

KOINONIA



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THE ANGLICAN & EASTERN CHURCHES ASSOCIATION

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Koinonia

THE JOURNAL OF THE ANGLICAN & EASTERN CHURCHES ASSOCIATION

Editorial

SINCE THE Council of Chalcedon in 451, Christians have been divided on the dual-nature of Christ. What we now know as the Oriental Orthodox Churches became separated from the rest of the Church because of a disagreement about the extent of the distinction and unity of Christ's human and divine natures. An important issue, fundamental to our understanding of the Incarnation.

As a result of much prayer, discussion, hard-work and patience, the Anglican Communion and the Oriental Orthodox Churches have finally gone some way to healing the rift created by Chalcedon. The joint statement on Christology is one of the most important ecumenical moments in the history of Anglican-Orthodox relations, and the document, reproduced in full in this issue, should be read by all our members and readers.

It is wonderful that such a breakthrough should occur in the 150th anniversary year of the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association. This kind of progress is one of the chief aims of the AECA and an answer to many heartfelt prayers. It is partly because of the AECA and other ecumenical societies that such a momentous event should have come about at all.

To celebrate the sesquicentenary year of the AECA, a gala dinner was held in Lambeth Palace with numerous significant guests including Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Bishop Richard of London, both of whom shared greetings from the Ecumenical Patriarch and Archbishop of Canterbury respectively. You can get a flavour of the evening from photos included in this issue.

Archbishop Michael Jackson, a member of the Anglican-Oriental Orthodox Commission, has contributed an article on the nature of Anglican-Lutheran relations expressed through the Porvoo Agreement.

Recently, the thoughts of many of us have been focussed on the tragic commemoration of the outbreak of World War One. This theme is reflected through two articles. The first comes from the AECA archive and is a selection

of extracts from the war-time correspondence between Archbishop Randall Davidson and the Russian Church. The second article recounts the wartime presence in England of Saint Nikolai Velimirovic. Both reveal something of the significance of the war for ecumenical relations, as Christians overcame traditional boundaries in the exigencies of that bleak period.

There is a short article on a recent and significant icon commission of the Annunciation for St Michael & All Angels, Bedford Park. Our Chairman also shares his review of a book examining three centuries of the Russian Orthodox Church in London.

Most significantly of all, this edition of *Koinonia* comes with the full text of the Constantinople Lecture delivered by Fr John Behr of St Vladimir's Seminary in New York. Fr Behr is a distinguished professor of Patristics and we are grateful for his permission to include the text of his lecture here. Who knows, in a century's time perhaps this lecture will form the basis for another 'From the archives' article? It is only by looking back that we can see the fruits of our labours, which at the time were so hard-won and perhaps seemed so meagre and insignificant. Our wraths and sorrows seem to make a mockery of our endeavours and history is often both tragic and tedious in repeating itself, but as Christians we believe that there can also be real progress, change and newness, because we trust in Him who brought life out of death and said, 'Behold, I make all things new' (Rev. 21.5).

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News and Notices

Coptic New Year Service

THE COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH in the United Kingdom celebrated the Feast of Nayrouz, marking the new Coptic year in St Margaret's Church, Westminster on 21 October 2014, with a sermon by His Grace Bishop Angaelos, General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom, and messages from His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, The Right Honourable David Cameron Prime Minister, and the Most Reverend Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury. In his sermon, Bishop Angaelos said:

“Freedom is a responsibility and an obligation that we have been given by God and must take seriously. We must, when we can, speak the truth; it is not an option. We must look at the freedom we have today in standing and praying together, and seek to use that freedom to benefit all those who are not able to do the same.”



Sesquicentennial dinner



ON THE 29th October 2014, members of the AECA and guests gathered at Lambeth Palace for a gala dinner to celebrate the sesquicentenary of the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association. The meal took place in the presence of our Orthodox President, Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain, and our Anglican President, Bishop Richard Chartres, who delivered messages of greetings from the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Archbishop spoke highly and warmly of the work of the AECA, and his words are included in full below.

Archbishop of Canterbury's Message to the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association on the celebration of their 150th anniversary

Our Lord's high priestly prayer in John 17 is "that they may become completely one."

As your Anglican Patron, this is also my prayer for you, members and guests of the Anglican & Eastern Churches Association, as you gather at Lambeth Palace to celebrate 150 years of service to the unity of the church.

Good relations between Anglicans and Orthodox are not for us an optional extra. Rooted in the creeds of the early church, both families of churches share many characteristics and face common challenges, which the AECA has always used as the foundation for its work. For this reason, His All Holiness

the Ecumenical Patriarch, your Orthodox Patron, spoke highly of the work of the Anglican & Eastern Churches Association when we met in Constantinople earlier this year.

I rejoice in the progress of the two official dialogues between the Anglican Communion and the Orthodox Churches — the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue (ICAOTD) met in September in Jerusalem, for vital theological exchanges on the nature of the human person, and the Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Commission (AOOIC) met in Cairo earlier this month, completed the joint statement on Christology, and began important preliminary work for agreement on the procession and work of the Holy Spirit. I am pleased that the Commission will next meet in Wales in 2015.

At the same time, Anglicans and Orthodox enter into pastoral and practical co-operation in faithful service, diakonia, to our world, in every continent — not least in bringing relief and encouragement to our brothers and sisters in Christ in Iraq and Syria.

The Anglican & Eastern Churches Association has given the same faithful witness and service to our common traditions over the last 150 years, and I pray that it will continue to strengthen the bonds of affection between Anglicans and Orthodox in the years ahead.

The Most Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby
Archbishop of Canterbury



Archbishop Gregorios delivers greetings from the Ecumenical Patriarch

Take Back Death!

Christian Witness in the Twenty-First Century

JOHN BEHR

WE ARE in crisis. This crisis has its roots in the twin phenomenon of the industrialisation and urbanisation of recent centuries, and it is growing in its ramifications—economic, ethical and bioethical, anthropological, and, not least, theological—to a truly epic scale. Whilst undoubtedly bringing great boons to those fortunate enough to benefit from them, the extension of this “industrialisation” into medical practice and dealing with the dead, though noted by many, have profound and unsettling implications for human life that have not, I would suggest, been sufficiently analysed or even recognised.

What I have in mind are the radical changes that we, in Western society, have undergone in our understanding of the relation between life and death. We live in a radically different world compared to our forebears, of even a few generations ago, let alone a few millennia ago. Over the last couple of centuries, modern medicine, through scientific inquiry, technical ability, and social organisation, has had tremendous success in dealing with illness, all but eradicating various diseases which would have decimated earlier populations. We have access to health care (whatever one might think of health-care reform and funding), which were simply unimaginable to our predecessors. We can, rightly, have confidence that most of the sufferings which previously were thought inevitable and untreatable, can be remedied. We now have every expectation that virtually any illness can be treated, so that we can expect to “live long and prosper.”

But, this has resulted several significant modifications. Jean-Claude Larchet, for instance, points out that “[t]he development of medicine in a purely naturalistic perspective [has] served to objectify illness, making of it a reality considered in itself and for itself.”¹ Sickneses are now something uniquely physiological, independent of the afflicted person, so that rather than treating the patient (“patient” meaning the one who is suffering), physicians today treat or cure the illness or the afflicted organs, through ever more sophisticated and abstract technical procedures, so depersonalising medical therapy and isolating the patient from “their” disease.

¹ Jean-Claude Larchet, *The Theology of Illness* (Crestwood NY: SVS Press, 2002) 11-13.

This means, secondly, that the patient is not in fact treated: the illness is attacked, the diseased organ is singled out and worked upon, but there is no attempt to help the patient understand or find meaning in their suffering. All that is left to the afflicted is to turn to the physician, in whose hands their fate resides. It is not the patient, as the suffering one, who is treated, but the illness which is attacked, while the patient suffers the treatment of modern medicine, hoping thereby to find healing, relief, and, ultimately, hoping to regain life. The physician has come to be, as Michel Foucault put it, the priest of modern times, the one who can save lives, the one who has power over life and death. Yet, the only life which such medicine can offer is that of the perpetuation of the biological functioning of the body; as to what life itself actually is—let alone *human* life—modern biology has no answer. As Jeffrey Bishop has pointed out, in his excellent book, *The Anticipatory Corpse*, the epistemologically normative body for modern medicine is the corpse. As he puts it:

Under this epistemologically normative dead body, medicine's metaphysical stance has become one in which material and efficient causes are elevated, while formal and final causes are deflated; put differently, the meaning and purpose of the body is deflated and the mechanical function of the body is elevated. ... the body is merely dead matter in motion; and if its healthy functioning organs are not donated when they are no longer useful to the patient, then that body is ordered to no good.²

The good, the *telos*, of the body—the human being as seen by medicine—is the right mechanical function of the parts of the body, either in itself or, if not there, in others. The bioethical problems into which this leads us are a quagmire, especially when, as is now suggested, we should regard “brain death” as a euphemism and a legal fiction so that organ donation could be practiced prior to the declaration of death.³

So what, then, is life, and specifically what is *human* life? We think we know what life is—after all, aren't we living? And yet, as the French philosopher, Michel Henry points out, when we begin to think about what it is that

² Jeffrey P. Bishop, “On Medical Corpses and Resurrected Bodies,” in J. Behr and C. Cunningham, eds., *The Role of Life in Death* (forthcoming: Cascade, 2015). Idem. *The Anticipatory Corpse: Medicine, Power, and the Care of the Dying* (Notre Dame, 2011).

³ cf. Bishop, “On Medical Corpses”, referring to Franklin G. Miller and Robert D Truog, *Death, Dying, and Organ Transplantation: Reconstructing Medical Ethics at the End of Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

we are talking about, we will find it surprisingly evanescent ... always receding from our sight.⁴ If we focus on that which we can see, looking at things as they show themselves in this world, we don't in fact see life. We can look at living beings, living organisms, but we don't see the life in them. And when we try to do so, we end up examining things that appear, that show themselves: neurons, electric currents, amino acids, cells, chemical properties, all the things with which biology deals—everything apart from life itself.

With our attention focused on things as they appear in this world, life simply becomes the lowest common denominator, applying not only to human beings, but also to protozoa and bees—as if such things can tell us what life is! If we want to say, yes, such things are living beings, but human beings are more than that, then we would probably say, following a tradition that goes back to the beginning of human thought this, that human beings are *more than living beings*, that humans are living beings endowed with *logos*, with reason and language, and today we would no doubt add creativity, being in relationship, and that hold a flourishing human life means the enjoyment of all this and more.

