysteries and the dogma affirmed by the church'.[50] In the holy liturgy dogmas, doctrine, holy mysteries and the life of Christians are one entity in experiencing the Kingdom of God. Theology is not something different from the way Christians live. 'In the Orthodox tradition, theology is related to life.'[51]

Let us briefly consider those parts of the ROC missionary documents which relate to the liturgical life of Orthodox Christians and to the missionary tasks which Christians need to fulfil in proving their life as theology and as practice in their Christ-like life. Let us note that under 'liturgy' and 'liturgical life' Orthodox Christians mean not only the divine service of liturgy but all the other services of the church: matins, vespers, 'hours', and other ecclesiastical divine services all bear witness to the union of doctrine and practice. 'It would be false and misleading to truncate the worship of the Orthodox into one service… The whole of the liturgical experience shapes Orthodoxy'.[52]

1. The liturgical ministry of the Orthodox Church: The example of the Russian Orthodox Church

A. Mission as liturgy: The Concept 1995 view

As a first attempt to theologically ground the Orthodox understanding of mission in the new circumstances of the late twentieth century, Concept 1995 does not focus specifically on the liturgical aspects of mission. Nevertheless, it points out essential characteristics of mission which are found in the liturgical life of the church and which were to be further developed in the next two missionary concepts on mission.

The Concept reveals the Orthodox understanding of mission and among the other characteristics, it also points out the innermost link between mission and Christ's resurrection. 'In this way, proclamation of the Good News must include preaching about Christ as the Lord resurrected and about the ways in which His Kingdom becomes our Kingdom here in the world, that is – the new heaven and the new earth (Rev. 21:1): they are revealed to us in the holy Eucharist. Through the liturgy and the fulfilment of His commandments, the Life-Giving Holy Spirit powerfully operates in the world and in actual fact brings the Kingdom into the world'.[53] Thus, the Concept defines liturgy as one of the

[50] Lossky, p. 7.
[51] Stamoolis, p. 10.
[52] Ibid., 87.
[53] 'Kontseptsiia vozrozhdeniia missionerskoi deiatel'nosti…,' p. 12.

main means through which Christians, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, bring the Kingdom closer to the world. Liturgy and the world are set in an inseparable bond. Because the mysteries (the holy sacraments) of the church, with the holy Eucharist being the centre and foundation of all the mysteries, are the practices of the church which transform Christians and cause them to 'go and make disciples' in order to share the holiness they possess with the world. 'Nothing reveals better the relation between the Church as fullness and the Church as mission than the Eucharist, the central act of the Church's *leiturgia*, the sacrament of the Church itself'.[54] In this way, the entire liturgy can be seen as a motivating force for mission and for affirming the Kingdom of God in the world.

The Concept also affirms that mission is an eschatological event where the gospel is proclaimed 'unto the end of the world', and that it is this eschatological perspective which reaffirms the purpose of mission: transformation of the whole universe (cosmos) – both people and the world, so 'that God be all in all' (1Cor 15:28). Understood in this way, mission is about the missionaries who approach (come closer to) the world, sanctify it and 'make everything new by instilling new content into the old ways of life, by accepting local cultures and their expression, provided they do not contradict the Christian faith, and by transforming them into means of salvation'.[55] As we will see, it is the liturgical life of Orthodox Christians that strengthens them in their faith and zeal for salvation and makes them more and more holy (sanctified). It is in the Eucharistic community where the believers can firmly take the path to holiness and *theosis*, and ultimately to salvation. The Concept appeals for Eucharistic communities (churches, parishes, groups of believers) to be established everywhere, in every place and among every culture[56].

B. Mission as liturgy: the ROC Missionary Concept view

Most of the statements of Concept 2005 (April 2005 version) are also found in the next version of April 2007. There are only insignificant differences between the two, which is why we are presenting here both Concepts as one unified platform for mission which now has the title 'Concept on the missionary activity of the Russian Orthodox church', as it is published on the official website of the Moscow Patriarchate.[57]

The preamble defines the main goals and aims of mission, and points out the main tasks of mission as well. Here again it is stated that all missions of the church aim at the sanctification of both people and the

[54] Schmemann, p. 255.
[55] 'Kontseptsiia vozrozhdeniia missionerskoi deiatel'nosti…,' p. 12.
[56] Ibid., p. 15.
[57] http://www.mospat.ru/index.php?mid=340, as of June 2009 (only in the Russian language).

world. Along with the task of proclaiming the gospel to all nations and the task of teaching people how to live a Christian life, the document restates the aim of mission: to pass on the experience of divine-human communion through the personal participation of Christians in the mystical (sacramental) life of the Eucharistic community.[58] This task confirms the importance of the liturgical tradition of the Orthodox Church and the need for Christians to live this tradition.

Living a liturgical life occurs both in the church and everywhere in the social life of Christians. But the role and the place of the liturgy and the other divine services of the church in the lives of Christians are essential for them so that they may be strengthened in their faith and ecclesiastical practice and so that their liturgical life will remain sanctified and reaffirmed by the Holy Spirit. This is why the second part of the document ('Methodology of the Orthodox mission') again insists that the immediate goal of mission is the creation of Eucharistic communities (parishes) 'unto the end of the world'.

While clarifying the tasks of the educational mission of the church, the Concept points out the main theological grounds which define a 'liturgical type' of mission. Among others (many of them connected with the teaching ministry of the church, as shown above), we also find the following:

- full acceptance that the Eucharist is the centre and the foundation of Christian life;

- full recognition and understanding that the life of Christians must be Christ-centred;

- full recognition and understanding that the meaning of participation in divine services is co-participation in the mystery of salvation;

- organisation of special 'missionary divine services' where liturgy is interwoven with elements of catechisation[59].

The Concept describes the characteristic features of missionary divine services as distinct from the ordinary services of the church. As shown above, much of it concerns the introduction of teaching (catechetical) elements into worship. The liturgical elements of such types of services are given, too. They all aim at affirming Christians in their liturgical life, both within the community, in society and in their private life. 'Each member of the Christian community should participate fully in liturgical life. This is an intensive spiritual life which includes constant self-testing, strict following of Christ's commands, true and deep

[58] 'Kontseptsiia missionerskoi deiatel'nosti…,' p. 5.
[59] 'Kontseptsiia missionerskoi deiatel'nosti…,' p. 10.

repentance, self-restraint, making efforts to consciously unite spirit, faith and deeds in oneself'.[60]

At a missionary divine service, it is acceptable that during the service theological and catechetical comments are made, but this in no way should influence the service itself or the spiritual mood and concentration of the congregation. The main purpose of such missionary services is stated thus: 'the liturgical culture of Orthodoxy should be made more accessible (understandable) to the mind of contemporary people'.[61] This again reaffirms the principle of a missionary's 'coming closer to the world', as the world now is different from the world the church used to know, even a few decades ago. The new reality needs new approaches, especially when it concerns the salvation of the human soul, which at the holy liturgy is mostly perceived in the act of taking the Holy Gifts as 'gifts for life eternal'.

Taking part in the liturgical life of the church and in the liturgy itself, especially in the Holy Eucharist, is inseparably linked with the understanding of the Orthodox notion of *theosis*. *Theosis* is stated to be the ultimate goal of mission, and by it the church means *theosis* of both humankind and the cosmos. *Theosis* and sanctification stand in close relation to the teaching of the church about the redeeming work of God: 'The redeeming work of God does not end in the redemption of humankind, but extends to the redemption of the cosmos. The creation of God will reach the purpose and place for which it was created.

The restoration of the universe supplies an added dimension to God's mission. God's mission is an overall plan that redeems human beings and renews and restores the physical creation to what God intended it to be before He created it. In all this, the glory of God is revealed'.[62] It is a postulate of Orthodox teaching and the teaching of the Holy Fathers that the sanctification (holiness) of humanity brings sanctification of the environment, as well. The notion of *theosis* does not start with St Athanasius's affirmation that God became human so that humans might become God,[63] nor does it end with St Maximus the Confessor,[64] as is

[60] Ibid..
[61] Ibid., p. 11.
[62] Stamoolis, p. 51.
[63] See St Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993), p. 93, where he says: 'He, indeed, assumed humanity that we might become God'.
[64] St Maximus the Confessor wrote: 'A sure warrant for looking forward with hope to deification of human nature is provided by the incarnation of God, which makes man god to the same degree as God himself became man.... Let us become the image of the one whole God, bearing nothing earthly in ourselves, so that we may consort with God and become gods, receiving from God our existence as gods. For it is clear that He who became man without sin (cf. Heb 4:15) will divinise human nature without changing it into the divine nature, and will raise it up for his own sake to the same degree as He lowered

sometimes cited in theological writings nowadays. The teaching of the Orthodox Church on *theosis* has been further developed by contemporary theologians[65] and further reaffirmed in many Orthodox documents of the Archbishop's Council of many local Orthodox churches.

It may sound strange to a Western Christian that a human being can be holy in this life. However, this is an indispensable truth for Orthodox Christians. Without the true, biblically and traditionally grounded understanding of holiness, no proper understanding can be reached as to how Christians possess this fervent zeal for salvation and are ready for martyrdom to gain it. Holiness in the life of Christians is most immediately perceived in the act of taking the Holy Gifts at Eucharist. Before taking the Gifts, you must purify yourself and become as sanctified in your life as possible for humans. This is reached through observing strict ecclesiastical discipline: fasting – both spiritually and physically; fervent and constant prayer; frequent attendance of divine services; care for the sick, the homeless, those in prison and other types of confinement, the hungry and those in need, and so on. It is not only discipline that purifies a Christian but also love – the love the Lord showed us how to express: to Him, to our neighbour, and for ourselves. The state of *theosis* can be reached in this life and it is *theosis* that makes the path to salvation more clearly visible and deeply felt.[66]

2. Theological reflections

'Christianity is a liturgical religion. The Church is first of all a worshiping community. Worship comes first, doctrine and discipline second'.[67] Florovsky's affirmation is true for any Christian tradition, and it is especially true for the Orthodox Church. Liturgy is central and crucial for bringing Christians closer to God. Doctrine and dogmas are important, too, but they are lived in the liturgy; they are neither abstract nor merely a reflection of the mind. It is true that doctrine and dogmas need to be correct and right because correct worship and liturgy and services are expressions of correctness in these areas. In their liturgical life, Christians constantly

himself for man's sake. This is what St Paul teaches mystically when he says, "...that in the ages to come he might display the overflowing richness of His grace" (Eph 2:7)'. See *Philokalia*, Vol. II, p. 178.

[65] See Lossky, *Mystical Theology*; John Karmiris, *A Synopsis of the Dogmatic Theology of the Orthodox Catholic Church* (Scranton, Pa.: Christian Orthodox Edition, 1973), pp. 55-74; John Meyendorff, *St. Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality* (Crestwood, N. Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974); Panagiotis I. Bratsiotis, 'The Fundamental Principles and Main Characteristics of the Orthodox Church,' in *The Orthodox Ethos*, ed. A J Philippou (Oxford: Holywell Press, 1964), pp. 23-31; Stamoolis, *Eastern Orthodox Mission*, p.154; Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Way* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, new edition, 1982), pp. 67-88; Archimandrite George, *Theosis: The True Purpose of Human Life* (Mount Athos, Greece: Holy Monastery of St Gregorios, 2006).

[66] For a more comprehensive explanation of *theosis* in modern terms, see Archimandrite George's *Theosis*, pp. 19-76.

[67] George Florovsky, 'The Elements of Liturgy in the Orthodox Catholic Church', *One Church*, Vol. 13, No 1-2, 1959, p. 24.

reaffirm the teachings and dogmas of the church, especially in the prayers and the hymns of the services. Western Christians have long ago noticed that all chants and hymns of the Orthodox divine services (any divine service) are in fact dogmatic definitions. All the *troparia*, *kontakia*, 'glory', *akathists* and many other types of Orthodox chants contain an abundance of the dogmatic teachings of the church. This makes it almost unnecessary for Orthodox Christians to specifically learn many dogmas at theological schools or seminaries (unless they want to become professional theologians) – they know the dogmas in a very practical way through their worship.

In this way, as affirmed above, theology is actually related to life, and theology is worship: 'Theology is something in which all believers can and must participate. It is no wonder that Orthodox theology is seen as "practical" theology and some have commented that it is expressed more in liturgy and prayer than in dogmatic confession… For the Orthodox, all theology is worship; all worship is theology…The examination of Orthodox theology then must include an examination of the liturgy'.[68]

The ROC missionary documents put special focus on the task of establishing Eucharistic communities in all dioceses and regions of the country. The missionary efforts and the 'missions' to many distant regions of the Russian Federation, which the missionary department of the ROC undertook between 1994 and 2005, convinced them that it is the liturgy that is the main motive for mission and for 'raising the body of Christ'. This is confirmed by the hundreds of churches built in these regions and the hundreds of Orthodox communities which were established there. They were all started through liturgy and have continued their own liturgical life which today bears rich fruit. They all have become missionary parishes as they continue to work among the majority of non-Orthodox people in the regions of Siberia and the Russian Far East. These missionary parishes now undertake collective and united efforts in order to bring inside those who are outside the church's boundary. Mission is not individual but collective:

> …Mission work is not exactly an individual duty but pre-eminently a collective one, which falls exclusively under the competence of the Church. So if and when each one of us does missionary work, he acts not merely as an individual but as a member of the Church or as the son of the Kingdom of God, as Christ's agent, aiming to also reinstate others on the road which leads to salvation through the Church.[69]

[68] Stamoolis, p. 10.
[69] P Demetropoulos, 'The Kingdom of God: Starting Point for the Mission Abroad', *Porefthendes* 7 (1965), p. 21.

If 'the liturgy contains the motivation for mission, is a method of mission, and is the aim of mission'[70], then the sacraments lay the foundation for mission, especially the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. Schmemann's affirmation that the Eucharist transforms the church into mission[71] well explains the repeated insistence of ROC missionaries on the urgent necessity that missionary parishes (with their core element – celebrating the liturgical tradition of the church) be established in every village, town and city. Understanding the meaning of the sacraments is not easy and needs special attention. This is why the Russian Orthodox Church tries to organise specialised courses on the liturgical tradition of the church where those who are not firmly rooted in their faith and ecclesiastical life have the opportunity to join teaching and practice into one unified 'struggle for Christ'. This is why special emphasis is put in the missionary concepts on the need of clarification of the meaning of the sacraments[72].

In a Eucharistic community, all Christians should feel they are missionaries. Because in their becoming holy and sanctified, after having received the Holy Gifts, they would not desire anything else but bringing this holiness into the world. This is the crucial importance of a Eucharistic community: to send out missionaries who are able to bring the light of the gospel to others and to sanctify the world. 'During the Eucharist, the Church unites with Christ. After the Eucharist, the Church returns to its mission in the world. But it is not simply a return. The Church, which has been called by God into the presence of the Trinity – a presence celebrated by the Communion in the body and blood of Christ – is then sent by God to the world. The Eucharist ends in mission, the Godhead sending the Church as the Father sent the Son'.[73] The church unites with Christ as a 'community of saints', not as individuals. 'Falling' is individual, whereas the path to *theosis* and salvation is communal.

Another important consideration of the missionary concepts is the role of the bishop in the work of mission by the power of the Holy Spirit. Unlike the previous two missionary concepts (that of 1995 and the other of 2005), the ROC Missionary Concept clearly speaks of the missionary responsibility of the bishop (as well as the missionary responsibilities of the

[70] Stamoolis, p. 87.
[71] Schmemann writes: 'The Eucharist is always the End, the sacrament of the *parousia*, and, yet, it is always the *beginning*, the *starting point:* now the mission begins. "We have seen the true Light, we have enjoyed Life eternal" but this Life, this Light, are given us in order to "transform" us into Christ's witnesses in this world. Without this ascension into the Kingdom, we would have had nothing to witness to; now, having once more become "His people and His inheritance", we can do what Christ wants us to do: "You are witnesses of these things" (Lk. 24:48). The Eucharist, transforming "the Church into what it is" – transforms it into mission.' See Schmemann, , 'The Missionary Imperative …," pp. 255-256; the words in double-inverted commas are taken from the liturgy; the italics are in the original.
[72] 'Kontseptsiia missionerskoi deiatel'nosti…,' p. 6.
[73] Stamoolis, p. 94.

clergy and lay people). The diocesan bishop is expected to organise and support efficient missionary activity in his diocese. He should make sure that all missionaries get appropriate missionary education and further strengthen their faith and liturgical life.[74] The bishop is also responsible for the efficient missionary activity carried out by missionary stations and camps (especially those which were established in the course of the missionary journeys between 1999 and 2004) in Siberia and the Russian Far East.[75] These requirements come from the conviction that the bishop is head of the local church and is the 'mystical performer' of the sacraments. The bishop is seen as 'the image of Christ' but only in the Eucharistic mystery.[76] In the person of the bishop the church can be said to be involved in mission.[77]

In summarising liturgical life as the missionary call of Orthodox Christians, we need to say that neither the catechetical aspect of mission, nor the liturgical, nor the salvific 'theology of mission' can be thought of separately from one another: all three constitute one theology which is practiced in the liturgical life of the faithful in the churches and in society. The artificial distinction we make between them can only help us better see the importance of each aspect of life for Orthodox Christians, as defined in the various ecclesiastical activities and tasks in their communities. The missionary documents of the Russian Orthodox church clearly state that the gospel will be proclaimed 'unto the end of the world' but spreading the Good News inevitably includes the true liturgical life of the believers, if they are to remain true to the gospel and the teaching of the church (including the teaching of Holy Tradition, along with the Holy Scriptures). The liturgical life of the faithful is sustained by the sound (healthy) Christian community which seeks salvation both for themselves and for 'the whole of creation'.

Conclusion – Personal Remarks

Personal remarks do not seem appropriate in a theological essay. It is not easy to speak in the first person singular in a scholarly essay, especially when the essay reflects theological considerations. But my humble experience in doing mission within the context of the Russian Orthodox Church makes me believe that even deep theological concerns can be shared and explained in order that we find similarities between our

[74] 'Kontseptsiia missionerskoi deiatel'nosti…,' p. 9.
[75] Ibid., p. 13.
[76] Meyendorff writes: 'The bishop was, first of all, the image of Christ in the Eucharistic mystery' (see John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology* [New York: Fordham University Press, 1974], p. 209).
[77] Cf. Stamoolis, p. 118.

experience and the experience of other missionaries and Christian theologians. Seven years of mission in Russia convinced me in a very practical way that doing mission is not an option but an imperative, as Schmemann clearly points out. Jesus Christ most often used imperatives when talking and preaching. He most often would say 'do this' and 'don't do that' and would not give any possibility of reconsidering His words. Obedience was one of the most honoured qualities in the past, especially in the Slavic countries where Slavic peoples were considered to be quite a submissive race. It may be that today obedience is still honoured in some places but it is all too evident that humility and submission are not the first qualities honoured by people today. Democracy and freedom (understood quite differently by different groups of people in a country or within a society) gave us the right not to be humble and not to submit to others. Today imperatives are almost avoided in society, only recommendations and offers are issued or spoken.

Today people agree that imperatives seem least acceptable in the area of religion and spiritual growth: love is the foundation of the Christian faith – love toward God and your neighbour. But is it simple to love one's neighbour (not to speak of one's enemies)? It is not: love needs effort, strength, sacrifice, and humility. Love needs submission, and often it needs imperatives to be obeyed and fulfilled. This is, at least, the experience the Russian Orthodox Church has had in her history and present activity.

Schmemann's affirmation that the Eucharist is the mission of the church has been practically and theologically developed by the Russian Orthodox Church in her missionary activity and in missionary research. Indeed, it is this most intimate and holy act of communion with God that makes believers desire the same intimate and holy communion for every human being. Communion means unity. As Fr Meyendorff affirms, the real unity of Christians is not in ecumenical gatherings, and not in their common actions, and not even in witnessing amongst non-believers –unity is in the Eucharist: it is an eschatological celebration which shows the coming of the Kingdom.[78]

The Holy Scripture verses of the Great Commission (Mt 28:19-20) tell us that teaching is the first imperative in mission: the original Greek text of this passage uses only 'teach' (or, 'make disciples', as discussed above) as an imperative form of the verb; all the other forms, translated as verbs in the modern texts, are participles (that is, literally we could translate them as 'by going [there]… teach all nations, baptising them…'). It is this understanding of mission that makes ROC missionary activity put the main focus on teaching (catechisation). This is why the three

[78] John Meyendorff, 'The Orthodox Church and Mission: Past and Present Perspectives,' *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 16 (1972), p. 66.

theological visions ('theologies') of mission require first the education of people, then bringing them into the church and enabling them to fully participate in the Eucharistic life of the parish, which ultimately leads them on the path of salvation. The example of the ROC with thousands of schools and teaching centres and Orthodox gymnasia demonstrates that teaching is the core of any missionary work.

At the same time we realise that teaching is not just telling people about Jesus and about the church as God's community of faithful followers of Christ: teaching needs to be appropriate and right. Theology and doctrines need to be right, too. If they are inappropriate and wrong, they do more harm than not having any teaching at all.[79] The right teaching is then constantly multiplied and reaffirmed in Holy Communion and in the Eucharistic life of the believers in a missionary parish. In this way the missionary parish should prepare true missionaries to go and teach others appropriately and rightly in their turn, by preparing them to undertake the path to salvation.

Observing the missionary activity of the ROC, one wonders whether the local church is ready to do mission in the way she has proclaimed in documents and showed in her missionary activity. The ROC realises the need for reorganisation, reassessment, and transformation: the church needs people transformed in their lives and thoughts in order to be able to discover mission in a new way and bring the Good News to others in the most adequate and efficient way. 'We need to discover mission in a new way: we not only need to teach people but to transform ourselves and only then to teach others… This is the way the Church will be transformed: if each of us discerns God and stays with Him'.[80] 'Staying with God' demands obedience to imperatives, and at the same time it needs love and

[79] Defining what is right and wrong is a delicate issue, especially if this concerns doctrines and ideologies. In her teaching and ecclesiastical practice, the Russian Orthodox Church has always referred to Christian tradition and to the teaching of the Holy Fathers. On 6 April 2006 a document was adopted at a World Russian People's Council: *Declaration on human rights and human dignity*. This declaration was then further developed and took the form of a Church Teaching which was confirmed, adopted and sanctioned by an Archbishop's Council on 26 June 2008. This document, with the title 'The Russian Orthodox Church's Teaching on Human Dignity, Freedoms and Rights' (it can be found at the official website of the Moscow Patriarchate: http://www.mospat.ru/index.php?mid=463, as of June 2009), was immediately implemented within the various ecclesiastical bodies, the churches and educational establishments throughout the country. It defines the Orthodox understanding of the three foundational human qualities as opposed to the universal declaration of human rights of 1948. The document specifically considers such issues as family, gender and sexual orientation; technological advances, especially biotechnology and the moral and ethical issues deriving from its advance; freedom of conscience and freedom from conscience; good and evil in human history and today; truth and 'new truths', etc. All these are still to be assessed and fully comprehended, but even now we can see a great abyss between the modern expression of life and the traditional vision of a Christian church that claims to have remained true to the teaching of the gospel and the early church.

[80] Antonii, Mitropolit Surozhskii, 'Missionerstvo Tserkvi'[Missionary activity of the Church], in *Missionerstvo Tserkvi* (Moscow: Sviato-Sergievskoe bratstvo, 2005, in Russian), p. 16.

love and love: toward God and neighbour, and toward all the creation, since the Orthodox affirmation of sanctification of nature through sanctification of humanity lies at the foundation of the Christian understanding of the salvific mission of Christ.

The missionary practice and theology of mission of the Russian Orthodox Church are still to be assessed by other Orthodox churches, other Christian traditions, and other religions as well. It is still not fully assessed even within the ROC and she needs to get responses and bring theology and practice into agreement in one unified Concept capable of transforming people's lives and nature's weakness. My missionary experience tells me that the Russian Orthodox Church can truly fulfil God's commandment to proclaim His Good News to the whole creation only if she interacts with the world and cooperates with other Christian churches. Her teaching and ecclesiastical practice still seem to remain quite secluded and inward, and she mainly aims to bring to the Orthodox Church the people living within Russia. The lack of knowledge of Russian Orthodox Christians of Western Christian ways of living a Christ-like life does not help them enter a true all-Christian dialogue and fellowship. In fact, this was my first missionary task in Moscow: making the Orthodox Christians I have been teaching acquainted with Western Christianity, more specifically with the life of the Anglican Church.

At the same time Western Christians do not know much about the Orthodox Church either, and this was my second missionary task: acquainting non-Orthodox Christians – mostly in the UK – with the life of the Orthodox Church. Closer cooperation between churches both in eastern and western Europe is very much needed. The ROC's understanding of mission is very much grounded in doctrine, dogmas and theology. We have seen above that these do not constitute abstract knowledge but actual practices in the lives of Orthodox Christians. At the same time we are quite aware that the doctrines and theology of the various Christian churches still divide Christians (or more specifically, the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the believers in the 'traditional' churches) in the world. This fact does not help us establish a true unity in Christ (and here was my third missionary task in Russia: seeking ways of reconciliation between the different Christian traditions and practices in the churches). Explaining and teaching an all-Christian attitude to proclaiming the gospel (to mission) can be (and really is) a painful process, and attempts at reconciling two contradicting Christian traditions can be not less than painful. But this is what missionaries always experience as we think about whether we are prepared to 'pay the price: weariness, threats, career, family, facing risks, antagonism, embarrassment'.[81]

[81] Alistair Brown, *I Believe in Mission* (London: Hodder&Stoughton, 1997), pp. 50-57.

