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The Anglican and Eastern Churches Association

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Orthodox Patron: The Ecumenical Patriarch

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No responsibility can be accepted by the Committee or by the Editor for the views expressed by the various contributors.

Eastern Churches News Letter

EDITORIAL

The funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales in Westminster Abbey was seen on television by many millions of people throughout the world, and the orthodox contribution, John Tavener's "Song for Athene" made a deep impression. The composer who is an English convert to the Orthodoxy set for the Dead prefaced by Horatio's words from the last scene of Hamlet, "May flights of angels sing thee to thy rest". The choir sang the work as the coffin was borne from the Abbey. I doubt if any part of the Orthodox Rite has been experienced simultaneously by so many people.

On a much lesser scale Orthodox religious art has reached out to Christian believers and non-believers at the Royal Academy exhibition, "The Art of Holy Russia", in which some 40 or so icons from the great museums of Moscow have been displayed.

When our Association was founded in 1864 the art of the Eastern Orthodox Church must have been unknown to all but scholarly clergymen and intrepid travellers. Let us hope that now modern communications have turned the earth into a "global village", Orthodoxy will continue to have an increasing presence in the cultural life of the world.

1991 Constantinople Lecture

I am pleased that we have been able to print the lecture delivered by the Right Reverend Richard Rutt on the 28th November 1991 at the Hellenic College in Knightsbridge. Dr Rutt who was a bishop in Korea from 1966 to 1974, firstly as Assistant Bishop and then Bishop of Taejon became Bishop Suffragan of St Germans in 1974 and Bishop of Leicester in 1979. He retired from his see in 1990 and in 1994 was received into the Roman Catholic Church. He was ordained as a Roman Catholic Priest in 1995.

The Eritrean Orthodox Church

Later in this issue appears a press release about the consecration of the first Eritrean Orthodox Church in Europe. The political separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia, two countries tragically involved in border warfare, has led to the setting up of a separate Eritrean Church. Press reports that Pope Shenouda III "consecrated" Archbishop Philipos as Patriarch of Eritrea in St Marks Coptic Cathedral in Cairo on the 8th May of this year must surely be inaccurate, as if he was already an Archbishop the Patriarch must have previously consecrated bishop probably many years ago, as he is 93. He is reported to have played a vigorous part in Eritrea's drive for independence, which was achieved in 1991.

Angela Harrison

I should like to thank members of the Association who have written to me following the death of my wife. All I would add to the Chairman's obituary is that Angela played a vital part in the production of ECNL and gave me great encouragement. She had a great love for Greece and was saddened that her illness prevented us from making our planned final visit in May of last year.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

New President of A.E.C.A.

We welcome the Bishop of London as our new Anglican President of the Association. Bishop Richard Chartres has long experience with the Orthodox Churches and we look forward to working with him.

Farewell

We wish Bishop Michael Manktelow a happy retirement as he lays down the office of Anglican President. Bishop Michael has been the most active president since the Association was founded and has been untiring in his leading of our pilgrimages and on committee. We welcome him back as Vice-President of the Association.

Visit of His Holiness Lord Lord Karekin I Supreme Catholicos of All Armenians

On Monday 3rd November 1997 His Holiness Lord Lord Karekin I left the headquarters of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Holy Etchmiadzin and travelled to London to return the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury to Armenia some three or four years ago. Before leaving the Catholicosate the Catholicos processed, to the ringing of church bells, to the Cathedral where The Only Begotten One's foot touched the ground, hence the name Etchmiadzin. Here His Holiness prayed at the altar of St. Gregory the Illuminator. He then travelled the short distance to Avartots airport where he gave the following message before departing on the flight to Amsterdam:-

"My visit has a two-fold nature and purpose, first an ecumenical visit to His Grace Dr. Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury ... as is well known, among the Western Churches, the Anglican Church, has been closest to the Armenian Church in ecumenical relations of true Christian fellowship. I believe my visit will promote such true relationship ..."

On his arrival in London the Supreme Catholicos was greeted by Canon Richard Marsh, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Secretary for Ecumenical affairs, the Most Reverend Archbishop Yeghise Gizirian, Prelate of the Armenian Diocese in Great Britain, Mrs Sarkissian Charge d' Affaires at the Armenian Embassy in London and Mr. Vahe Manoukian, a benefactor of Holy Etchmiadzin.

His Holiness travelled to Lambeth Palace, where he was greeted by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Mrs Eileen Carey. After luncheon at Lambeth the Catholicos accompanied by the Archbishop of Canterbury was received in audience by Her Majesty the Queen. This was an historic meeting as it is the first time that the Supreme

Catholicos of All Armenians has met the Sovereign and the Supreme Governor of the Church of England. This served to emphasize the great importance attached to this visit.

Fr. Salter and Fr. Warner were received by His Holiness following a service at St. Sarkis's Armenian Church in London and were presented with signed photographs of the Supreme Catholicos.

Before His Holiness's departure a service was held at St. Sarkis's Church where joint prayers were held. The Catholicos and the Primate of All England signed a joint communique in which they agreed to commit themselves to continuing the work for unity in Christ, our Resurrection and our Life.

The Supreme Catholicos awarded the Archbishop of Canterbury the Holy Etchmiadzin decoration of St. Gregory the Illuminator.

Ukrainians' Visit

A group of Ukrainian children and teenagers from the Lviv district visited London and Brighton during the last summer. The group was largely Greek Catholic, but there were one or two Roman Catholics and Ukrainian Orthodox of the various jurisdictions. They came to St. Silas's, Pentonville, for Mass on the feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God. It was impressive to hear these youngsters singing their version of the Ave Maria in English and to have the pleasure of hearing one ten year old boy reciting in perfect English the Nicene Creed during the service.

At the time of writing I have staying with me Deacon Andrei Chita of the household of His Grace Archbishop Jan of the Greek Catholic Church in Poland.

Bulgarian Orthodox Church

His Majesty King Simeon II of the Bulgarians has kindly sent me a video film of His Majesty's return to Bulgaria. It is entitled "A King returns to His People".

Dr. Methodie Kusseff has been tireless in his work to raise money to keep the Bulgarian Sunday School running at the chapel in the grounds of the Bulgarian Embassy in Queens Gate. We are happy to report that the Association made a grant towards this invaluable work, but donations would be gratefully received to keep the school on the road for another two years.

The Romanian Orthodox Church

Anglican military chaplains may be interested to know that a Romanian Orthodox chaplain recently accompanied two colonels of the Romanian army on a visit to the United Kingdom. Some armies in the once Soviet bloc have now regular chaplains serving with their units.

Ecumenical Patriarchate

Sadly the Ecumenical Patriarchate has been the target of a bomb attack, which injured Deacon Nectarios Nikolou. The Chairman sent a message of sympathy to His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomeos I on behalf of the Association, and has received a reply from the Ecumenical Patriarch thanking the Association for its concern.