Thinking we know what life is—that which we already live—when we hear Christ saying that he has come that we might have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10), we risk thinking that Christ has come so that we might have more of what we already have, that our definition of a flourishing human life is already sufficient, though perhaps needing to be tweaked a little bit, to make it more moral or ethical (according to our dictates of what we think is moral) and we will probably fall into thinking that eternal life will be a continuation of the kind of life that we think we now live—that which we give so much of our time to supporting—but now set free from all the worries that beset us daily in the struggle for survival, so that we can finally enjoy, unburdened, all that we have.

But if we take this path, to accept this definition of life—as the lowest common denominator for all living beings—and that we humans are more than simple living beings, having further dignity in all those things in which we pride ourselves, then we would also have to say that life is less than human, or even stronger, that life is *inhuman*. This is not, however, how Christ speaks, the Christ who says: “I am life” (John 11:25, 14:6); the one who speaks of others as

⁴ Mark See esp. Michel Henry, *I am the Truth: Toward a Philosophy of Christianity*, trans., Susan Emanuel (Stanford University Press: Stanford, California, 2003). Cf. Christina M. Gschwandtner, “How do we become fully alive?: The Role of Death in Henry’s Phenomenology of Life,” in Behr and Cunningham, ed. *The Role of Life in Death*.

simply dead, “let the dead bury their dead” (Luke 9:60); the one who says, if we want to gain life, we must first lose it (cf. Luke 17:33). As Christ speaks of life, life is not less than human, it is in fact nothing other than the life of God, it is Christ himself, the one who shows himself not as yet something else in this world, but as the very life of the world and the very light of the world. Life, then, is something more or other than what biology studies, more than or other than what we think it is that we are engaged in, in our daily lives. Life is something that we must acquire, must enter into, must be born into, as we will see later.

But we have come now to live in such a manner that we not only hope for, but have come to expect, that our life will be free from pain, sickness, and suffering, that we have escaped the conditions endemic to human life as our ancestors knew it, and that we can continue to grow in attaining a form of life completely free of such limitations. We do indeed live in a radically different world than our forebears.

And perhaps, to take this to its final level, this change is nowhere more true than our understanding of death. I would suggest that very few people today (in the West) “see” death. We know that people die, we hear reports about death, tragic and catastrophic, and we see death in ever more cartoon-like character in countless Hollywood productions and video games. Yet compared to the situation a century ago, there is a marked difference. At the beginning of the twentieth century, most people would have had one or more of their siblings die during their childhood, and one or more parent dying before they reached adulthood (and now, our parents live on till we ourselves are beyond the life-expectancy of previous ages). Deceased siblings, parents, friends, and neighbours would have been kept at home, in the parlour, being mourned and waked by friends and neighbours, washed and prepared for burial, until being taken from home to church, where they would be commended to God and interred in and entrusted to the earth.

Today, however, the corpse is removed as quickly as possible, to the care of the death industry, the death professionals, the morticians, who embalm the body, to make it look as good as possible. It is then placed under rose-tinted lights in a funeral home so that it looks alive, in the hope that we might make a comment such as “I’ve never seen him or her looking so good”! The casket is then often closed during the funeral service. Or, as is increasingly happening today, there is no funeral service: the body is disposed of in a crematorium, increasingly with no one else there, and then, later on, a “memorial service” is held in which the person is celebrated without being bodily present.

All this betrays a very ambiguous, and disturbing, attitude to the body: no longer “seeing” the process of death, the dead person, death itself, our focus is now ever more on the body. We exercise and look after our body more than any previous generation, and we might do so under a veneer of Christian theology, arguing that ours is an “incarnational faith” in which the body is the temple of the Spirit. Yet, when we come to death, we treat the person as “liberated” from the body, discarding the coils of the mortal flesh. Today, we live as hedonists and die as Platonists!

In a very real sense, then, we no longer *see* death today: we don’t live with it, as an ever-present reality, as has every generation of human beings before us. To put it at its most extreme: today we must be killed in order to die! What we call life is capable of being sustained indefinitely by machines in an Intensive Care Unit; the machines must be switched off for the patient to die. One cannot but recall the verse from the Apocalypse: “And in those days, they will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death will fly away from them” (Rev. 9:6).

The erasure of the process of dying, the dead person, and death itself, has, of course, been observed many times: such as the classic work by Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (1973), following on from other equally noteworthy studies, such as Geoffrey Gorer, *Death, Grief, and Mourning in Contemporary Britain* (1965), and Jessica Mitford, *The American Way of Death* (1963).⁵ There have also been excellent studies with a much longer historical sweep, examining the changing patterns of death and dying in Western culture, especially the works of Philippe Ariès.⁶ And there have also, of course, been any number of books written in response to these changing patterns, mapping out the best way for looking after the dying and the grieving, from the older works of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross to the more recent works of Ira Byock.⁷

However, I would suggest, that despite various “death of God” theologies, the problem has yet to be addressed on a theological level, and that when

⁵ Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: The Free Press, 1977); Geoffrey Gorer, *Death, Grief and Mourning in Contemporary Britain* (New York: Doubleday, 1965); Jessica Mitford, *The American Way of Death* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963)

⁶ Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of our Death* (New York: Penguin, 1981 [1977]), and more briefly, *Western Attitudes to Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1974).

⁷ cf. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying: What the Dying have to teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy and their own Families* (New York: Scribner, 2003 [1969]), and *Death: The Final Stage of Growth* (New York: Touchstone, 1986 [1977]); Ira Byock, *Dying Well: Peace and Possibilities at the End of Life* (New York, Riverhead, 1977) and *The Best Care Possible* (New York: Avery, 2012).

we do so, the problem is deeper and more difficult than we might immediately have supposed. Most basically, if it is true that Christ shows us *what* it is to be God in the *way* that he dies as a human being, then, quite simply, if we no longer “see” death, we no longer see the face of God. If we cannot “see” death, we will not see the face of God. If we don’t “see” death, we have no basis for seeing that life in fact comes through death. If we don’t “see” death, our horizons will be purely imminent—it will be about this life, and its perpetuation, it’s being “saved.” Like cancer, which is basically cells that refuse to die, we have become a cancerous society!

And this is not a purely theoretical problem; it has huge economic implications. Already some 80% of health care costs in the US are given over to the last months of life, to treating the dying by trying to “save life.” The profound demographic changes in the world will only exacerbate this situation: according to the United Nations, in 1998 the number of older people (ages 60 or above) outnumbered for the first time, in the Western world, the number of children (aged 15 or less); this shift is predicted to become a global reality by 2045. Another way of presenting this shift is to note that in 1950 there were 12 potential workers to support each elderly person; by 2009 there were 9; in 2050 there will be 4.⁸ These are demographic changes unparalleled in human history, presenting challenges of immense proportions.

Now, if we don’t bear these changes in mind, we can easily hear the Gospel proclamation about the victory of life over death in terms of our own modern understanding of medicine and its treatment of illnesses (rather than the patient). When we hear from ancient and modern theologians that sickness and death was brought into the world through human disobedience, we might now think that Christ has simply reversed the situation: he heals sicknesses, as a doctor today might do; he has conquered death, such that we will not die; he provides life, and life in abundance, as we define it today—“having it all and more” or “be all that you can be”!

But we delude ourselves if we think this: we will still fall sick, and we will still die, however much we try to hide ourselves from it. If we recognize, and accept, the fact of our mortality, then perhaps we can see greater depths in the Gospel message and patristic reflection: Christ did not destroy death in any

⁸ United Nations, “World Aging Report 2009,” http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/WPA2009/WPA2009_WorkingPaper.pdf (accessed 12 March 2013). Cf. Daniel Hinshaw, “The Kenosis of Dying: An Invitation to Healing,” in Behr and Cunningham, *The Role of Life in Death*.

other way than through his death, and this requires of us our own death — in baptism, taking up the cross, bearing witness (*martyria*) all the way to the tomb—for us to share in his life. Christ did not simply destroy death (we will still die!), but rather, in the language of Hebrews, he has set us free from “the fear of death” (Heb 2:15), so that we might follow him, in taking up the cross. God did not simply destroy sickness and death, but rather turned them inside out, as it were, to an even greater end than the perpetuation of this so-called life, revealing a new form of life—the life of God himself, the life of self-sacrificial love.

It is vitally important to recognise that at the heart of the Gospel is a great reversal, and to recognise how this reversal works. It is all too easy to begin with the Apostle Paul’s conclusions, and to start with them as our premise: that Adam brought sin and death into the world, and that Christ is God’s response to Adam’s fall, bringing in righteousness and life (cf. Rom 5:12, 17; 1 Cor 15:21-22). But to do so would be to make Christ, as it were, plan B. The train of thought which led Paul to these assertions is actually the reverse of what he says in them! Before his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus, Paul (as Saul) did not think of himself as a sinner waiting for salvation, for someone to redeem him from death. Instead, he states categorically that he was blameless with respect to righteousness under the Law, full of confidence in the flesh, so much so that he persecuted Christians for their obvious blasphemy (Phil 3.4-6). It is, rather, only in the light of his encounter with the Risen Christ, the one who by his death wrought the resurrection, that he reevaluates the situation and his reading of Scripture. If this Christ is one who conquered death, now, and only now, is death seen to be “the last enemy” (1 Cor 15:26), conquered, however, in no other way than by death. If here is one who is the salvation of all, then, and only then, is it known that all need salvation. In other words, to paraphrase E. P. Sanders, the solution comes first, and then we see the problem.⁹

This way of thinking is so at odds with our modern linear way of thinking, that it can sound to us extremely paradoxical. For instance, one of the most difficult (for us) statements from the Fathers on this matter, is that of St Irenaeus of Lyons, commenting on Paul’s words that Adam is ‘the type of the one to come’

⁹ E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), esp. 474-5.