The role, the place and the importance of the Orthodox Church in the world has been thoroughly discussed, and still questions like these have been constantly asked: how can one be united to Christ and fail to share the vision of Christ? How can one speak of Orthodox spirituality, a spirituality that dwells on mystical union with Christ, and not manifest a concern for the salvation of those not so united to Christ?[82] If the Orthodox Church possesses the truth, as she claims, then shouldn't it be shared? In considering similar challenging questions, Yannoulatos states: 'Let us not deceive ourselves. Our spiritual life will not acquire *the fervour, the broadness, the genuineness, that it should, if we continue to regard and live Christianity limited within the narrow boundaries of the community to which we belong,* forgetting its universal destiny, even if this community is our town or our country'.[83] In our common Christian desire for unity, do we find helpful the fact that today there are 350 Christian world communions representing some 40 000 distinct Christian denominations?[84] Can we keep in our mind such diversity of Christian teaching, theology and practices in the churches together with the desire 'to be one in Christ'?

It seems that the new missionary activity, as undertaken by Orthodox churches throughout the world, would enable a true and deep dialogue with the other Christian traditions such that we could all benefit from it, since we all know that we can see good ecclesiastical practices in many churches in the world. We can learn so much from each other, and this does not mean that we will completely change theology and practice in our own churches. This only means that we are trying to find ways of unity in Christ on the foundation of true Christian dialogue and sharing. It is also my deep conviction that the Russian Orthodox Church has undertaken a truly Christian missionary activity[85] and that her cooperation and agreement with the other Christian churches would make a difference in the world in this challenging new century.

Dr Valentin Kozhuharov,

[82] See Stamoolis, p. 84.
[83] Anastasios Yannoulatos, 'Orthodox Spirituality and External Mission', *International Review of Mission*, No 52 (1963), p. 301. The words in italics are given as in the original.
[84] 'Christian World Communions: Five Overviews of Global Christianity: AD 1800-2025,' *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 33, No 1 (Jan. 2009), pp. 1, 31-32.
[85] In order to resolve any doubts concerning the question of whether the Russian church continues her mission or has already diminished it, let us again affirm that missionary expeditions have been organized on an ongoing basis, the next one to cover several hundreds of kilometers along Russia's Arctic coast in August 2010.

Political and Religious Factors in the Emergence of the Baptist Movement in the Russian Empire

Timofei Cheprasov

Introduction

A number of books written on the history of the Russian Baptist movement begin with a description of the religious scene within the Russian Empire. Frequently authors, particularly if they come from a baptistic tradition,[1] claim that the appearance of the Baptist movement in Russia was a natural outcome of a search for true faith, a spiritual pilgrimage that the peoples of the Russian Empire[2] had made through the centuries.[3] Dukhobory, Khlysty, Skoptsy, Starovery, Molokane and various others are mentioned as proof of this constant spiritual search, thus showing that Russian Baptists have indigenous Russian roots, being a final product of the "pilgrimage", implying that the people have 'finally found it!'

Although some of these dissenters from Orthodoxy, like the Molokane, do show obvious connections to at least one of the centres (in the Caucasus) where the first Russian Baptists appeared, most of these sects had little or nothing in common with Baptists. They existed and co-existed at different stages of Russian history, far earlier than the first signs of Baptists in Russia can be traced. Moreover, most of these religious groups were formed around a particular charismatic leader or group of leaders.[4] None became a major movement that received wide recognition and support of the population or spread across the country. It was only in

[1]Throughout this work the term 'Baptist' will refer to a 'tradition or community of believers which is self-consciously Baptist and designates itself by that title'. The term 'baptist' or 'baptistic' (with a small 'b') will be used to refer to a wider tradition, which includes Mennonites, Brethren, Pentecostals, etc., that is, those who share 'some or all of those values associated with believer's baptism, the autonomy of the local congregation and freedom of conscience' (Nigel G. Wright, *Free Church, Free State: The Positive Baptist Vision* [Waynesboro, Ga.: Paternoster Press, 2005], p. xxiii). For the origin of the terms, see McClendon, *Ethics: Systematic Theology Vol. 1* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), p. 19; and Rollin G Grams and Parush R Parushev, "Editor's Preface," in Grams and Parushev, eds., *Towards an Understanding of European Baptist Identity: Listening to the Churches in Armenia, Bulgaria, Central Asia, Moldova, North Caucasus, Omsk and Poland* (Prague: IBTS, 2006), p. 10.

[2] The Russian Empire was a multi-national country. By using the terms 'Russian people' or 'Russians', I am referring to various ethnic groups that lived on the territory of the Russian Empire. Instead of naming all possible ethnic groups, this use is intended for convenience. I do not mean to imply that there was but one ethnicity or rob other nations (some of which are independent countries now) of their history.

[3] E.g. S N Savinskiy, *Istoriia russko-ukrainskogo baptizma: Uchebnoie posobiie* [The history of Russian-Ukrainian baptism: Study manual] (Odessa: Odessa Theological Seminary 'Bogomislie', 1995), p. 7.

[4] For more information on the history and convictions of the sects and movements mentioned, see Georg Bernard Michels, *At War with the Church: Religious Dissent in Seventeenth-Century Russia* (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1999); Irina Paert, *Old Believers, Religious Dissent and Gender in Russia, 1760-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003). A helpful perspective can be found in Sergei Margaritov, *Istoriia russkikh misticheskikh i ratsionalisticheskikh sect* [The history of Russian mystical and rationalistic sects], Izdanie 3, dopolnennoie (Simferopol, 1910).

the second half of the nineteenth century that groups and individuals such as the Stundists, Pashkovtsy and other Baptists began to stir minds and cause controversies in different corners of the empire. The year 1867 is considered the starting point of the Baptist movement in Russia, marked by the baptism of Nikita Voronin on 20 August in Tiflis.[5] Despite the fact that Stundists, Evangelical Christians and Baptists were constantly persecuted, their numbers grew rapidly, counting tens of thousands of active members in only twenty years.[6]

The fact that the Baptist movement started only in the second half of the nineteenth century and very quickly spread over the vast territory of the Russian Empire implies that there were significant reasons for it. Albert W. Wardin argues that multiple factors are to be considered: the sociological, political and religious situation within Russia; financial support; evangelistic and educational efforts of the Western Baptists (particularly German Baptists) and Mennonites; as well as the passion and zeal of laypersons and indigenous evangelists in spreading this teaching that was an alternative to Orthodoxy.[7] However, he insists that all of these factors are secondary, pointing to the indigenous roots of the movement.

Without rejecting the contribution of Baptists from abroad, I wish to concentrate on indigenous elements in the origins of the Baptist movement in Russia. I will argue that a general meltdown in state internal politics and control allowed 'unrest of minds' and freer thinking, which, when projected on a serious crisis that the Russian Orthodox Church was going through, resulted in a radical movement within the church. This movement grew out of a desire to bring positive change to the Orthodox Church. This desire was the result of communal reading and interpretation of the Bible, which in most cases took the form of preaching—a simplistic interpretation and direct application of the Scriptures into the lives of the hearers.

The politics of persecution that both civil officials and the Orthodox clergy adopted, forced these radicals to split away, gradually forming a new denomination. One of its major marks was preaching. My claim is that preaching[8] played a formative role in establishing and spreading the Russian Baptist movement.

---

[5] Albert W Wardin, Jr., 'Penetration of Baptists into the Russian Empire in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of European Baptist Studies*, 7/3 (May 2007), p. 45.

[6] *Baptist Missionary Magazine* (April 1903), p. 126.

[7] Wardin, "Penetration of Baptists…", p. 47.

[8] It is important to emphasise that preaching among Russian Baptists at the earlier stages of their development had a very particular form and meaning. Its main purpose was retelling the story of the Bible in understandable language and offering a simple application. Very often it was a message about Christ, which was always followed by an invitation to repent and believe in him. The chronic shortage of Bibles and the great number of uneducated people made this kind of preaching the only possible way of spreading the Good News (see, e.g. Walter Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals since World War II* [Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1981], pp. 60-64).

Of course, Ukrainian Stundists were only one part of the revival in the Russian Empire. However, due to the limitations of this article, I will focus exclusively on the history of Ukrainian Stundists, deliberately omitting the revivals in St Petersburg (also known as the Pashkovite movement) and in the Caucasus.

Freedom, crisis and the Bible

The second half of the nineteenth century was marked by a set of unique circumstances that made Russian society a fertile soil for the emergence and spread of the baptistic movement. These were freedom, the Bible and the religious crisis. Freedom came as a result of the politics of Alexander II, who freed the serfs and allowed free thinking.[9] For the first time in history the Bible was published in contemporary Russian and was made widely available. The crisis that struck the Russian Orthodox Church at that time prompted many people to look for other forms of religious expression. Nonetheless, it would be wrong to say that they started searching for an alternative denomination or religion. Yet, without any doubt, there was a great desire to see some change within the established church.

Freedom

The rule of Emperor Nicholas I ended in 1856 leaving Russia facing complete catastrophe. The loss of the Crimean War and the consequent destruction of Russia's military prestige and political influence 'was a severe blow to national self-esteem'.[10] Gregory L Freeze points out that, 'The Crimean War not only exacted a high cost in lives, resources, and prestige, but also vitiated the main impediment to reform—the belief that the existing order was consonant with stability and power'.[11] Failure in foreign politics and serious internal economic problems caused disillusionment with ideas of Russia's uniqueness and superiority, resulting in an epistemological crisis of a sort.[12] All of these factors defined a need for renewal. Alexander II was the answer to that need. Although his life tragically ended with his assassination, his reign could be considered one of the most important periods in Russian history. His reforms were incomplete and could not untie the knot of society's social and economic problems,

[9] This does not mean that there was absolute freedom in the Russian Empire in 1856-1884. Yet this period was marked by far greater political, social and religious freedom than any other era of Russian imperial history.

[10] George Vernadsky, *A History of Russia*, 3d rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951), p. 156.

[11] Gregory Freeze, "Reform and Counter Reform 1855-1890" in *Russia, A History*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 172.

[12] I am referring to Alasdair MacIntyre's concept of a crisis of self-perception caused by a certain discovery or event. As MacIntyre notes, 'such a discovery is often paralysing, and… social life as we know it could scarcely continue' ('Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science', in Stanley Hauerwas and L Gregory Jones, eds., *Why Narrative: Readings in Narrative Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), pp. 138-139.)

with perhaps tragic consequences. Yet the impact of Alexander II, the 'Tsar-Liberator', whose rule is known as the Epoch of Great Reforms, cannot be overestimated.

One of the most needed reforms was related to the institution of serfdom—a form of slavery that was beginning to threaten the stability of the country. The process of freeing the serfs was initiated in 1857 with the work of the Committee on Peasant Reform. Public discussions were initiated for the first time in Russian history, bringing social problems that were already highly criticised in progressive literature, into focus for the whole country. The process concluded in 1861 when all the serfs were freed and given the possibility to buy land allotments and transfer them into private or communal property.[13]

Without describing all the complexities of this reform, it is sufficient to say that the peasants were left feeling that they were actually robbed of freedom, since their expectations of getting land as well as economic independence were not met. They became even poorer than before—freedom brought hunger. This dissatisfaction resulted in numerous violent disorders. And 'although the number of disorders gradually declined (849 in 1862, 509 in 1863, 156 in 1864), the villages continued to seethe with resentment and discontent'.[14] Former serf-owners were also far from happy. They lost their power without receiving proper compensation for their property; they were short of finances and lacked prospects for the future. Many of them went bankrupt, being unable to adjust to a changing social reality. Thus, the nobility became a force of opposition, looking for power in exchange for being deprived of their social and economic privileges. As several historians note, despite the fact that the reform had completely transformed the country, it became one of the major reasons for the Revolution of 1918.[15]

Gradual relaxation of censorship (1865) was another important element of freedom. Although censorship was not removed from social life, it was changed from pre-censorship to post-censorship, with much weaker control. This 'significantly enhanced the ability of the press to publish quickly and, within limits, to exercise some freedom of expression'.[16] Soon after the introduction of the new law, a great amount of earlier prohibited literature was published, bringing new philosophical, social, religious and cultural ideas onto the Russian public scene.[17]

---

[13]Nicholas V Riasanovsky and Mark D Steinberg, *A History of Russia*, 7th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 344.
[14] Freeze, *Russia, A History*, p. 177.
[15] Vernadsky, *A History of Russia*, pp. 159-169; cf. Freeze, *Russia, A History*, p. 170.
[16] Freeze, *Russia, A History*, p. 180.
[17] See C E Black, ed., *The Transformation of Russian Society: Aspects of Social Change since 1861* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960).

Education also underwent a significant change. Many new schools were opened across the country. Each university found itself turned into a 'self-governing corporation, with far greater rights for its teaching staff and even some recognition of student rights'.[18] The great freedoms that universities received produced the rapid development of Russian philosophical thought and increased the political involvement of the people. These changes also carried certain negative features. Universities received a reputation as places of liberal thinking, nests of atheism and ungodliness, and even as producers of revolutionaries and rebels. The following statement partly explains the origins of contemporary 'anti-intellectualism' among Russian Baptists:

> The university students contributed the greatest number of radical and revolutionary leaders. The majority of the students consisted of men who had no means whatsoever. The average student lived in a state of semi-starvation, earning his way through the university by giving lessons or by copying. The majority of the students had no notion of sport and no taste for it. Lack of physical exercise and consequent ill-health had a crushing effect upon the psychology of the students…[19]

As a consequence of the above mentioned factors, as well as major administrative and judicial reform, there appeared a new social class—*raznochintsy*.[20] The core of this group was the growing educated middle class: doctors, engineers, scientists, writers, publishers, journalists. The group expanded in size and particularly in social importance. Although still relatively small in numbers, these people were extremely active in society. Ironically, this new class, which was purely a result of the 'Great Reforms', despised both the reforms and the government, demanding complete transformation of the Russian state.[21]

This general dissatisfaction with the existing order and the belief that the reforms were incomplete also had some positive results. One of them was a 'populist movement', based upon the belief that it was possible to achieve the transformation of the whole society through education and the enlightenment of the masses:

---

[18] Freeze, *Russia, A History*, p. 178.

[19] Vernadsky, *A History of Russia*, p. 169.

[20] *Raznochintsy* is a complex word that consists of two roots—*razniy*, which means 'different' and *chin*—'social status'. Thus, the name of this class means 'a mixture of people of different sorts, who were neither peasants, nor aristocracy', Ibid.

[21] 'Nihilism' was one of its extreme manifestations. This movement was popular among educated youth and was marked by a rejection of absolute values and belief in the absolute power of science. This was not a revolutionary movement, however; instead, nihilists were marked by a 'negative attitude towards existing convention, social, political and religious institutions' (Edmund Heier, *Religious Schism in the Russian Aristocracy 1860-1900: Radstockism and Pashkovism* [The Hague: Marinus Nijhoff, 1970], p. 6. See also Nicholas V Riasanovsky, *Russian Identities: A Historical Survey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 167-211.)

> The movement reached its peak in 1873-74 when thousands, not only of young men and women, but also of men in well-established professions (including hundreds of aristocrats) roamed the Russian countryside, often dressed as peasants, to carry out their enlightening propagandist activities. They abandoned the universities and their comfort in order to serve the people and be one with them in spirit.[22]

However, the peasants turned out to be the most conservative class of Russian society. Most of them did not welcome these ideas. They neither accepted these 'western things' nor the people who were trying to 'enlighten' them. Police archives hold multiple accounts of peasants reporting to the police on the activities of the populists.

The history of Russian society in the second half of the nineteenth century presents a fascinating mosaic of new philosophical ideas and attempts to implement these ideas and translate them into reality. It was a period that many historians call the 'Russian Enlightenment', which significantly changed and influenced the development of the country. However, despite all the newness, freedom and openness, or perhaps because of it, one of the major results of this time was a deeply divided society.

The crisis

Without any doubt, in the second half of the nineteenth century, Russian society was in a spiritual crisis. The educated intelligentsia and nobility were seeking answers in science. The uneducated peasants turned to the Orthodox Church, which itself needed help.

The beginning of the crisis that struck the Russian Orthodox Church can be traced to the time of Peter the Great. One of his numerous reforms was the removal of the figure of the Patriarch from the political and social stage of the Russian state. In his place, Peter instituted the new governing body of the Orthodox Church, the 'Most Holy Governing Synod', presided over by a civil official, the Chief Procurator. This marked the change from the Orthodox Church being the heart of the Russian nation into its becoming an institution, a sort of 'ministry of spiritual affairs', which was gradually drifting away from the needs and struggles of the people, serving only the interests of the state. This 'dealt a terrible blow to the Russian Church [after which] she was paralysed for two centuries'.[23]

---

[22] Heier, *Religious Schism*, pp. 6-7. D N Ovsianiko-Kulikovskiy, 'Kaiushchiesiia dvoriane' i raznochintsy 60-kh godov', *Istoriia russkoi intelligentsii* (Sobranie sochineniy) ['Repenting nobles and raznochintsy of the 60s', in The history of the Russian intelligentsia (Collected works)](St Petersburg, 1911), VIII, pp. 83-99; Andreas E Buss, *The Russian-Orthodox Tradition and Modernity* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 120-128.

[23] Helene Iswolsky, *Christ in Russia: The History, Tradition, and Life of the Russian Church* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1960), p. 113.

The state officials understood the value of the church as an influential agent; thus they were always concerned about its 'well-being'. As Vera Shevzov notes:

> State-initiated regulations during the eighteenth century made themselves felt in internal, even sacred, aspects of ecclesial life. Toward the goal of proper ordering of the state, which included a populace of good Orthodox standing, state officials often took an interest in ensuring that church life was properly observed. In this vein, for instance, a 1774 directive delegated to local civil officials the responsibility of making sure that people attended church on Sundays and major feast days, thereby blurring the boundaries between civil and purely ecclesial life. A similar blurring of boundaries was evident in civil legislation mandating annual confession and Communion.[24]

Thus, at a time of social unrest and radical movements, a time of disillusionment and constant spiritual search for the meaning of life by many people, the church itself needed help. Its clergy were unable and, to a certain degree, uninterested in understanding and helping people. Its witness, ethical life and teaching were almost non-existent due to the corruption caused by poverty, poor education and the almost total lack of support given to local parish clergy. The teaching of the church, its rites and liturgy were unclear and seemed inadequate to simple people and were considered irrelevant by the nobility and intelligentsia. [25]

Not surprisingly, one of the reforms of Alexander II was related to the Orthodox Church. 'Special commissions designed a broad range of reforms, including the establishment of parish councils in 1864 (to raise funds for local needs), the reform of ecclesiastical schools in 1867 (modernising curriculum and opening schools to youth from all social classes), the formal abolition of the clerical caste in 1867, and a radical reorganisation of parishes in 1868. Still more reforms were in preparation…'[26] Ironically, it was exactly such 'care' by the state that resulted in the crisis mentioned above, and in the unwillingness and hostility of clergy to conform to the reforms.[27] The church leaders saw that the church 'was kept like a captive under the pretext of its own safety',[28]

---

[24]Vera Shevzov, *Russian Orthodoxy on the Eve of Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 17.

[25]Sergei Margaritov, writing at the beginning of the twentieth century from the Orthodox perspective offers several reasons for the appearance and spread of the baptistic movements in Russia. His first and second reasons are the failure of the Orthodox Church to provide guidance for the freed serfs and the uncontrolled reading and interpretation of the Bible that freed serfs had received (*Istoriia russkikh misticheskikh i ratsionalisticheskikh sekt,* pp. 147-148.)

[26] Freeze, *Russia, A History*, p 180.

[27] A I Polunov, 'Church, Regime, and Society in Russia (1880-1895)', *Russian Studies in History*, vol. 39, no. 4 (Spring 2001), p. 34.

[28] Edmund Heier, *Religious Schism*, p. 17.

whilst state officials were blunt about the nature of their care. Consider the words of D A Tolstoi (Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, 1865-1880) about the role the church was to take within the state system: 'I view the clergy… as no more and no less than a force that must be subordinate to the government and of which a wise government can make clever use for its own ends'.[29]

As seen from this brief survey of Russian society at the second half of the nineteenth century, both society and the official church were struggling with serious issues, looking for new ways of development, and realising the need for change. It was an age of disillusionment about the 'kind Tsar' working for the freed serfs, and there was disillusionment about socialist ideas among the wide spectrum of intelligentsia, some of whom turned to terrorism. It was an age of either skepticism and cynicism, or the rise of conservative ideas among the aristocracy. It was a time when the guidance of the church was especially needed, but was missing.[30]

Now I would like to turn to the Bible, the third element among the main prerequisites for the emergence of the Baptist movement.

The Bible

The history of the Russian people receiving the Scripture began in 1816, the year when the Bible was published in Old Slavonic. The first Russian translation of the New Testament was published in 1822, with 25 000 volumes produced. Unfortunately, the initiative to translate and publish the Bible into Russian at that time was not supported by the Orthodox clergy. After the death of Alexander I, the Bible Society was closed and those New Testaments that had not been distributed were burnt.

The second period of bringing the Bible to the Russian people is closely connected with the name of Moscow Metropolitan Filaret (1782-1867). Under his influence the Holy Synod made the decision in 1862 to translate the Bible into contemporary Russian. In 1863 a small group began raising funds to assist people in purchasing Bibles. Three years later this group grew into the Society of Distribution of the Holy Scriptures in

[29] E M Feoktistov, *Za kulisami politiki i literatury* [Behind the curtains of politics and literature] (Leningrad, 1929), p. 169.

[30] However, it would be an exaggeration to say that there was general 'disillusionment in the official church', as Edmund Heier puts it in his analysis of the rise of the evangelical movement known as Radstockism or Pashkovism. The whole society was so deeply Orthodox (both peasants and nobles) that people could not see a viable alternative, could not imagine a different way of life. Later when looking at Stundists, I will point out that neither Stundism nor Pashkovism began as an alternative to Orthodoxy. Rather they were sincere attempts to bring about a positive change within the church and the country.

Russia, supported by the imperial government. The full Russian Synodal Bible was published in 1876.[31]

The work of this and other organisations that were involved in the distribution of the Scriptures was tremendous. During thirty years of this ministry they distributed over 1.5 million copies of the New Testament, including 150 000 copies in the Asian part of the Russian Empire. Many of these books were distributed through special people—full-time travelling distributors of Bibles and other spiritual literature. They walked through towns and villages, carrying the books and the Good News; sales were almost always accompanied by their simple preaching.[32]

Stundist dissent

I would like to turn to one the main centres of evangelical revival in Russia— the first peasant Stundist communities in the Ukraine, their beginning, and their characteristic features and practices, which caused their excommunication from the Orthodox Church. This was accompanied by persecutions from both the clergy and the Russian state and led to the eventual formation of a new denomination.

In this short study I am deliberately omitting the Stundist movement among the German colonists. Rather, my focus will be on the first known communities of Ukrainian Stundists, because there is much evidence that they appeared without direct German influence. Obviously, it will not be possible to provide a comprehensive picture of the Ukrainian Stundist movement—it was not coordinated, and had various leaders with different agendas and doctrines. Yet, there was one feature that characterised every single community or group called Stundists, namely communal preaching—a simplistic reading of the Bible with its subsequent application to the immediate life situation done by various members of the community.

The first community of Ukrainian Stundists was formed in 1862 in Osnova, a village in the southern Ukraine. The group met in the house of the village elder (*starosta*) Mikhail Ratushniy for prayer, Bible study and singing.[33] Due to the numerous similarities of this group with German

[31] Iu Reshetnikov, S Sannikov, *Obzor istorii evangelskogo-baptistskogo bratstva na Ukraine* [Overview of the history of the Evangelical-Baptist brotherhood in the Ukraine] (Odessa: Bogomislie, 2000), pp. 68-69.

[32] Robert G Torbet, Albert W. Wardin, Sergei Savinskiy, *Istoriia baptistov* [A history of the Baptists] (Odessa: Bogomislie, 1996), p. 321. See also Viktor Dik, *Svet Evangeliia v Kazakhstane: Istoriia vozvessheniia Evangeliia i rasprostraneniia obshchin Baptistov i Menonnitov v Kazakhstane (Pervaia polovina XX veka)* [The light of the gospel in Kazakhstan: The history of the proclamation of the gospel and the spread of the Baptist and Mennonite communities in Kazakhstan (first half of the XX century] (Samenkorn: Steinhagen, 2003), p. 67.

[33] Police reports show that Ratushniy started his meetings in 1862 (Sergei I Zhuk, *Russia's Lost Reformation: Peasants, Millennialism, and Radical Sects in Southern Russia and Ukraine, 1830-1917* [Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2004], p. 192), which is another important indirect confirmation of the importance of the Bible's appearance in the hands of lay people.