Constantinople Lecture

Our new president, Bishop Richard Chartres of London, took the chair for the Constantinople Lecture, which was given at the Serbian Orthodox Institute. Father Ephrem's lecture is soon to be published. A superb reception was laid on for our members by the Serb community and later the officers of the Association and our guests sat down to a dinner in the Serbian restaurant. The guests included Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira, Archbishop Joannes of the Ethiopian Church and Mother Martia of Gradac Convent, who is in England at the moment nursing her mother.

Serbian Cathedral of St. Savva

The lovely Serbian Cathedral was originally an Anglican church and dedicated to St. Columba. On St. Columba's Day last autumn a Moleben was served in honour of the saint in the cathedral. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Alexander of Yugoslavia and the Crown Princess hosted the luncheon which was attended by the Mayor of Kensington, Bishop Michael Manktelow, Fr. Salter, Fr. Warner and Fr. Beal of the Association's committee.

Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia

The foundation stone of the new Uspensky Sobor or Cathedral of the Dormition of the Mother of God was laid by Archbishop Mark of Western Europe before Christmas. The ceremony took place in an enormous marquee on the site in Gunnersbury. Archpriest Milun Kostic, Dean of the Serbian Cathedral in London, was one of the concelebrating clergy. Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia was present. Fr. Salter, Fr. Beal and Mr David Powell represented the Association. This, it is believed, is the first purpose-built Eastern Church in London since the consecration of St. Sarkis's Armenian Church and the Greek Cathedral of Hagia Sophia in Moscow Road.

Mount Athos

On 21 January Maria Andipa kindly hosted the reception for The Friends of Mount Athos at her icon gallery in Chelsea. The gallery contains a myrrh-streaming icon of Saint Nicholas.

Christopher Morris Lecture

Fr. Salter was invited to give the annual Christopher Morris lecture at the St. Vincent Hall near Westminster Roman Catholic Cathedral in the Autumn. The subject was "The Eastern Catholic Churches – A help or an obstacle to Christian Unity?"

The Melkites

Father White of the Melkite Church addressed a group of Anglican clergy – The Friends in Council – at St. Silas's Vicarage, Pentonville, on the Melkite Church and its work for Christian unity particularly within the Patriarchate of Antioch.

Ethiopian Orthodox Church

For the first time in London the Timkat or Epiphany ceremonies were celebrated in Islington by the Ethiopian Archbishop and his flock.

Girma, the Ethiopian student at the Royal Academy of Music, has now completed his studies and has returned to Addis Ababa after practising

five days a week in St. Dunstan-in-the-West. The Association were very happy to give a grant towards this very talented pianist. He is organist at the Anglican church of St. Matthew in Addis Ababa.

His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury visited Ethiopia's Orthodox Church in January. This returned the visit to London of His Holiness Paulos the Abuna Salama or Father of Peace, the Patriarch of Ethiopia.

The Orthodox Church of Georgia

Georgia is the oldest Established Orthodox Church and since the collapse of Communism it has rapidly picked up its role in the state. One of the great events of the Georgian Church is the annual procession across the country following the route believed to have been taken by St. Nina Equal to the Apostles in the 4th century. This event takes place every summer and clergy, religious and lay folk make the pilgrimage in large numbers. Last summer the procession was led by the young nuns of the Samtavro Convent in Mtsketa, where some years ago Fr. Salter, Fr. Warner, Fr. Welling and Jonathan Bolton-Dignam were royally entertained by the abbess and prioress. Traditionally the Catholikos-Patriarch Ilia II celebrates each year an open-air liturgy on the shore of Lake Parvana, which site marks the beginning of St. Nina's travels across Georgia.

The Syrian Orthodox Church

News has reached us via Romania and the Dutch publication "Trouw" that three Syrian Orthodox monasteries lying in south-eastern Turkey have had restrictive measures imposed upon them in that they have been forced by the Turkish authorities to close their schools and to stop the teaching of the Syrian language and the admission of new monks. The Turkish government is seeking entry to the E.E.C., which is composed of nominally Christian States. It seems a curious preparation for partnership in the Common Market to begin a further persecution of our fellow Christians. The excuse offered by the Turkish authorities is that the Syrian monks had offered support to the Kurdish PKK rebels.

A.T.J. Salter

OBITUARIES

Pamela Warner

We are saddened to record the death of Father Philip Warner's mother. Pamela was taken seriously ill while Fr. Warner was touring the Yemen, but fortunately he managed to be contacted and returned home before his mother died. We offer him our prayers and sympathy in his and his brothers' sad loss.

Pamela was well known on our pilgrimages accompanying us on the pilgrimage to Russia and the Ukraine in 1988, when her sense of humour and fun kept us going when we found ourselves waiting for hours at Moscow station for the St. Petersburg express to leave, and again on St. Petersburg airport when we were similarly delayed waiting for the Kiev flight. Pamela buoyed us up with her sense of the ridiculous. The sleeping arrangements on the night sleeper sent her

into paroxysms of giggling. In the Hermitage and similar splendid buildings she gave us some insights into the architecture of those places, for Pamela was by profession a very successful architect. I used to run into her at the Society of Genealogists as she was a keen genealogist and pointed me in the direction of discovering the marriage of a great-great grandfather. She suggested the Mormons' Records and she was right.

Angela Harrison

Our editor, Neil Harrison, has also been bereaved. Last year he lost his wife, Angela. Angela had been suffering for some time so that death, when it eventually came, came as a friend. Angela was not fond of flying, but she came on some of our home pilgrimages. We will remember Neil in our prayers.

Father Pufulete's Mother

Father Sylviu-Petre Pufulete, our Romanian member on the committee of the Association, has suffered the loss of his mother in Romania. We offer Fr. Petre and his family our sympathy at this sad time.

Archbishop Joannes

Archbishop Joannes was found dead in his new home. I first met him in 1975 at the laying up of the banner of the Emperor Haile Selassie in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. Father Joannes, as he then was, had only recently arrived in London and was soon to become a well known figure on the ecumenical scene. He was a quiet and retiring, rather shy man. Gifted linguistically he had studied at the Russian Orthodox seminary at the Alexander Nevsky monastery in St. Petersburg. He had to face the task of ministering to a great number of young Ethiopian students who were stranded here when the Imperial Government collapsed. He also had to cope with the Rastafarian phenomenon and it was due to his patient influence that many members of that sect became full members of the Ethiopian Church.

Peter Storrs

The name of Storrs has long been associated with the Christian communities in the Middle East and the death of Peter Storrs removes another member of that family which was actively involved in the work of the Nikaeen Club. Bishop John Satterthwaite preached a brilliant panegyric at Peter's Memorial Service in St. Peter's, Eaton Square; a church long associated with the Storrs family. I was able to represent the Association at the service of thanksgiving for Peter's life.

A.T.J. Salter

PRESIDENTIAL MUSINGS

Having been asked to speak this afternoon at the completion of my eighteen years in office as Anglican President of the Association it seems appropriate to indulge in some reflections about that time.