[Adam 'is the type of the one to come'] because the Word, the Fashioner of all things, prefigured in him the future economy relating to the Son of God on behalf of the human race, God having predetermined the first, the animated human that is, so that he should be saved by the spiritual [one]; for, since the Saviour pre-exists, it was necessary that the one to be saved should also exist, so that the Saviour should not be without purpose. (*Haer.* 3.22.3, referring to Rom 5:14)

Creation and Salvation, for Irenaeus, are not Plan A and Plan B. Rather they cohere together as the one economy of God, which culminates in the work of Christ on the cross, and which is only understood and told from this starting point.¹⁰ And this starting point is simultaneously the completion of the creative act begun in Genesis. The only work in the opening chapter of Genesis said to be God's own express purpose, his own project, is "Let us make the human being in our image" (Gen 1:26-7). Yet this is also the only work for which God does not say "Let there be." After having spoken everything else into being, he announces his own project with a subjunctive rather than an imperative. And it is in the Gospel of John, which clearly sets itself in parallel with Genesis, that Christ says from the Cross: "it is finished" (John 19:30)! Now is the divine purpose complete, by Christ's own voluntary passion, so that he is the image of God (Col 1:15), and, as Pilate says, just before the crucifixion, and only in the Gospel of John: "behold the human being" (John 19:5). Christ shows us the truth of God and also the truth of the human being (or the true human being) simultaneously: he shows us *what* it is to be God in the *way* he dies as a human being.

It is only in the light of the risen Christ that we can say that death came into the world through Adam's sin. But this also means that, while it is only in the light of the Risen Christ that we can see that death is the last enemy, this last enemy isn't simply dismissed, rendered naught, or obliterated, but is, rather, turned inside out: it is now also known to be the means by which the last enemy is destroyed—it is by his death that Christ conquers death—so that what was once the end, now in fact becomes the beginning. Its power over human beings, the fear that it introduces, leading us to sin, has been voided, so that we might voluntarily die to ourselves in baptism and a life of taking up the cross, in following Christ.

¹⁰ cf. J. Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons: Identifying Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

To further explain this paradox we might turn to the other contrast between Adam and Christ mentioned by Irenaeus in the passage just cited, which is again based upon Paul and the distinction he makes between the way in which the first Adam was animated by a breath of life and the last Adam, Christ, as a life-creating spirit (1 Cor 15:45). Adam was animated by a breath of life, and could have used this breath not for himself but for others. But Adam, as we all from our very first breath, did all he could to preserve it, to perpetuate it, to make it secure. But a breath is inherently transitory – it is snatched, and will expire, no matter how secure we try to make it. As Christ says: If you try to preserve your life, you will lose it. But, he continues: if you lose it for my sake and for the gospel, you will gain it (Mark 8:35; Matt. 10:39, 16:25; Luke 9:24, 17:33). Christ has shown us what it is to be God in the way that he dies as a human being, by laying down his life in love. And by showing us the way of life, and freeing us from the fear of death, he enables us to follow him in using our breath to live a life of self-sacrificial love, a life which is that of the Spirit himself, the life of God.

In this way, then, the death which we have introduced into this world has been, as I put it, turned inside out, and now becomes the way of life. Suffering, sickness, and death, while on one level do indeed result from our sin, yet on another, more profoundly theological level, can be seen as the means by which God trains us, fashions us, into human beings in his own image and likeness.

To help us understand how this is so, Irenaeus points out that there are two types of knowledge: that gained through experience and that arrived at by opinion. It is only through experience that the tongue learns of bitterness and sweetness; and, in the same way, we only come to have a knowledge of good (that is obedience to God, which is life for human beings), through the experience of both good and evil (that is, disobedience, which is death), so that we are in a position to reject the evil and adhere to the good. In this way, through experience of both, and casting away disobedience through repentance, human beings become ever more tenacious in their obedience to God. But if someone tries to avoid the knowledge of both of these, and the twofold faculty of knowledge, he will, in Irenaeus' striking language, both forget himself and kill his humanity (*Haer.* 4.39.1).

Irenaeus further claims that as the heavenly kingdom is more precious to those who have known the earthly kingdom, and, that if they prize it more, so also will they love it more: and loving it the more, they will be more glorified by God. He then concludes:

God therefore has borne all these things for our sake, in order that, having been instructed through all things, henceforth we may be scrupulous in all things and, having been taught how to love God in accordance with reason, remain in his love: God exhibiting patience [*magnanimitatem*] in regard to the apostasy of human beings, and human beings being taught by it, as the prophet says: “Your own apostasy shall heal you.” (*Haer.* 4.37-7; *Jer.* 2:19)

Irenaeus further suggests that God could have created the human being as perfect or as a “god” from the beginning, for all things are possible to him. However, created things, by virtue of being created, are necessarily inferior to the One who created them, and so fall short of the perfect: they are of a later date, infantile, and so unaccustomed to, and unexercised in, perfect conduct (*Haer.* 4.38.1). He describes Adam and Eve as children at their creation. It would be possible for God to have given us perfection at the beginning, just as a mother can give an infant meat; but we were still in our infancy, and could not have received this perfection. He is not suggesting that God’s creation was imperfect, but rather that it was not yet fully complete, just as an infant might have perfect limbs, but be unable to walk or run: the infant needs to learn, by experience, by falling down and getting bruised, before it can run. Moreover, the perfection Irenaeus has in mind is that shown by Christ, not the perfection of perfectly formed limbs, but the perfection of love, laying down one’s life for others. We are not born with such love (otherwise it would not be free love), but we learn to grow into such love, the life of God himself.

As an example of this divine pedagogy, Irenaeus gives the case of Jonah. By God’s arrangement, Irenaeus points out, Jonah was swallowed up by the whale, not that he should perish, but that, having been cast out, he might be more obedient to God, and so glorify more the One who had unexpectedly saved him. Irenaeus then continues:

... so also, from the beginning, God did bear human beings to be swallowed up by the great whale, who was the author of transgression, not that they should perish altogether when so engulfed, but arranging in advance the finding of salvation, which was accomplished by the Word, through the “sign of Jonah” (*Mt* 12.39-40), for those who held the same opinion as Jonah regarding the Lord, and who confessed, and said, “I am a servant of the Lord, and I worship the Lord God of heaven, who made the sea

and the dry land” (Jonah 1.9), in order that human beings, receiving an unhoped-for salvation from God, might rise from the dead, and glorify God, and repeat, “I cried to the Lord my God in my affliction, and he heard me from the belly of Hades” (Jonah 2.2), and that they might always continue glorifying God, and giving thanks without ceasing for that salvation which they have obtained from him, “that no flesh should glory in the Lord’s presence” (1 Cor 1.29), and that human beings should never adopt an opposite opinion with regard to God, supposing that the incorruptibility which surrounds them is their own by nature, nor, by not holding the truth, should boast with empty superciliousness, as if they were by nature like to God. (*Haer.* 3.20.1)

For Irenaeus, then, God has borne the human race, from the beginning, while it was swallowed up by the whale. But in doing so, God has “arranged in advance the finding of salvation, accomplished by the Word through the sign of Jonah”; this is already a given, though it is unknown to human beings prior to Christ, who brings an “unhoped-for salvation,” unhoped-for, but nevertheless divinely foreseen. Christ, as we have seen, is our starting point for understanding how and why we have been held under sin and death from the beginning.

For Irenaeus, death is undoubtedly the result of human apostasy, turning away from the one and only Source of life; it was instigated by the Devil and so the expression of his dominion over the human race. But it is also embraced within the divine economy, the way in which everything fits together in God’s hand. When viewed from the perspective of the salvation granted by Christ through “the sign of Jonah,” we can see that, as it was God himself who appointed the whale to swallow up Jonah, so also the engulfing of the human race by the great whale was “borne” by God in his arrangement, his economy, which culminates in the finding of salvation.

But there is yet more! For Irenaeus, the newly-created humans were inexperienced, and so they immediately gave way to temptation. And, so Irenaeus continues:

Such then was the patience of God, that human beings, passing through all things and acquiring knowledge of death, then attaining to the resurrection from the dead, and learning by experience from whence they have been delivered, may thus always give thanks to the Lord, having received from him the gift of incorruptibility, and may love him the more, for “he to whom more is

forgiven, loves more” (cf. Luke 7:42-3), and may themselves know how mortal and weak they are, but also understand that God is so immortal and powerful as to bestow immortality on the mortal and eternity on the temporal, and that they may also know the other powers of God made manifest in themselves, and, being taught by them, may think of God in accordance with the greatness of God. For the glory of the human being is God, while the vessel of the workings of God, and of all his wisdom and power is the human being. (*Haer.* 3.20.2)

God is patient, while we learn by experience our own weakness and death in our ungrateful apostasy, trying to live on our own terms (preserving our lives). God is patient, knowing that having passed through the experience of death, and having an un hoped-for salvation bestowed upon us, we will remain ever more thankful to God, willing to accept from him the eternal existence which he alone can give. In this way we become fully acquainted with the power of God: by being reduced to nothing, to dust in the earth, human beings simultaneously come to know their total dependency upon God, allowing God to work in and through them, to deploy his power in them as the recipient of all his work. And both dimensions of this economy—the engulfing of man, and the salvation wrought by the Word—are simultaneously represented by Jonah, a sign of both the transgressing human race and its Savior.

Vivid testimony to the Christian conviction that life comes through death is seen dramatically in the case of the early martyrs. For instance, the way in which the slave girl Blandina is portrayed in the Letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons to the Churches of Asia and Phrygia, probably written by Irenaeus after a violent persecution in Lyons around 177AD.¹¹ Blandina, as a young slave girl—the epitome of weakness in the ancient world—embodies the point made by Christ to Paul: “My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9). She was so “weak in body” that the others were fearful lest she not be able to make a good confession. Yet, she

[Blandina] was filled with such power that even those who were taking turns to torture her in every way, from dawn until dusk, were weary and beaten. They, themselves, admitted that they were beaten ... astonished at her endurance, as her entire body was mangled and broken. (*H.e.* 5.1.18)

¹¹ The Letter is preserved by Eusebius, *H.e.* 5.1-3.