Stundist practices,[34] these Christians were labeled 'Ukrainian *Stunde*'.[35] Yet, the report of the local priest to the archbishop claimed neither that the peasants were visiting 'German churches' nor that 'German pastors' preached among them.[36] Therefore, the group was not persecuted at the beginning. The members of the group were devout Orthodox believers who actively participated in all church services and ceremonies, read and studied the Bible, and used it as a guide for their lives.[37]

About four years later 'Stunda' began to spread into the neighbouring villages.[38] Although the police were not too happy about it, suspecting them of preaching the 'German faith', they could not find 'any evidence of a German presence at the peasant meetings, [recognising that] the peasants read only books printed by the Russian Orthodox publishing houses'.[39] There are documents showing that sometimes Stundist leaders were arrested for 'teaching the gospel falsely' but were quickly released, after Orthodox priests visited them. This shows that the police at that time did not consider Stundists to be spreading a different faith, which was a criminal offence.[40]

There were several important marks of this first Stundist group. First, the group was an indigenous movement that was formed around an educated individual (Ratushniy) in order to read and reflect upon the Bible.[41] According to Ratushniy's personal witness, he decided to start his house-group after a village meeting, where 'the peasants asked the local

[34]These practices can be identified as evening meetings for Bible study, extemporaneous prayer and singing Christian hymns. Their exemplary moral life, manifested in the rejection of consumption of alcohol and use of bad language was another 'similarity'. As A Rozhdestvenskiy put it, 'They did not pay attention to the theoretical side of faith, but they brought to the fore its practical points—the desire to live according to the Scripture, trying to live out the Christian ideals' (A Rozhdestvenskiy, *Iuzhno-russkiy shtundism* [South-Russian Stundism] [St. Petersburg, 1889], p. 1).

[35] N N Iarigin, in his analysis of the emergence of the Baptist movement in Russia, argues that the label 'stunda' was created by the Orthodox clergy, in order to create an image of its foreign origins in the eyes of simple peasants and, more importantly, of state officials. For the same reason there were attempts to 'link' Ukrainian Stundists to the Peasant Wars of the sixteenth century (N N Iarigin, *Evangel'skoe dvizhenie v Volgo-Vyatskom regione* [The evangelical movement in the Volgo-Vyatski region] [Moscow: Akademicheskiy Proekt, 2004], p. 28).

[36] Rozhdestvenskiy, *Iuzhno-Russkiy Shtundizm*, p. 57.

[37] Rozhdestvenskiy, *Iuzhno-Russkiy Shtundizm*, pp. 56-57.

[38] In 1865 there were about twenty people in the group; by 1867 the numbers grew to thirty-five families; in 1870 there were over 200 members (Reshetnikov and Sannikov, *Obzor istorii Evangelskogo-Baptistskogo bratstva na Ukraine*, p. 77.)

[39] Zhuk, *Russia's Lost Reformation*, p. 165.

[40] The story of I Riaboshapka, one of the most prominent Baptist leaders, is a good example. Riaboshapka was arrested in 1867 and in 1878, being accused of 'teaching the Gospel falsely,' but every time he was released after visiting a local priest for instruction, confession and communion. (*Materiali dlia istorii vozniknovenia i rasprostroneniia stundi na iuge Rossii* [Materials for the history of the appearance and spread of the Stundist movement in the south of Russia] [Kievskaia Starina, 1884], p. 11.)

[41]Some Ukrainian authors show the connection between the conversion of Mikhail Ratushniy and the peasant Onishchenko, who, presumably, was baptised by German Shtundists in 1858 (Torbet, Wardin, Savinskiy, *Istoriia baptistov*, p. 327.). However, in a personal conversation Albert W Wardin indicated that he was not able to find any documented proof of the existence of such a link.

priest questions about religion' but the priest was unable to answer them. Thus, Ratushniy decided to invite these people into his house and explain to them what the Bible had to say about their questions.[42]

Second, the movement was not an alternative to the Orthodox Church. It was an attempt to add to the church's existing practices something that people were lacking—relevant guidance for daily living. This point could be strengthened by considering the fact that the priest in Osnova was Greek and could not speak Russian. How could he give the needed guidance? However, this did not prevent him from acting on the basis of some strange conviction, and upon his arrival in the area he began prohibiting people from reading the Scripture in their own homes, insisting that they visit his house to receive answers to their questions.[43]

The third characteristic feature of the movement was its gradual turn to German Mennonites and later to Baptists. This, however, was largely due to their rejection by the Orthodox clergy.[44] The breakaway from the Orthodox Church started to happen almost six years after the group began meeting for Bible study/preaching and prayer. The dissent was neither Ratushniy's primary goal nor a sign of German (or any other) influence. Karl Bonnekemper, a German pastor who arrived in the Ukraine to minister to German colonists, explained this to the governor of Kherson province: 'The majority of Russian peasants wanted to read and understand the New Testament. They asked the Orthodox priests for instruction and help. But not receiving assistance from the Russian clergy the religious peasants turned to the representatives of non-Orthodox churches'.[45]

Wardin argued that German Baptist missionaries did not try to evangelise the Russian Orthodox population, 'until after the Stundist movement had started… If anything, Ukrainian Stundists will reach out to Baptists rather than Baptists reaching out to them'. The shift from Orthodox-Stundism to Baptist-Stundism started when Efim Tsymbal persuaded Abraham Unger, a Mennonite Brethren preacher, to perform water baptism for him and several other converted peasants in 1869.[46] Tsymbal, in turn, baptised Ivan Riaboshapka, who became one of the most

[42] Zhuk, *Russia's Lost Reformation*, p. 166.

[43] Rozhdestvenskiy, *Iuzhno-Russki Shtundizm*, p. 57; also Bishop Alexiy (Doronitsin), *Materiali dlia istorii religiozno-ratsionalisticheskogo dvizheniia na iuge Rossii vo vtoroi polovine XIX stoletiia* [Materials for the history of the religious-rationalistic movement in the south of Russia in the second half of the XIX Century] (Kazan, BM BD, 1908), p. 48.

[44] Bishop Alexiy quotes a complaint Ratushniy made to the police after he and three other members of their group were beaten by some extremist Orthodox peasants. In the complaint Ratushniy stated that they were persecuted for reading and studying the Bible, implying that his group were still members of the Orthodox Church who had no intention of leaving the Mother-Church (*Materiali dlia istorii*, pp. 67-68).

[45] Rossiiskiy gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv [Russian state historical archive], f.796, op. 149, d.448, 1.9; F.821, op. 5, d.991, 1.2-2ob. (Quoted after Zhuk, *Russia's Lost Reformation*, p. 192).

[46] Albert Wardin, 'How Indigenous was the Baptist Movement in the Russian Empire?' *Journal of European Baptist Studies*, Volume 9, Number 2 (January 2009), pp. 34-35.

prominent preachers of the new movement. In 1871 Riaboshapka baptised Ratushniy and forty-eight people from his group.[47] The name of Johann Wieler should be mentioned at this point. After 1869 he developed close relationships with Ratushniy and other Stundists. 'He counseled them to withdraw entirely from the Orthodox Church and form their own congregations'. This began the transformation of Stundists from a radical Orthodox wing into independent baptistic communities.

Ratushniy's group was only one among many that sprang up in the south of Ukraine at the beginning of the 1860s. Some of them were clearly linked to the German settlers, while others did not show any connection. Some appeared independently; others were 'planted' by known Stundist leaders. Yet it is possible to point to several features that all these groups shared. First, for a number of years all of them continued to practice their Orthodox faith, including infant baptism, attending worship, observing the fasts and holidays, venerating icons, etc. They all shared the desire to read and study the Bible in their homes. They practiced high standards of moral life. They were keen evangelists—passionately telling/retelling 'what the Bible teaches'.

Considering their sincere Orthodox faith, zeal for study and application of the Bible, and exemplary moral lives, it could be said that Stundists were very good Orthodox believers. This was admitted by one of the leaders of the Orthodox Church, who mourned that the evangelical movement was not led by Orthodox leaders, and thus went astray.[48] Unfortunately (for the Orthodox Church) the local clergy could neither understand nor accept the new expressions of Orthodox spirituality and tried to suppress it, often seeking assistance in this task from the state authorities and the police. This caused the breakaway of these groups, which were already dissatisfied with the official church, and beginning to see it as 'idolatrous' and 'false'. Naturally, they turned to the non-Orthodox churches for help, thus becoming a beginning for the Baptist movement.

Despite their newly gained non-Orthodox identity, the baptistic movement grew among the peasants. This can only be explained by the 'closeness' of the new movement to the beliefs and worldviews of simple people. Unlike the movement of Populists, considered by peasants as Western and therefore rejected, Baptist movements, having indigenous Orthodox roots and theology, were able to offer an 'updated', more relevant version of the church, providing people with moral guidance, down-to-earth, understandable spirituality, and a community where people

[47]Heather J Coleman, *Russian Baptists and Spiritual Revolution, 1905-1929* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), p. 16. See also Rozhdestvenskiy, *Iuzhno-Russki Shtundizm*, chapter 2.
[48] Reshetnikov and Sannikov, *Obzor istorii Evangel'sko-Baptistskogo bratstva na Ukraine.*

could take an active role in prayer, Bible-reading (which also included preaching) and worship.[49]

Conclusion

In this article I have attempted to map the nature of the Great Reforms of the second half of the nineteenth century in the Russian Empire. The reforms resulted in a transformed society with freer, more open thinking, yet at the same time a society that was deeply divided at all levels—economic, social and spiritual. Unfortunately, the Orthodox Church was not able to provide either moral or spiritual guidance for its people. Partly this lack was compensated for by the Bible, which people received at that time and could read.

This grass-roots communitarian reading and lay preaching (interpretation and application) of the Bible resulted in a very distinct lifestyle and certain convictions that were considered threatening to the church and therefore to the state, thus causing persecution and the dissent of these groups from the Orthodox Church and eventually the formation of a new denomination. Therefore, it is possible to speak about the practice of reading the Bible in the community and preaching—understood as retelling, simplistic interpretation and immediate application of the biblical stories—as an initial formative force that helped to establish the Russian Baptist movement.

Certainly, these are not the only components that resulted in the appearance and the spread of Russian Baptists. I have mentioned only a few here, omitting other important influences, such as the life and example of the German settlers, the sporadic contributions of various missionaries, and many other things. This omission was done for only one reason—all those additional contributions, though important, did not produce any significant results until the Bible and the ability to read it was given to the people.

Timofei Cheprasov,

[49] Perhaps it is worth noting that this zeal for simplistic reading of the Bible and a strong conviction that God speaks to his people through the preaching of every 'brother or sister in Christ' has often led to various extremes in both interpretation of the Bible and in communal practices, including relationships with Orthodox believers. This, however, is a subject for another study.

Canonical Territory and National Security: Patriarch, President, and Proselytism in the Russian Federation

D R Jackson

> The Patriarch is the custodian of the internal unity of the Church and, together with his brothers in the episcopate, guardian of the purity of the faith ... The Patriarch is the defender of the canonical borders of the church. This ministry takes on special significance in the situation that arose after the formation of independent states on the territory of 'historic Russia'. While respecting their sovereignty and caring for their well-being, the Patriarch is called, at the same time, to be concerned with maintaining and strengthening the spiritual ties between people living in these countries for the sake of preserving the system of values which the one Orthodox civilization of Holy Russia reveals to the world.[1]
>
> Patriarch Kirill, 1 February 2009

'One Bishop – one City – one Church'

Orthodox scholars assume that when the Apostle Paul mentions the churches of Jerusalem, Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus, he points implicitly to their being territorially distinct. In the greater number of instances it seems that when Paul is referring to the church, he is referring to the church in a city.[2]

The earliest extra-biblical, canonical witnesses to the territoriality of the church are to be found among the eighty-five *Apostolic Canons* and in the later canons of the Ecumenical Councils.[3] These use a diversity of categories to describe the area over which a bishop of the church may exercise his ecclesiastical and administrative oversight to ordain, deploy and dismiss other clergy as well as his other pastoral duties in caring for the church in that place. They include 'city' (*Apostolic Canons* 12, 35), 'parish' (*Apostolic Canons* 14, 15, 34), and 'the [country] places that

[1] 'New Russian Patriarch Kirill I pledges to keep church unified', *ENI*, 2 February 2009.

[2] Although the Apostle Paul also uses the term 'church' when discussing Christians who assemble in the homes of believers (Ro 16:23; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Philemon 1:2) as well as using it as a collective description of Christians across a region such as the church in 'all Judea, Galilee and Samaria' (Acts 9:31). These uses should caution against applying distinctions too rigidly during this early period, prior at least to the drafting of the *Apostolic Canons.*

[3] 'Canonical' refers to the agreed practices within the early church that were codified by the synods and councils. Their primary purpose was to protect the integrity and order of the church.

belong to the city' (*Apostolic Canons* 34, 35). In addition, 'nation' is used to describe the territorial area over which a 'leading' bishop has been appointed to serve as the 'head' over the other bishops (*Apostolic Canons* 34). It is clear that these references to territory are intended to 'limit' the area over which any bishop enjoys ecclesiastical authority (*Apostolic Canons* 35). The diversity of terms used to describe the territorial extent of a bishop's ecclesiastical authority hints at the difficulty of defining with accuracy the precise geographical spread of each territory for which the bishop had pastoral and/or missionary responsibility.[4]

Under the Roman Emperor Diocletian (AD284-305), the Roman provinces were united into dioceses and the patchwork of ecclesiastical territories was similarly rationalized with the eparchies being united into larger units called *metrapolies* from the fourth century onwards. The metropolitan bishop, appointed to administrative authority over other bishops of the diocese, was typically the bishop from the capital of the dioceses within the *metrapolie*. In time, the term 'canonical territory' was applied to the territory of a diocese or local church over which a bishop had been appointed. The geographically more extensive 'metropolitan canonical territories' necessitated the appointment of metropolitan bishops who exercised certain pastoral and administrative responsibilities over and above those of the local bishops. More extensive again were the 'patriarchal canonical territories' which were accorded to the historical metropolitan bishops judged worthy of special honour on account of the long-standing nature of the metropolitan church in those places. As the term 'canonical territory' was developed, it rapidly established a series of adjacent and non-overlapping areas of ecclesiastical authority.

Commenting on Canon 8 of the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (AD325), Fr John Meyendorff concludes thus: 'A single bishop in every local community, a single synod or council in every province, such is the absolute rule established by the Fathers.'[5] He continues:

> …one church, one bishop, one community in every single place. The canons of the Church have always protected this simple principle against all attempts to create several separated ecclesiastical administrations in the same place or country, and also against the tendency of some big and important churches (Rome, Alexandria, Antioch) to deprive the local bishops of their authority and to affirm their own power over the rights of the local synods.[6]

---

[4]'Nowhere in the sacred canons and in the Orthodox patristic theology is the canonical jurisdiction 'territory' defined with criteria which are not ecclesiastical or spiritual' http://www.orthodoxa.org/GB/orthodoxy/ canonlaw/russianterritory.htm.

[5]J Meyendorff, 'One Bishop in One City (Canon 8, First Ecumenical Council)', *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*, vol. 5, 1-2 (1961), p. 56 (pp. 54-62).

[6] Ibid., 58.

Following the emergence of the nation-state,[7] in which geo-political and ethno-cultural entities coincide and unite, there has been, according to John Rinne, 'a certain tendency to put more emphasis on the administrative aspect and the national understanding of the local Church than on the ancient ecclesiological concept of the local Church'.[8]

Ancient canons and new realities

A key point of Orthodox debate about canonical territory concerns the extent to which the Canons of the Councils can continue to be applied to the current situation, particularly where the Local Orthodox Churches are now present in the Diaspora, where a Local Orthodox Church has defined a country where other (non-Orthodox) Christian churches have had an existing presence as its 'missionary territory', and where the ecclesiastical boundaries of a Local Church have been constantly tested by changing geo-political boundaries.

For precisely these reasons, the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, Kirill, who was installed last year, carefully enunciated his understanding that he can only preserve the essential unity and purity of Orthodox faith through vigilant attention to the canonical borders of the Church for which he is pastorally responsible. However, the attention his Patriarchate intends to pay to matters of canonical territory is little more than a re-statement of the *Statutory Charter of the Church of Russia* ratified in 1988 and revised in 2000. Article I, § 3 of the *Charter* reads:

> The jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church extends to 'people of orthodox confession residing in the USSR', people 'residing on the *canonical territory* of the Russian Orthodox Church', as well as 'people who reside abroad and who voluntarily accept its jurisdiction.

The revision in 2000 saw the inclusion in the *Charter* of the phrase 'people residing on the *canonical territory* of the Russian Orthodox Church'. This is the first occurrence of the terminology of 'canonical territory' within an official document of the Moscow Patriarchate. The document mentions several former states of the USSR, now independent nation-states, which it considers part of its canonical territory.[9] Further, the strict territoriality of canonical territory is subverted by the 2000 revision which extends canonical authority over Russians living outside the Russian territories and

[7]The historical moment that marks the nation-state's emergence is a point of debate, although the idea is closely associated with the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) which marked the end of the Thirty Year's War.

[8]John Rinne, cited in J Oeldemann, 'The Concept of Canonical Territory in the Russian Orthodox Church' in T Bremer, *Religion and the Conceptual Boundary in Central and Eastern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 233 (pp. 229-236).

[9] The *Statutory Charter* (1988, rev. 2000) correctly avoids any inclusion of Georgia and Armenia within the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate, as both of these nations have their own historical Orthodox Churches.

in the Russian Diaspora. Each of them is believed to belong to the *pastoral* or *cultural canonical territory* of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev provides something of an extended rationale for the revisions to the *Statutory Charter*. He argues that the correspondence of ecclesiastical territories with their civil equivalents became the general rule in the ancient church, although this principle was never accorded canonical status. Over time, with the emergence of empires and identifiable countries, the boundaries of the church were adapted accordingly. Despite this, there are examples of Orthodox Churches developing a notion of *canonical missionary territory* where, for example, missionary priests of the Russian Church established canonical structures during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in America. Orthodox migration to the USA led to further developments with the ordination of Bishop Raphael (in 1904) of the Antiochian Orthodox Church at the request of the Russian Metropolitan in America. The new American model made room for a Local Orthodox Church that allowed bishops to be appointed to dioceses that were ethnically composed rather than territorially situated.

Commenting on these developments, Alfeyev writes, 'Such a model did not correspond to the ecclesiology of the Ancient Church, but it did correspond to the new reality which emerged as a result of immigration to Europe and America'.[10] Offering a contrary opinion, Meyendorff asks,

> What happens then when Orthodox Christians living side by side in the same city consider it normal to constitute several "churches" — the Russian, Greek, Serbian or Syrian — which, of course, maintain their formal unity in faith and spirit, but not in practice? There is no doubt that such a situation is the greatest blow to our witness in the contemporary world and goes against the very nature of the Church of Christ.[11]

An alternative reading of the *Statutory Charter* also insists that a careful reading of the early canons shows that 'the jurisdiction of a locally established Autocephalous Church is exerted on a specific territory and never on an entire Nation, much less on scattered people'.[12] Papathomas continues that 'the defining criterion of an ecclesial community, an ecclesial body or an ecclesiastic circumscription has always been the *location* and never a racial, cultural, national or confessional category'.[13] Despite such protestations, the self-identity of the Moscow Patriarchate is

[10] H Alfayev, 'The Canonical Territories of the Local Orthodox Churches - Part 2' [Online], www.orthodoxytoday.org/articles6/HilarionOneBishop.php.
[11] Meyendorff, "One Bishop…", p. 61.
[12] G D Papathomas, 'In the age of the Post-Ecclesiality (the emergence of post-ecclesiological modernity)', (Tallin: Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church, 2006), www.orthodoxa.org/GB/orthodoxy/theology/Post-Ecclesiality.pdf , pp. 9-10.
[13] Ibid., p. 13

being cast with reference to its sense of divine destiny and calling as the largest of the Orthodox Churches.

The election of Kirill as the sixteenth Patriarch of Moscow and All-Russia

On 1 February 2009, in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow, the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) enthroned its sixteenth Patriarch of Moscow and All-Russia, Kirill. The previous Patriarch, Alexii II, had been enthroned during communist rule. Kirill was greeted by President Medvedev with Prime Minister Putin in attendance.

Prior to his election and enthronement, Kirill chaired the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate. From this position he has most obviously been deeply involved in, among other matters, the unwillingness or failure to improve the poor relations that existed with the former Roman Catholic Pope, John Paul II (who was unable to shake off allegations of Roman Catholic proselytism following the activity of Roman Catholic priests in reviving previous Catholic and Greek Catholic congregations in Russia and Ukraine). Kirill showed greater willingness to deepen relations with Pope Benedict XVI, although a meeting of Patriarch and Pope on the territory of the Russian Federation currently still seems a distant hope.

Kirill's leadership within the nationalist *World Russian Peoples' Council* has been hugely important in his being considered for the Patriarchal throne. He serves as the WRPC's Deputy Chair and had a major part in drafting its *Declaration on Human Rights and Dignity*, published on 6 April 2006.

We can note several important speeches that Kirill made before his election. On 29 December 2008 he stated that he was categorically opposed to church reforms intended to destroy church traditions. However he was quick to point out to reporters that the church does not stand still – it has modernised – as a result of 'natural growth and natural movement'.[14] Western observers have been making much of the claim that Kirill is a reformer.[15] That may be true, but such a statement needs a little unpacking.

Kirill is certainly not a reformer in the sense that Martin Luther was a reformer. His predecessor, Alexii II, was close to former presidents, including Gorbachev and Yeltsin, but less so to Putin. Alexii had been

[14] Blagovest-info, 'Metropolitan Kirill: I am categorically opposed to Church reform', 29 December 2008.

[15] In the period running up to a patriarchal election it is not uncommon for pundits to show interest in the orientation of particular prospective candidates. Metropolitan Daniel of Iasi, in Romania, was asked prior to his consecration as the Romanian Patriarch in 2008 whether he was a 'traditionalist' or a 'reformer'. 'I am a dynamic traditionalist', was his reply.

involved with the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Conference of European Churches (CEC), the latter as a former president, at the same time as Gorbachev had risen to influence and power. His perspective was thus slightly different from that of Kirill. Kirill has shown his capacity to remain close to Putin and his state machinery and it is far more likely that his vision for reform parallels that of Prime Minister (formerly President) Putin.

In this sense he is perhaps better described as a 'moderniser' who will seek to position and strengthen the ROC within global ecclesial settings (paralleling the re-emergence of the Russian Federation onto the international stage) but will likely do so by relying upon and developing a significantly nationalist and patriotic discourse that emphasises the spiritual security and integrity of 'Holy Russia' and the Russian people, both within the territory of the Russian Federation, the CIS states, and elsewhere in the world.

The playing out of Russia's global politics has its counterpart in the ecclesiastical and canonical issues being played out in countries such as Estonia. Kirill oversaw the temporary withdrawal of the ROC in 2008 from active involvement in the life of the CEC, following frustrations with the failure of the CEC to approve an application for membership of that part of the Estonian Orthodox Church that remains loyal to the Moscow Patriarch.

On Thursday 17 May 2007, an elaborate celebration of Divine Liturgy at Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Saviour acknowledged the Canonical Communion and Reunification of the ROC with the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR), the culmination of a four-year long effort by Putin to have the Moscow Patriarchate reunite with ROCOR.[16] The reunited church now serves as a potentially vital instrument of foreign policy. In a February press conference, Putin said that Russia's 'traditional confessions' and its nuclear shield, were essential 'components that strengthen Russian statehood and create [the] necessary preconditions for internal and external security of the country'.[17]

One can read these as collective indications of a Patriarch who will act decisively in the interests of the ROC as well as Russian Orthodox people outside of the territory of Russia. He has successfully asserted the authority of the Moscow Patriarchate over the ROCOR with the outcome that Moscow can now claim spiritual authority over all Russians resident in North America. In addition, it has strengthened its claim upon Russians living in Australia and the UK and, in the case of the UK, this ameliorates

[16] ROCOR émigré communities, particularly in the UK and Australia, had strong links with members of the Tsar's wider family. They opposed Soviet-sponsored Russian nationalism and instead sustained a notion of Holy Rus'.

[17] Y Zarakhovich, 'Putin's Reunited Russian Church,' *Time*, 17 May 2007.

the loss of some Russian parishes to the Ecumenical Patriarch. One consequence of this move has been to quiet the anti-ecumenical clamour that characterised the ROCOR as well as wresting control of the ROCOR from the hands of non-Russian citizens and placing it more firmly under the control of Moscow.

For these reasons we can expect that the election of Kirill will be of continuing, perhaps even accelerating, significance for future discussions of canonical territory and proselytism.

Russian national security policy and spiritual security

A). National Security

The *National Security Concept of the Russian Federation* was approved by President Putin on 17 December 1999 and published on 10 January 2000. It acknowledges the demise of the bi-polar world order and looks to a multi-polar world of international relations in contrast to the threat of a uni-polar world dominated by a militarily interventionist USA. The *Concept* attempts to balance the demands of the individual, society, and the state, addressing directly the spiritual development of the individual and the spiritual renewal of Russia. National interest in spiritual life is said to, 'boil down to maintaining and developing the moral values of society, the traditions of patriotism and humanism, and the cultural and research potential of the country'. Territorial integrity is a central concern and proposals are offered to secure borders. Uncontrolled migration is considered to facilitate, amongst other factors, the growth of 'religious extremism'. Threats to the border sphere of the Russian Federation are said to be 'determined by cultural-religious expansion of adjacent states into the Russian territory'. Ensuring national security involves:

> … the protection of the cultural, spiritual and moral heritage, historical traditions and norms of social life, the preservation of the cultural heritage of all nations of Russia, the elaboration of a state policy on the sphere of spiritual and moral education … as well as resistance to the negative influence of foreign religious organisations and missionaries. The spiritual renewal of society is impossible without the preservation of the Russian language as a factor of spiritual unity of all peoples of the multinational Russian Federation and as the language of inter-state communication of the people of the country members of the CIS. To preserve and develop our cultural and spiritual heritage, we should create the socio-economic conditions for the creative activity and operation of cultural institutes.[18]

[18] Russian Federation, (1999), *National Security Concept of the Russian Federation*, 17 December 1999.