The memory of my being elected at the AGM held at St. Sava's Church in October 1979 is particularly vivid and perhaps accounts for my affection for the Serbs! The then Bishop of St. Albans, Robert

Runcie, had preached at the Liturgy in the morning and this was followed by a splendid lunch in his honour as it was known that he was to be enthroned as Archbishop of Canterbury a few months later. This meant that he would be elevated from being President of the Association to becoming its Patron, along with the Ecumenical Patriarch. The atmosphere was euphoric, but I could not understand why I was being cheered when I left the lunch to attend the AGM, which had already started because the majority of members had finished their sandwiches long before. It was then explained to me that I had been elected to the presidency!

My own membership of the Association began when I was Vicar of St. Wilfrid's, Harrogate, a splendid Temple Moore church which Dom Cuthbert Fearon, then Assistant General Secretary of the Association, used to attend during his summer break from Nashdom. Prompted by him we invited the Orthodox congregation from Leeds to come and sing Orthodox Vespers in St. Wilfrid's, and this aroused a lot of interest. So it was no great surprise that soon after I became Bishop of Basingstoke I should be invited to preach at the Greek Cathedral of Hagia Sophia in October 1977 on the occasion of the Association's AGM. Shortly beforehand "The Myth of God Incarnate" had been published by a number of Anglican theologians, one of whom actually used the phrase, "an updated Christianity without the Incarnation". Leaning heavily on the writings of Basil the Great (whose work had been the special interest of Canon Emmanuel Amand de Mendieta, my predecessor in the house I was then living in at Winchester) and Bishop Michael Ramsey (who had recently written on the Holy Spirit), I urged that we all be led not by the *Zeitgeist* but by the Holy Spirit of God "into all the truth."

The role of the Association, founded by Tractarians in 1864, could not, then, be more clear or made less urgent. "To promote mutual understanding of, and closer relations between, Orthodox, Oriental and Anglican Churches". I hope that one day its fascinating history will be written up. Friendship has been maintained by individuals on both sides, as well as dialogue, which became more official during the archiepiscopate of Archbishop Michael Ramsey – still a revered figure among the Orthodox, as well as Anglicans who thank God upon every remembrance of him. Sadly, though, the Agreed Statements of Moscow (1976) and Dublin (1984) have never been given the high profile accorded to the ARCIC Agreed Statements on the Eucharist, Ministry and Authority (1971–81). But we must be grateful that the Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Discussion continues under the inspiring leadership of Metropolitan John Zizioulas, who has mapped out a programme of basic theology (God as Trinity, Christology, the Holy Spirit and Ecclesiology) for discussion over a ten-year period. No papering over the cracks here, for as Metropolitan John said in his memorable address to the Lambeth Conference of 1988, "If we make theology secondary or even irrelevant in the quest for Christian unity, the cost can be too great for the Church of Christ to pay."

The Association has, I believe, made some contribution in this regard through the Constantinople Lectures, which were the brainchild of Father Harold Embleton, our former Chairman. Inaugurated in 1981 to commemorate the Second Ecumenical Council and the

promulgation of the Ecumenical Creed, distinguished members of both Orthodox and Anglican Churches would be invited "to help us realise our unity in Christ through our common profession of the Ecumenical Creed." The first lecture was given at Lambeth Palace by Archbishop Michael Ramsey, who vividly portrayed the fourth century history and controversies which led to Constantinople 381, insisting that "It matters greatly that the Fathers took seriously issues about truth which are still with us." At the same time he deplored the two ways in which the Church in the West has deviated from the original text of the Creed - in the all-too familiar addition of the *filioque* clause, and in the "strangely overlooked" mistranslation of the little preposition *ek*. "The creed declares that the Son became incarnate *from* the Holy Spirit and *from* the Virgin Mary: the same preposition, *ek*, is used. This balance of language makes it clear that while all is of God and all is of grace, the Incarnation happened from the act of the Holy Spirit and from the act of Mary in her response and obedience." He goes on to say that "The West has by verbal clumsiness obscured this balance" and "recent Anglican revisions have gone further in dislocating the balance of language" by introducing the words "by the power of" the Holy Spirit which are lacking in the Greek.

It is to be hoped that this and subsequent lectures by Archbishop Gregorios, Archbishop Anthony Bloom and Bishop Kallistos Ware from the Orthodox, and Bishops Graham Leonard, Richard Hanson, Geoffrey Rowell and Rowan Williams from the Anglicans, will be published together in one volume before long. The supreme accolade to the project was given when His All-Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomaios delivered the 1995 Lecture in Westminster Abbey.

The other great contribution of the Association to promoting mutual understanding and friendship between Anglicans and Orthodox in the last few years has been in organising pilgrimages, alternately to Orthodox countries and domestically to Celtic sites and shrines like Iona, St. David's, Cornwall and the North-East. Then in 'even-numbered' years we have been to Romania in 1982 and 1994 (particular memories of the 'painted churches' of Bukovina and the strength of religious life despite Ceausescu's repressive regime); to monasteries of Serbia in 1984 (under the energetic leadership of Mother Maria, sadly unable now to continue her work in refounding the monastery of Gradac); to Bulgaria; to Russia and the Ukraine in the millenary year of 1988; to Crete and to Cyprus; then the climax in going to the Phanar in 1995 and being so graciously and generously received by His All-Holiness, somewhat beleaguered in that dwindling Greek community yet personifying all that is best and enduring in Orthodoxy and so warm and steadfast in his friendship with Anglicans, and tireless in his work to promote Christian unity. May God bless him and us all as we together work for that.

Michael Manktelow

WALKING IN MARY'S GARDEN - A PILGRIMAGE TO MOUNT ATHOS.

On an October morning my companion and I arrived at Daphne on the boat from Ouranopolis in the company of about one hundred other

pilgrims, mainly Greeks. We had come to Athos as Anglican priests, one stipendiary, the other retired, with a particular devotion to and interest in the Jesus Prayer. We were hoping to sit at the feet of holy men in this bastion of Orthodox spirituality, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary to the exclusion of all other women, and to learn much from them about the things of God. We were not to be disappointed.

During the seven days which followed we visited the monasteries of Iviron, Stavronikita, Pantokrator, Vatopedi, and Simonos Petra. At each monastery we were received as angels by the guest master or his assistant, slept in a cell of two or three comfortable beds, and enjoyed the simple but plentiful food which was offered at meal times. The regular diet of beans in olive oil kept us going during our stay. Despite dire warnings to the contrary, at no time did we go hungry on the Holy Mountain.

We also dined well on the spiritual fare which was on offer. Each day we arose at around 5 am and, as non-Orthodox, took up our positions in either the outer or inner narthex of the monastery's *katholikon* for the Divine Liturgy, whose duration averaged between one-and-a-quarter and one-and-a-half hours. In the late afternoon we attended Vespers and on occasion Compline at sunset.