Not only is she, in her weakness, filled with divine power by her confession, but she becomes fully identified with the one whose body was broken on Golgotha: when hung on a stake in the arena,

Blandina, hung on a stake (ἐπὶ ξύλου), was offered as food for the wild beasts that were let in. She, by being seen hanging in the form of a cross, by her vigorous prayer, caused great zeal in the contestants, as, in their struggle, they beheld with their outward eyes, through the sister, him who was crucified for them, that he might persuade those who believe in him that everyone who suffers for the glory of Christ has for ever communion with the living God. ... the small and weak and despised woman had put on the great and invincible athlete, Christ, routing the adversary in many bouts, and, through the struggle, being crowned with the crown of incorruptibility. (*H.e.* 5.1.41-2)

Through her suffering, Blandina becomes identified with Christ: (as with Paul, cf. Gal. 2:20) she no longer lives, but Christ lives in her: she *is* his body. Blandina's passage out of this world is Christ's entry into this world, and this is again described as a birth. After describing her suffering, and that of another Christian called Attalus, the letter continues:

Through their continued life the dead were made alive, and the martyrs showed favour to those who had failed to witness. And there was great joy for the Virgin Mother in receiving back alive those who she had miscarried as dead. For through them the majority of those who had denied were again brought to birth and again conceived and again brought to life and learned to confess; and now living and strengthened, they went to the judgment seat. (*H.e.* 5.1.45-6)

The Christians who turn away from making their confession are simply dead: their lack of preparation has meant that they are stillborn children of the Virgin Mother, the Church. But now, strengthened by the witness of others, they also are able to go to their death—and so the Virgin Mother receives them back alive, finally giving birth to living children of God. The death of the mar-

tyr is their “new birth,” and the death of the martyr is celebrated as their true birthday:¹²

Similarly with Ignatius of Antioch. He was taken underfoot and under guard from Antioch to Rome, to be martyred there. On his journey he wrote a letter to the Roman Christians imploring them not to interfere with his coming trials or, for instance, not to try to keep him alive by bribing the authorities. While journeying slowly but surely towards a gruesome martyrdom, he nevertheless embraces his fate with joy, exclaiming:

It is better for me to die in Christ Jesus than to be king over the ends of the earth. I seek him who died for our sake. I desire him who rose for us. Birth-pangs are upon me. Suffer me, my brethren; hinder me not from living, do not wish me to die. ... Suffer me to receive the pure light; when I shall have arrived there, I shall become a human being (ἄνθρωπος). Suffer me to follow the example of the passion of my God. (*Rom. 6*)

Life and death are again reversed. Ignatius says that has not yet been born. He, as us all, has merely come into existence, involuntarily, without any choice on his part; but through his martyrdom, his voluntary death in conformity to Christ, he will be *born*, freely, into life and as a human being. He becomes human by giving his fiat to God’s purpose, by voluntarily following Christ, so giving “fiat” for God’s own purpose to be accomplished.

We must be clear on the fact that the Church has always taught that we must not seek death in martyrdom; Ignatius’ enthusiastic language is expressed based on the given fact that he is already on his way to martyrdom. The model to be followed here is surely Paul’s recognition that while “my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better” nevertheless “to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account” (Phil 1:22-3): in other words, our life is to be one of loving self-sacrificial service, taking up the cross in this manner. Likewise the Church has (at least for the most part) never counselled avoiding the medical resources of the day. Yet, while seeking out medical assistance (which in our day are infinitely greater—and therefore offer an infinitely greater seduction), the Fathers, following the pattern of healings in the Gospels, in-

¹² cf. Henry, *I am the Truth*, 59-60: “To be born is not to come into the world. To be born is to come into life. ... To come into life here means that it is in life and from out of it alone that this coming is capable of being produced. To come into life means to come from life, starting from it, in such a way that it is not birth’s point of arrival, as it were, but its point of departure.”

sisted that such healing is given so that we might glorify God and serve our neighbours, rather than continue to live for ourselves.

The fact that human lives are always lived out under the shadow of sickness and culminating in death was seen by the Fathers as a given, to be ameliorated where possible, certainly, but not something that could be rectified by the march of human progress, as is our unexamined presupposition today. The human condition of suffering culminating with death was seen as transformed by the work of Christ, not displacing it, but setting it within the greater arc of the economy of God, fashioning human beings in his image, with a merciful and loving heart, rather than with a heart of stone. And this arc of the economy is pedagogically fashioned, providing an opportunity for learning patience, to not trust in oneself, to know that life does not come from the body but from God, to learn one's true dependence on God, to provoke us to prayer, to have compassion on others, as sharing a common human vulnerability. In a word, the sufferings of this life lead us to humility, learnt finally and fully, in the guts not just in the head, in the grave, when we become clay in God's hands.

Now, if all this is so, then we perhaps we can begin to realise how immense are the tectonic changes resulting in our modern approach to life, sickness, and death, that I spoke about earlier. If we don't know that life comes through death, then our horizons will become totally immanent, our life will be for ourselves, for our body, for our pleasure, even if we think we are being "religious," growing in our "spiritual life." If we think that the healing provided by Christ, the Great Physician, is akin to that provided by modern medicine, with its own high priest, the doctor, then we will never see beyond our own horizons, we will continue to block death out of our sight, we will continue to treat the illness but not the patient, and we will forget what it is to be, or rather, become human.

So, I would suggest that one of the greatest tasks for Christianity today is not simply to proclaim the faith in an increasing secularised world, but it is rather a matter of changing the presuppositions that have formed that world. We must take back death, just as over the past decades we have taken back birth from being, as a matter of course, a procedure carried out in isolation and in a medicated state, in the industrialised setting of the hospital, by medical professionals. The desacralisation of the beginning and end of life result in a hedonisation of life, in which sickness, suffering, and death are deprived of any meaning. We might prefer to deny all of this, but the fact that we are embodied beings means that we cannot do so forever. As Hervé Juvin put it:

Alone, the body remembers that it is finite; alone, it roots us in its limits, our last frontier (for how long?); and even if—especially if—it forgets, the body alone still prevents us from being God to ourselves and others.¹³

We are, as I began by noting, in a crisis. We all know this. Yet perhaps we can now see that the real cause of the crisis is not simply one of our own making, by adopting the wrong economic or social program; rather we have been put in crisis by Christ himself. As he said, approaching his Passion: “Now is the judgment of the world,” literally: now is the crisis (κρίσις) of this world (John 12:31). We have been challenged to see life and death otherwise than we might want, and this reversal is starker today than it has ever been before. Our judgment depends, as it always has, on how we respond to it.

¹³ Hervé Juvin, *The Coming of the Body*, (New York: Verso), 177.

St Bishop Nikolai Velimirović of Žiča: A Link Between Serbia and England¹

MILUN KOSTIC

GEORGE BELL, the Bishop of Chichester, speaking of Bishop Nikolai Velimirović in 1956 said: *“A marvellous man, yes. A great patriot, yes. But he was more than that. He was a prophet of God, not only of God’s mercy, but of God’s judgment”*.

In the most difficult days for Serbia, after it was attacked in 1914 by the mighty Austro-Hungarian Empire, Serbia’s Premier Nikola Pašić summoned hieromonk Nikolai Velimirović to Niš, the temporary seat of the Serbian Government, and asked him to go to England and America to plead for support for Serbia and her long suffering people and to counter Austro-Hungarian propaganda. When Nikolaj asked him “What shall I tell them?”, Pašić replied “You’ll know instinctively what to tell them”.

Nikolai left for England immediately, then travelled on to the USA, but soon returned to England where he delivered many lectures and sermons in churches, universities, cinemas, clubs, houses... He informed his audiences about

Serbia’s difficulties in her just struggle against the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which planned to wipe Serbia off the face of the earth. Against all odds, this man of God and monk succeeded in opening the eyes of churchmen, politicians and people of the mighty British Empire and won them over to Serbia’s cause.



¹ This text is an excerpt from a lecture Father Milun delivered in the churchyard of the church of Our Lord’s Ascension at Žarkovo, Serbia, on the eve of the feast of St John of Shanghai and San Francisco in 2013.

Some of his sermons and lectures were published in English under titles such as *The Soul of Serbia*, *Serbia in the Light and Darkness*, *The Spiritual Rebirth of Europe* and *The Agony of the Church*.

One of Nikolai's first lectures titled *Serbia's Place in Human History* was immediately published by the Westminster Council for the Study of International Relations as the first volume in a series. The booklet dealt with the following topics: "The Struggle between Superman and Universal Man", "Before and after the Battle of Kosovo", "The Resurrection of the Humiliated Against the Arrogant", "Democracy and Heroism in Theory and Practice", "A Great Struggle for a Great Idea - That is All" and "Always Truthful to Itself". Nikolai dedicated the booklet to Professor R. W. Seton Watson, an expert on the South Slavs, saying: "Dear Dr Seton-Watson, In these most tragic and most momentous days in our Serbian history I dedicate to you this text about my people who are great in their ideals and in their suffering. This is an expression of my gratitude to you for loving and understanding us" (London, 10 October 1915).

In a lecture on the theme *Democracy and Heroism*, Nikolai quoted one English and one French author writing about Serbs at that time and said: "Dr Dillon has stated: 'Rising like a phoenix from the ashes Serbia has risen from non-existence to existence and has become the Piedmont of the South Slavs and a central factor in international developments.'"

He then quoted the French author Maurice Barres as saying: "The Serbs, the impoverished defenders of European civilisation through many centuries, these heroes wearing rags and moccasins, have earned the respect of the whole world".

Nikolai's words, sermons and lectures about the suffering of the Serbs touched the hearts of his listeners with such force that it led to the setting up of a Serbian Relief Fund in England with Queen Mary as patroness, the Bishop of London as president and Seton-Watson as secretary.

The London *Times History of the War* magazine, issue No. 3 of 27th April 1915, was entirely devoted to the Serbs and their struggle in the First World War. It carried many illustrations including a photo of Prince Regent Alexander in an army officer uniform. Page two of the magazine was full of appeals for aid to Serbia.

A telegram from Lady Paget², published under the banner headline “Serbia Needs Your Help” said: “Conditions here defy description. If we are to save lives it is paramount you send us more medical and surgical equipment. We are short of everything. We won’t be able to do anything unless we get aid immediately”. She goes on to list goods received from the Serbian Relief Fund and those still needed urgently.

The magazine also published instructions on how and where donations in cash, blankets, pillows and bed sheets should be sent as well as parcels.

In August 1915 monk Nikolai went to the USA on a lecture tour in Chicago. He won over many Serbs, Croats and Americans so that many volunteered to go to the Salonika front to help the Serbian and Allied armies liberate Serbia and create Yugoslavia.

I have been told by my parishioner Miladin Novaković, (who was a Chetnik fighter under the command of Vojvoda Momčilo Djujić during the Second World War), that his father who had emigrated to the USA before the outbreak of the First World War, after having heard Nikolai speak in the USA decided to return home and then went on to the Salonika front. No wonder then that a British army commander, said after the war: “Father Nikolai was Serbia’s third army”.

On his return to England from the USA Nikolai continued to make speeches and give lectures all over the UK; many were published in English.

² Lady Paget (1881 – 1958) went to Serbia for the first time in 1910 with her husband Sir Ralph when he was appointed British envoy to the Kingdom of Serbia. They stayed in Serbia for three years and she got to know the Serbian people well, becoming their friend and life-long benefactress. During the Balkan wars she worked as a nurse in Belgrade hospitals. With the outbreak of the First World War she returned to Serbia as head of the British medical mission and with the help of the Serbian Relief Fund in London organised a Serbian military hospital in Skopje. She caught typhoid and had to be evacuated temporarily to Switzerland but returned to Skopje in 1915 and remained with her patients even when the Bulgarians occupied the city.