The *National Security Concept* was elaborated in the information sphere by the *Doctrine of the Information Security of the Russian Federation* approved by President Putin on 9 September 2000. Of four main components important to information security, *Doctrine* identifies among the first, the 'spiritual renewal of Russia, the preservation … of the moral values of society, and … the cultural potential of the country'.

Threats to information security are said to include 'threats to the rights and freedoms of citizens in spiritual life … and the spiritual revival of Russia'. Most noteworthy in this respect, are references to the

> … possible disruptions of social stability, damage to the health and threat to the lives of citizens due to the activities of religious associations that preach religious fundamentalism as well as totalitarian religious sects.

Securing information security in the face of this type of religious activity will involve, 'countering the negative impact of foreign religious organisations and missionaries'. Licensing is envisaged for agencies and activities that pose potential threats in this area.

In a commentary on these texts, written for Harvard University's Belfer Center, General Valery Manilov, First Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, differentiated between security interests that were 'vital', 'important', and 'other'. Spiritual and cultural interests were regarded by him as 'important'.[19]

B) Spiritual security

The notion of spiritual security features as the concluding section of the *Concept of the missionary activity of the Russian Orthodox Church 2005-2010,* drafted under the pastoral authority of Archbishop Ioann of Belgorod, Head of the Mission Office of the ROC. The missionary activity of the ROC is said to be directed towards the goal of ensuring spiritual security. Because its missionary activity takes place in a specific society and state, it includes spiritual, legal and informational goals. The 2000 *Concept of National Security* is quoted in detail and at length to legitimise the legal references in the *Concept's* concluding section.[20] Curiously, the previous 1995 *Concept for the Renewal of the Missionary Activity of the Russian Orthodox Church* makes no reference to the apparently important notion of 'spiritual security'. Perhaps a more charitable observation might be that between 1995 and 2005 it had become apparent that a spiritual and moral crisis was looming within the Russian Federation.

---

[19] V Manilov, (n/d), *National Security of Russia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project).

[20] In addition, the *Concept* cites several international and European resolutions that censure illegal activity and the violation of human rights by sects, later referred to as 'totalitarian religious sects professing religious fundamentalism'.

Observing this crisis, *The Economist* noted in 2001 that Russian young people were living in a 'moral and spiritual vacuum'. The *Economist*'s journalist reported the growth of the scouting movement and those related to Western agencies. The one institution noticeable by its absence from work among young Russians was the ROC: 'The church… does not seem much interested in them'.[21] It was doubtless for such reasons that the Moscow Patriarchate looked to form alliances with existing youth movements and in particular it has been drawn to *Idushchie vmeste* ('Walking together'), a secular movement established in May 2000 by Vasiliy Iakemenko. In 2003 I visited its Moscow office. The Deputy Director outlined the contribution of the ROC to their secular youth programme. Its three-fold emphasis was upon patriotism, professionalism, and morality. The ROC provided an essential input to the framework of patriotism. The movement became *Nashi* ('Ours') in 2005, following a scandal involving the distribution of pornographic video tapes. Sergei Markov, a Kremlin adviser, stated in 2005 that *Nashi* '[wants] the modernisation of the country and preservation of its sovereignty'.[22] In November 2008, Metropolitan Kirill met with representatives of *Nashi* and stressed the importance of a youth movement with an ideology rooted in traditional values drawn from a 'thousand-year Russian history'.[23]

Spiritual security in the 2005 *Missionary Concept* is argued to rest on three foundations. The first is the command to 'love your neighbour as yourself'. Secondly, it will involve lobbying for Orthodox traditional values in the information space. This implies restraint in the media regarding depictions of violence, responding to anti-Orthodox disinformation, and non-Orthodox Christian broadcasting. It also requires Orthodox media services to be more active. Finally, there will be the need for legal considerations, including investigation and action to clarify the legal basis of activity of destructive sects. Legal action to prevent the moral and spiritual corruption of individuals is envisaged.

Further measures include the provision of education addressing spiritual security. The Russian Orthodox University's Law Faculty has a course in 'Spiritual Security' which grew out of the anti-cult movement of the ROC which began to gather momentum during the mid 1990s, and gained legal expression in the 1997 Law on Religious Associations. My meeting with the professor responsible for mission in the St Petersburg

[21] 'The Russian Orthodox Church: Not spreading the faith', *The Economist*, Vol. 357, 8202 (23 December 2000), pp. 65-67.
[22] Discussion of freedom of speech at Russian Radio Freedom, 19 April 2005 http://www.svoboda.org/ll/grani/ 0405/ll.041905-1.asp.
[23] 'The Moscow Patriarchate stands for all-Russia youth organization based on traditional values', *Interfax*, 14 November 2008.

metropolitan area was illustrative.[24] His missiology was essentially framed with reference to the 'new religious movements' and secularisation, and involved the writing and publication in 2002 of a lengthy two-volume work on non-Trinitarian movements and neo-Pentecostal groups.

At the national religious celebrations on the occasion of the 1020th anniversary of the Baptism of the Rus, President Putin expressed his conviction that:

> Orthodoxy from the start was exceptionally tolerant toward representatives of other confessions and it was this position of the Russian Orthodox Church that enabled the creation of the Russian state not only as a multi-national but also a multi-confessional one.[25]

The former President's rhetoric singularly fails to convince the many indigenous religious groups that still struggle for legitimacy in the Russian Federation in the face of pejorative discourse. For example, reports from the Slavic Legal Centre in November 2008 drew attention to the Evangelism Department of the Murmansk Diocese of the ROC which had initiated an 'anti-sectarian campaign' against the Christians of Evangelical Faith (KhVE) in the city. Speaking for the Murmansk Diocese, Fr Anton Tuchkov accused the group of 'proselytising extremism' and of being a 'totalitarian sect', one charismatic group among more than a hundred that are active in the Murmansk province.[26] Putin fails to note the distinction to which the ROC objects; namely that it believes itself to be a church grounded in conciliar (or canonical) ecclesiology and precisely not in a confessional ecclesiology, unlike the 'totalitarian sects' to which it objects.

Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin of the DECR told *Interfax* on 3 December 2008 that the state needed to 'initiate a dialogue with religion and even insist on it' in the face of current challenges posed by ideologically based religious beliefs and practices that fuelled inter-religious conflict.[27] At the end of 2008, fifty-six religious organisations were unexpectedly listed on the website of the Russian Ministry of Justice as scheduled for liquidation, including World Vision, Youth with a Mission, three regional districts of the Russian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists and the entire Assemblies of God denomination.

---

[24] D R Jackson, *Report of a Visit to St. Petersburg and Moscow, December 19th 2003 – January 9th 2004* (Geneva, Conference of European Churches, unpublished paper).

[25] 'Putin: State intends to support social and educational mission of Russian Church,' *Interfax*, 28 June 2008.

[26] 'Murmansk Orthodox Diocese opens 'Antisectarian Campaign' *Slavic Legal Center*, 14 November 2008.

[27] 'The Moscow Patriarchate believes the state shouldn't be neutral in religious sphere' in *Interfax*, 3 December 2008.

No organisations from the Moscow Patriarchate appeared on the list, although lawyers noted that Protestants only made up less than 1% of Russia's population whereas they made up 62% of the list.[28] This, presumably, is not what President Putin had in mind when he referred to a multi-confessional Russia and neither does it show the characteristics of a dialogue offered by the DECR. Instead, the actions show all the signs of a church prepared to urge the use of legal means in the pursuit of its anti-sectarian policies.

Julie Elkner[29] has drawn attention to the manner in which the discourse of spiritual security has lent legitimacy to the instruments of state security. She contends that the discourse of spiritual security has utility for preserving and strengthening traditional Russian values, yet also serves the purpose of ideological subversion of, for example, the activities of non-traditional religious organisations. Elkner's concern is directed towards the linking of spiritual security with what she describes as Chekism, namely the ideological system guiding the Russian security apparatus and policy. The high point of this she considers to be the consecration of an Orthodox Church in the FSB's Lubianka district and the restoration of the 'modern' FSB as a morally credible state agency charged with ensuring information security and, therefore, spiritual security.

Elkner cites Viktor Zorkal'tsev, a communist parliamentary deputy chairing a parliamentary committee liaising with religious organisations, and saying in 2003 that freedom of conscience included the freedom to act according to conscience but that this had its 'understandable boundaries', boundaries defined by the concept of spiritual security. She refers to Zorkal'tsev recommending spiritual security as a shield against the fifth column of foreign spies who operate under cover as religious missionaries as well Russian citizens with pro-Western liberal opinions.

The discourse of spiritual security has been taken up by other Orthodox nations, perhaps unsurprisingly in those with the closest political and cultural relationships with the Russian Federation. In Armenia, for example, a similar discourse of national and spiritual security is emerging. This development can hardly have been envisaged in the joint statement of Armenian Catholicos Vazken I and Karekin II in 1992 *A Fatherly Word addressed to the Armenian People.* In that document directed at the proselytising activity of neo-Protestants and non-Trinitarian groups, the notion of the Armenian Motherland is invoked: 'The Armenian Apostolic Church as the national Church of Armenia is the spiritual-religious

[28] 'A Wake-up call from the Russian Government' *DECR RUEC-B*, 21 October 2008.
[29] J Elkner, 'Spiritual Security in Putin's Russia' in *History and Policy*, January 2005. www.historyand policy.org/papers/policy-paper-26.html.

foundation for the buttressing of the unity and strength of the nation'. However, a discourse of spiritual security and canonical territory is absent.
In a 2008 article, Gagik Terteryan, argues that the discourses of 'civil society' and 'absolutist human rights' represent 'foreign challenges'. In addressing such challenges he calls the Armenian state to action: 'the state must undertake the whole complex of secular functions to ensure spiritual security'.[30] He goes on to suggest that Armenian statehood is uniquely fit for this purpose in the face of globalisation only when it draws upon the spiritual resource of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Terteryan believes that the Armenian Church has managed to steer a middle path between the secularised approach of Western Protestant churches and the conservatism of the Eastern Orthodox. By doing so, it can inform a uniquely and exclusively Armenian way of participating in global civilisation, 'Displaying a striking example of original Armenian civilisation our Church must play the main role in the future multi-civilisation world order, and its mission is not only limited by Armenia and Armeniancy (*sic*)'.

In the securing of a state's national security the Armed Forces must naturally play a significant part. In 2007 Russian scientists and military officials celebrated sixty years of Russia's nuclear arms programme in the Military Glory Hall of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour. Critics talked of Russia entering the twenty-first century wearing an armoured breastplate adorned with crucifix: 'yet another example of the mongrel wedding of Church and State'.[31] Supporters preferred to emphasise the new symphonic unity between Church and State being established through the twenty-first century ideology of 'nuclear Orthodoxy'. They claimed that whilst Stalin saw the route to Russia's greatness resting upon military might, he underestimated the weapons of psychological warfare targeted at Russia's spiritual and territorial integrity. Associating the twenty-first century discourse of spiritual security with Stalin would appear anomalous in other situations; not, it would appear, in the minds of nationalist writers.

Further examples of the military alliance of Church and State are to be found in regular reportage of the various military conflicts in which Russian troops are engaged. Interfax reported in 2008 that Russian soldiers, given crosses and wrist bands bearing words from Psalm 91 by Orthodox priests, replied 'This prayer helps us more than all the commanders' orders and tank armour, because God is with us'.[32]

The ultimate guarantor of security, spiritual and national, is the president and his government. On the occasion of the 1020th anniversary of

[30] G Terteryan, 'State-Church-Society: Issues of Spiritual Security' at *Norovank Foundation*, 27 October 2008, www.noravank.am/en/?page=analitics&nid=1413.
[31] Y Kholmogorov, 'The Church consecrates Russia's nuclear shield,' *rpmonitor*, 11 September 2007.
[32] 'Russian soldiers said a prayer protected them better than tank armour,' *Interfax*, 29 August 2008.

the Baptism of the Rus, Prime Minister Putin, in offering thanks to the ROC for its contribution to the unification of the Russian people, pledged the state's support for its social and educational mission. Putin said that

> [The] adoption of Orthodoxy was the most important, defining milestone in the fate of Russia. In this choice is the source of our statehood, great culture, national character, and the traditions of our people. Orthodoxy has linked inseparably the fates of the peoples of Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia, and of other countries. The state intends in future to support the initiatives of the church directed to the strengthening of civil and interreligious harmony and its social, cultural, educational, and charity mission.[33]

Following in the footsteps of his predecessor and mentor, President Medvedev and his wife, between 4 to 8 August 2008, visited the Cathedral of the Dormition and the Tolga convent in Yaroslavl, the Don Monastery Cathedral, the Holy Trinity St. Seraphim Diveevo convent, and the Raifa Mother of God Monastery in Kazan.

The ROC looks to its interests in the business sector as well as with the organs of regional government. Notable among the elections to membership of the Local Council responsible for electing the Moscow Patriarch in 2009 were secular delegates, including the president of the administration of the 'Yunifarm' pharmaceutical company, Yury Nizhegorodtsev; the owner of 'Donetskstala', Viktor Nusenkis; businessman Oleg Smirnov, son of the president of the unrecognized Trans-Dniestra Moldovan republic, Igor Smirnov; State Duma delegate and member of the Committee on International Affairs, Ivan Savvida; and the deputy director of one of the departments of provincial administration, Alexander Shapovalov.[34]

C) Enculturing an enigma: A trajectory for Russian modernisation

Metropolitan Kirill served as the Deputy Head of the Universal Russian National *Sobor* (or World Russian Peoples' Council - WRPC) a body responsible for developing what has become known as the *Russian Doctrine*.[35] Seventy experts have worked on an integrated approach to a wide range of social, cultural, political, moral, scientific, economic,

[33] 'Putin: State intends to support social and educational mission of Russian Church,' *Interfax*, 28 June 2008.

[34] 'Influential laymen delegated to Orthodox Council for electing patriarch,' *Vremia novostei* 16 January 2009 (trans. PDS).

[35] The *Doctrine* was first published on 5 November 2005. www.politklass.ru/cgi-bin/issue.pl?id=336 and took as its inspiration the work of Solzhenitsyn's 1991 *Rebuilding Russia*, Panarin's 2002 work *Pravoslavnaia tsivilizatsiia v global'nom mire* [Orthodox civilisation in the modern world] and Nazarov's controversial 2004 book *Vozhdiu Tret'ego Rima* [To the leader of the Third Rome].

military, theological, and social subjects. The central object was formulated as being:

> to revise the experience of centuries of Russian statehood, Russian social mind, and generally, the Russian civilisation as a whole,… in order to instrumentalise the traditions of the Russian nation, mostly based upon Orthodox Christian views, for creative application to the… present and potential challenges of the time.[36]

Presented as a supra-partisan text, the *Doctrine* was presented initially in Greece in 2005, then in Yekaterinburg, Moscow and St Petersburg. It is essentially a rejection of the model of nation-building and neo-liberalism offered by the USA. It is a modernising text, but it implements traditional values rooted in the Russian national culture, especially Russian Orthodoxy. Andrey Koyakov, the leading economist working with the team, writes, for example, that 'the economic model cannot be isolated from the dominating (essentially Orthodox) values'. The work of the WRPC has made possible the development of a discourse of 'cultural security' that is rooted in traditional (Orthodox) values and thus offers significant overlap with the discourse of 'spiritual security'. The experts defined their approach as 'dynamic conservatism' or 'tradition-based modernisation' whose goal is the "transformation of the nation as [the] self-revelation of basic principles and values, impregnated in the Russian culture'. The doctrine was named after St Sergius of Radonezh.

Grigorijus Potašenko commenting on the seven central theses of the *Doctrine*, as originally formulated by Y Kholmogorov, summarises the second as the view that

> Russians are the nation of sacred history. The Russian nation is a unique ethnic, cultural and historic singularity, significantly different from other modern and historic nations. The amalgamation of the Orthodox Church and the glorious history is the basis of the unique Russian identity. Therein lays the Russian mission and the Russian cross.[37]

The authors of the *Doctrine* are not archaic restorationists: they see new opportunities for Russia in the global processes but proclaim the inherent priority of spirituality and culture over instrumentalist politics and economics. They are modernised anti-Westernists and hostile to universalisms, hence their *Declaration on Human Rights and Dignity* (adopted at the 10th WRPC on 6 April 2006) which set out an alternative rooted in the 'unique Russian civilisation' to the UN Declaration on

[36] A Kobyakov, 'The Russian Doctrine as a phenomenon of public initiative in outlining a harmonic programme of Russia's development', at www.rpmonitor.ru 20 August 2007.
[37] G Potašenko, '"Russian Doctrine" – Nationalist Ideas of the Right-Wing Conservatives of Russia', *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 18 (2006), www.lfpr.lt/uploads/File/2006-18/Potasenko.pdf.

Universal Human Rights. They reject the so-called 'Russian Idea' of Russia as a combination of both Eastern and Western impulses (thus rejecting Khomiakov, Dostoyevsky, and Berdyaev). Democracy is portrayed as a tool extending American national interests. Russia's obvious advantages in its struggle with the democratising political forces of the West are stated to be her Orthodox worldview and her moral and cultural singularity.

D) Enshrining an enigma

Speaking at the Savvino-Storozhevskiy Monastery in Zvenigorod, Moscow Metropolitan Kirill spoke at length on his conception of 'Holy Russia':

> Today, everybody is saying that modern Russia should be a great country. But this greatness must be attained through the Holy Spirit, rather than through the force of power and the force of arms. Russia was named 'Holy Russia' because 'Russian saints were the national leaders in Russia, it was they who formed popular consciousness and traditional values. We have united many peoples and… created a great country which ranges from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean. Let us pray that Holy Rus which today lives in the people's hearts become our national ideal once again.[38]

Western news sources tend to interpret this popular resurgence as an expression of patriotic fervour rather than an indication of religious revival. 'Most Russians say they follow Orthodoxy for national rather than moral reasons. Deeply patriotic and with a declared intention of making Russia great again, the Church has milked the sentiment', reported Adrian Blomfield for the normally conservative *Daily Telegraph*, published in Britain.[39] This may be very largely true if the popular response is measured, but it does not really do full justice to an often overlooked aspect of Orthodox theology that takes seriously the created realm as the arena of God's sanctifying activity. As human beings progress in holiness and sanctity, Orthodox theology teaches that the sanctified and purified presence of such individuals (or 'saints') fulfils a salvific purpose in the evangelisation of the whole created order.[40] Of course, Orthodox theologians cannot be unaware that their 'merely' theological formulations also take on a direction of their own when they enter the popular discourse where the memory of the Saints becomes harnessed to partisan programmes.

---

[38] 'Holy Rus should become the national ideal of Russians, according to interim head of the Russian Church,' *Interfax*, 16 December 2008.

[39] N Blomfield, 'Orthodox Church unholy alliance with Putin,' *The Daily Telegraph*, 26 February 2008.

[40] For more on this, see V Khozhuharov, *Towards an Orthodox Christian Theology of Mission: An Interpretive Approach* (Veliko Tranovo: VESTA Publishing House, 2006), p. 21 and p. 46; Kozhuharov considers this a unique Orthodox contribution to missiology. See also Kozhuharov's contribution to this volume of *Baptistic Theological Perspectives*.

The discourses of National Security, national interests, spiritual security, Holy Russia, and spiritual unity each lend shades of meaning to the discourses of canonical territory and proselytism that are familiar in the context of the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church. They impart to these discourses a peculiar ideological and ethnic character that appears to be remote from earlier usages.

Canonical territory and proselytism in the context of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church

The situation of the Moscow Patriarchate is complicated by its canonical territory extending into the geo-political territory of nation-states that exist beyond the borders of the Russian Federation. Through the fortunes of political circumstance, the Moscow Patriarchate's status as a transnational subject is confirmed and this is increasingly bringing it into direct and frequent conflict with the prior historical and ecumenical claims of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. It is justified to ask whether canonical territory can be adequately explained with reference to any of the various adjectives: 'Russian', 'Russian Federation', 'Russian people', 'Russia and the CIS'. If we emphasise, instead, the discourse of the 'canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate', we both clarify and complicate the issues under discussion.

In referring to the 'canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate' it is certainly possible to move away from an immediate discussion of the political issues that have become attached to canonical territory. The Moscow Patriarchate, faced with tricky issues relating to the newly independent states that were formerly part of the USSR, appears at first glance to be keen to place the emphasis other than on present political borders. This immediately simplifies the issue and allows a focus on Russian people wherever and however they have been dispersed.

However, the issue simultaneously becomes problematic because, in incorporating culture, spirit, and pastoral elements into the discourse of canonical territory, the ROC enters a conceptual and definitional minefield. As one Roman Catholic observer notes, 'The use of the principle of canonical territory today is much more complicated than the application of the same principle in the early Church'.[41] Given the slippery nature of attempts to define 'culture' and 'spiritual', it is not surprising that both the

[41]St Basil Foundation, (n/d), 'Russian Canonical Territory', www.catholic-church.org/church-unity /r_c_t_e.htm.

definition and the application of canonical territory are bound to remain hotly contested issues.

Despite the differences of interpretation, the Moscow Patriarchate is clear in its understanding that culturally Russian people who live *outside* the geographical borders of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate fall *within* the scope of its cultural (and therefore spiritual) canonical territory. Russian Orthodox people who are resident outside of the Russian Federation are considered a part of the Moscow Patriarch's *canonical pastoral territory*. Kirill, whilst at the DECR, actively pursued a policy of re-establishing more effective links with Russian communities outside the territory of the Russian Federation. Most obviously this is to be seen in the re-incorporation of ROCOR in 2007.

The 2005 *Missionary Concept* of the Moscow Patriarchate makes it clear that there are Buddhists, Muslims, atheists and agnostics who are resident within the borders of the geographical canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate. It understands these people as part of its *canonical missionary territory*. The 2005 *Missionary Concept* draws the implication that Protestant and schismatic Orthodox groups are also to be understood as a part of this canonical missionary territory.

Valentin Kozhuharov's *Towards an Orthodox Christian Theology of Mission* is primarily an exposition and interpretive approach to three documents published by the Department for Mission of the Moscow Patriarchate between 1995 and 2005. He correctly notes that although the 1995 *Concept for the Renewal of the Missionary Activity of the Russian Orthodox Church* deals with the concept of canonical territory (as the historical precedent for the contemporary usage of 'apostolic commission'), the 2005 *Concept of the Missionary Activity of the Russian Orthodox Church* uses the term 'territory of pastoral responsibility' as the domain within which the mission of the ROC is conducted. He writes that, 'It is not the canonical territory of the ROC, nor is it the territory of the Russian Federation – it is the spiritual territory of the Orthodox Church as a whole'.[42] As the text of the 2005 *Missionary Concept* states: 'The contemporary mission field is people's souls in need of acceptance of the saving Word of the Gospel… it has to be viewed not only in canonical, but also in historical and cultural aspects'.

He summarises the *internal mission* of the ROC as being largely directed towards baptised nominal Orthodox who require routine catechisation. Internal mission also targets baptised Orthodox who have been influenced by non-Orthodox Christian organisations. In such cases,

[42] Kozhuharov, *Towards an Orthodox Christian Theology of Mission*, p. 43.

skilled apologists are required to catechise. The *external mission* of the ROC is conducted within the Russian Federation and is oriented mainly towards Russian citizens.

The ROC strives to provide spiritual security in its historical and cultural territory of spiritual responsibility by encouraging all agencies, secular and religious, to rediscover and make operational Russia's traditional values. He points out that the Church Fathers discussed spiritual security, although he concedes that they used it with a slightly different meaning (without expanding on how exactly they used it). In its contemporary usage Kozhuharov suggests that it means, 'Safeguarding the Orthodox peoples' souls against the non-Orthodox influence (either of other Christian or of other religious organisations) on the Orthodox believers in the country'.[43]

The 2005 *Missionary Concept* views destructive sects and proselytising groups as external to the Russian people because most of their activities appeared after the changes in the late 80s. 'Any non-Orthodox influence on Russian society is considered by the ROC as external and foreign to the Russian Culture'.[44] In particular, the 2005 *Concept* expresses concern for the expansion of Chinese and Korean peoples into the Siberian and Far Eastern territories of Russia, fearing the impact of their non-traditional forms of religious practice on the indigenous Russian (and therefore culturally Orthodox) population. The presence of evangelical and Pentecostal Koreans does not go unnoticed although they are not named directly in the 2005 *Concept*.