Accustoming ourselves to the various privations of Athonite life was accomplished with varying degrees of difficulty. The complete absence of any female presence was not an enjoyable experience. The general lack of modern flush toilets posed something of a challenge for our lavatorial routine. Similarly, the paucity of warm water and electric light were eventually met with stoic acceptance.

The sheer physical process of getting from monastery to monastery occupied our minds for a good part of the time. With a bad blister on his left foot my companion was unable to walk quite as far as we had been hoping and so the conventional option of Shank's Pony was not always available to us. Thus we managed the shorter walks with some ease but longer distances required other modes of transport, including a very expensive "taxi", the back of a monastery truck, a monastery landrover, a bus and a boat.

As well as their substantial discussions with fathers on the specific subject of the Jesus Prayer, and some very useful talks with other monks, we were also greatly enriched by the many conversations we were privileged to have with pilgrims of various nationalities, each with a most interesting story to tell, and each eager to hear from us about the current stage of Anglican life. We were especially impressed by the significant number of young monks at each monastery we visited, a sure sign of spiritual resurgence in contemporary Orthodoxy.

Before arriving in Athos we had spent a most absorbing afternoon in Thessaloniki at an exhibition of Byzantine treasures at which we saw hundreds of icons, books, manuscripts, vestments, etc on loan from the monasteries. We left Athos in the sure knowledge that the true Athonite treasures had remained all the time on the Holy Mountain, in the flesh and blood of men who had been crucified with Christ, and whose whole existence was geared towards seeking a closer communion with God the Holy Trinity.

Canon Jim Wellington

CONSTANTINOPLE AND INTER-FAITH DIALOGUE RICHARD RUTT

The 150 fathers of Constantinople could not have conceived the possibility of inter-faith dialogue as we know it. For them Hinduism and Buddhism lived in another world; Islam did not yet exist. They could not foresee how soon their home territory would be taken over by another faith, Constantinople would cease to be a Christian city, and most of their successors have to live under Muslim rule; how, in our century most of the cities of western Christendom would become home to people of other faiths, and interfaith dialogue part of pastoral work.

The nature of inter-faith dialogue is still widely misunderstood. It differs from Comparative Religion, because one can study religions comparatively without being committed to any faith at all. Modern 'Religious Studies' show us how this is done.

Apologetics, too, differ from dialogue. They presuppose some degree of dialogue, but have a different purpose: to demonstrate the rational acceptability of the faith. For this purpose, they sometimes allow negative criticism of other faiths; but inter-faith dialogue, though it permits neutral questioning, eschews negative criticism. Assuming the commitment to faith of its participants, it aims to learn rather than to persuade.

Christians are not the only believers who are uneasy about inter-faith dialogue because it is not deliberately directed towards evangelism. Muslims have made eloquent pleas that inter-faith dialogue is useless if it does not lead to conversion. There is an apparent paradox: dialogue cannot survive with immediate evangelistic aims, yet evangelism without dialogue is impossible. Those taking part may carry deep hopes of conversion, but the manner of procedure must be self-denying tolerance.

Dialogue must also be distinguished from symbiosis, that living together of which the Orthodox Eastern Churches have so much experience in Muslim countries. There can be symbiosis without dialogue, as there can be symbiosis without evangelisation.

Dialogue is necessary for the creation of that peace that turns living side by side into working together, mutual suspicion into mutual respect and affection. Its primary aim is for the believer to understand, even to empathize with, believers of other faiths. It implies a readiness to be completely open and sincere about one's own religion. The outcome is likely to be joint action in regard to the non-believing world, and improvement in communal relations, while enhancement of one's own faith and spirituality is also a reasonable expectation.

Far from being the surrender of faithfulness that some fear, this is a work of profound charity, esteeming the freedom of others, springing from the movement of the Spirit and the love of Christ. Properly conducted, it increases self-knowledge, and therefore stimulates the growth of humility.

And it can take place without Christian participation. It is neither a Christian invention nor a Christian cultural property.

My own pastoral experience has been in predominantly Buddhist Korea and largely Hindu Leicester. Because I spent longer in Korea and my duties there gave me better opportunities for personally taking part in inter-faith dialogue than I had in Leicester, I must refer more to Buddhism than to Hinduism or Islam. I am, however, also very aware that Buddhism shows signs of making a stronger appeal to our generation of the English than any other great non-Christian religion.

But first the story of Constantinople 381 must be recalled, trying, in an integrated and non-defensive view, to gauge how it may be seen by members of other faiths. Otherwise they cannot be expected to understand our gratefulness for the theologizing of the fourth century.

2

In 325 the Council of Nicaea had ruled Arianism out of order, but during the ensuing half century refinements and revisions of Arianism flourished in ever-shifting forms among the growing jealousies between the major sees. At the same time the Church was learning what it meant to have the emperor take an interest in her affairs. He could do damage without persecuting. Julian the Apostate fomented dissension within the Church in the conviction that the Church could thus be destroyed; Valens, from 364 onwards, trying to achieve a comprehensive church, favoured Arians, and thus threatened the Catholics.

Even the Council of Nicea had been as much an imperial as an ecclesiastical event, held near Constantine's court at Nicomedia. Fifty years later, Byzantium, strategically set on the west bank of the Bosphorus, had become the capital, called Constantinople and rapidly developing, but still new. Ecclesiastically it was no more than a suffraganate of Heraclea – an arrangement that now made no sense. The two leading sees of the Eastern Empire, Alexandria and Antioch-in-Syria, were both anxious about the threat the growing capital posed to their preeminence.

The see of Rome retained the highest honour of all, but took little interest in speculative theology. Its bishops had only passing concern for sniping between Antioch and Alexandria.

When Valens died in 378, after a twenty-year reign, the Church was bound to face change. Theodosius from Spain, a vigorous 33-year-old, became Emperor of the East. On the way to Constantinople he was briefed by the Church in Rome. Then he went on to his military headquarters at Thessalonica, where he was delayed by illness and met the anti-Arian local bishop, Acholius. It was clear that, like most westerners, Theodosius would adhere to Nicene orthodoxy. He had a military background, and could be expected to rule firmly.

The ecclesiastical situation in his new capital was messy. Demophilus, who had been bishop for ten years, was an Arianizer; but there was another bishop living in town, running a private church for the theological opposition. This intruder was Gregory Nazianzen. He had never visited the backwater town of which he was bishop, appointed on the old-boy network of his friend Basil, and had come to Constantinople to gather a following for Nicene orthodoxy.

When Theodosius arrived in the city on 24 November 380, he promptly gave Bishop Demophilus an ultimatum: accept orthodoxy or resign. Demophilus left the city next day; whereupon Theodosius appointed Gregory to the see.

Among those who attended Gregory's house-church was a plausible rogue from Alexandria called Maximus, who claimed to be a Cynic philosopher as well as an orthodox Christian. Gregory had fallen for this curious character and even praised him in sermons. Maximus now made it clear that he intended to become Bishop of Constantinople himself. He argued that according to the canons, Gregory could not be translated from one see to another, and therefore the see of Constantinople was technically vacant. He even won the backing of Peter, the aged Bishop of Alexandria, who was anxious to restrain the bishopric of Constantinople lest it usurp Alexandria's place of honour. Under Peter's mandate, some bishops arrived in Constantinople and arranged the clandestine consecration of Maximus. The ceremony was stopped by the magistrates, but Gregory was badly shaken.