Lady Paget was honoured for her services by Prince Regent Alexander who awarded her St Sava’s Order “as a token of gratitude from my entire nation”. She left Skopje only in 1916 and returned to England. She published two books of her war memoirs under the title *With our Serbian Allies*.

Lady Paget renewed her links with the Serbs during the Second World War when the Yugoslav Government arrived in London after Hitler’s invasion of Yugoslavia in April 1941. When the war ended she helped many Serbian exiles who refused to go back to Tito’s Yugoslavia. Lady Paget especially helped the Serbian Church in London where her many decorations are exhibited in a case on the wall of St Bishop Nikolai’s Hall. She commissioned a bas-relief of General Draža Mihailović, the leader of the royalist resistance movement in Yugoslavia, which hangs on a wall of St Sava’s church. The citation reads: “In Recognition of Bravery, From Lady Paget”.

His books reveal his wisdom, patience and persistence. Let us quote just the ending of his book *The Soul of Serbia*:

Serbia is now like a cemetery full of silence, bones and hyenas. However, the last chapter of this great tragedy is not death but Resurrection. I don't believe that Serbia will die for ever. But even if it happens temporarily, I will write on the holy cemetery of my martyr country this most apt epitaph: "*Here Rests England's Loyal Friend*".

Thus spoke Nikolai who was a gift from God to the Serbian people at this most critical time. It is, therefore, not surprising that in 1916 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, began his foreword to Nikolai's book *Serbia in the Light and Darkness* by saying: "The presence of Father Nikolai Velimirović in England for the past few months has brought to many people with whom he has been in contact a new message and a new appeal reinforced by his personality and gratitude which shines more warmly and more brightly as we get to know him better".

In a sermon, delivered in Canterbury cathedral in the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Nikolai said: "I am not addressing you in order to teach you but to thank you. I must thank you on behalf of the Serbian nation and me personally". He went on to say that England had given to the world Shakespeare, Milton, Newton, Hershel, Wellington, Nelson, Cardinal Newman and many others. He expressed his gratitude to the many nurses who had died in Serbia while trying to save Serbian lives, commenting: "Serbia would rather forget about herself than about the English lives lost in this catastrophe".

Nikolai continued to meet people, make speeches increasingly winning over the hearts for the Serbs and their cause. Working tirelessly for the good of the Serbian people he stayed in England for four years until 1919 when he was made Bishop of Žiža.

Let us list some more of his lectures: *England and Serbia*, *Serbia for the Cross and Freedom*, *The Soul of Serbia*, *Serbia's Place in the History of Humanity*, *Religion and Nationality in Serbia*, *The Serbian Tragedy*, *Serbia at Arms...* One of his most memorable sermons was at St Paul's in London on St Vitus' Day in 1916 when he addressed more than ten thousand people including King George and the elite of English society. I shall quote the opening and closing paragraphs of his sermon:

Gentlemen and friends, I have come from Serbia, from Europe's deepest night where there is no flicker of light. All the light has vanished from the earth and escaped to the skies and only from above shines on us. Despite that, we who are weak in everything, are now strong in our hope and in our faith that dawn will break out soon. I am grateful to the Archbishop of Canterbury for making it possible for me on St Vitus' Day this 1916th year of Our Lord to address you in this magnificent cathedral of St Paul's in the presence of His Majesty King George and some of the most distinguished English personalities...

He ended by saying: "On St Vitus' Day in 1389 Serbian Prince Lazar with his gallant army stood on the ramparts in the field of Kosovo and laid down his life in defence of Christian culture. At that time Serbia's population equalled England's. Now there ten times fewer Serbs than the English. Where have they gone? They were killed defending Europe. It is now time for Europe to repay this debt to Serbia".

When lecturing, Nikolai had the habit of quoting examples, proverbs or verses. He was helped greatly by his knowledge of English history, literature and life in general. He had no difficulty in winning over people to the Serbian cause since he spoke from his heart. He would fearlessly expose errors, ours and other people's, but always stressed that which was positive, useful and pleasing to God.

Thanks primarily to Nikolai a significant number of Serbs came to England to study. Among the first arrivals were some who later became well known figures: Irinej Djordjević, Jovan Stojanović, Jelisej Andrić, Pavle Jevtić and Justin Popović. They were followed by many others. A report from 1920 says that these studies were organised by the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association, especially by Anglican clergyman L. Pulan and Father Nikolai Velimirović.

Father Nikolai enjoyed general respect. He made many friends both in England and the USA. In 1971 Dr Muriel Heppell published a book about Nikolai Velimirović and George Bell, the Bishop of Chichester, entitled *The Story of a Friendship*. The book has been translated into Serbian. Dr Heppell relates how the two men first met when Nikolai came to England during the First World War and stayed in touch until Nikolai's death in 1956. Bell attended the memorial service for Nikolai in St Sava's church in London and said of his friend in an inspired eulogy: "A marvellous man, yes. A great patriot, yes. But he

was more than that. He was a prophet of God, not only of God's mercy ,but of God's judgment”.

Ten years ago or so, the Bishop of London, Dr Richard Chartres, made a pilgrimage to Serbia and on his return to the UK he set up a fund named after bishops Nikolai and George Bell designed to provide financial assistance to Serbian students. Later he took part in a film about Bishop Nikolai made by Serbian Orthodox Church council in Berlin.

The [former] Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, said in 2001 that “Bishop Nikolai Velimirović was for several generations of British Anglicans, one of that group of unmistakable moral and spiritual giants who brought something of the depth and challenge of the Orthodox world into the West”.

Let us have some more quotations. *The Church Times* in 1920: “During the four war years Dr Nikolai Velimirović with his personality and his message made such a strong impression on a large number of English people that they had a feeling of a real loss when he went back to Serbia”. The same year Canon J.A. Douglas, the Vice Chancellor of London University stated: “This author is not only a provocative thinker and a stimulating personality but he has the rare gift of practical application of ideas”. In 1921 Fynes Clinton, an Anglican priest, said: “The impression he made with his personality, good qualities and the work he carried out preaching in our cathedrals and churches is without precedent for an Orthodox priest in this country”.

The first non-Anglican to preach at St Paul's

Dr Harold Buxton, the Bishop of Gibraltar, said in 1940: “I have known Dr Nikolai since the great war when he preached at St Paul's to ten or even twenty thousand people. People in England, and especially in London, are still asking where Dr Nikolai Velimirović is now and what is he doing. He was the first non-Anglican who was allowed to preach at St Paul's. If he came today the whole of London would turn up to hear him”.

Let us end these quotations with Dame Rebecca West, one of the most outstanding writers in the British Isles whose grave is near the Serbian Church cemetery at Brookwood which I visit often to say a prayer. This great woman writer said that Bishop Nikolai was “The most exceptional human being she had ever met”.

The Second World War brought pain and sorrow to the Serbian people and to Nikolai who was taken to the infamous Dachau concentration camp with the Serbian Patriarch Gavriilo. After the liberation and release from Da-

chau he refused to return to his homeland which was under the rule of a godless regime and went first to England and then to America trying to help the Serbs and Serbia with his words and deeds. While most Serbs missed him and his activities he was branded – to Serbia’s shame – a war criminal by the Yugoslav regime.

He stipulated in his Will that his mortal remains be returned to Serbia when the time comes. This indeed happened on the feast of St Basil of Ostrog, the Miracle-maker, on 12th May 1991 when his holy relics arrived from faraway America to his native Lelić. A Holy Liturgy was celebrated in the presence of all strata of Serbian people and society. With God’s providence and St Bishop Nikolai’s blessing the author of this text had the honour of also taking part.

Today St Bishop Nikolai’s books can be found in almost all Serbian homes. They are being translated into many languages and are becoming increasingly popular. If Bishop Nikolai, in the words of that Englishman, became “Serbia’s third army” during his life, he as a saint in his beloved homeland has now become “Serbia’s universal army” because a saint can do for his country and nation much more than an entire army.

St Bishop Nikolai pray for us!

Note: Bishop Nikolai was canonised in May 2003. His feast day is celebrated on 3rd May.

Towards greater unity and closer friendship: people of the Porvoo Communion today and tomorrow¹

MICHAEL JACKSON

Introduction and language: Towards ...

THE VERY TITLE of this paper points us to the inherent provisionality rather than to the insurmountable problems of the areas under consideration which are the joint areas of unity and friendship. Provisionality is essential to a working understanding and receptive appreciation of Anglicanism because provisionality itself moves us on *towards* eschatology and the divinely sanctioned incompleteness of our earthly efforts, not least in the church. The church is a gift of God most certainly, but constructed and deconstructed by human beings. Anglicanism is not a confessional way of believing and therefore the churches constituent of the worldwide Anglican Communion are not, in any sense, members of a confessional church. Provisionality is, therefore, all the more important in understanding the Anglican witness and presence in living history. Provisionality honours the need for interpretation as a primary doctrinal tool and places Anglicanism at quite a far remove from prescriptive confessionalism. Provisionality also offers a way of living fruitfully, creatively, critically, respectfully and relationally within the inherited tradition. The shorthand terms for this Anglican theological method are Scripture, Tradition and Reason. In my thinking, provisionality makes the vital difference to their dynamic application as, in some sense or other, these three terms are common to most religious traditions.

The other reason I use the term provisional is that the primary Biblical paradigms for *unity* and for *friendship* in the New Testament are St John 17.11: My prayer for you is that you may be one even as my Father and I are one; and St John 15.12,13: Greater love has no one than to lay down his or her life for his or her friends. And so, we are asked to grapple in the here and now with a definition of unity which believes in us so fervently as to want to draw us into the being and the dynamic of the Godhead; and to invite us to live in and live by a definition of friendship which is so sacrificial as to articulate its greatest glory as its most costly loss in terms of the self. And so, by drawing us into the life of

¹ An introductory paper for the York Meeting of September 2014.

the Father and the Son within the Godhead, unity and friendship take us to the heart of who God is and why God is God and also why, as human beings, our life is a relationship with God. And it is rooted in our patterning of the person of the Incarnate Christ.