Canonical territory is personified in the person of the Patriarch and expressed in the spiritual unity, or communion, of the Orthodox people for whom the Patriarch is responsible. Alexii II re-affirmed the spiritual unity of the Belarusian, Russian, and Ukrainian people at celebrations marking the 1020th anniversary of the Baptism of Kievan Rus, held in Minsk. He underlined the unity of the Slavic tribes and prayed for the success of Church and state co-operation.[45] The unity of the Orthodox people in Trans-Dniestra with the Moscow Patriarch is also important and strenuous efforts underlie the Patriarchate's work to avoid a situation paralleling developments in Estonia. There is insufficient space to treat the Estonian controversy in detail, but a reference to that dispute will at least illustrate the manner in which alternative discourses of canonical territory are being developed.

[43] Ibid., p. 45.
[44] Ibid., p. 32.
[45] 'Spiritual Unity between Belarusian, Russian, Ukrainian peoples unshakeable – Alexy II,' *Interfax*, 27 October 2008.

The Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church, unsurprisingly, defines canonical territory with greater emphasis upon geography, although it carefully avoids talking solely of the modern nation state. They develop this in the following way:

> Surely, using the cultural origins of the Orthodox all over the world is helpful in the pastoral ministry. However, this must occur… with respect toward the geographical canonical boundaries of each of the Orthodox eparchies...[46]

Papathomas, in a somewhat polemical paper placed on the website of the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church, upholds conciliar Orthodox ecclesiology over and against Protestant confessional ecclesiology, Roman Catholic mono-Patriarchal ecclesiology, and Orthodox ethno-phyletic ecclesiology.

He dismisses any conception of ethnically composed ecclesiologies on the grounds that this fundamentally prejudices any likely outcome to theological interpretation of the ancient canons of the Church and of the New Testament:

> the idea of the State-Nation, in other words, the nationalism of the State, or better yet, the *phyletic nationalism* …determines the ecclesiology of the Church and the canonical resolution of every ecclesiological issue.[47]

Payne correctly asserts that the

> …concept of a local church disavows nationalism, in the history of the Orthodox Church. The concept was given new meaning with the advent of nationalism in the nineteenth century. The Orthodox churches have on the one hand accepted the transformation of this concept, utilizing it to defend their canonical territories based on the idea of the nation-state, while on the other insisting on the use of the term in its original context. In the case of Estonia, two patriarchates came to schism over the issue of the recognition of the legitimate church in that territory. Both Patriarch Bartholomew and Patriarch Alexii defended their decisions using the confused idea of the local church being equated to nationality.[48]

Confusion is certainly a constant factor in the attempt to enter the intricacies of the Estonian dispute between Moscow and Constantinople. In much the way that Russia has tried to exert its dominance within the CIS or

[46]Estonian Orthodox Church (Tallin), (n/d), *The Russian Canonical Territory: Comment from an Orthodox historico-canonical perspective* www.orthodoxa.org/GB/orthodoxy/canonlaw/ russianterritory.
[47] Papathomas, 'In the age of post-ecclesiality', 21.
[48] D P Payne, 'Nationalism and the Local Church: The Source of Ecclesiastical Conflict in the Orthodox Commonwealth', *Nationalities Papers*, 35, 5 November 2007, pp. 831-852, here p. 846.

its 'near abroad' as it is frequently described,[49] the Moscow Patriarchate may eventually come to see that co-operation with it cannot be avoided by the Orthodox churches present in the various CIS states, but at the same time its sister churches can only increasingly come to resent what they may see as ethnic bullying and attempts at control and domination from a foreign capital. This threatened the recent Muscovite Patriarchal elections with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) making some highly unusual moves that were widely interpreted as indications of the desire for greater autonomy, even autocephaly.

A) Canonical territory: the career of a concept

Patriarch Alexii addressed the issue of Roman Catholic activity in Ukraine and Russia in 1991 at a meeting in Novosibirsk. He condemned the activity with reference only to the discourse of proselytism.[50] Addressing CEC in 1992, Alexii criticised both Protestant and Roman Catholic activity, again using the discourse of proselytism.[51] Volf carefully records the contemporary Orthodox complaints although he does not refer to a discourse of canonical territory. In 1996 his discussion, and the response from Leonid Kishkovsky, centred solely on a discussion of church and culture. In May 1995 Alexii again addressed the activity of the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine. In that interview with Moscow TV's Channel 3 he used the discourse of canonical territory. By June he became more explicit: 'The Catholic Church is conducting aggressive mission on the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church, the area of the CIS'.[52]

In 1995, Yelena Sperankskaya, of the Moscow Patriarchate's DECR, used the discourse of proselytism in a very detailed account of Protestant missionary activity in Russia and the CIS presented to the WCC Consultation on Mission and Proselytism. Special mention is made of Korean missionaries. No reference is made to canonical territory (although the title of the Consultation may have had a certain influence over her choice of discourse). She mentions that the WCC and CEC were both engaged in dialogue about possible joint Christian witness but that the 'sheep-stealing' reduced any prospect of a successful outcome to the dialogues.

The WCC called an Orthodox Consultation on *Mission and Proselytism* at the Moscow Theological Academy from 26-29 June 1995.

[49] See the discussion, for instance, in K Malfliet, L Verpoest, E Vinokurov, eds., *The CIS, the EU, and Russia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2007), pp. 86-91, where the Russian Federation's posture vis-à-vis the CIS may ultimately prove self-fulfilling.

[50] G Stricker, 'Fear of Proselytism: the Russian Orthodox Church Sets Itself against Catholicism', *Religion, State & Society*, 26, 2, pp.140-156, here p. 140.

[51] M Volf, 'Fishing in the Neighbour's Pond: Mission and Proselytism in Eastern Europe', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 20, 1, January (1996), pp. 26-31, here p. 27.

[52] Stricker, 'Fear of Proselytism', p. 156.

The *Final Document* uses the discourse of proselytism to describe Roman Catholic and Protestant missionary activity. In the detailed discussion of proselytism it is said to, 'alienate people from their local ecclesial and cultural tradition, whereas true mission assures an integration of the gospel into the national culture, thus inspiring it'.

One of the papers prepared for that Consultation reviewed twelve intra-Christian dialogues between 1990 and 1994. The prevalence of the discourse of proselytism is apparent throughout these statements. The *Pro Russia* Pontifical Council Document only refers to 'parallel structures of evangelisation'. The 1993 WCC Consultation *Towards Responsible Relations in Mission* refers to the invasion by evangelical churches into areas where centuries-old churches had territorial jurisdiction.

The more careful formulation of the discourse of canonical territory within the Moscow Patriarchate would appear to have begun to emerge during the latter part of the 1990s. Prior to this it is rarely used and the chief discourse used to combat the activity of non-Orthodox missionaries was that of proselytism. Between the 1995 and 2005 *Missionary Concept* documents, the Moscow Patriarch developed a reasonably coherent discourse of canonical territory, particularly because of the increased activity of the Roman Catholic Church, which is most susceptible to a theological dialogue concerning canonical territory. Protestant missionaries are less vulnerable to such a treatment, but clearly feel the impact of the political and legal vehicles that have been developed to support the efforts of the ROC to ensure the spiritual security and territorial integrity of the Russian people, acting in concert with the government of the Russian Federation and several of its neighbouring states.

How successfully these efforts will serve the ROC and the National Security policy of the Russian Federation remains to be seen. As Larry Uzzell suggests:

> One effect of Russia's crackdown on American Protestant missionaries is to enhance the Protestant cause's marketability in Russia. In the future this may be remembered as a classic instance of the law of unintended consequences.[53]

There is reliable and chronologically consistent evidence of statistical growth within the Protestant churches of Russia. The domestic and foreign policy interests of the Russian State may at some point be well served by attention to the Protestant churches. Uzzell continues:

[53] L Uzzell, 'Politics, Propriety, and 'Proselytism' in Russia,' *International Religious Freedom Watch*, 4 October 2005, 9.

> From the Kremlin's standpoint, the cultivation of such docile Protestant bodies might well be more advantageous than the restoration of an Orthodox monopoly. The more 'spheres of influence' the state has, the better.

The possibility that the Russian state might one day view its special relationship with the ROC as no longer quite as beneficial as it once was, is echoed by a Chief Correspondent of *Die Welt*, Professor Michael Stuermer, in his commentary on Russia's grand alliances in general: 'Great states have no permanent alliance but only permanent interests. Friendship is a personal matter'.[54]

As Winston Churchill famously said in a radio broadcast from the BBC on 1 October, 1939, 'I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma'. He added, 'But perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest'.

Conclusions

The Moscow Patriarchate's hierarchs have been developing a consistent discourse of canonical territory since approximately the mid-1990s. From that period to date there has been a gradual evolution of its application in understanding the pastoral and missionary responsibility for Russian people living within the Russian Federation as well as among the Russian Diaspora. This was formally enshrined in the 2000 revision of the Church's Statutory Charter and given ecclesiastical support in Kirill's enthronement speech in February 2009. There is every indication that this principle will be applied vigorously by the Patriarchate to endorse, tacitly or otherwise, the application of regulatory restrictions by local and regional authorities to the missionary and other activities of non-Orthodox religious communities within the Russian Federation. In addition, its use within the Russian Diaspora will continue to be used as a means to resist the claims of the Ecumenical Patriarch to the ecclesiastical oversight of the entire non-Greek territories without a historically present local Orthodox Church.

The ready recourse by the Patriarchate to the discourse of canonical territory in the attempt to control evangelical and Baptist activity should be met in a different spirit. Evangelical Baptist witness in the Russian Federation will need to self-consciously stand apart from the expansionist and imperialist visions of Western governments and the EU, as well as from some of the cherished values of Western societies. Otherwise, there can be no moral platform from which to call the Moscow Patriarchate to account for its too-ready identification with the domestic and foreign policy

[54] M Stuermer, *Putin and the Rise of Russia* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2008), p. 46.

goals of the government of the Russian Federation. This can then provide a precise focus for theological dialogue and discussion between evangelical Baptist and Orthodox missiologists.

The Revd Dr Darrell Jackson Director of the Nova Research Centre and Lecturer in European Studies at Redcliffe College, Gloucester, UK.

On the Shared Roots of Russian Baptist and Russian Orthodox Spirituality

Constantine Prokhorov

There was a paradoxical situation in the brotherhood of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists (ECB) in the former Soviet Union: they had practically no theological seminaries and did not write any theological books (for obvious reasons), but they certainly had their own theology. Today we can reconstruct their basic beliefs, forged behind the Iron Curtain, by analysing pre-*perestroika* Russian Baptist periodicals, interviewing elderly presbyters and regular church members, as well as looking at Russian evangelical traditions in provincial areas (home of the so-called 'rustic', or popular, theology) where the majority of beliefs are still preserved from Soviet times. The second paradox we should point out is the evident disagreement between some official Baptist declarations (or even their creedal statements), on the one hand, and church practice on the other, regarding many doctrines of the Russian Orthodox Church. It was commonplace in a large part of traditional Russian Baptist sources to speak negatively of Orthodox theology and traditions. With that, as a rule, Baptist authors emphasise the numerous Orthodox 'deviations from the beliefs' of the Apostolic Church.[1] However, in reality, Russian Baptists unconsciously fully followed many points of Orthodox belief. Here are the hidden roots of the evident peculiarity of Russian Baptist mentality, both its advantages and drawbacks.

Under the influence of Eastern Christian traditions, the theological mentality of many Russian Baptists is traditionally *apophatic*. In full degree it is manifested in their confession of God as inexpressible in His majesty, unfathomable, and as one who cannot be portrayed. On the last point, Russian Baptists are probably even more coherent in comparison with the old Orthodox *(cataphatic)* tradition of the veneration of icons.[2] 'Negative', or apophatic language better befits a man who dares to

[1]E.g. A Karev and K Somov, *Istoriia khristianstva* [History of Christianity, in Russian] (Moscow: AUCECB, 1990), pp. 113-7, 215; *Istoriia Evangel'skikh Khristian-Baptistov v SSSR* [History of the Evangelical Christian–Baptists in the USSR, in Russian] (Moscow: AUCECB, 1989), pp. 73 ff.

[2] Orthodox theologians, from Gregory Palamas (fourteenth century) and his followers, usually advocate holy images by dividing God's essence (which cannot be comprehended and portrayed) and His 'energies' (which are efficaciously displayed in any theophany even by means of material objects, for instance, icons). See Prot J Meyendorff, *Pravoslavie i sovremennyi mir* [Orthodoxy and the contemporary world, in Russian] (Minsk: Luchi Sofii, 1995), pp. 87-92.

speculate about God and heavenly mysteries. Thus, Russian Baptists intuitively agreed with the superiority of this old Eastern Christian tradition.[3] The apophatic and 'conciliar' mentality is more typical for monks than for professors (who are the Protestant theologians as a rule).

In their teaching about the Triune God, Russian Baptists are also closer to the Orthodox Church than to Western Protestants (whether from Lutheran, Reformed, or Anabaptist historical branches). Besides the above-mentioned apophaticism in their thinking about God, Russian Baptists did not accept the *filioque* clause in the article on the Holy Spirit included in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed,[4] though the addition 'and the Son' is not usually contested among Western Protestants.[5] It is a notable example of the way belonging to Russian Orthodox Tradition preserved Russian Baptists from Western theological influence.

Regarding soteriology, it is quite often said that the majority of Russian Baptists hold an Arminian theology.[6] That statement is hardly correct. In reality, they are not Arminians at all. This is a Western classification of them caused by an approximate likeness. In the Russian context, Protestant ideas, under the influence of the Eastern Orthodox tradition (which is, of course, much more ancient than the teaching of Arminius) often noticeably change. One such change from standard Protestantism is in the matter of salvation. It is noteworthy that the only Russian Baptist Calvinist creed, published by V G Pavlov (1906) and later republished by N Odintsov (1928), in practice appears to be a translation from the German creed of the Baptists of Hamburg and did not become notably widespread in Russia.[7] Before *perestroika*, Russian Baptists held doctrines quite near the Orthodox view of salvation (which may outwardly look like Arminianism but the roots were from an absolutely different

[3]S Sannikov, *Vecheria Gospodnia* [The Lord's Supper, in Russian] (Moscow: Protestant, 1990), pp. 12-9; V Popov, 'Isikhazm kak chaianie dukhovnosti' [Hesychasm as an aspiration for spirituality, in Russian], *Bogomyslie*, 2 (1991), pp. 115-33; N Kolesnikov, *V pomoshch' propovedniku: Sbornik konspektov* [Help for the preacher: A collection of notes, in Russian], 2 vols. (Moscow: Zlatoust, 1995), v. I, pp. 441 ff.

[4] "Verouchenie Evangel'skikh Khristian-Baptistov [The creed of the Evangelical Christians–Baptists, in Russian]," *Bratsky Vestnik*, 4 (1966), p. 15; 4 (1985), pp. 37-8; cf. also the Orthodox version of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed in the official Russian Baptist textbook: P Savchenko, *Sravnitel'noe bogoslovie* [Comparative theology, in Russian] (Moscow: AUCECB, 1991, originally 1974), p. 39. Russian Baptists sing this creed exactly the same way during their church services (see hymn #1109 in any edition of *Pesn' vozrozhdeniia* [Song of revival, in Russian]).

[5]E.g. L Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1981), p. 97; G Bromiley, "Filioque," in: *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. by W Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), pp. 415 ff.

[6] H L McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville: Broadman, 1987), p. 817; M Sidwell, *The Russian Baptists*, http://www.bju.edu/library/collections/fund_file/russianbap.html #russ65, accessed 7 January 2009.

[7] S Savinsky, *Istoriia evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov Ukraini, Rossii, Belorussii (1867 – 1917)* [History of the Evangelical Christians–Baptists of Ukraine, Russia, and Belorussia (1867 – 1917), in Russian] (St Petersburg: Biblia dlia Vsekh, 1999), p. 314. As far back as the most authoritative early Russian creeds by I S Prokhanov (1910) and I V Kargel (1913), declarations were included about the synergy of God and man in the process of salvation.

historic-theological context). In contrast to many Orthodox believers, Russian Baptists stressed faith more than good works (that indicates their connection with the Protestant world), but were far away, for instance, from Western Reformed views on salvation.

In the Russian Baptist brotherhood, there were clearly two opposing tendencies related to the sphere of Christian anthropology and hamartiology. The first was strict *perfectionism*. The Council of Churches of ECB ('initsiativniki') always emphasised the teaching on the necessity of absolute holiness for 'genuine believers'.[8] There are some evident parallels here with the old Anabaptist (Mennonite) idealistic tradition of building a church 'without spot or wrinkle'.[9] In the hostile Soviet atheistic context, the logical development of the Baptist perfectionist position became *wishing to suffer* for Christ ('This is the reality of life: either you go to prison for Christ or you go to hell…').[10] The second tendency was the Russian Orthodox tradition of open confession of self-*imperfection* and the 'shedding of tears' over personal sins. Not the church members who considered themselves holy, but the Christians who felt their own imperfection and repented before God, even for their smallest sins, had and felt a real sense of holiness. The nearer Christians came to God, the more they felt their imperfection. Such an attitude was more conformed to the position of the All-Union Council of ECB.[11]

Officially Russian Baptists always declared the *Sola Scriptura* principle[12] (along with the majority of Baptists around the world). However, in practice, as a rule, Soviet Baptists followed Eastern Christian Tradition. Looking at the pre-*perestroika* issues of the Soviet Baptist periodicals, we find there regular loving quotations from many Eastern (rarely from the Western) Church Fathers; absolutely uncritical paraphrases of many Orthodox legends and apocrypha; publishing of Orthodox hymns and poems; mention of many Christian feasts celebrated by both Russian Orthodox and Russian Baptists; regular Easter and Christmas greetings from the Orthodox patriarch and metropolitans (in *Bratskiy vestnik*

[8]*Ob osviashchenii* [On sanctification, in Russian] (Sovet Tserkvei ECB, 1990 [1964]); 'Osviatis'!' *Vestnik spaseniia*, 1973 ["Be holy!" Bulletin of salvation, in Russian], (Archives of the Russian Union of ECB, file 28d, document 28d-18).

[9]See A Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology: An Introduction* (Kitchener: Pandora Press, 1995), p. 362 and W Claassen, ed., *Anabaptism in Outline: Selected Primary Sources* (Kitchener: Herald Press, 1981), p. 102.

[10]For instance, a former minister of the Moscow unregistered Baptist church, V P Zinchenko, testified about such views in the 1960s and 1970s (author's interview, Seattle, Washington, USA, 2006).

[11]See, for example the following issues of *Bratskiy vestnik* (the main periodical of the Soviet Baptists): 5 (1969): 60; 1 (1971): 66-9; 5 (1972): 26; 6 (1975): 26-35; 3 (1976): 28; 5 (1985): 13, etc.

[12]E.g. see "Verouchenie Evangel'skikh Khristian–Baptistov [Creed of the Evangelical Christians–Baptists], *Bratskiy vestnik*, 4 (1985): 33-4; *Osnovnye printsipy very Evangel'skikh Khristian–Baptistov, sbornik publikatsiy*, [Basic principles of belief of the Evangelical Christians–Baptists, a collection, in Russian] (Odessa: Russian Gospel Ministries, 1992), p 92.

[Fraternal bulletin]); and so on. The definite influence of the Orthodox tradition on Russian Baptists was also through the Synodal translation of the Scripture. The Synodal Bible (of 1876) is the main Book not only of Russian-speaking Orthodox people but also of Russian Baptists. Russian scholar I. Apatova has convincingly shown how several 'extreme Protestant' passages of the New Testament on salvation by grace alone were evidently moderated in the Russian Synodal Bible, which was translated in harmonious accordance with Orthodox Holy Tradition.[13]

Whereas Western Protestants usually place primary focus on two ordinances, water baptism and the Lord's Supper, Russian Baptists often move on, speaking of the sacral number of *seven sacraments* ('church ordinances') and evidently imitating on this point some elements of Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology.[14] For instance, two well-known Russian Baptist ministers and theologians, A V Karev and N A Kolesnikov (members of the leadership of the All-Union Council of ECB) wrote about the seven sacraments. The list of church ordinances by Karev is the following: 'preaching, [church] singing, praying, serving one's neighbour with love, baptism, communion, and keeping peace in the church'.[15] The list of the ordinances by Kolesnikov has a much more 'sacramental' character: 'water baptism, the Lord's Supper, ordination, marriage, praying for the sick and children, consecration of houses of prayer, and burial'.[16] Kolesnikov and his supporters (as Russian Baptist Slavophils) did not agree with the traditional Western Baptist attitude towards the sacraments. They willingly quoted the Eastern Church Fathers, found mystery and divine grace in all church ordinances, and on no account considered them merely external ritual or symbolic acts.[17]

On the whole, after World War II, Soviet Baptists were moving by degrees toward a sacramental theology and corresponding church practice. This process was conditioned, on the one hand, by the historically established Russian Orthodox context and the undoubted Orthodox influence on native Baptist mentality and, on the other, because of the very limited (because of Soviet policy) contacts of Soviet Baptists with their

[13]I Apatova, 'Germenevtika sinodal'nogo perevoda [Hermeneutics of the synodal translation], Diploma Thesis, Moskovskaia bogoslovskaia seminariia ECB, 2006, unpublished manuscript, pp. 109-123.

[14]Though Roman Catholicism also has seven sacraments, it never had any serious influence on the Russian Baptists.

[15]A Karev, 'Svyashchennodeistviia tserkvi [Holy ordinances of the church, in Russian]," *Bratskiy vestnik*, 1 (1963): 36; cf. A Karev, *Izbrannye stat'i* [Selected articles, in Russian] (Moscow: AUCECB, 1977), p. 150.

[16]N Kolesnikov, *Khristianin, znaesh' li ty, kak dolzhno postupat' v dome Bozh'em?* [Christian, do you know how people ought to behave in God's house? in Russian], 3 volumes (Moscow: Druzhba i Blagaia vest', 1998), v. I, p. 41.

[17]Kolesnikov, *Khristianin, znaesh' li ty*, v. II, pp. 48, 57. See also, Kolesnikov, *V pomoshch' propovedniku*, v. I, pp. 285-6; P Shatrov, "Deianiia Apostolov' [The Acts of the Apostles, in Russian], *Bratskiy vestnik*, 4 (1982), p. 17 ff.

Western brothers, lack of knowledge of foreign languages, and so on. It is remarkable that the highest point of 'Baptist sacramentalism' fell at the end of the 1980s, when, already in the atmosphere of *perestroika* policy, a new theological tendency represented by numerous Western Baptist missionaries and preachers started to wield appreciable influence in Russia. As a result, the Occidentalist wing of domestic Baptists quickly gained strength and began to put considerable pressure upon their brothers – the 'Slavophiles'. This influence is still evident today.

2

The liturgical practices of the Russian Orthodox Church and Russian Baptist congregations outwardly differ greatly from each other. However, analysis of the church year, liturgical order and main ceremonial acts of the brotherhood of ECB displayed a more Eastern Orthodox than Western Baptist influence before *perestroika*. Any external liturgical distinctions between the Orthodox Church and Russian Baptists are substantially compensated by their historical and traditional spiritual affinity. The liturgical year of Russian Baptists includes many Orthodox feasts. Even through the number of holidays observed by the Soviet Baptists, one can see the partisanship of the Eastern Christian tradition (as many Western Baptists celebrate only Easter and Christmas).[18] For instance, here is the complete list of the official church feasts of Russian Baptists for 1976: New Year's Day, Christmas Eve (January 6), Christmas Day (January 7), Second Day of Christmas, Third Day of Christmas, Baptism of the Lord, Presentation of the Lord, Annunciation Day, Christ's Entry into Jerusalem, Holy Thursday (in Holy Week), Easter Day, Second Day of Easter, Third Day of Easter, Ascension of the Lord, Trinity Sunday, Whit Monday, Transfiguration of the Lord, Harvest Feast, Day of Unity, New Year's Eve.[19] All the dates of the feasts on the list (except New Year's Day), correspond to the Julian calendar and Eastern Orthodox *Paschalion*, which are common both to the Russian Orthodox Church and to the majority of Soviet Baptist congregations.

Regarding the rite of divine service, a cursory glance only perceives a 'free style' in the meetings of Russian Baptists. Actually, they have had their established order, or rite of divine service, for a long time.[20] Though

[18]For example, G Milne, President of the Baptist Union of Australia, muses: 'We celebrate Christmas. We celebrate Easter… Baptists tend to reject the church year with all its various celebrations. What is Epiphany Sunday, or Trinity Sunday or many other special holy days (holidays) of the church?' http://www.baptist.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=48&Itemid=8, accessed 17 November 2007.

[19] "Tserkovnye prazdniki ECB na 1976 god" [Church holidays of ECB for 1976, in Russsian]," *Bratskiy vestnik*, 6 (1975): 75.

[20]See the section 'The rite of divine service of the Moscow congregation' in I Motorin's article "O bogosluzhenii [On the divine service, in Russian]," *Bratskiy vestnik*, 1 (1957), pp. 9-10.

some ECB authors assert that Baptist meetings are conducted in accordance with Holy Scripture,[21] the majority of them admit that their divine worship follows a certain tradition.[22] Researchers have noted many times the 'Western' or 'German' origin of the structure of the Russian Baptist meeting,[23] i.e. its outward form. At the same time, the content of divine service of the brotherhood of ECB subconsciously follows the Orthodox tradition.