The great bishopric of Antioch was no happier than Constantinople. For eighteen years there had been two conflicting bishops there too. The regularly appointed bishop was Meletios, but in the eyes of some he was too conciliatory with Arianizers. Bishop Lucifer of Cagliari, taking advantage of Julian the Apostate's policy of encouraging Christians to quarrel, had consecrated one Paulinus to replace Meletios. Meletios had generously accepted that Paulinus should run a church in the city; and it was locally accepted that whichever of the two lived longer should be recognised as sole bishop.

The new Emperor had come to the East intending to support Paulinus; but when he was nearer the situation, he realized that Meletios was more likely to foster unity. He was determined to have a united Church throughout his empire, and he wanted it to hold to Nicene orthodoxy. In January 381 he decreed that all must adhere to the doctrinal standards of Rome and Alexandria. Then, to settle ecclesiastical and theological problems together, he summoned a general council of bishops.

Some say the invitations were sent late or were delayed; some say that the Emperor arranged that theologically acceptable bishops should form the majority. Fewer than 200 arrived in May, none of them from the west or from Egypt. The Bishop of Rome stayed away. He was in his mid-seventies, and much taken up with the affairs of his city.

Meletios of Antioch presided. The first business was to confirm Gregory's appointment to Constantinople. When this had been done, Gregory preached a sermon affirming the divinity of the Holy Spirit, which was not yet an accepted dogma. This upset thirty-six bishops, who promptly left. Only some 150 remained.

Then Meletios, who was an old man, suddenly died. Gregory became president of the Council, just as Timothy of Alexandria (who had very recently succeeded old Bishop Peter) and Acholius of Thessalonica arrived to represent the Roman point of view. They favoured Paulinus to succeed Meletios at Antioch, and Gregory was happy to agree; but the majority was opposed. The Syrian bishops chose a priest called Flavian.

Timothy and Acholius objected to Flavian because he had already been nominated for another see; thus his appointment to Antioch contravened the canon Maximus had quoted against Gregory's appointment to Constantinople. The bishops of the Council were outraged; but it was all too much for Gregory. He resigned and left.

An elderly government official called Nektarios, who had not even been baptized, was chosen by serendipity to succeed him as bishop of the capital. The Council, already delayed by Meletios's obsequies and Gregory's departure, paused for the installation of Nektarios, who took over the presidency of the Council. No minutes have survived. We know nothing of how the meetings were conducted, save that the much interrupted Council closed on 9 July and Theodosius confirmed its decrees on the 30th.

The chief theological outcome was the final official defeat of Arianism; and, because Constantinople was the new Rome, the Bishop of Constantinople was in future to be next in seniority to the Bishop of Rome.

By the time of the Council of Chalcedon, seventy years later, the creed we now call Niceo-Constantinopolitan was also credited to the Council of 381. That creed, especially because of its assertion of the divinity of the Holy Spirit, is what these Constantinople Lectures chiefly commemorate; but there is no clear evidence of the precise connection between the Council and the creed. The finest part of the Council's legacy is an historical puzzle.

In considering the implications of this whole story for inter-faith dialogue today, let us first note that the doctrinal definitions of the first four general councils are fundamental to this dialogue. Popular misunderstandings of Christian belief, particularly about the incarnation and the divinity of Christ, well illustrate why those definitions were necessary. Although we shall meet people of other faiths who are aware of orthodox Christian dogmas, we are likely to meet more who are not. In clarifying what the Churches believe about Christ, no better preparation will be found than a grounding in the work of the first four councils.

But how will believers in other faiths react to a council that showed the Church replete with bitterness and jealousy, strongly influenced by secular power while defining theological truth, yet responsible for a credal statement of crucial importance?

3

Let us turn briefly to the conciliar process.

Do Christians really believe they can arrive at theological truth by majority vote of an assembly? Anglicans, Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholics all profess great respect for the conciliar principle, though they differ as to what constitutes an ecumenical council and the degree of certainty they attribute to conciliar pronouncements.

Such a council has hitherto always consisted of bishops, men recognized as having a divine commission and with a certain

representative character, in that each bishop in some sense represents his see; and they make theological definitions. Other faiths may understand similar gatherings for making decisions about practice: Buddhists have not infrequently held councils for such purposes. Making theological definitions is another matter.

This issue is of course very much alive in the Church of England, where we now have a synod that is prepared to make theological definitions by majority vote of representatives whose sole commission lies in election by popular vote. There is great unease about this in some quarters; though it should not be assumed that no theological support can possibly be found for such a process. All decisions by legislative assemblies, even sovereign secular ones, have ultimately to be tested for acceptability by the larger constituency to which they apply; and there is no assuredly peaceful way of making theological decisions. In dialogue, these points can be uncomfortable.

* * *

The question of secular power over ecclesiastical assemblies is closely allied to the conciliar principle. The Council of Constantinople, like many other Christian synods, shows the Church acting for its own proper religious purposes under the direction of external power. Not only is the council summoned by the Emperor to meet under his auspices, but it is designed to arrive at conclusions he wants. What guarantee is there in this situation that the truth will be protected and maintained?

This question too is still alive for us in England. Whatever *modus vivendi* the Church of England may have arrived at with the Crown and Parliament, the very fact that we need a *modus vivendi* shows that the State claims some power in theological issues. It is hard to think of a similar example in another faith. Secular rulers have of course taken interest in religions other than Christianity, but rarely in the non-Christian analogues of Christian theology; and other faiths have not seen the Church and State relationship in the same terms as Christians.

In theological terms Buddhist experience must always differ from Christian experience, because, although it has the *sangha*, the monastic community, Buddhism has no precise analogue of the Christian Church. Gautama himself did not aspire to political authority, nor especially pledge the *sangha* to accept it; but hoped that the king's ministers would take refuge in the *dharma*, much as Christians wish to be governed by godly men.

Islam, too, has nothing that quite corresponds to the Church, either theologically or structurally, and is able to regard the government ideally as part of Islam, submissive, like all Muslims, to God.

Questions of Church and State are indeed peculiarly Christian questions, yet, though Christianity appears to need a theology of politics more than most other religions (as is shown by the long history of the study of Church and State), there is no dogma that defines what are the things that belong to Caesar. While our attitudes are much tempered by the early Christian belief that the powers that be are ordained of God, all churches revere martyrs who rebelled

against the state. The story of St Thomas Becket, martyr for the Church's rights, revered for nearly four centuries (from 1173), then officially forgotten by the Church of England at the behest of the king (about 1536), and after a further four and a half centuries officially honoured again (in 1980), is embarrassing. The scriptures do not settle these questions for us, and all our present solutions are demonstrably temporary. Christianity lacks a consistent theology of the State.