The third reason for my use of the term provisional derives from the word: *towards* in the title. Any of us involved in the relational aspects of church life could hardly have a deep enough reservoir of patience! Words like: *towards* give voice to such patience. Whether it be an Agreement or a Covenant or a Communion or any other permutation on coming and being together, a word such as *towards* gives cover for what is incomplete in its expression, yet honourable in its aspiration. Finally, words like *closer* and *greater* are both progressive and ingressive. The further we go, the deeper we go. This is what convinces me more and more of the theological, even more than the operational, aspects of communion. Communion is a spirituality that ask of us: Who do we want to *be* and to *become* together even more than it asks of us: What do we want to *do* together? (1 John 3.2)

The Trinity as a paradigm of unity and friendship

There are many ways of understanding the Trinity but I should like us, in the context of The Porvoo Common Statement and as The Porvoo Churches, to look at a particular word as a way of understanding the Trinity and it is: *rapport*. And so, I introduce the term: *elasticity* as well as *provisionality* into our current discussion of Porvoo into the future in order to grasp something of this word: *rapport* as we ourselves seek to live an earthly life of Trinitarian proportions. Unity and friendship in the Christian religion are modelled in a comprehensive Trinitarianism which shares with the earthly creation the best of Godly life. There is a *rapport* across members of the divine Trinity and there is also a *rapport* between individual members of the Trinity and human beings, built on their divine attributes. Using the inherited names of Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the Three Persons of the Trinity, I offer three expressions of each Person consonant with the incarnational impact of the God who came to live an earthly life in Jesus Christ and who continues to exercise a providential care and oversight of the world in the Holy Spirit. Were time to permit, I could offer a more structured explanation of why I suggest each set of three descriptions around each Person. However, I imagine that it will quickly be clear why I am offering the three trinities that I am offering. I suggest that the Father is expressed in creation, recreation and redemption; that the Son is expressed in incarnation, teaching and mission; that the Holy Spirit is expressed in love,

truth and justice. Any of you might decide or choose to express the essence of the three Persons differently (and I say quite readily that my clusters are not exclusive) but I hope that they give us some sense of how, using our imagination, we can flesh out Trinitarian aspects of each person of the Trinity for a life of responsible discipleship in response to God's incarnational gift of God to us and to the whole world.

I want to do no more than to open up the ground for a divine, as well as a theological, understanding of unity and friendship. In many ways it is no more than an application of the doctrine of co-inherence (*perichoresis/circumincessio*) of the Cappadocian Fathers to specific attributes of the Three Persons of the One God and how they relate to us in living a Godly life. Any of the characteristics which I have clustered, in threes, around the essence of each Person of the Trinity can be seen as operating in the lives of the other two Persons also. My concern is to connect divine being with human personhood and community life. It was, after all, a Patristic truism which has not utterly lost its validity that God became human in order that human beings might become divine and it was taken up with gusto and creativity by the Caroline Divines of the Anglican tradition in the seventeenth century.

'Disappearing boundaries'

I was listening one evening recently to a programme about a close harmony group called Chanticleer. What was particularly interesting was the way in which, as with Schonberg but differently, in their music the classical form became more and more elastic and creative as it was subjected to more and more strain through revision and reapplication in an idiom and a direction which I will call contemporary, for want of a better word. The interviewer asked the interviewee, who was Chanticleer's conductor: 'Where will all of this go next?' The interviewee replied, from within his encyclopaedic knowledge of the tradition both in terms of form and of content: 'I really don't know. We live in a world of disappearing boundaries.' I thought it an exciting statement from a traditionalist, in the best sense of that word, and I found it asking me deep and searching questions about the church as a vehicle of inherited tradition, and in particular of the *laissez faire* liberalism which passes for theological thinking in parts of my own church and of the boomerang response of constricting literalism which equally passes for theological thinking in other parts. The future is already happening as we speak; since it is God's future, we cannot know where it is going. This is the disciplined freedom of being children of the Kingdom of God. Both parts of the tradition seem to me to be confused and frightened

children of the eighteenth century, armed now with iPhones and Facebook Pages and Twitter Feeds, and yet with unacknowledged debts of derivation to rationalism and deism respectively.

So, as we gather as Porvoo people to plan under God for the future years of our Communion, we are rightly invited to grasp those challenging words: unity and friendship. Uniformity is not unity on this side of the *eschaton*. Diversity is not self-explanatory or self-authenticating nor is it necessarily expressive of coherence or cohesion. Too much diversity can, however, put significant strain on friendship. Using our local autonomy and the considerable freedom which it grants us, I would encourage us to proof our inherited traditions over against the realities and the questions of our age – and to share this new wisdom with one another; to move away from our long-standing concern of refining the definitions of various ministries in each of our church families over against one another; and to take the other model of friendship so powerfully lived out in the Gospels as our guide: friendship as accompaniment, as it is expressed in the walk to Emmaus (St Luke 24). This is an encounter through the filter of The Resurrection; it follows so beautifully and so lovingly from The Passion. In this encounter, we see the inter-relation of human and divine, personality and Scripture and the greater unity of Master and disciples in the reality of closer Eucharistic friendship. Friendship and Eucharist bind us together in a Trinitarian communion of faith, hope and love. All of these components we, as Porvoo people, already have in a structured and living way through our very public Communion.

How might it look?

As things are developing, we are already moving in the direction of more and more expression of such instincts - and we need to do more of it. I have just returned from The Anglican-Lutheran Society Conference on the shores of Lake Balaton, Hungary where the theme was: Fear Not Little Flock: The Vocation of Minority Churches Today. It was very clear that a burning issue is the capacity which a minority has to contribute to and to drive from within the definition of a majority culture in a caritative and an altruistic direction; it may not have numbers – that is self-evident – but it has capacity through its lived witness, its presence and its engagement, its ideas and its identity and most of all perhaps its courage – all of these are essential to the totality of the society of which it is part. A majority needs a minority to respect, in order to be able to respect itself and others as a way of unity and of friendship. The other important insight that I took away from the Conference was the striking one to

the effect that diakonia and movement go together. The message was clearly voiced: we are going to have to share everything with people on the move in the future irrespective of creed, class or colour. Movement and displacement, on this argument, are already challenging so significantly the older model of settled ecclesiastical domesticity that ecology and theology are, in fact, becoming the same thing. God and creation combine. It reminded me of the HSBC advertisement that we see from time to time as we go into a plane: In the future, energy and waste will be the same thing. A proper theology and a proper ecology waste no one and no thing. Love is the eradication of waste and sin is waste.

I wish to suggest that the issues and the opportunities offered by this new reality, once we let it embrace us, will form the crucible and the context of a new understanding of greater unity and closer friendship for the Porvoo Churches in Europe today. And the greatest thing is this: whether we are a numerical majority or minority in our own countries matters nothing. Not only do we need one another for the embedding of a shared vision; we need all of the different peoples among whom we live to bring out in us the greater unity and the closer friendship – as human beings – which we might never get round to identifying in ourselves for *the other*. We are who we are under God primarily because of the stranger and the Godly rapport between us.

A possible way forward

The Porvoo Church Leaders' Meeting addresses areas of planning and exploration for the Porvoo churches together. A number of the important issues has already been explored and continues to be. The issues around potential new member churches within Europe need to be addressed and the prospect of new constituent members is surely an attractive one as it builds new capacity through the sharing of experience and wider belonging. More and more of us are a numerical minority and seek to be a critical contributing minority in our countries which although frequently not overtly hostile about religion and faith are at very least hugely un-enthusiastic. Greater unity and closer friendship will require of us a willingness to be honest about our fears and failures as well as eager in celebrating our joys. This exploration may well invite us to look at our relationships with the LWF and the Anglican Communion. The ordained ministerial substratum is, and has been, in place from early on in Porvoo; it underpins our shared sacramental life. The Synodical decision of the Church of England to ordain women to the episcopate will bring a fresh palate of opportunities not only for the sharing of ministry at an episcopal level but for the sharing

of a variety of initiatives which are episcopally led and episcopally inspired in church and society. The areas of enriched discipleship on a local everyday level, infused by prayer and service, and of Inter Faith encounter and understanding, infused by patience and advocacy, are extremely urgent in a world where movement and dislocation go together and identities seem to be very vulnerable in the second and third generations of diaspora. We also need to decide if we are to have a specific relationship of accompaniment with the Christians and others in Egypt, Gaza, Syria and Northern Iraq. These are but a few starter ideas and I know all of you will have lots more.

Towards greater unity and closer friendship may, as I said earlier, seem to be a rather obvious and indeed predictable aspiration for people steeped in religious language and spiritual idealism and, by this stage, experiencing a degree of well-merited indigestion in this field. The divine imperative latent in both phrases nonetheless facilitates the exploration of a Godly life with a deep Trinitarian underpinning. As disciples, lay and ordained, we are icons and agents of the Trinity. This model is one of informed involvement and engaged accompaniment combined with pervasive compassion. We do not need to be the same churches, in fact we are much better if we are not the same because then we have the energy of difference and the elasticity of diversity. Things can happen differently *and* coherently. This all will help us as we work at the discipline of shared freedom within and without our Communion. We need to remain constantly aware that in all of our constituent churches, the quest for a literalist ecclesiology is always in danger of eroding the eschatological provisionality of which I spoke earlier as Christ's gift. Both liberalism and conservatism are very much in danger of becoming, each separately and both together, *de facto* and distinct churches within our churches. This needs careful handling because it is the very antithesis of greater unity and closer friendship. Indulging such caricatures is a betrayal of the people who are our charge and who, irrespective of our efforts, are and will remain God's people.

From the archives: The Church of England and the Russian Orthodox Church in World War One

STEPHEN STAVROU

IN THIS centenary year of the outbreak of World War One, I have looked back into the AECA archives. One of the earliest collections is a volume of *The Christian East* (a precursor to *Koinonia*) from 1920. This includes an article containing correspondence between the Archbishop of Canterbury (Randall Davidson) and various leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church during and just after the first world war. What these letters describe is that for the Church in Russia the trauma of the war was equalled by the subsequent revolutions of 1917 and especially of 1918 when violent persecution was unleashed upon all Christians. They also reveal that, at a time of international and internal conflict, Christian leaders were able to comfort and encourage one another, overcoming what in peace-time would have been irreconcilable differences.