For instance, Orthodox chants are an essential part of the Russian Baptist liturgy. Baptist choir songbooks with printed music, starting from the first pages, usually include many classical Orthodox songs, which have been sung by the brotherhood of ECB for a long time. These are musical compositions by Degtiarev, Bortnyansky, Tchaikovsky, Arkhangelsky, Vedel, and others. Analysis of the words of Russian Baptist service songs shows their constant dialogic tendency for communication with God, expressed by the traditional use of the lexical forms of the first and second persons, plenty of exclamatory intonations and inclination to the 'epic' Russian folk syntax.[24] The lack of information about the composers of the hymns (whose names were not usually stated at all until recently) draws many domestic Baptist songs near to folk poetry. This can be specifically confirmed by the great number of versions of some popular chants (especially in rural areas).[25]

Although there is a formal dogmatic denial of icons by Russian Baptists, nevertheless, in practice there turn out to be a significant number of Baptist church paintings (wall-paintings) and a sacramental attitude toward the Bible. There are many Russian Baptist parallels to the Orthodox divine service ceremonial acts, such as kneeling prayers, the holy kiss, standing during many parts of divine service, etc. Thus, even when ECB church members were bellicose towards Orthodoxy, they were, in fact, nearer to Orthodox ground than they could imagine.

In analysing the beliefs of Russian Baptists and their dependence on Orthodox theology, aside from religious reasons, we should make allowance for the 'ecumenical' influence of Soviet power, which had much

[21]A Kadaev, 'Vecheria Gospodnia—khleboprelomlenie' [The Lord's Supper – the breaking of bread, in Russian], *Bratskiy vestnik*, 3 (1990), pp. 12-3.
[22]N P Khrapov, ed., *Dom Bozhiy i sluzhenie v nem* (Sovet Tserkvey ECB) [God's house and the service in it, in Russian] (Council of Churches of ECB, 1972-1974, http://www.blagovestnik.org/books/00280.htm#60, accessed 20 November 2008.
[23]Savinskiy, *Istoriia (1867–1917)*, pp. 124-6 and J Dyck, "Fresh Skins for New Wine," *Theological Reflections*, 6 (2006): 119-21.
[24]Z Tarlanov, 'Zametki o sintaksise gimnov russkikh baptistov' [Short commentary on the syntax of Russian Baptist hymns, in Russian], in Z Tarlanov, *Izbrannye raboty po iazykoznaniiu i filologii* [Selected works on linguistics and philology, in Russian] (Petrozavodsk: Izd-vo Petrzavodskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta, 2005), p. 616.
[25] Ibid., pp. 617-8.

experience not only as the terrible persecutor of believers, but also as their resolute 'conciliator'. It is enough to remember the joining together (though not always on good terms) of Evangelical Christians and Baptists in 1944,[26] and the likewise not unproblematic addition to them of the Pentecostals in 1945,[27] or the suspiciously benevolent abolition of all medieval anathemas against the Old Orthodox believers by the Moscow Patriarchate in 1971.[28]

Undoubtedly, Soviet power supported ecumenical contacts between Orthodox and Baptist churches as well. However, to see this as the main cause of a certain affinity before *perestroika* is a mistake. Looking at the underground periodicals of the unregistered Russian Baptists (the Council of Churches of ECB) during the time of Khrushchev and Brezhnev, first of all at *Vestnik istiny* [Bulletin of truth], we find the same tendency toward influence by the Russian Orthodox mind.[29] Thus, the root of Russian Baptist specificity is to be sought first of all in their common history with Orthodoxy, their life in the same country, their unconscious following of the traditions of Russian Orthodox piety, but not so much in the influence forced upon them by the Communist regime.[30]

3

The distinctive features of Russian Baptist theology and liturgical usage in the period could not but affect their everyday lives, i.e. the whole system of cultural, economic and mental national identity, all the things usually called the way of life. The Orthodox concept of 'monasticism in the world' helps us to understand better the deep connection between Russian Orthodoxy and Russian Baptists. It is interesting that Russian Baptists, for all their everyday criticism of Orthodoxy, often spoke well of the monastic ('narrow') way, and compared themselves, whether intentionally or not, with monks. The naming of the Russian Baptist Union the *brotherhood (bratstvo)* suggests a parallel with monastic 'brotherhood' (as well as 'sisterhood').

---

[26] *Istoriia Evangel'skikh Khristian-Baptistov v SSSR*, pp. 231-2.
[27] Ibid., pp. 233-4.
[28] 'Pomestniy Sobor Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi' [Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, in Russian], *Zhurnal Moskovskoy Patriarkhii*, 7 (1971): 63-73.
[29] Examples from *Vestnik istiny* include: accolades to St John Chrysostom and monasticism (4 [1977]: 30-2); panegyric to Russian Orthodox philosopher Vladimir Soloviev (1 [1979]: 34-41; 2 [1979]: 31-8; publishing of Orthodox maxims (4 [1979]: 33), etc. On the whole, unregistered Russian Baptists used rather more Western Baptist sources in comparison with the AUCECB. At the same time, the Council of Churches was nearer to the spirit of such radical underground Orthodox movements as the True Orthodox Church and the True Orthodox Christians. See, for instance, the remarkable testimony about this by the famous Soviet Baptist minister Iosef Bondarenko (I Bondarenko, *Tri prigovora* [Three verdicts, in Russian] *)* (Odessa: n.p., 2006), pp. 122-123.
[30] It should be pointed out that the common suffering of the Orthodox and Baptists for their faith under Communism was also a cause of their sympathy for each other.

There are some positive Baptist testimonies about Soviet Baptist girls who were called by their unbelieving neighbours 'Stundists' and 'nuns' simultaneously.[31] Some Baptist church members felt sorry for young women who sincerely turned to God and then after that realized that they had come into a 'Baptist nunnery', since the women in the congregations heavily outnumbered the men. The young sisters were traditionally bound by the following public words (a kind of vow). The question was: 'If an unbeliever makes an offer of marriage to you…?' The answer was: 'No, I have fallen in love with Jesus!'[32] In this way, Russian Baptists actually preordained the mass female monastic way of life.

Russian Baptist periodicals initiated some interesting attempts to offer an interpretation of Russian Orthodox monasticism as a kind of forerunner of the evangelical movement in Russia.[33] It is noteworthy how readily Soviet Baptists (both 'unregistered' and official groups) used some terms drawn from the monastery in their songs: for instance, *obitel'* (cloister, spiritual abode), *kel'ia* (monastic cell) and others.[34] Traditional mystical monastic motifs, for instance of the 'spiritual ladder',[35] i.e. the gradual, submissive climbing the 'ladder' to God in heaven, occupied the mind and struck a deep chord in the heart of Russian Baptists. The main Soviet Baptist periodical *Bratskiy vestnik*, for example, characteristically identified Russian Baptists with Russian Orthodox monks in their divine ascent, and also in their spiritual struggle against the powers of darkness.[36] The spiritual ladder, starting on earth with its top hidden high up in the clouds, so delighted Soviet Baptists that they dreamed about it and wrote poetry on the subject.

The monastic orientation of the brotherhood can also be seen in the traditional political indifference and pacifism of Russian Baptists. Many of them refused to participate in Soviet public life or take part in elections.

---

[31]Testimony of a Baptist church member from Gomel (Belarus) N F Mazhnaia (author's interview, Fresno, Calif., USA, 2006, available through the author).

[32]Testimony of B M Zdorovets from Kharkov (Ukraine), one of the founders of the Soviet Baptist *initsiativnik* movement (author's interview, Spokane, Wash., USA, 2006, available through the author).

[33]A Bychkov, '100-letie ob''edinitel'nykh s''ezdov' [The centenary of the uniting councils, in Russian], *Bratskiy vestnik*, 6 (1984): 44-5; I Gnida, 'Dukhovno-patrioticheskoe sluzhenie' [Spiritual and patriotic ministry, in Russian], *Bratskiy vestnik* (1984), p. 51; V Popov, 'Isikhazm', pp. 123-33.

[34]See *Sbornik dukhovnykh pesen Evangel'skikh Khristian-Baptistov* [Songbook of the Evangelical Christians–Baptists, in Russian] (Moscow: AUCECB, 1968), #106, p. 78; #464, p. 309; #140, p. 99; #122, p. 88, etc. *Pesn' vozrozhdeniya* [Song of revival, in Russian] (GmbH: Christlicher Verlag, 1991 [1978]), #296, p. 192; #312, p. 203; #332, p. 215; #351, p. 226, etc.

[35]St John Climacus, *Lestnitsa* [The ladder of divine ascent, in Russian] (Sviato-Uspensky Pskovsko-Pechersky monastyr', 1994); *Monasheskai zhizn'* [Monastic life], vypusk 1 (Svyato-Uspensky Pskovo-Pechersky monastyr', 1994, [1885]).

[36] Anonymous, 'Na rasput'e' [At the crossroads, in Russian], *Bratskiy vestnik*, 4 (1972), p. 66. See also in *Bratskiy vestnik*, Ia Zhidkov, 'Preobrazhenie Gospodne' [The Transfiguration of the Lord, in Russian], 5-6 (1962), p. 40; I Tatarchenko, 'Dukhovnaia lestnitsa' [The spiritual ladder, in Russian], 6 (1969), pp. 47-48; S Fadiukhin, 'Bog Vsemogushchiy blagoslovil menia' [God Almighty blessed me, in Russian], 5 (1982), p. 18); A Karev, 'Golgofa' [Calvary, In Russian], 3 (1964), p. 24; 2 (1974), p. 25, etc.

Some members of Baptist churches did not accept any job in Communist organisations; some congregations rejected all 'red' certificates (including regular passports)[37] and even Soviet money.[38]

The Russian Orthodox interpretation of holiness, which reached elevated foolishness for Christ's sake, exerted evident influence on the brotherhood of ECB. In the Russian Orthodox Church, alongside universal canonisation, there is also a local parallel, concerning a certain diocese or even a monastery or a church, closely associated with the life of a particular saint.[39] We see a similar state of things among Russian Baptists.

For example, there are many hagiographic stories about Baptist 'holy paupers' (*bessrebreniki*) for God, their pious lives and their service for the Lord.[40] The accounts do not seem to suppose any shortcomings in the lives of these people. Even stylistically the stories bear a strong resemblance to Russian Orthodox 'Lives of Saints'. The unmarried state of some holy Baptists also comes to the fore, which again mirrors the ancient monastic tradition.

Analysing such life stories, it should be noted that Baptist hagiographies, as well as the Orthodox 'Lives of Saints', often omit the essential details of the events described; it is not always clear where and when the events took place. The moral example and spiritual edification definitely come first, not the historical context. No doubt, this is a reflection of a well-known feature of the Slavic soul – the tendency to a mystical rather than a rational perception of the world. Here, for example, is a characteristic note that many Soviet Baptists of the period beginning in the 1950s and continuing to the 1970s struck in their intimate diaries:

> The address of the Christian: the Spiritual Homeland, the Gospel Region, the Zion District, the City of Heaven, the Narrow Way Street, the Thorny Lane, the House of the Tabernacle. The guide leading there is the Holy Spirit; to ask for the Watchman of conscience…[41]

---

[37]*Biulleten' soveta rodstvennikov uznikov Evangelskikh Khristian-Baptistov v SSSR* [Bulletin of the Council of Prisoners' Relatives of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists of the USSR, in Russian], # 21 (Moscow, 1975), p. 46; Iu Kuksenko, 'Nashi besedy' [Our conversations, in Russian] Kazakhstan's Baptist Union Archives (2002), p. 113; etc.

[38]Testimony of Zdorovets concerning 'evangel'skie khristiane sovershennye' [perfect evangelical Christians].

[39]G Fedotov, *Sviatye drevnei Rusi* [The saints of Old Russia, in Russian] (Moscow: Moskovskiy rabochi, 1990), pp. 34-35.

[40]For example, there are testimonies about the holy lives of the brethren Iosef Laptev and Ivan Ivolin by several ECB church members from Gorky Region and Krasnodar Territory: M A Vasiliev, O E Avdeeva, S G Odariuk and N M Odariuk (author's interviews, Everett, Wash., USA, 2006, available through the author).

[41] From the personal files of G E Kuchma, a church member of Omsk Central Baptist Church.

The essence of the allegorical text (which was copied by both young and mature Soviet Baptists) is slightly clearer if we compare it, for instance, with the following words of a Russian Orthodox hagiographical author:

> ...But from what town or hamlet and from what family such a leading light was descended we did not find in the writings. God knows this. For us it is enough to know that he was a heavenly citizen of Jerusalem, God was his Father and the Holy Church was his Mother, his relations were the all-night, tearful prayers and unceasing groans, his neighbours were the vigilant desert workers'.[42]

The general, non-rationalistic approach, in which there is little about abstract spiritual and moral notions and very little about actual historical data, is to a considerable degree typical for both Russian Orthodox and Soviet Baptist hagiography.

In the Russian context, the unique spiritual phenomenon of foolishness for Christ's sake is closely related to the theme of holiness. In the Eastern Christian tradition, the Saviour Himself, who rejected the values of this world and taught that His Kingdom is 'not of this world', was often interpreted as the first of 'God's fools'. Hundreds of fools for Christ's sake became famous in Russia, and dozens of them were canonised.[43] In such an atmosphere, there is little wonder that Russian Baptists also had many fools for Christ. In the period examined, dozens of fools for Christ became known among Soviet Baptists. The most famous of them was probably Vanya Moiseev.

Even official sources of the Council of Churches of ECB report much about Vanya Moiseev. For example, they make no secret of the fact that he saw visions of the heavenly Jerusalem, Old Testament saints, and Christ's apostles; he communed with God's angels.[44] During military service in the Soviet Army, Vanya prayed many hours a day, as he had done before at home. He simple-heartedly told other soldiers and commanders (Communists) about Jesus Christ, enduring much mockery and many beatings. Once he publicly prophesied that an unbelieving sergeant would get a furlough ('I prayed with my spirit, and the Lord revealed it to me'). This sergeant was someone who, it seemed, had no chance to visit his home in the foreseeable future, but the prediction came true and he did get to go home! Vanya miraculously recovered after a

[42]Cited in V Kliuchevsky, *Istochniki russkoy istorii* [Sources of Russian history], in V Kliuchevskiy, *Sochineniia* (Works, in Russian), 9 vols. (Moscow: Mysl, 1989), v. VII, pp. 74-75.

[43]S Iurkov, *Pod znakom groteska: Antipovedenie v russkoy kulture, 11 – Nachalo 20 vv.* [Under the sign of the grotesque: Anti-behaviour in Russian culture, 11th – Early 20th centuries, in Russian] (St Petersburg: Letniy sad, 2003), pp. 52-53; *Khristianstvo: Entsiklopedichesky slovar'* [Christianity: Encyclopedia, in Russian], ed. by S Averintsev, 3 vols. (Moscow: Bolshaia Rossiyskaia Entsiklopediia, 1995), v. III, pp. 286-287.

[44]*Podrazhaite vere ikh, 40 let probuzhdennomu bratstvu* [Imitate their faith: The 40th anniversary of the revival brotherhood, in Russian] (Moscow: Sovet Tserkvei ECB, 2001), pp. 350, 355-356.

severe injury without any doctors. He could get along without food for several days. In the winter cold, he walked for entire nights outside just in his summer uniform without detriment to his health. He endured all the punishments from his commanders without a grumble and even with joy. They cite one example: with a glad heart he scrubbed the floor of a large barracks with a brush and soap, which was considered unthinkable and humiliating work by other second-year soldiers. After all these trials he became a martyr for Christ.[45]

Comparing the Christian exploits of Vanya Moiseev with the 'Lives' of the holy Russian fools for Christ's sake, we find many features in common, such as meekness and love for the people around them, including their oppressors; 'strange' public conduct; great zeal in prayer; visions of the spiritual, angelic realm; gifts of wonder-working and prophecy; and an ascetic mode of life. Thus, St Procopius of Ustiug suffered with humility many 'vexations, reproaches, and beatings' for his foolishness for Christ;[46] St Mikhail Klopsky was eminent for his special asceticism, as well as indefatigable prayer and miracles;[47] St Simon of Iurievets walked in the winter in a flaxen shirt and without any footwear;[48] St Vasily the Blessed was considered worthy of angelic visions and had a great prophetic gift,[49] the same as Procopius of Viatka, Nikolai of Pskov, and many others were known fools for Christ's sake.[50]

Another important facet of traditional Russian foolishness for Christ was courageous denunciation of the powers that be, including the Tsars. What was unthinkable for common people, and even those from the nobility, was often permitted to fools for Christ, through whom, according to pious belief, God Himself had spoken. Following this tradition, Russian Baptist fools for Christ's sake denounced both believing and unbelieving leaders (for instance: Senior Presbyters, high-ranking officers of the KGB, etc.). Usually what they said was articulated in terms of revelation: 'The Lord Himself has sent me to you…' 'God's fool' feels, without the slightest doubt, that he is an instrument in the Lord's hands. In one case a

[45]*Inye zhe zamucheny byli* [Others were tortured, in Russian] (Sovet Tserkvei ECB, 1970s), pp. 1-32; *Podrazhaite vere ikh*, pp. 340-61; testimony of V P Litovchenko, an ECB church member from the Crimea, who was personally acquainted with Vanya Moiseev (author's interview, Los Angeles, Calif., USA, 2006, available through the author).

[46] Fedotov, *Sviatye drevnei Rusi*, pp. 202-203.

[47] Ibid., pp. 203-204.

[48]A Panchenko, 'Smekh kak zrelishche' [Laughter as a spectacle, in Russian], in D Likhachev, A Panchenko and N Ponyrko, *Smekh v drevnei Rusi* [Laughter in Old Rus', in Russian] (Leningrad: Nauka, 1984), p. 119.

[49]A Panchenko, 'Iurodivye na Rusi' [Fools for Christ in Rus', in Russian], in A Panchenko, *Russkaia istoriia i kultura* [Russian history and culture, in Russian] (St Petersburg: Yuna, 1999), p. 397; *Khristianstvo: Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar'*, v. I, pp. 338-339.

[50]Hieromonk Aleksei (Kuznetsov), *Iurodstvo i stolpnichestvo* [Foolishness for Christ and pillar asceticism, in Russian] (Moscow: Izd-vo Moskovskogo Podvor'ia Sviato-Troitskoi Sergievoi Lavry, 2000 [1913]), pp. 202-204.

prophet had a meeting with a high-ranking noble – a meeting that, he said, could only take place at God's (that is, 'preordained') time. The holy fool spoke about the noble's soul, just as if he was speaking to one of the common people. Meeting with a rebuff, the fool immediately resorted to dramatic effects, defiantly shaking off the dust from his own feet, in reference to the well-known, literally interpreted words of Scripture. The prophet also predicted the future by mysteriously hinting at the death of a certain man who formerly had not listened to him.[51]

This deliberate act of 'playing the fool' that took place during some court trials of Soviet Baptists was also notable before *perestroika*.[52] Here was a Russian interpretation of holiness at work. It is significant that, in Soviet labour camps (where prisoners were not divided into groups on the basis of their religion) there were even some instances of joint 'playing the fool' by both Russian Orthodox and Baptist inmates. The famous leaders of the CCECB, Iosef Bondarenko and Boris Zdorovets, testify about this in their memoirs.[53]

4

The Eastern Christian self-consciousness of many Soviet Baptists was expressed through their cooperation with the Russian Orthodox Church, as well as through the numerous public censures by Baptists of the 'hostile' Western countries, with their simultaneous support of the 'peacemaking' policy of the USSR. The Baptists paid tribute to the Russian way of life, following in this respect the mainstream of Russian Orthodox and even Slavophil practice. At the same time, Baptist beliefs and practical experience had some impact upon Russian Orthodoxy. This was expressed, for example, by recommendations on the part of Orthodox leaders to the Orthodox laity to read the Bible regularly; by the preaching of instructive, gospel-based sermons at Orthodox churches; by some attempts to set up church communities which were amazingly akin to the Russian Baptist model; and by using some songs, poems and sketches on biblical themes written by Baptist authors (as a rule, not mentioning their names) at Orthodox children's camps and Sunday schools.[54]

---

[51] V Zhuravlev, *Velika vernost' Tvoia, Gospodi: Svidetel'stva iz zhizni* [Great is your faithfulness, Lord: Life Testimonies, in Russian] (Steinhagen, Germany: Samenkorn, 2006), v. I, pp, 309-310.

[52]'Sud nepravedny: Stenogramma sudebnogo protsessa [Unfair trial: Full trial transcript, in Russian]," *Vestnik spaseniia* 1 (1973), pp. 22-26.

[53]I Bondarenko, *Tri prigovora*, pp. 122-123; testimony of Zdorovets. At the 'church' camp in Mordovia, where the latter was imprisoned in 1960s, there was even a Russian Orthodox 'stylite', who sat, telling his rosary, on the upper plank bed for several years, ignoring any work and roll calls… As spiritual kin, he and Zdorovets were on friendly terms.

[54]For example, the testimony of Christian historian Viktor Fast (author's interview, Frankenthal, Germany, 2008, available through the author); a Baptist presbyter from Odessa (Ukraine), Ia D Shevchuk,

The interpenetration of Russian Orthodox and evangelical ideas, and in particular the exchange of practical experience, was unavoidable. The Orthodox and the Baptists were conditioned by their long experience of living together in the same country, in a shared Russian and Soviet society. Many clergymen, including I Shakhovskoi, A Men', D Dudko, A Borisov, and others, by their excellent works, repeatedly testified to the truth of the old paradoxical assertion that, contrary to well-known but one-sided theories, there existed in real life both 'sectarianism in [Russian] Orthodoxy' and '[Russian] Orthodoxy in sectarianism'.[55]

It seems the denominational distinctions between Orthodox people and Baptists in Russia were somewhat more superficial than deep. In fact, an amazingly integrated 'Slavic Christianity' was formed in Russia in the times of Khrushchev and Brezhnev. Representatives of even the most 'non-Russian' domestic Christian groups could not avoid Russian Orthodox influence.

Constantin Prokhorov,

testifies about a certain positive impact of Soviet Baptists on Russian Orthodoxy, emphasising love for the Holy Scripture and the church and preaching clearly for the common people in their common language (author's interview, Portland, Ore., USA, 2006, available through the author).

[55]Archbishop Ioann (Shakhovskoi), 'Sektantstvo v Pravoslavii i Pravoslavie v sektantstve [Sectarianism in Orthodoxy and Orthodoxy in sectarianism, in Russian]," *Pravoslavnaia obshchina*, 4 (1992), pp. 71-77.

Dostoevsky's Implicit Mission to Russian Society as a Russian Orthodox Convictional Theology

Dumitru Sevastian

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to point out some common practical elements in the mission of Baptist and Orthodox Christians in an Orthodox context. My intention is to explore F Dostoevsky's implicit mission in order to suggest some ways in which Baptist and Orthodox Christians can work together in responding to the *Missio Dei*. The focus is *being the theology*[1] in terms of lived-out convictions.[2]

To understand Dostoevsky's mission, one must 'hear' his story, which is linked with the story of the people and with the greater story of God.[3]

Dostoevsky was a journalist as well as a novelist. That is why in the first section of this paper I am going to examine his perception of the situation of his time as a form of 'mission as witness'.[4] In the following three sections I intend to explore three elements in Orthodox Church mission: love, life and unity[5]as they are evident in the life of Dostoevsky.

1. Perception of his situation as 'mission as witness'

'The perception of the situation often begins by defining the threat' and by 'the questions of the desirability and speed of the presumably needed social change in the community'.[6]

---

[1]According to James Wm McClendon's definition, theology is 'discovery, understanding, and transformation of the convictions of a convictional community, including the discovery and critical revision of their relation to one another and to whatever else there is', in James Wm McClendon, Jr. *Ethics. Systematic Theology Volume 1* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), p. 23.

[2] Convictions are firm beliefs that guide the person. They do not change easily, but if we change them, then the person changes as well. (See James Wm McClendon, Jr and James M Smith, *Understanding Convictions: Defusing Religious Relativism*, revised edition (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1994), p. 5.

[3]James Wm McClendon, *Ethics. Systematic Theology Volume1* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), p. 356.

[4]Parush R Parushev and Rollin G Grams, *Academic Reasoning, Research and Writing in Religious Studies. A Concise Handbook* (Brno: Tribun EU; Prague: International Baptist Theological Seminary of the European Baptist Federation, 2008), p.19.

[5]David J Bosch, *Transforming Mission. Paradigms Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), pp. 207-209.

[6]Lina Andronovienė and Parush R Parushev, 'Church, State, and Culture: On the Complexities of Post-Soviet Evangelical Social Involvement', *Theological Reflections*, EAAA Journal of Theology 3 (2004), pp. 194-21.

The situation itself

The nineteenth century found Russia in a rather complicated condition. The emperor reigned autocratically, answerable only to the Lord God.[7] Not being a man of outstanding morals, Nicholas I abused his power, giving in to violence and immorality.