We may want to explain this to other faiths as a sign that the kingdom of God is in one sense still to come. Or if we are to talk of the Church as the Body of Christ properly occupying positions of powerlessness, then we must know how to put that point to others. We certainly cannot claim that on this subject Christendom has an internally consistent position.

Thus, in relation to both theological definitions and secular power, Constantinople presents teasing problems. Its decisions may have been right; but they were made under imperial command by a small and partisan minority – perhaps less than a quarter of those entitled to be present. Neither the legislative nor the political process could have given the Constantinopolitan creed its enduring authority.

We can explain this for ourselves; but how will our explanations sound to others?

4

Now to Constantinople's creed.

In secular Britain the word 'creed', when it does not merely suggest a pointless division of communities for which no future can be seen other than its disappearance, connotes a religious system exclusive of other religious systems; which strikes the non-religious person of our day as a very bad thing. Most faiths appear not to have creeds, which makes Christianity look spitefully exclusive. But the creeds are not what they are thought to be.

Christian creeds were born of necessity, for use at the admission of new Christians. Creeds and adherence to them do not make Christians, nor even does belief that what the creeds say is true. Christians are made solely by a relationship to a person: Jesus Christ. The ceremony that marks admission to the Church is one of sharing in the experience of Christ dying and rising again: baptism. The essential ritual practice of our faith is communion with him in the eucharist. The basis of our moral theology is that we see him in others.

Baptismal ceremonies require a creed, because to be baptized into Christ you must know him and know who he is. The neophyte reciting the creed at baptism is effectively answering the question 'Who is this Christ with whom you seek union?' Despite the fact that Carl Gustaf Jung¹ thought belief meant taking someone else's word for something about which one knows nothing oneself, faith in Christ is born and nourished in experience of him, including the believer's response to God's revelation of himself.

No Christian believes alone, or relates to Christ alone. Christ came to the people of God, to renew God's people, to found a Church, to create a new world. He prayed for his disciples to be one for ever; and that

unity with the Word of God, both eschatological and necessarily expressed in the oneness of the Church on earth, is a distinctive characteristic of the Christian religion.

Dogma comes from and belongs to that oneness. As Ronald Knox repeatedly explained, 'dogma' is derived from a Greek word meaning 'to be acceptable': 'dogmas are the tenets on which a school or party is agreed';² or as John Burnaby put it, 'a resolution passed by a properly constituted body', 'neither more nor less than a ruling of the Church on a disputed point'.³ Dogma is of its nature shared. The elaboration of the creeds was necessary to unite the Church against explanations of Christ and his incarnation that would have betrayed the fundamental message of the Gospel. The creeds are essentially Christological statements. Even the first and third articles, speaking of the Father and the Holy Spirit, are buttresses of the Christological centre. We need to know the Trinity in order to know who Christ is, and we know the Trinity through knowing Christ. In the creeds we declare who he is to whom we belong.

Thus the recitation of the creed finds a place in daily and weekly worship, as an act of devotion, uniting all those who recite it. It is recited at points in the eucharist where the presence of Christ is most dramatically felt, through the words of the gospel or in the sacramental action. Far from being merely a proclamation of doctrinal correctness, it is an act of love and praise. In Professor Frances Young's lapidary phrase: 'creeds have their genesis in doxology'.⁴

(I recall being told by Bishop Edward Wynn of Ely, forty years ago, of the difficulties of a distinguished logical positivist at Cambridge, who wished to be baptized, but held that the wording of a credal formula was without meaning. The bishop permitted *Te Deum* to be used in the rite instead of the Apostles' Creed. Everyone was satisfied: creed had become doxology again.)

The fixing of the creed at Nicaea and Constantinople may have had the incidental effect of excluding Arians, Semi-Arians and others, but the primary purpose of a creed is to hold the Church together. It has a unitive effect, and may be carefully framed with that intent. This is aptly illustrated by the article on the Holy Spirit in the Constantinopolitan creed, which was drafted so as not to rule out the Macedonians and Apollinarians. The creeds also came to the rescue in the General Synod of the Church of England in February 1990, when there was a potentially divisive debate on the dogmas of the resurrection and the incarnation. The synod held that the statements in the creeds were sufficient and definitive. Churchmen are perhaps too slow to recognize how powerful the unitive function of creeds can be.

We should make this point to other faiths. Though they may claim no creeds of their own, they often have brief formulas that express the heart of the religion, and exert a similar unifying influence among believers. These formulas may also have a value in worship, and in initiation rites, not dissimilar to what I have claimed for our creeds. Hindus, for example, while they have no formal creeds, possess in the *Bhagavad Gita* many well-loved passages of doctrinal statement that have the doxological quality that marks the Nicene symbol – and often in startlingly similar phrases.

That Jains have no credal formula is easy to understand, for they have no tractate *de Deo*; and they have no initiation ceremony. Yet they have a short formula that functions very nearly as a creed, the *Pañca namaskārya mahāmantra*. Its fivefold salutation of *arihant*, *siddha*, *ācārya*, *upādhyāya* and *sādhu* has a doxological structure and implies belief, though it makes no definitions. Furthermore it is recited whenever Jains gather together and so becomes a sign of their communal identity. (In fact the more one studies the mahamantra, the more interesting it becomes, even structurally, as a formula with a credal function.)

Buddhists have no creed, but they make much use, even daily use, of the *trisarana*, the 'three refuges', often translated as 'I take refuge in the Buddha; I take refuge in the Dharma; I take refuge in the Sangha.' The personal relationship here expressed to the Buddha, to the eternal law and to the monastic community, is very close to what the Christian means by *credo*, 'I trust'. The binding force of the *trisarana* for the Buddhist community as a whole is immediately obvious, if only because of the mention of the monastic community, though there is much more to it than that.

Sikhs have a short formula of belief that is recited in their initiation rite. This is the Mool Mantra. Significantly, its spirit is doxological rather than doctrinal.

There is one God, whose name is truth eternal,
Creator of all things, the all-pervading spirit.
Fearless and without hatred, timeless and formless,
beyond birth and death, he is self-enlightened.
He is known by the Guru's grace.

Islamic formulas were developed after the Christian creeds were forged. The *kalima* or *shahada*: 'There is no god but God and Muhammad is his messenger,' is an essential element in daily prayers for all the faithful, defining and binding the Muslim community. It is also pronounced by new converts in the ceremony of becoming a Muslim. As a statement of belief it implies the worshipper's relationship to God, exclusive only for those outside Islam.

Christian creeds, then, have much in common with the corresponding formulas of other faiths; but they also have a distinctively Christian character.