The first letter is important less for its content than for its timing. Sent on Easter Day according to the Russian calendar, the 'strife and confusion' it refers to was that of the February Revolution of 1917, the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II and significant Russian military defeats. At the same time, this letter reflects a certain sense of hopefulness that the 1917 revolution was potentially positive for the people of Russia:

'On behalf of the Church of England I exchange with you, at this sacred season, the fraternal greetings of thanksgiving and hope. Christos voskress. May the blessings of the Risen Lord fill you with joy and peace in believing, even amidst the anxiety and strain of this eventful year. May the strife and confusion issue in a righteous victory over the high-handed wrong of our enemy, and in abiding peace and freedom for the peoples of Europe. May the Russian people, in its newborn strength, be guided by the Holy Spirit of God to bear therein a worthy part. The Easter benediction rests to-day upon our great peoples, united under new conditions by bonds of ever-deepening sympathy and friendship. Christos voskress.'

Randall Cantuar
April 15 1917

The following year saw the restoration of the Moscow Patriarchate and the appointment of Metropolitan Tykhon. Archbishop Davidson sent a message of greeting and this was returned by the Patriarch with appreciation while also mentioning the on-going horror of the war:

‘Let us pray that the vial of the wrath of God may yet spare humanity, and that for the elect’s sake, these days of tribulation may be shortened, and general misfortunes of nowadays may teach all branches of Christianity to approach nearer one another in the Spirit of love and unity.’

The Patriarch was writing in January 1918, just months after the Bolshevik October Revolution of the preceding year. His hope that the ‘days of tribulation may be shortened’ were to be short-lived, as the persecution of the Church in Russia took on an apocalyptic reality. A letter shortly afterwards from Metropolitan Platon of Odessa is a desperate cry for help as it describes some of the horrors that were taking place on a daily basis:

‘I fervently beg your Eminence to protect the Orthodox Russian Church. The Revolutionary Government is subjecting it to cruelties by the side of which the persecutions of the Christians in the first three centuries pale. Many Archbishops, hundreds of priests have been martyred and shot. The Churches are profaned and pillaged ... I implore your Eminence and your body of Bishops to save ... the Church from the frightful agonies which she is enduring’

Platon, Metropolitan of Odessa

What could the Archbishop do in such circumstances? As well as sending personal messages of comfort and solidarity the Archbishop issued a prayer for the people and Church of Russia to be used across the nation:

O God, our Refuge and our Strength, Who art a very present help in trouble, have mercy, we beseech Thee, upon the Russian Church in her hour of need. Deliver her by Thy most mighty protection from the dangers that beset her, and grant her people rest; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Perhaps the most disturbing letter is from a number of bishops including the Archbishop of Omsk who describes in greater detail the persecutions taking place:

‘The Kremlin Cathedrals of Moscow and those in the towns of Yaroslav and Semferopel have been sacked, and many churches defiled ... Vladimir, Metropolitan of Kieff [sic], about twenty Bishops and hundreds of priests have been assassinated. Before killing them the Bolsheviki cut off the limbs of their victims, some of whom were buried alive. Religious processions, followed by great masses of people, at Petrograd, Toula, Kharkoff and Sogialitch, were fired upon ... Nuns are being violated, women made common property, license and the lowest passions are rampant. One sees everywhere death, misery and famine ... In the name of human solidarity and in the spirit of Christian brotherhood, we trust that we shall be able to count upon your Grace’s compassion. We hope that as the representative of the Christian Church in Great Britain you will with your followers, turn to Him who holds life and death in His hands with ardent prayers for those in Northern Europe, who for the love of Christ have in the twentieth century been martyred for their Faith’

Sylvester, Archbishop of Omsk
February 12th 1919

In response the Archbishop promised to redouble his efforts to raise awareness wherever it might help, and to use whatever influence he had to improve the situation.

Looking back over this correspondence, despite the horror and pity of the situation there is something profound in the words of one Christian leader reaching out to another at a desperate time. There is here, a sense of a faith that is shared, of truth held in common, an intimacy that crosses all ecclesiastical boundaries. This is what we might call true koinonia.

Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Commission

THE COMMISSION held its third meeting in October at St Mark's Centre, Cairo. At this meeting, the Commission completed its work on an agreed statement on Christology, thereby helping to heal the rift that came about at the Council of Calcedon in 451 when the Church divided over the dual nature of Christ. This significant text was agreed upon and signed at the meeting by Bishop Geoffrey Rowell on behalf of the Anglican Communion and Metropolitan Bishoy on behalf of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. This was Bishop Geoffrey's last meeting as Anglican Co-Chair and the new Anglican Co-Chair will be Bishop Gregory Cameron of St. Asaph. Writing in the Church Times, Bishop Geoffrey says of this agreement: 'This new agreement is part of a wide ecumenical endeavour to overcome this most ancient of Christian divisions on a major matter of doctrine.' The next meeting will take place in Wales in October 2015 and among a number of issues will focus on the Holy Spirit.



Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Commission
Holy Etchmiadzin, Armenia, November 5-10, 2002
Agreed Statement Revised Cairo, Egypt, October 13-17, 2014

Christology

Introduction

In 1990, the second Forum of representatives of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Churches of Anglican Communion, meeting at the Monastery of St Bishoy in Wadi el Natroun, Egypt, was able to produce the following statement: *God, as revealed in the life, teaching, passion, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ calls His people into union with Himself. Living by the Holy Spirit, His own people have been given authority to proclaim this Good News to all creation.*

The Forum was also able to suggest that an agreement on Christology between the Oriental Orthodox and the Anglican Communion was now possible, taking note of the detailed theological work done by representatives of the two families of Orthodoxy between 1964 and 1971 resulting in the Agreed Statements of 1989 and 1990, the work done in the unofficial Pro Oriente conversations, and of the history of convergence in Christology between the Churches of the Anglican Communion and the Oriental Orthodox Churches. To this must now be added the Agreed Statement on Christology of the Reformed-Oriental Orthodox Dialogue (Driebergen, Netherlands, September 13, 1994).

Our first meeting as the Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Commission was held in Holy Etchmiadzin, Armenia, November 5-10, 2002, following the meeting of the Preparatory Committee in Midhurst, England, July 27-30, 2001. It produced an Agreed Statement on Christology. This text was sent to the participating Churches following this meeting and again following the second meeting of the Commission held in Woking, England, October 3-7, 2013. The third meeting of the Commission, held in Cairo, Egypt, October 13-17, 2014, reviewed these responses and made slight revisions to the text. All this work has been done in a spirit of service of the Risen Christ and of the human race whom He came to save. Our work recognizes the presence of Christ with those who suffer in the tragic history of humanity. It expresses both the hope of a new humanity and the hope of glory wherein we will partake in Christ's holiness. With the will for unity-in-Christ within us it has been

our privilege in this work of exploration and collaboration to handle the understanding of the person of Christ Jesus (1 John 1.1) together.

We have been able to agree on the following statement:

Agreed Statement on Christology

1. We confess that our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ is the Only-Begotten Son of God who became incarnate and was made human in the fullness of time for us and for our salvation. We believe in God the Son incarnate, perfect in His divinity and perfect in His humanity, consubstantial with the Father according to His divinity and consubstantial with us according to His humanity, for a union has been made of two natures. For this cause we confess one Christ, one Son and one Lord. [Based on the Formula of Re-union, AD 433].

2. Following the teaching of our common father Saint Cyril of Alexandria we can confess together that in the one incarnate nature of the Word of God, two different natures, distinguished in thought alone (*τη θεωρια μονη ti theoria moni*) continue to exist without separation, without division, without change, and without confusion.

3. In accordance with this sense of the unconfused union, we confess the holy Virgin to be Theotokos, because God the Word became incarnate and was made man, and from the very conception united to himself that perfect humanity, without sin, which he took from her. As to the expressions concerning the Lord in the Gospel and in the Epistles, we are aware that theologians understand some in a general way as relating to one single person, and others they distinguish as relating to two natures, explaining those that befit the divine nature according to the divinity of Christ, and those of a humble sort according to his humanity. [Based on the Formula of Re-union, AD 433].

4. Concerning the four adverbs used to qualify the mystery of the hypostatic union: “without commingling” (or confusion) (*ασυγγχτος asyngchtos*), “without change” (*ατρεπτος atreptos*), “without separation” (*αχοριστος achoristos*), and “without division” (*αδιαιρητος adiairetos*), those among us who speak of two natures in Christ are justified in doing so since they do not thereby deny their inseparable indivisible union; similarly, those among us who speak of one incarnate nature of the Word of God are justified in doing so since they do not thereby deny the continuing dynamic presence in Christ of the divine and the

human, without change, without confusion. We recognize the limit of all theological language and the philosophical terminology of which it makes and has made use. We are unable to net and confine the mystery of God's utter self-giving in the incarnation of the divine Word in an ineffable, inexpressible and mysterious union of divinity and humanity, which we worship and adore.

5. Both families agree in rejecting the teaching which separates or divides the human nature, both soul and body in Christ, from his divine nature, or reduces the union of the natures to the level of conjoining and limiting the union to the union of persons and thereby denying that the person of Jesus Christ is a single person of God the Word. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13.8 NRSV). Both sides also agree in rejecting the teaching which confuses the human nature in Christ with the divine nature so that the former is absorbed in the latter and thus ceases to exist. Consequently, we reject both the Nestorian and the Eutychian heresies.

6. In the Anglican tradition in the 16th century, the Thirty-nine Articles and the theologian Richard Hooker witness to the continuing relevance of these concerns. Article II affirms 'that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided.'¹ In the fifth book of the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, section 5e, Hooker emphasizes the necessary mystery of the person in Christ. "It is not man's ability either to express perfectly or to conceive the manner how (the incarnation) was brought to pass." "In Christ the verity of God and the complete substance of man were with full agreement established throughout the world, until the time of Nestorius." The church, Hooker contends, rightly repudiated any division in the person of Christ. "Christ is a Person both divine and human, howbeit not therefore two persons in one, neither both these in one sense, but a person divine because he is *personally* the Son of God, human, because *he hath* really *the nature* of the children of men." (*Laws* 52.3) "Whereupon it followeth against Nestorius, that no person was born of the Virgin but the Son of God, no person but the Son of God baptized, the Son of God condemned, the Son of God and no other person crucified; which one only point of Christian belief,

¹ THE Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took Man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men.

the infinite worth of the Son of God, is the very ground of all things believed concerning life and salvation by that which Christ either did or suffered as man in our belief.” (*Laws* 52.3). In the following consideration of the teaching of St Cyril, Hooker maintains both the importance of St Cyril’s insistence on the unity of the divinity and humanity in the single person of Christ, while repudiating any Eutychian interpretation of that unity. Hooker quotes with approval Cyril’s letter to Nestorius: “His two natures have knit themselves the one to the other, and are in that nearness as uncapable of confusion as of distraction. Their coherence hath not taken away the difference between them. Flesh is not become God but doth still continue flesh, although it be now the flesh of God.” (*Laws* 53.2). Anglicans continue to hold this tradition as normative today.