> Just as a squire managed the lives and desires of peasants, so was the Tsar with his servants. He would pay attention… not only to young beauties at his palace – ladies and maids -- but to girls he accidentally met while walking. If he liked someone during his walks or in theatre, he would tell an adjutant on duty. And this girl would be under his control. If she hadn't been involved in any improper activities, then her husband (if she was married) or parents (if she wasn't married) would be told about the enormous honour, which they received… No one ever resisted the Tsar's desires … In this strange country, to sleep with an emperor was considered as a great honour…for parents and even for husbands…[8]

The social situation was very complicated as well. Serfdom-based forms of exploitation were pushed to an extreme, turning serfs into slaves. The rule of landlords always meant excessive abuse of serfs, endless outrages upon the personhood of serfs, and implied the most impudent, shameless, unprecedented exploitation of serf labour.[9] The gap between the landlord and the slave was so great that the landlord seemed to consider himself made from another material than common folk.[10]

A secret police force was formed to keep everything under tight control. Police controlled all the literature, which made the existence and development of publishing in Russia practically impossible.[11] The Tsar and the head of the secret police became the ultimate censors.[12] French author Marquis Astolf de Custin compared the vast Russian Empire with a prison where the emperor had the key.[13]

Violence in the name of love - how to change society

As a reaction to this existing police-feudal régime we see the appearance of the first secret society starting as early as the first quarter of the nineteenth

---

[7]A Radzinskiy, *Alexandr II zhizn' i smert'* [Akexander II life and death] (Moscow:, Izdatel'stvo ACT, 2006, in Russian), p. 81.
[8]Ibid., 75.
[9]A F Vvoznyi, *Politseiskiy sysk i kruzhok Petrashevtsev* [Criminal investigation and Petroshavski's group] (Kiev, KVSH MVD SSSR, 1976, in Russian), p. 25.
[10]Marquis Astolf de Custin, *Nikolaevskaia Rossiia* [Nikolai's Russia] (Moscow, Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1990, in Russian), p. 301.
[11] *Kniga dlia chteniia po istorii novogo vremeni T. IV* [New time history handbook, Vol. IV] (Moscow: Tipografiia t-va I D Sytkina, 1914, in Russian), p. 100.
[12] Radzinskiy, *Alexandr II zhizn' i smert'*, p. 59.
[13] Custin, *Nikolaevskaia Rossiia*, p. 157.

century.[14] The members of this society wanted to overthrow the absolute power of the emperor and destroy the existing feudal customs.[15] In the 1830s we see the appearance of such ideological currents as 'Slavophilism' and 'Westernism'.[16] Whereas the Slavophiles wanted to transform the country by implementing reforms,[17] the Westernisers dreamed of a revolution similar to the one in France.[18] The mid-1840s saw the appearance of other, more radical socialist circles, the members of which were convinced that autocracy and social injustice were the main obstacles in the way of the people's well-being. Thus, their main purpose became getting rid of these obstacles, even resorting to violence.

Literary critic V Belinsky was one of the leaders of the Westernist movement. He was a convinced atheist. In his understanding, Russia's transformation would be impossible without eliminating Christianity.[19] At that time Dostoevsky, also deeply concerned for the lives of his countrymen, became close to Belinsky and often visited some of the illegal, anti-government meetings. Belinsky preached his socialist-atheist way with such passion that Dostoevsky could not resist. Accepting the socialist teachings of Belinsky, Dostoevsky saw his Christian convictions being shattered. He describes this time as the time of 'losing Christ'.[20] 'We were infected with the ideas of theoretical socialism of those days!' Dostoevsky would recall.[21] For his involvement in the anti-government movement, Dostoevsky was sentenced to capital punishment, which was later replaced with four years of penal labour (*katorga*).

Faith in God as the only way to transform society

In penal servitude, Dostoevsky went through something that he called 'the regeneration of his convictions'.[22] What could have taken place to change his convictions so completely? Dostoevsky himself answered this question by saying, 'I accepted Christ in my life, whom I got to know as a child in

[14] *Istoriia Rossii v XIX veke* [History of Russia in XIX century] (St Petersburg: Russkaia skoropechatnia, v. 1-2, no year, in Russian), p. 69.
[15] A V Semionova,*Velikaia frantsuzskaia revoliutsiia i Rossiia* [Russia and the Great French revolution] (Moscow: Znanie, 1991, in Russian), p. 8.
[16] *Rossiia. Entsiklopedicheskiy spravochnik* [Russia. Encyclopedia] (Moscow: Izdatel'skiy dom 'Drofa', 1998, in Russian), p. 132.
[17]*Russkoe obshchestvo 40-50 godov XIX veka* [Russian society in the 1840s and 1850s] (Moscow:,Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1989, in Russian), p. 10.
[18] Ibid., 13.
[19] F M Dostoevskiy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenie v 30 tomakh, tom 21, Dnevnik pisatelia za 1873 god.*, [Complete works in 30 volumes, v. 21, The diary of a writer for 1873.,] (Leningrad: Nauka, 1980, in Russian), p. 8.
[20] Ibid., p. 9.
[21] Ibid., p. 130.
[22] Ibid., p. 134.

my parent's house and whom I almost lost when I in turn became a European liberal'.[23]

Dostoevsky began to understand clearly that Russian society's greatest problem was its departure from God. Thus, the problem lay not in the social but in the spiritual realm. The social realm was a result of the people's spiritual condition.

Another problem, which could make matters worse, was the intrusion of the socialist-atheist teaching mentioned above. From his own experience, Dostoevsky knew the danger and destructiveness of this socialist way, offered by many as the way to reform society. In his letter to M Pogodin, Dostoevsky wrote that 'socialism and Christianity are antonyms'.[24] The danger of this way, in Dostoevsky's opinion, was its negation of God and the establishment of a new atheistic society.

By means of his novels, articles, and personal correspondence, Dostoevsky warned about the consequences of entering this dangerous path. The tragedy of Raskolnikov, the main character of the novel *Crime and Punishment*, shows how easily one can be infatuated with this teaching of 'violence for the sake of love'.

Dostoevsky not only warned about the dangers, but also proposed a way to transform society, and openly called the people to come back to God. At the same time he realised how hard it is for a person to pass through this process of doubt and disbelief. In his works Dostoevsky shows this inner struggle that takes place in a person who is on the path of returning to God.

The Diary of a Writer contains an interesting article describing this path. Dostoevsky answered a certain Gradovsky, who was considered by others to be a Christian, on Gradovsky's statement that faith is not related to social ideals and that faith in God cannot transform society. Dostoevsky's first utterance was: 'It is funny how you understand Christianity!'[25] He went on to explain that growth in the Christian faith changes Christians themselves and these changes have an effect upon people in society. He was convinced that even without the abolition of serfdom, slavery would disappear because the landlord and the serf would become brothers.[26]

---

[23]Dostoevskiy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 30 tomakh, tom 26, Dnevnik pisatelia za 1880 god.*, [Complete works in 30 volumes, v. 26, The diary of a writer for 1880, in Russian] (Leningrad: Nauka, 1980, in Russian), p. 152.

[24] Dostoevskiy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 30 tomakh, tom 28, Pis'ma 1873 god.,M. P. Pogodinu 26 fevralia* [Complete works in 30 volumes, v. 28, Letters of 1873, to M Pogodin from 26 February] (Leningrad: Nauka, 1980, in Russian), p. 471.

[25]Dostoevskiy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 30 tomakh, tom 21, Dnevnik pisatelia za 1873 god.*, [Complete works in 30 volumes, v. 21, The diary of a writer for 1873] (Leningrad: Nauka, 1980, in Russian), chapter 3.

[26] Ibid.

(Raskolnikov's sufferings would awaken a new life in him.) Thus, the call of Dostoevsky was towards the return of people to faith in God.

2. Love of God as the foundation of mission

According to David Bosch, God's love expressed in the sacrifice of Christ is the foundation for mission, in an orthodox understanding. The followers of Christ are to display this same love beyond the limits of the flock.[27]

Dostoevsky did not simply call others to the imitation of Christ, but he himself lived as a compassionate person who loved people. He learned to be compassionate to the poor and needy from his childhood, when he lived in his father's house in Moscow, in a hospital for the poor.[28]

Being near helpless people, he would go out of his way to help. When still in his teens he once gladly brought water to a peasant woman who had accidentally spilled it and had no one to carry it to her child in their village fifteen kilometres away.[29]

A Saveliev, who served as an officer in the engineering school when Dostoevsky was a student, expressed his observations of Dostoevsky's compassion toward the poor:

> Feelings of compassion remained in Fyodor Mikhailovich during his time of study. He had witnessed the life of poor peasants in Staraia Kikenka village. A picture of terrifying poverty, the absence of providence, poor clay ground and unemployment was revealed. The main reason for this situation was the neighbouring wealthy estate of Count Orlov. Striking poverty, pitiful houses and masses of poorly nourished kids increased the level of compassion in young people's hearts towards these peasants of Staraia Kikenka. Dostoevsky and Berezheskiy, along with their friends, used to raise funds for the needs of the poorest peasants.[30]

Later Doctor A Rizenkampf, who lived in the same apartment as Dostoevsky, spoke of the writer's sacrificial spirit:

> Fyodor Mikhailovich had a type of personality that everyone enjoyed, yet these kinds of personalities were in need themselves. He had been robbed unmercifully, though due to his kindness and trust, he would not go into details or rebuke servants that abused his carelessness.[31]

---

[27] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, pp. 208-209.
[28] Ibid.
[29] A M Rumiantseva, *Fiodor Mikhailovich Dostoevskiy* (Leningrad: Prosveshhenie, 1971, in Russian), p. 14.
[30] *F M Dostoevskiy v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov v dvuh tomah* [F M Dostoevsky in the reminiscences of his contemporaries, in two volumes] (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1990, in Russian), pp. 166-167.
[31] Ibid., p. 189.

O. Miller states that when in St Petersburg Dostoevsky and Rizenkampf rented an apartment together, 'this co-habitation with the doctor turned out to be practically a new source of constant expenses. He was ready to accept as a dear guest every poor person who came to the doctor for advice. Often he would come to a point of extreme need of money.'[32] 'The new day with the lack of money, new loans, oftentimes with exorbitant interest rates, just to borrow enough money to be able to buy sugar, tea, etc.'[33]

Doctor S Ianovskiy knew that Dostoevsky was well paid, but also knew that he was constantly in need of money. Ianovskiy posed the question, 'Where did his money go?' and supplied the answer himself:

> I can answer this question correctly, since Fyodor Mikhailovich was open to me more than to others when it used to come to finances: he distributed almost all of his funds to those who were poorer than he; sometimes he distributed funds to those who were not poorer than he, but they would receive his money due to his endless kindness. He never gambled, did not have a clue about the rules and even hated card games. He was a decisive enemy of wine and carousing.[34]

The testimony of Dostoevsky's brother Andrei serves as a good illustration of Ianovskiy's words: 'When there was the first case of cholera and a patient had an attack on the street, brother Fiodor immediately ran to the patient to give him medication and after that massaged him when he had convulsions'.[35]

Another story came from A G Dostoevskaia, the writer's wife. She tells about Fyodor Mikhailovich's compassion for the poor and sick:

> Having heard about poverty of one widow who remained after her husband's death with three children aged 11, 7 and 5, Dostoevsky out of pity has hired her as a servant with all of her children … Fedosia, with tears in her eyes, shared with me while I was still a bride, about Fyodor Mikhailovich's kindness. According to her, at nights whenever he heard a child coughing or crying, he would come to cover him/her with a blanket, calm him/her down, or at least wake the mother up.[36]

Dostoevsky would never turn away those asking for alms. 'There were cases', his wife would say, 'when my husband would not have petty cash on him when he was asked for alms close to our stairs; then he would bring the beggars in and in our apartment they would be given the money'.[37]

---

[32] Ibid., pp. 189-190.
[33] Ibid., p. 191.
[34] Ibid., pp. 235-236.
[35] Ibid., p. 141.
[36] A G Dostoevskaia, *Vospominaniya* [Memoirs] (Moscow: Pravda, 1987, in Russian), p. 78.
[37] Ibid., p. 220.

He would not pay back evil for evil, but would forgive his offenders. In 1879 a drunken peasant on the street hit Dostoevsky over the back of the head with such force that he fell on the pavement, resulting in a bloody gash. In the police station Fyodor Mikhailovich asked the officer to release the offender, as he had forgiven him. However the protocol was already completed and the process could not be reversed. Dostoevsky said to the judge that he forgave the offender and asked for his release. The judge acceded to Dostoevsky's request, however still fined the peasant sixteen roubles for 'creating noise and disorder on the street'. Dostoevsky waited for his offender at the exit and gave him sixteen roubles to pay the fine.[38]

According to A G Dostoevskaia, Fyodor Mikhailovich was a man of limitless kindness. He would display it not only to those close to him, but to anyone whose misfortune or crisis came to his notice. He would not have to be asked, he would offer his help himself.

> Having influential friends, my husband used their influence in order to help others. He placed many old people in homes for the elderly, children in orphanages, and helped those who had lost everything to find their place in society. He had to read and correct many other writings, listen to honest confessions and offer advice on very personal issues. He did not feel sorry about his time or his strength in trying to give help to his neighbour. He has helped financially; if he lacked funds, he would sign bills and later had to pay them off. Sometimes Fyodor Mikhailovich's kindness contradicted family interests, and often I would get upset about his unlimited kindness, yet I could not help but delight in seeing him rejoice whenever he had an opportunity to help others.[39]

Dostoevsky was especially concerned for children and paid attention to cases of child abuse that he heard about. He followed closely the trials of parents accused of child abuse.[40]

Towards the end of his life Dostoevsky became a spiritual leader for a great many people. Every day he would receive letters from all across Russia and would agree to see visitors asking for spiritual advice, seeking mentoring, or looking for direction for their lives. This activity of Dostoevsky was similar to the social ministries of *startsy* in the monastery, similar to the elder Ambrosi whom he saw in the Optina monastery, or *Starets* Zosima in *The Brothers Karamazov*.[41]

Dostoevsky lived so sacrificially because his convictions were deeply founded in Christ's suffering and resurrection. In addition, he was

---

[38] Ibid., p. 354.
[39] Ibid., p. 421.
[40] Dostoevskiy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 30 tomakh, tom 25, Dnevnik pisatelia za 1877 god.*, [Complete works in 30 volumes, v. 25, The diary of a writer for 1877.,] (Leningrad: Nauka, 1983, in Russian), pp. 182-187.
[41] N O Losskiy, *Bog i mirovoe zlo* [God and world evil] (Moscow: Respublika, 1994, in Russian), p. 19.

convinced that this was the only way for the Russian society he loved so much to be transformed. *Starets* Zosima in the novel *The Brothers Karamazov* admonishes Aliosha Karamazov to go into the world and to love people, even in their sins. The sacrificial love of Dostoevsky comes from the conviction that 'there is nothing more beautiful, deeper, attractive, wiser, more courageous, and more perfect than Christ, and not only nothing, but I say with a jealous love, that there can never be.[42]

3. Life as the goal for mission

According to Bosch, 'For the Orthodox Church - love is the foundation of mission and life is the goal of it. Christ came not first of all to free men from their sins, but to restore them in their godly image and to give them life'.[43] People are called not to simply get to know Christ; they are called to 'share the glory of Christ'. 'It is a continuing state of worship, prayer, thanksgiving, adoration, intercession as well as meditation and consideration of the triune God and God's infinite love'.[44]

We have now many examples of the prayer life of Dostoevsky, of his meditations and ponderings about God and biblical characters. One of Dostoevsky's early memories is a daily prayer with his nanny before going to bed, when he was three years of age. 'I put all my hopes in Thee, Mother of God, keep me in Thy care'. This prayer Dostoevsky loved so much that it became part of the prayers which he read to his children at bed time.[45] Also from his early years Dostoevsky listened to Bible stories. Remembering those years, Fyodor Mikhailovich wrote in 1873, 'in our family we knew the Gospel almost from earliest childhood'.[46]

In his student years, Dostoevsky displayed a conscious eagerness to talk about God, despite the laughter of his comrades. Soloviov testifies:

> Fyodor Mikhailovich behaved modestly; he performed executive responsibilities and tasks meticulously, but was very religious, diligently performing the duties of an Orthodox Christian. In his possession you could see both the Gospels and *Die Stunden der Andacht* [Hour of prayer]. After lectures on Scripture by Poluektov, Fyodor Mikhailovich would talk at length to his Scripture teacher. This was in such sharp

[42]Dostoevskiy, *Polnoe sobranie sochineniy v 30 tomakh, tom 28, Pis'ma 1854 god., N. D. Fonvizina 20 fevralia* [Complete works in 30 volumes, v. 28, Letters of 1854.,to N D Fonvizina from 20 February] (Leningrad: Nauka, 1985, in Russian), p. 175.
[43] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, pp. 208-209.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Losskiy, *Bog i mirovoe zlo*, p. 36.
[46] Dostoevskiy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 30 tomakh, tom 21, Dnevnik pisatelya za 1873 god.*, [Complete works in 30 volumes, V. 21, The diary of a writer for 1873.,] (Leningrad: Nauka, 1973, in Russian), p. 134.

> contrast with everyone else's way of life that his friends called him Photius Monk.[47]

This is an important testimony that from his earliest childhood gospel reading was not just a form. It made its way deep into his heart, and he loved it. In Dostoevsky's letters to his brother Mikhail he said 'To learn nature, soul, God, love… this is learned with the heart and not with the mind."[48]

From the time of Dostoevsky's marriage to Anna Grigorievna we have a number of references to his prayers. We have a letter in which Dostoevsky writes to his wife, "I prayed with tears about you this night".[49] When their firstborn was due, Dostoevsky prayed all night. As the birth of another son, Fyodor, approached, he prayed all day and all night.[50] When his two-year-old daughter Liubov' broke her hand and the bones did not knit well, she had to undergo surgery. 'Anya, we shall pray and ask for the help of God, the Lord will help us!' remembers A Dostoevsky, 'We got on our knees and probably never have we prayed with such zeal as in those moments'.[51]

Meditating about Christ and desiring to imitate Him in His self-sacrificial spirit, Dostoevsky said to writer DV Averkiev, 'To understand your existence, to be able to say, I am! – that's a great gift, but to say I am not, to humble yourself for the sake of others, to have this power is probably much greater'. To which Averkiev objected, 'This certainly is a great gift, but no one has it or had ever had except for one, who was God'. Dostoevsky answered, 'Yes, but also man'. For Dostoevsky, Christ was not only God but also man, open to pain and called to go through it.[52]

The Book of Job made an especially strong impression on Dostoevsky, with its story of an innocent sufferer, uncomplainingly enduring the difficult tests God sent to him: the death of those closest to him, bankruptcy, leprosy, poverty. For that he was healed, restored to his wealth, became again the father of a large family and 'died in late years filled with days'. Later he would say to his wife in 1875, 'I am reading the Book of Job and it creates in me a morbid excitement, I stop reading and walk about the room for about an hour, on the verge of crying…this book,

---

[47] *F M Dostoevskiy v vospominaniyah sovremennikov v dvuh tomah*, p. 163.

[48] Dostoevskiy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 30 tomakh, tom 28, Pis'ma 1838 god., M M Dostoevskiy 31oktobrya* [Complete works in 30 volumes, v. 28, Letters of 1854.,to M M Dostoevsky from 31 October] (Leningrad: Nauka, 1985, in Russian), p. 53.

[49] Dostoevskiy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 30 tomakh, tom 28, Pis'ma 1867 god., A G Dostoevskaia 8 maya* [Complete works in 30 volumes, v. 28, Letters of 1867., to A G Dostoevskaia from 8 May] (Leningrad: Nauka, 1985, in Russian), p. 188.

[50] Dostoevskaia, *Vospominaniya*, p. 78.

[51] Ibid., p. 144.

[52] *F M Dostoevskiy v vospominaniyah sovremennikov v dvuh tomah*, p. 20.

Anya, is strangely one of the first that made a deep impression on me, and I was almost a baby back then!'[53]

The image of Christ who suffered and was resurrected and the image of Job suffering and his 'resurrection' to new life served as a model and inspiration for Dostoevsky's walk by faith.

4. Unity and mission

Dostoevsky was part of Russian Orthodox society. A constant love towards Russia and the Russian people, and steadfast Christian ideals were among Dostoevsky's chief characteristics. Together they gave him a dream of the 'reconciliation of nations' in Christ with the help of Orthodox Russia.[54] Dostoevsky's thoughts and dreams on universal reconciliation, fascinating to him throughout his life, came to their fullest expression six months prior to his death in his speech in honour of Pushkin, delivered on 8 June 1880. In the end he says with assurance:

> Future Russian people will understand – each and every single person – that this is what it means to be a true Russian: to try to finally reconcile European disagreements once and for all, to show the way out for European boredom in our Russian soul, universal and all unifying, to encompass in it with brotherly love all of our brothers, and finally maybe to reach a concluding agreement of all the nations on Christ's gospel law.[55]

According to Dostoevsky, a divine harmony that would resolve all contradictions would be possible if people would live the life of Christ. He himself understood that this dream bordered on fantasy, yet nonetheless he strove to fulfil it, providing an example for others.

Conclusion

At the centre of Dostoevsky's mission is the image of Christ suffering and resurrected. He warned people of the danger of turning away from Christ, and called upon them to follow Him through difficulties and hardships to "resurrection for new life". With all that, he displayed a personal example of life in Christ in his relationships with Him and with other people.

I am aware that this study does not cover all the elements of Dostoevsky's implicit mission. I hope that this research of Dostoevsky's implicit mission to Russian society as a lived-out Russian Orthodox convictional theology will help us, as Baptist believers, in our mission to

---

[53] L Grossman, *Dostoevskiy* (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1962, in Russian), p. 15.
[54] Losskiy, *Bog i mirovoe zlo,* p. 19.
[55] Dostoevskiy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 30 tomakh, tom 26, Dnevnik pisatelya za 1880 god.*, [Complete works in 30 volumes, v. 26, The diary of a writer for 1880.,] (Leningrad, Nauka, 1984, in Russian), p. 148.

secularised people in European contexts where an Orthodox religious presence predominates.

However what was most evident in Dostoevsky’s day to day life was the love of God evident in him and through him because his convictions were grounded in Jesus.

Dumitru Sevastian

St Kosmas Aitolos: Contribution to Orthodox Missions

Radoslav Spassov

The divine words of the Lord to Peter: ‘Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou are converted, strengthen thy brethren’, were familiar to the great Balkan missionary St Kosmas Aitolos. Guided by this exhortation he developed his preaching, teaching and spiritual activities during a very difficult historical period for the nations of South-Eastern Europe – the Ottoman rule in the eighteenth century. The life and work of St Kosmas serve as a good illustration both of the conditions in which the Orthodox population at the time lived, and the political and social paradigm of the interreligious relations in the empire. All this can show us that the Orthodox Church was not able to preach about Christ and His word among the non-Orthodox and also had many difficulties in its own inner missionary work. These difficulties were caused both by the dominant Muslim religious community and the Jewish minority. It is a logical conclusion that the *millet* system of the Ottoman Empire had a definitely bad effect on the mission of the Orthodox Church. This kind of insight into history will help us better understand the contemporary state of Christian mission in the Orthodox context, mainly in South-Eastern Europe.

St Kosmas was born in 1714 in the town of Mega Dendron in Aetolia, Greece. At first he studied with the guidance of an archdeacon Ananias and afterwards, at the age of twenty, continued his education on Mount Athos at the school of the Great Monastery of Vatopaidi. Then he became a monk and later hieromonk at Philotheou Monastery.

With the blessing of his abbot St Kosmas departed for Constantinople to learn the art of rhetoric and thereafter began to preach throughout northern Greece, the Ionian Islands and Albania. Travelling on foot, by donkey and by ship, followed by scores and often by hundreds and even thousands of men and women, priests and monks, Kosmas undertook three 'apostolic' journeys. The first took him from Mt Athos to Constantinople (Istanbul), through European Turkey and Macedonia, Thessaly, and Aetolia, crossing over to the island of Cephalonia. On his second journey he covered many of the same provinces and in addition visited the islands of Skiathos and Skopelos instead of Cephalonia and spent much additional time in Aetolia, going northward into Epirus and

southern and central Albania. His third and final journey was spent primarily in Albania, Epirus, Aetolia and Thessaly, but also included the Ionian Islands, the Cyclades, and even some of the Dodecanese Islands.

Among the factors contributing to Kosmas' enormous success as a preacher were his humility and his identification with the people among whom he moved and worked. He spoke in their language, taking his illustrations from the experiences and surroundings with which they were familiar. He was selfless, spending all of his time and energy in the service of others, while never accepting any payment for his services.[1]

In addition to feeding the soul, Father Kosmas attempted to feed the body as well as the mind. He spoke out against social injustices, against the abuse of the poor and uneducated and against the inequities that existed between men and women. Moreover, Kosmas was a great foe of illiteracy and a strong advocate of education.[2]

Against social injustice and the abuse of the poor by the economically more affluent he said:

> We, too, my brethren, if we wish to call our God father must be compassionate, and cause our brethren to rejoice, and then we can call God father. If, however, we are merciless, hardhearted, and we cause our brethren to be poisoned, we put death in their hearts. [3]

On the subject of schools and education, Father Kosmas said:

> It is better, my brother, for you to have a Greek school in your village rather than fountains and rivers, for when your child becomes educated, then he is a human being. The school opens churches; the school opens monasteries.[4]

Father Kosmas was persuasive enough so that in over two hundred towns and villages he was instrumental in establishing schools where none existed before. His moral authority and influence were so far reaching that he was able not only to raise the money needed to establish the schools and maintain them, but with the consent of the inhabitants to appoint teachers and overseers for those schools, as illustrated from his letters.[5]

> I appointed,with the consent of all, Mr. Ioannes, son of Panos, trustee; and Mr. Demos, son of Ioannes the priest, and Mr. Stavros, son of

[1] Nomikos Michael Vaporis, *Witnesses for Christ: Orthodox Christian Neomartyrs of the Ottoman Period, 1437-1860* (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000), p. 201.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Nomikos Michael Vaporis, *Father Kosmas, the Apostle of the Poor* (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1977). Available electronically as *Father Kosmas, the Apostle of the Poor: The Life of St. Kosmas Aitolos together with an English translation of his teaching and letters* on www.stmaryofegypt.org/ kosmas/welcome.html, last accessed on 17 April 2010. Quotations are from the electronic edition.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.