5

In 1935 Alan Richardson published *Creeds in the making*, a short book still in print. This year Professor Frances Young, a scholar notably expert in the age of the great councils, has published what she describes as 'an updated version', *The making of the creeds*. Apart from changes in perspective resulting from the discovery of fresh historical materials, and from changing theological frames of reference that are partly due to shifts of academic fashion, the fundamental difference that she sees between Richardson's first readers and her own lies in the intellectual climate of today as contrasted with that of the thirties, especially with regard to historiography. Although for at least ten years the tide of post-structuralism has been swelling, she still takes structuralism into

account.⁵ This too is a point of fashion, but important for creeds, because it affects Richardson's view of what a creed is, and challenges the traditional view of the creeds' substance.

Alan Richardson said 'the historical christian religion has always been faith in a person' and 'the facts about the historical Jesus are ... the date of theology.' He also said 'it is the business of christian doctrine to interpret these facts.'⁶

Professor Young asserts that 'to speak of "facts" apart from interpretation is simply impossible.' 'The change in perspective (since Richardson wrote) is simply a recognition that different aspects will present themselves to different investigators, there can be no "neutral" accounts, no "bare event" is accessible to us – indeed even if it were, it would be meaningless.'⁷ E.H. Carr gave this view its most widely read and pungent expression in *What is history?*, an iconoclastic contribution⁸ to a debate which had started before Richardson wrote. Though often and strongly criticized, Carr's ideas are certainly helpful to a historian in self-monitoring. Neo-Marxists, for whom self-monitoring has a specific purpose, took them up with glee, not least because Carr himself wrote Russian history from a communist viewpoint.

Even in the light of what has now happened to Marxist politics, Carr's point of view is not entirely discredited. His back-ups in epistemology and ontology were not spelt out in the famous book, but are crucial; they will show that there is indeed a sense in which all the facts of history are inaccessible in themselves, and that this was scarcely a twentieth-century discovery. We have found Constantinople inaccessible tonight and, indeed, the historic events of our own times are exasperatingly inaccessible. Carr's is not so bleak a doctrine as it may appear before it is examined.

Hence in contrast to Richardson's theory that the creeds were necessary explanations of 'the fact of Jesus', Professor Young says creed-making is better seen as 'a continuation of the process of forging a new community identity which was inherent in the whole nexus of Jesus-responded-to-and-understood.'⁹ Some readers will not find her approach much different in effect from Richardson's. What she expresses as 'Jesus-responded-to-and-understood' is at least very close to 'Jesus-believed-in-and-interpreted', which is his subject. Post-structurally or not, the most obvious difference between the two books is that between Richardson's manifestly passionate belief in Jesus and Professor Young's comparatively detached style (though her faith is quite clear). Both implicitly agree about the community-identifying nature of dogma, although neither defines that word.

Now, if the substance of a creed is hermeneutic treatment of the revealed and experienced fact of the kenosis of the Son of God known in history, the epistemology and ontology involved must be of great interest to any non-Christian, not least to a Buddhist. Yet, according to Aghananda Bharati, discussing the difference between Hindu and Buddhist philosophy, Buddhism has 'no ontology, no metaphysics', and this is 'the one unbridgeable difference' between Hinduism 'in all its forms' ('with a powerful ontology') 'and Buddhism of all schools'.¹⁰

Bharati's autobiography, *The Ochre robe*, makes useful reading for inter-faith dialogue. Born in Vienna in 1923, he is an Austrian, well-versed in western philosophy, who became a Hindu monk in his twenties. He knew Buddhism especially through Thai Theravada and Japanese Mahayana, and wrote his books at the University of Washington. Though few have been so well informed on Oriental ontology, some Buddhists, especially mahayanists, may wish to question his statement. They may point to the Abhidharma, the third 'basket' of the Buddhist scriptural canon, with its systematization of entities as an indication of Buddhist concern for ontology. The concept of *dhyana*, 'awareness', currently explained as 'seeing things as they are', also implies an ontology, however little Buddhists may be inclined to discuss it. Christians with even an elementary understanding of *dhyana*, and such terms as *sunyata* (void) and *samsara* (rebirth), will feel that an ontology is implied in Buddhism, but of a different kind from that which underpins the creeds.

Mahayana Buddhism may have a bearing on Christian ontological thinking about, say, St Catherine of Alexandria. For most western Christians the now accepted fact that St Catherine is a pious fiction removes all value from the millions of prayers that must have been, indeed still are, directed to her, and makes her shrine on Mount Sinai worrying. A non-believer can simply resort to the ontology of fiction that gives rise to the natural inclination of Englishmen to speak of Hamlet or Sherlock Holmes in the present tense. Creative imagination of persons is acceptable to us in various modes, but not in definitive theology. There is no dogma even about visions.

John Blofield (1913–83), an English Buddhist who lived in China, illuminated this problem in his treatment of the reality of Kwan-in. Kwan-in is the Chinese name of the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, who was possibly an historical Indian prince, but is widely regarded in China as female and better known there as 'the goddess of mercy'. In Japan this transsexual identification is so strong that during the 'hidden years' of persecution (c1650–1860) Roman Catholics used Kwannon figures to represent Our Lady. Tibetans, however, believe the Dalai Lama is a reincarnation of Avalokiteshvara, whose residence is called Potala after the heavenly abode of that bodhisattva. They find it impossible to think of Avalokiteshvara as female; while in Korea his image always wears a moustache. The change to a female nature was perhaps due to iconography that showed him as a bestower of fertility with a child as attribute.

For the western mind this change of sex alone would present a problem about his ontological status. Yet behind that problem lies the problem of the reality of all bodhisattvas, most of whom have no putative historical personal origin. Blofield wrote as though he knew Avalokiteshvara personally – an experience doubtless shared by millions of Buddhists.

'Bodhisattvas', wrote Blofield, 'are as real as earth and sky and have infinite powers to aid human beings in distress, but they exist within our common mind, which, to speak the truth, is itself the *container* of earth and sky.' 'The "reality" of a bodhisattva is not hard to accept, once one recognizes that even such solid-seeming objects as elephants

and mountains are all creations of Mind and therefore on a par with dreams, imaginings, visions – like everything else in existence.¹¹ His mention of the sky may distract us, because the idea of sky is a human construct in a sense that elephants and mountains are not; but more important for us is the relation to history of what he says about a Buddhist understanding of truth.

Whatever solutions Christians can find for legendary saints, they will not be relieved of the need for historical and ontological definitions in the articles of our creeds. Saints and angels have never been the subject of credal definition: the historical existence of Christ has. Hence the mentions of Mary and Pontius Pilate in the creeds, fixing Christ's kinship and his date. This is vital matter for Christians. If irrefutable proof were to surface that Gautama Buddha never existed historically, Buddhism would not be shaken. Indeed, Gautama himself is credited with having said so. But if Christ were not historical, Christianity would collapse.

6

The non-Christian interlocutor may well be puzzled by the Christian claim to know Christ. He may reply; 'You say the creed is an act of commitment to the Jesus Christ you know and trust. But how do you know him?' This question has at least two senses. It may ask about what the word 'know' means in this context. That would be the epistemological pendant to what I have just been saying about ontology; but I will restrict myself to another sense, which asks about the way in which we know Christ. The answer to this lies in the Constantinople story, in the dogma of the godhead of the Holy Spirit. God works in the body of Christ through the Holy Spirit, and knowledge of Christ is entirely in the Spirit.