7. The term ‘monophysite’, which has been falsely used to describe the Christology of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, is both misleading and offensive as it implies Eutychianism. Anglicans, together with the wider oikumene, use the accurate term ‘miaphysite’ to refer to the Cyrilline teaching of the family of Oriental Orthodox Churches, and furthermore call each of these Churches by their official title of ‘Oriental Orthodox’. The teaching of this family confesses not a single nature but One Incarnate united divine-human nature of the Word of God. To say ‘a single nature’ would be to imply that the human nature was absorbed in his divinity, as was taught by Eutyches.

8. We agree that God the Word became incarnate by uniting His divine uncreated nature, with its natural will and energy, to created human nature, with its natural will and energy. The union of natures is natural, hypostatic, real and perfect. The natures are distinguished in our mind in thought alone. He who wills and acts is always the one hypostasis of the Logos incarnate with one personal will. In the Armenian tradition in the 12th century St Nerses the Graceful (Shenorhali) writes: “We do not think that the divine will opposes the human will and vice versa. We do not think either that the will of the one nature was different at different times, sometimes the will was divine, when He wanted to show His divine power, and sometimes it was human, when He wanted to show human humility.”

9. The perfect union of divinity and of humanity in the incarnate Word is essential to the salvation of the human race. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (John 3.16 NRSV), and “In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself” (2 Cor 5.19). The Son of God emptied himself and became

human, absolutely free from sin, in order to transform our fallen humanity to the image of His holiness. This is the Gospel we are called to live and proclaim.

10. We submit this revised statement to the responsible authorities of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the responsible authorities of the Anglican Communion for their consideration and action.

The Rt Revd Dr Geoffrey Rowell
Anglican Co-Chairman

His Eminence Metropolitan Bishoy
Oriental Orthodox Co-Chairman

Signed in Cairo, October 15, 2014

The Annunciation of Bedford Park

STEPHEN STAVROU

IN RECENT YEARS there have been a great many icons commissioned for Anglican churches. Few of them can be as ambitious or theologically interesting as the pair of Annunciation icons commissioned from Aidan Hart for St Michael & All Angels, Bedford Park, in west London, which were installed in September this year.

Saint Michael & All Angels has a long history of artistic patronage. It is a church uniquely designed in the 'Queen Anne Gothic' of the Bedford Park estate by Norman Shaw, and consecrated in 1879. It is an excellent example of the architecture and design of the Arts and Crafts movement, and at that time a great many of the local residents were semi-professional artists who came to live out romantic ideas in the first garden suburb. Even the Tabard Inn across the road from the church has William de Morgan tiles. The interior of the church has much of the original furniture, fixtures and fittings designed by Shaw himself, with later glass, statuary, wall-painting and ironwork all working together to create a highly colourful and striking interior.

Until now however, the church has not had any icons. An opportunity arose with a large-scale project involving the building of an entirely new organ, to reconsider the decorative scheme relating to two prominent arches either side of the Nave Altar.

From the beginning this was a commission held within a carefully considered theological, liturgical and devotional framework. The brief was to find something that would not detract from the central focus of the Altar, while at the same time contribute to an understanding of what happens there. The idea of a 'separated' Annunciation soon emerged, with the Archangel Gabriel to the left of the Altar, and Our Lady on the right. Such a division is in some senses unusual – particularly in western art where the Annunciation is almost always shown in one image. Despite this, some Renaissance paintings visually split the Annunciation with strong architectural features, separating the heavenly and earthly realms, represented by Gabriel and Mary respectively. The concept of a separated Annunciation is less striking in Orthodoxy where it almost always forms the chief image of the central, or Royal Doors, on the iconostasis. With



the angel on one door and the Mother of God on the other, it is through the opening of these doors that the Body and Blood of Christ are brought forth to the people – through the Annunciation, Christ becomes present to His people then and now.

It is this idea which forms the theological foundation for this commission. Aidan Hart says of these icons: “The icons stand at either side of the altar to show that the Annunciation happens not only historically but also in our daily lives, and especially in the Holy Liturgy. We are involved in this conversation between Mary and the angel. They speak across real liturgical space. God is constantly asking us to conceive Christ in our hearts and lives. And in every Holy

Communion service, at the epiclesis, we beseech the Father “to send down the Holy Spirit upon us, and upon these Thy gifts” to make them Holy. That is, we ask God to make the gifts, and us who receive them, the Body and Blood of Christ on earth.”

The icons frame the Altar, and as anyone familiar with images of the Annunciation will know, it is in the centre of the scene that one normally sees the Holy Spirit descending to bring about the Incarnation. A series of connections are set up between the Annunciation, the Incarnation and the Eucharist

in which Christ manifests His presence to us in the Sacrament. The liturgy, specifically through the epiclesis, re-enacts the Annunciation, and the icons interpret these actions to the worshippers. Indeed, this train of thought need not be limited only to the liturgy, but to anything that takes place in this space whether it be concerts, plays, lectures or any other kind of creative activity. Here the conversation created by the space between the icons is always a place where the Holy Spirit can descend to make Christ present among us.

There was much discussion of exactly what kind of Annunciation image this should be. The careful thought that has gone into the design of these icons is very evident in their appropriateness for their setting. To begin with, Aidan Hart took western Romanesque images from the 12th century Bury



St Edmund's Bible as his inspiration, thereby rooting these icons in a distinctly British idiom. Both Gabriel and Our Lady are depicted in shades of red and green that are used throughout the rest of the church interior. Both figures stand upon the distinctive terracotta tiles that decorate the Sanctuary to remind us that 'the Annunciation is happening now, in this building'. Perhaps most strikingly of all, although Our Lady is framed by the traditional Temple, it is surmounted by the even more distinctive cupola bell-tower and Queen Anne window-frames of the church. At the same time as maintaining the integrity of the icon tradition, the icons combine many local elements that give them a specific identity and meaning in this particular place. These are icons about the



presence of Christ in *this* worshipping community, gathered around *this* Altar in *this* church.

Moreover, the church has many images of Mary. A large wall painting of the Visitation, a statue of Mary with the infant Jesus, a large rood screen showing the Mater Dolorosa, and in the east window Mary is shown crowned and exalted in the glory of heaven. These icons therefore complete the scheme of Mary's life from the Annunciation to the Assumption. The icons are part of the larger hermeneutic of the whole building, so that they do not stand alone, but are part of a definite catechetical decorative scheme.

The church is open every day and I encourage you to go and see these icons. Aidan Hart is one of the best iconographers working in Britain today and this is a significant commission. They are a particularly good example of what can be achieved when art, theology, spirituality and liturgy are brought into dialogue with one another to create something truly beautiful for God.

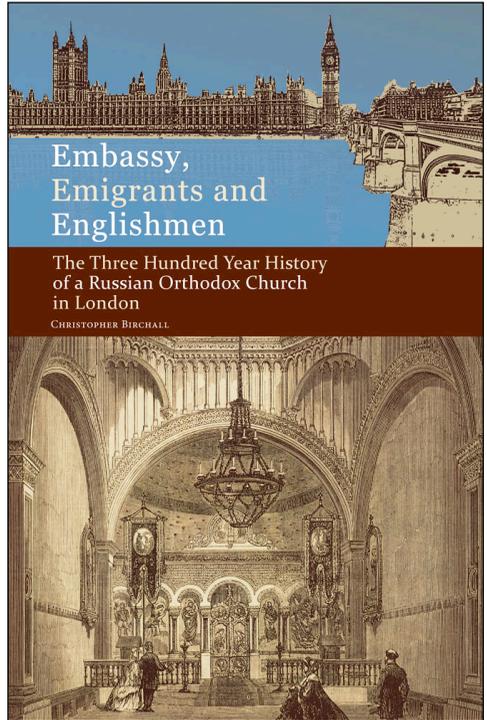
Book Review

WILLIAM TAYLOR

Embassy, Emigrants, and Englishmen: The Three Hundred Year History of a Russian Orthodox Church in London. Christopher Birchall. £29.95. Holy Trinity Publications, 2014. 712 pp; paperback. ISBN: 978-0-88465-336-3.

2016 WILL BE a “big year” for Orthodoxy – globally and locally. Globally, the planned pan-Orthodox Synod should take place, either in Constantinople or Rhodes, and locally, the Russian Orthodox Church will celebrate 300 years of continuous presence in London. Plans are already being made to mark this significant anniversary, and AECA is playing its own role in helping to plan appropriate commemorations. As part of the commemoration comes the publication of this important book, which documents the Russian Orthodox presence in London in 712 pages of detailed description.

Fr Birchall takes us through the origins of the church in 1713/14 with a delegation sent originally from the Church of Alexandria, and this delegation’s important contacts with the Non-Juror Bishops in England, and on through the eighteenth century, noting the particularly important contribution made to the establishment of the Russian church in London by Prince Boris Kurakin, Imperial Russian Ambassador to the Court of St James. The mid nineteenth century saw the establishment of the Russian Embassy Chapel at Welbeck Street – this is particularly well documented and illustrated. This (deconsecrated) Chapel, now part of the Society of Radiolo-



gists, was the venue for the launch of the book in November 2014. “Hidden London” is an apt description of this tiny architectural jewel not accessible to the public in general. A very important, and until now largely undocumented, history in the mid-nineteenth century concerns the role of the Crimean War prisoners, which I found particularly fascinating.

The second half of the nineteenth century saw the establishment of our own AECA and the movement towards Orthodoxy from within the Church of England, some of which was manifested by conversion from Anglicanism to Orthodoxy. Fr Birchall has a huge amount of detail on this phenomenon. The early years of the twentieth century for Russian Orthodoxy were dominated, of course, by the dramatic effect of the Russian Revolution and the subsequent establishment of the Church in Exile. These years are documented in detail, as are the important inter war years. The post Second World War period saw the continued existence of the Church in Exile, and the strained relations between that Church and the official Patriarchate of Moscow, leading to the happier story of the reconciliation with the Patriarchate in 2009.

This book, meticulously documented and beautifully illustrated, represents not only the most important history of Russian Orthodoxy in London to date, but also a most significant contribution to the history of relations between Anglicans and Orthodox in which the AECA has played a key role. In concluding his 300 year history, Fr Birchall writes, “When he arrived in England in 1713, Archimandrite Gennadius could not have known that the church he started would endure for another three hundred years.” Would that all our endeavours in the service of the Kingdom were so richly blessed.

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