> Demos, overseers and his assistants to govern the school as the Lord inspires them. [6]

Father Kosmas' primary interest in education, however, was religious. He saw in education an indispensable tool for the understanding of Orthodoxy. 'Schools enlighten people. They open the eyes of the pious and Orthodox Christians to learn the Sacraments'. In another teaching he said: 'Schools may open the way to the church. We learn what God is, what the Holy Trinity is, what an angel is, what virtues, demons, and hell are'. Elsewhere he noted: 'Blessed Christians, a large number of churches neither preserve nor strengthen our faith as much as they should if those who believe in God aren't enlightened by both the Old and New Testaments'.[7]

In the eighteenth century the Orthodox Church was faced with a growing number of defections among the poor and illiterate to Islam, especially in the areas of Albania and western Greece. The Orthodox Christians there were under especially severe social, economic, and religious pressure by the dominant Moslems. It was Father Kosmas' belief that the establishment of schools where the Orthodox faith was taught would be able to stem the tide.

The atmosphere created by the unsuccessful revolution of the Greeks in the Peloponnese in 1770, inspired and led by the Orlov brothers, together with the real and imagined presence of Russian agents among the Orthodox people of the Balkans, made it easy for the Ottoman Turks to believe that Father Kosmas was himself an agent. Undoubtedly, the thousands of people who left their fields and jobs to follow Father Kosmas from place to place added to the uneasiness of the Turks and raised grave suspicions about his activities.[8]

Father Kosmas waged a strong battle against the desecration of the Christian Sabbath. Town fairs and country bazaars were often held on Sundays, something Kosmas opposed and did everything in his power to change. He insisted that they be held on Saturdays. In this he was opposed by Jewish merchants, who naturally did not wish to engage in commerce on their own Sabbath. Allied with them were Christian merchants for whom Sunday was also more convenient. Consequently, Father Kosmas' death was fashioned by many interests: Christian, Jewish, and Turkish.[9]

---

[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Vaporis, *Witnesses for Christ,* p. 204.
[9] Ibid.

On 24 August 1779, Father Kosmas was in the city of Berat, Albania. Permission to seize him was secured from the local governor, Kurt Pasha, who was generously bribed and who heard Kosmas falsely accused of various crimes. To prevent any demonstration on the part of Father Kosmas' followers, he was apprehended in secret and many of his closest friends were imprisoned in a neighbouring monastery. Father Kosmas was taken to the neighbouring village of Kalinkontasi, where he was hanged.

After he died, his body was thrown into a nearby river from which it was retrieved a few days later by the priest Markos of the same village. Father Kosmas was buried in Father Markos' church with Metropolitan Ioasaph of Velegrada in attendance. He was glorified by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1961.

St Kosmas Aitolos is not the only such missionary, but a significant example of an Orthodox preacher and missionary in the eighteenth century. Similar cases can be seen also among Serb, Romanian and Bulgarian Orthodox followers. In the same period there lived a man named St Paisij from Hilendar who developed missionary work. The accent in his activity was the education of the Bulgarians. He worked to make them acquainted with their history and to return them both to their Christian roots and to their national identity.

We hope that with this short presentation we have succeeded in throwing light on the historical aspects of the Orthodox mission.

Radoslav Spassov,

Some Reflections on Sources and Reasons for Charity in Catholicism and Orthodoxy

Jana Daly

Introduction

When the word 'charity' is mentioned, as it quite often is, by the present day media, there is no doubt that people draw a picture of what it means. Whether it is the fault of the media or not, its meaning has become more secular, and we might not be far from the truth to think that some of the younger people from a country such as the Czech Republic (with a 59% non-religious population[1]), would think that charity is just another activity of the rich and famous. Although it benefits charity to do such 'propaganda', it might be often considered as something that only the wealthy do to become even better known. For somebody who enters the Roman Catholic Church, it is also common to be invited to contribute in a material way towards different causes. Looking at it from one point of view, it doesn't matter who does engages in charity, why they do so, or how professionally it is done, it will always have be positive if it leads to an improvement and help somebody's problem. Where we can see a difference is not only in the way it is done or in different levels of professionalism, but also in the reasons why people help others. I have been looking at the long history of charity starting with the seven deacons of the first church and then on through the massive number of organised aid activities in the history of the Roman Catholic Church. I was amazed not so much about how many people were involved in charity, but how much they sacrificed their lives to help the needy, and I was wondering what made them so often risk or change their lives completely so that they could improve the world. The question was—why does the Church make such an effort?

The word 'charity' comes from the Latin, *charitas*, which means love. Looking at the expression in a broader context, we could say it is love of God and love of one's neighbour, for the sake of God. In the closer meaning, this love covers those who, in their material or physical poverty,

[1] Cf. H Brotánková, 'Religiozita v České republice v církevních statistikách', in: *Teologické texty*, 2004/5, available on http://www.teologicketexty.cz/casopis/2004-5/Religiozita-v-Ceske-republice-v-cirkevnich-statistikach.html, last accessed on 9 April 2010.

need actual love, or in other words it is a Christian virtue.[2] However, it is closely connected to the love of God. This gracious love is, in the Roman Catholic Church, called '*diakonia'* and it represents, alongside '*kerygma'* and 'liturgy' one of the three cornerstones on which the church rests.

1. Roman Catholic sources

1.1. The Bible

Charity is part of Roman Catholic social teaching, which has been developed out of the Holy Bible and church tradition with help from the teachings of the Magisterium. The Catholic social ethic is reflected in part in the papal encyclicals.

In my research I focused first on the Holy Bible, from which the Christian faith sources its authoritative confidence and which gives a basic orientation to Christian ethics for the individual as well as for society. The crucial certainties gained from the Holy Bible imply general criteria for organising social facts so that they are useful for the common good. God reveals himself to human beings in and through the Bible; therefore it is certain that the biblical narrative would not ignore human behaviour.[3] It is accepted in fuundamental theology that God approaches humanity and identifies with them, which means that whatever we do to any person, we do to Christ, the Son of God.[4] As Christians we, of course, focus in a special way on the imperatives and recommendations of the New Testament. Although the ethical comands of Jesus are valued 'documents' in the search for the sources of church charity work, they cannot be referred to as an entire moral system.[5] Jesus, throughout his mission, references the Old Testament (Matthew 3:15). Human solidarity in the Old Testament has strong theological motivations. Although the Old Testament puts more emphasis on the social parameters of ethics we cannot forget the historical context in which the books were written. The Old Testament, however, is always a strong feature in Christian social-ethical perspective. The main ethical certainties are illustrated by the following biblical themes.[6]

The first is the theme of creation, where a certain view of human dignity is expressed. God, as the one who wishes the best for human beings, assigns to them certain responsibilities. People, as moral subjects, view this as God's will. Next is the theme of Exodus, which expresses

[2] P Leander Brejcha OFM, *Pamětní spis o katolické charitě (milosrdné lásce) v zemi Moravsko-Slezské* (Přerov, CZ: Společenská tiskárna, 1930), předmluva.
[3] Helmut Weber, *Všeobecná morální teologie* (Praha: ZVON, 1998), p. 18.
[4] Mt 25:31-46.
[5] Jiří Skoblík, *Úvod do morální teologie: Poznámky ke křesťanské etice* (Praha: KTF UK Praha, Katedra teologické etiky a spirituální teologie, 1996), p. 25.
[6] Arno Anzenbacher, *Křesťanská sociální etika* (Brno, CZ: CDK, 2004), p. 15.

important social-ethical codes. Also, the prophet's social ethos cannot be forgotten. The prophets ask for people to stand up for the rights of the poor and to be gracious to the weak. In the time of the Old Testament, society's rights were not a result of people's decisions, but came directly from God. He frees the Israelites from Egypt and gives them a land of their own where they will not be repressed and where justice will exist (Ex 22:20-23:9).[7] This is how we learn from the Bible that a fair society is not only the decision of the people, who have come to it through experience, but that it is God's requirement (Dt 26:4-11). As further themes, one should not leave out the eschatological ethics of Jesus, Paul's theology and social-ethical matters from the biblical texts that consider community life.

After all that has been said, the most important biblical orientation for the behaviour of a Christian and also for our social life is the dual love command—the love of God and the love of one's neighbour.[8] This requirement is the principal source of all biblical moral regulation. This love is a human being's response to God's gift of the coming salvation. What really matters are only the needs of others whom we meet. Jesus' approach to this world is a proof of God's love. God first so loved humanity that he gave his Son to this world and through him gives eternal life.[9] Some of the biblical sources that refer to the significance of this love of neighbour are the gospels, Paul's letters, the Pastoral Letters and the Catholic Epistles, among others. Strong references to this can be found in Luke, which itself is known as the gospel of God's mercy, community and love. In his Christology, Luke introduces Jesus as the guardian of the poor, sick, unwanted, outcasts and sinners. Also, Jesus' parables are good examples showing the kind of relationship we are supposed to have with people who find themselves at the edge of society (e.g. Lk 10:37 or chapter 16).

The main gospel text, however, that influences Christian behaviour is the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-7:29). From an ethical point of view it is possible to say that the Ten Commandments preceded Jesus' proclamation. Its request is for much greater fairness than the listeners could imagine was possible. The required response does not only assume that they will physically follow his words, but Jesus expects them to be sincere in their hearts, including with their enemies. These sermons are also a critique of insincerity, particularly in the lives of the falsely religious. Another important text in the search for reasons for doing righteous deeds is Matthew 25. In the parable of the Last Judgment, man's future

[7] J D Douglas et al., eds., *Nový biblický slovník* (Praha: Návrat domů, 1996), p. 1095.
[8] Cf. Mk 12:28-31; Lk 10:25-28.
[9] Cf. 1 John 4:9; John 3:16-17.

destination is decided when the Son of God divides all peoples into those who showed compassion and those who did not (Matthew 25:32-33).

Concerning Paul's letters, I can find evidence in Philippians, Romans, or 1 Corinthians 13, where Paul explains what should be behind every person's actions. He insists that spontaneous love should underlie all ethical behaviour; otherwise it loses its value.

1.2 Church tradition

So far I have been talking about theoretical advice and written recommendations, but what always makes for the best motivation is the following of an example. After Jesus, there is a long line of saints and other Christians who have dedicated their lives to helping others. Descriptions of their acts of compassion would cover many pages and would bring us to wonder at the difference a single person can make to the world. But what truly interests me is the cause of their determination to act in such a way. Through studying a sample of some well-known saints, it became clear that their motivation came from the desire to follow God's will.[10] Often they were people without money or power or specific talents, but still they reached great goals. One such person, Mother Teresa, claimed many times that her work was more God's doing than her own skill and work.[11]

1.3 Magisterium

Listed amongst the theological sources of charity in Roman Catholicism is the Magisterium.[12] The importance of neighbourly love is brought to mind in the Second Vatican Council in the constitution '*Gaudium et Spes*' and in the letter '*Apostolicam actuositatem'*. Also, it appears in the Catechism of the Catholic Church in readings for assisting love.[13]

1.4 Social encyclicals

In the history of Roman Catholic ethical thought, a major role is played by the social encyclical. These papal letters are concerned with social problems. Encyclicals react to certain issues of their time but they always have something in common—the principals of social teaching—solidarity, subsidiarity and personalism. What is usually considered the first and most

[10] See Jana Daly, "Teologické důvody charitativní činnosti církve," Diplomová práce obhájená na KTF UK Praha 2008, p. 28-33.
[11] Desmond Doig, *Matka Tereza. Život a dílo* (Praha, CZ: Řád), p. 4.
[12] In the Roman Catholic Church the word 'Magisterium' refers to the teaching authority of the church. This authority is understood to be embodied in the episcopacy which is the aggregation of the current bishops of the church, led by the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, who has authority over the bishops, individually and as a body, as well as over each and every Catholic directly. According to Catholic doctrine the Magisterium is able to teach or interpret the truths of the Faith.
[13] *Katechismus katolické církve* [Catechism of the Catholic Church] (Praha: Kostelní Vydří. Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2001), nos. 2052-2055.

basic is Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, written at the end of the nineteenth century. This century saw the consolidation of the social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church at a time when the message of the gospel had already been confronted with the problems of modern industrial society. The importance of *Rerum Novarum* lies in the fact that it was the first document that gave firm guidance for the church's engagement with social issues. It contains several important fundamentals such as respect for the dignity of a weaker person; the acknowledgment that there is no shame in poverty and suffering; that God pays special attention to the poor, suffering, sad and persecuted; that helping the needy must be unconditional.

Subsequent encyclicals considered and further developed these principals as well as offer instructions on new issues. The matter of charitable love is also included in other church social documents such as *De iustitia in mundo, Evangelii nuntiandi, Dives in Misericordia* etc.[14] One of the most recent documents of great value is the encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI *Deus caritas est*. His work is not officially counted among the traditional social encyclicals, but still it can be seen historically as the first document on the theme of charity.[15] In his work the pope evaluates the caring gifts of God in general and puts them in context with the charitable missions of all Christians and the church. The difference between the previous encyclicals and this one lies in the pope's affirmation that charitable behaviour is necessary, even in the most just society. The suffering of the world is viewed by the pope not only as material poverty but also in a hunger for compassion, a desire to be accepted at face value and psychological and spiritual suffering. This remarkable work also opens new views and shows that charity, or its sources, can help others to find the theologians' motives for their practical experience. In this sense, it is possible to say that this work is ecumenical.

2. A brief look at Orthodox sources of social ethics and charity

It is known that many other Christian denominations and other religions are strongly involved in charity. However, it has often been noted that the Orthodox Church, for example, makes relatively few organised efforts in this area. Orthodox Christianity refers to the parts of the Christian tradition that live according to Eastern traditions. Eastern Christians can be viewed as belonging to three major groups:

[14] Daly, *Důvody charitativní činnosti církve*, pp. 71-72.

[15] Dolezel, Jakub and Pompey, Heinrich, "Impulzy pro socialni praci cirkve - encyklika Deus caritas est" [Impulses for Social Work of the Church – Encyclical *Deus caritas est*], *Studia theologica*, 8:3 (2006), pp. 53-61.

- Churches that are in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church;
- Eastern Christian churches that split at the time of the first ecumenical councils;
- The sisterhood of the Orthodox Churches.

While there is no doubt that Orthodox Christians would not abandon a suffering person and that the churches do some sort of charity work, it has been noted that by and large there is a lack of strategic, organised, charitable activities by the Orthodox churches on an institutional level.[16] The main difference from Roman Catholic communities would be that social help for the needy is carried on at the level of individual parish activity rather than by comprehensive structural work. I was interested to find out why, in the area of ecclesial social work, the approach of the Eastern churches varies from that of the Catholics when on the other hand its core beliefs are so similar. Unfortunately there is a great shortage in the literature that describes this problem—at least from the Czech Catholic point of view.

In studying, I came across different opinions on how much the Orthodox Church depends on the Bible. There are some voices declaring that the Orthodox ethic is pure 'theonomy' (i.e. based on God and the Bible).[17] Others say that the relationship between the Bible and church life is a relationship of mutual resonance.[18] However, a more detailed search revealed that Orthodox authors do, indeed, consider the Bible seriously when dealing with specific ethical problems.[19] What is more, regarding our subject, they use the same biblical references as do Catholics. It is clear that Eastern theology is aware of the necessity of helping the needy and definitely refers to the Bible. It is also right to say that in the Theo-logic of charity, diaconal work and philanthropy, there is no significant difference between the Western and Eastern Churches.[20] This fact can be confirmed in the proclamations of the encyclical mentioned above, *Deus caritas est*, that there is a chance that this love for the neighbour could lead to possible church unity. One other source for the Orthodox is the literature of the

[16] Magda Maria Pap, 'Practices of social involvement in the life of the Szekler Hungarians of the Hungarian Baptist Churches in Romania : A case study of the churches of Csikszereda and Kibed involving intervention with alcoholics', unpublished MTh Thesis for the University of Wales, 2004, p. 15.
[17] Antonín J Novák, *Sociální aspekt pravoslavné etiky* (Praha: Ústřední církevní nakladatelství, 1962), p. 9.
[18] Pavel Filipi: *Křesťanstvo. Historie, Statistika*: *Charakteristika křesťanských církví* (Brno, CZ: CDK, 1998), p. 28.
[19] Octavian Baban, 'The Bible in the Life of the Orthodox Church', in Ian Randall, ed., *Baptists and the Orthodox Church: On the Way to Understanding* (Praha: IBTS, 2003), 15-29. Cf. Samuel S Harakas, *Living the Faith: The Praxis of Eastern Orthodox Ethics* (Minneapolis: Light and Life Publishing Company, 1992), p. 199.
[20] Jakub and Heinrich, "Impulzy pro socialni praci cirkve.

Church Fathers which is, according to some theologians, not easily accessible. Concerning social ethics, it lacks a systematic structure, many ethical ideas are not elaborated on in any great detail, and (unlike the Catholic way) it is not divided into a social and individual ethic.

As the Catholic charity has been done on a great scale by missionaries, I have been looking into Orthodoxy and its missions. Missions in Orthodox Church history have been done quite differently than in the Western church. Although Orthodoxy acknowledges the importance of social mission, it is fair to say that this area has been a bit neglected.[21] Still, we can point to some interesting mission undertakings such as the mission of Sts Cyril and Methodius which, for Slavs specifically, will always be remembered. However, some of those missions were linked more to economic interests and geographical exploration than evangelical interests.[22]

The question of missions has been influenced by the split between the churches in 1054.[23] After unity had been broken, the Orthodox idea of missions was altered. This break-up changed evangelisation into a quest for Christian reunification, which is one of the reasons why Orthodoxy had a different future for mission than the Catholic Church, which has never interrupted its mission outreach.

So far, it has been said that Orthodoxy embodies insufficient interest in improving the social conditions. At the same time, it has been shown that the Holy Bible is a common pointer in the question of the ethical basis. The main difference in Catholicism lies in the way in which social ethical precepts are expressed. When we ask about the reasons, there is no easy or single answer.

I am positive that, with more thorough research, even more evidence could be found. However, it is possible to mention at least some others alongside the above mentioned differences in mission work. In the Eastern Church, liturgy is at the heart of Christian worship. The Orthodox devotee tends towards 'negative activity' such as asceticism[24], which can show itself as passive behaviour. The proof for this is also Eastern monasticism, which, when compared to Western monasticism, is less involved in serving the world and is also accused of not being interested in the social

[21] Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 191.
[22] Parush R Parushev, 'Walking in the dawn of the light: On the salvation ethics of the ecclesial communities in the orthodox tradition from a radical reformation perspective', Ph.D. Dissertation, Center of Advanced Theological Studies, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif., USA, 2007, available through ProQuest, UMI No. 3260231, p. 130.
[23] Cf. David J Bosch, *Transforming mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York: Orbis Books, 1991), p. 208.
[24] Filipi, *Křesťanstvo*, p. 41.

apostolate.[25] The reason for this can be found in the original moral teachings that were dependent on the moral-scholastic Western school.[26] The old moral school liked the classic example of Christian asceticism. Despite Christ's example, it stuck to personal salvation and that at the expense of direct individual obligation towards one's neighbour. It focuses on the existential and mystical level. Individual-mystical religious life is actually a sort of asceticism and as such is demonstrated by solitude.[27]

At the same time, I would like to note that we cannot say that Orthodoxy is absolutely not interested in the world, but rather that its battle with problems is carried out on a personal level. This argument comes from believing that all evil comes from the human heart, and so every single good thing done by the most unpretentious person will bring good to the world and thus contribute to the redemption of the world.[28] Both expressions of Christianity mentioned believe that with Christ's coming, the heavenly kingdom was already inaugurated. The Eastern Church perceives this kingdom as 'perfect' and that it will arrive at its destination through its own progression or maturation. From this perspective, God has put everything that is needed in our world and there is no necessity to contribute more. This theory produces the following conclusion: it is enough to live out our faith and instead of fighting evil, support good with love and modesty. The plan, therefore, is to provide the spiritual conditions in which the human institute is able to exist.[29]

Finally, I would like to draw attention to another issue. The Eastern Churches are known for their traditionalism. This may be one of the reasons why they lack flexibility towards the new demands of our time and its needs, which has led to reluctance to respond as institutions to social poverty.[30]

Conclusion

In the Catholic Church, liturgy, of course, plays a main role besides kerygma and *diakonia*. It comes from the conviction that this role has its foundation in God's act of creation. Outside the belief that the church's mission is to lead people to salvation, it emphasises responsibility for the righteous development of the world.[31] Despite the fact that the functions of the church are religious, it does not live in secrecy. It attempts to improve

[25] Tomáš Špidlík, *Spiritualita křesťanského Východu: Mnišství* (Roma: Křesťanská akademie, 2004), p. 12.
[26] Novák, *Sociální aspekt pravoslavné ethiky*, p. 5.
[27] Ibid., p. 7.
[28] Filipi, *Křesťanstvo*, p. 41.
[29] Ibid.
[30] František Grivec, *Pravoslaví* (Kroměříž: Velehradská akademie, 1921), p. 47.

people's co-existence on all levels with its teaching. That applies not only to the social field, but also to the areas of politics, education, economics, and so on. From the message of the Second Vatican Council, it is clear that the church does not want to issue prohibitions, but understands its role as a duty of service.[32] A charity worker imitates Jesus Christ who humbled himself to help those who were suffering.

The Catholic Church understands the heavenly kingdom not only on the level of eschatology, but also as a kingdom that has come to us with the arrival of Christ. The church believes that the kingdom exists here among us. The church enhances the work of the kingdom here on the earth with its acts of compassion; in other words, it is not possible to overlook the pain and sadness of this world. Charity work cannot be something extra, something that stands outside the church, because it belongs to its fundamentals. This having been said, it looks as though there is a tendency in the Orthodox Church to separate the two worlds—the world of God's kingdom and the world around us. It is true that God does not create imperfect things and also that he is the Creator and the Lord of all existence (Gen 1:31). Quite the contrary, God entrusted the created world to human hands and gave us the freedom and responsibility that we have over the world. 'The way to the heavenly kingdom is not acted out only transcendentally inside the church but also in the expansion of human culture and society on the natural level. It is necessary to discriminate between this nature and super nature but never to disunite them'.[33]

The Orthodox Church's understanding of the heavenly kingdom could justify some people's opinion that religion drags people away from the world's troubles. We read in the Bible that it is God's will for people to be faithful, but not in such a way that they depend on God absolutely and leaves other people's problems to be solved of themselves.

Finally, we will look into why we should not only do good deeds, but also help. The reason that God demands fairness lie within.[34] Human beings were created in God's image and are not allowed to lead their lives or influence somebody else's life however they choose, because they stand before God and could ruin God's image in themselves. Conversely, when helping others human beings follow God as a role model for right behaviour. God is the most righteous; he is righteousness itself. The subject

---

[31] Filipi, *Křesťanstvo,* p. 97.

[32] 'Second Vatican Council: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes,* (7th December 1965)', in: *Dokumenty II. vatikánského koncilu* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2002), čl. 3, pp. 173–265.

[33] Václav C Pospíšil, *Jako v nebi, tak i na zemi: Náčrt trinitární teologie* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2007), p. 70.

[34] Václav C Pospíšil, *Teologie služby* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2002), p. 142.

of this righteousness is compassion.[35] The Christian duty which is charity is, then, not only a form of righteousness but also reveals the true face of God. When talking about God, we must talk about the Holy Trinity. The mystery of the Holy Trinity is the main mystery of our faith and the Christian life. It is the essence of who God is.[36]

One way to approach the truth of God's Trinity is to try to understand it with the help of the so-called 'Theory of interrelationship', that talks about Fatherhood and Sonship, about the relationship of the Father and Son to the Holy Spirit, and the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son. The relationships in the Trinity are the internal dedication of the Father to the Son and the Son to the Father. Each Person is fulfilled in love in the way that it, paradoxically, gives all that it has. The Trinity is therefore the prototype of the new civilisation of a culture of love and life.[37] We learn about the Trinity of God from the New Testament through Jesus Christ. The image of the Holy Trinity is then based upon the belief that Jesus Christ is God. Human righteousness and compassion is not only our taking part in the mystery of God's Trinity, but also makes us in the image of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Jana Daly,

[35]Pospíšil, *Jako v nebi, tak i na zemi*, p. 501.
[36]Katechismus katolické církve, no. 234, quoted in Pospíšil, *Teologie služby*, p. 153.
[37] Pospíšil, *Teologie služby*, p. 174.