Orthodox Christians fear being glib about the Holy Spirit, and are aware of the dangers of misidentifying the Spirit's work; therefore they say little about him. As a result, non-Christians and half-educated Christians have some excuse for thinking that Christian belief means simply knowing about Jesus the man, that Christians are people with certain opinions, rather than people of faith who live with God. Nor is the situation helped by those who speak of the work of the Holy Spirit as though it were limited to producing ecstasy and giving guidance in personal dilemmas.

The Holy Spirit was promised by Christ for the sake of the Church, which is led, guided, sanctified and strengthened by the Spirit. The prayer of the Church and the Christian is a direct activity of the Spirit. God and man are one in Christ by the action of the Holy Spirit in the incarnation of the Word, and God and men are made one again by the Holy Spirit of God acting in the individual Christian and in the Church. The Spirit is the author of the experience through which we learn to trust in God. What is more, he fills the whole world. What a pity that in modern usage spirituality is treated as a purely human activity. Are Christians so dazzled by the manifold variety science shows us in creation that we forget that unity is the common quest of all religions, and that unity in God is the heart of the Gospel message?

It is entirely appropriate that the third article of the creed should subsume the mysteries of the Church catholic, the communion of

saints, the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. This is no merely miscellaneous collection. We are led into all these ways of unity by the Holy Spirit. While the Christian concept of the Church is not found in other religions, other religions have beliefs about the integration of human society into divine life, and they cannot be expected to understand the Church, which so often is seen as a purely pragmatic terrestrial necessity, unless we take care to show what we really understand the Church to be.

The nature of the Church is never so clear as in the eucharist; and the eucharist is implicit in the credal statements about the Church and the communion of saints, within the article on the Holy Spirit. Because of the Buddhist attitude to pain and evil, I used to think that the eucharist would be for the Buddhist the greatest stumbling block in understanding Christianity. Now, I wonder. Buddhists speak of transcending good and evil alike. In the eucharist good and evil are indeed transcended by the Son of God who became sin for our sake: injustice and cruelty caused the suffering that saves and unites men to God in glory: the anamnesis of the eucharist shows that truth in a way that might be interpreted in tantric and yogic terms, if we were learned enough in tantrism and yoga to undertake the task. Tantrism emphasises the identity of the absolute (*paramārtha*) and the phenomenal (*vyarāhāra*) when filtered through the experience of *sādhana* (contemplative action).¹² Yoga is union of the absolute and the phenomenal. Both could describe the action of the Holy Spirit in all the sacraments.

Tantra and yoga belong to Hindus as well as to Buddhists; yoga is also becoming the property of the post-Christian English, thousands of whom now practise meditation without reliance on the Holy Spirit, not knowing that orthodox Christianity has any experience to help them. Yoga is more than a system of therapeutic gymnastics popular on the local further education circuit. *Hatha yoga*, as now taught, dates only from the pre-modern period, say the fifteenth century, and has developed much during our own century, indeed is still developing. It is based on ancient meditation postures (*āsana*) that are not endemic to India, and can be found, sometimes without religious associations, in other cultures. In India they have been allied to the spiritual techniques of the *yoga* that means union of the absolute and the phenomenal; which is not of itself necessarily or even tendentially non-Christian. Indeed, once we regret and repair any failure to have taught that Christianity, from the incorporation of the Christian into Christ at baptism onwards, is essentially itself *yoga*, 'the sweet yoke of Christ' (just such a 'making one'), some of our wholeness is restored; we cease hindering the Spirit whose godhead we adore, and our faith shows again some of the original beauty that attracted people in the first centuries.

Christian apologetic was already becoming trivialized and compartmentalized by the end of the fourth century; and the period can only be understood by looking into the heart of its faith. Athanasius had said God became man in order that man might be engodded,¹³ and Gregory Nazianzen, the anti-hero of Constantinople, held that doctrine dear. The scandal of the divinity of the Holy Spirit lies in the fact that the God whom we worship can be in us and we in

him. This is the core material of inter-faith dialogue: the faith and truth that the Holy Spirit protects, even through such wayward human behaviour as that of 381.

- 1 In a television interview with John Freeman.
- 2 E. Waugh *The Life of Ronald Knox* 1959/62 p. 203, referring to *Some Loose Stones* 1913.
- 3 J. Burnaby *Christian words and christian meanings* 1955 p. 42.
- 4 F. Young *The Making of the creeds* 1991 p. 13.
- 5 *Op. cit.* pp. ix–xii.
- 6 A. Richardson *Creeds in the making* 1935/1941 pp. 8–9 and 7.
- 7 *Op. cit.* p. x.
- 8 E.H. Carr *What is history?* 1961.
- 9 *Op. cit.* p. x.
- 10 Agehananda Bharati (Leopold Fischer) *The tantric tradition* 1965 p. 26.
- 11 J. Blofield *In search of the Goddess of Compassion* 1977/1990 pp. 36 and 23.
- 12 Bharati *op. cit.* p. 18.
- 13 *De incarnatione Verbi* 54.

CONSECRATION OF FIRST ERITREAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN EUROPE

On Saturday, 23rd November a former south London public house ('The Rose'), in Edmund Street, Camberwell, having undergone extensive conversion, was consecrated as St. Michael's Eritrean Orthodox Church, an historic event for the Eritrean Orthodox community in London. This is the first Eritrean Orthodox Church to be consecrated in Europe. The congregation had worshipped for the past nine years in the hall of St. Philip's Anglican Church, Earls Court Road, in west London.

The consecration service was performed by His Grace Bishop Marcos (Menghistu Abebe), General Secretary of the Holy Synod of the Eritrean Orthodox Church, assisted by Metropolitan Seraphim of Glastonbury (British Orthodox Church). Among those present was Mr. Ato Afeworki Abraha, Eritrean Consul General for Britain, with other consulate staff.

The new church premises include a community hall, meeting rooms and residential accommodation. On the Sunday morning following the church's consecration, three infants were baptised, a wedding was solemnised and the first Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the sanctuary. Bishop Marcos presented the parish with a large silver traditional Eritrean processional cross and Metropolitan Seraphim presented a large silver ciborium on behalf of the British Orthodox Church.

In addition to St. Michael's Church there is another Eritrean Orthodox parish worshipping in a hired hall in the Caledonian Road, Islington.

The Eritrean Orthodox Church was granted the status of an autocephalous church in 1993 by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church, but has yet to elect its own

Patriarch. Further Eritrean Churches are shortly expected to be established in Germany and Sweden.

THE MEETING OF PATRIARCHS OF THE MIDDLE EAST ORTHODOX CHURCHES

COMMON DECLARATION

In The Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

We, Pope Shenouda III, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark, Patriarch Mar Ignatius Zakka I, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East and Catholicos Aram I, Catholicos of the Armenians of the Great House of Cilicia, together with us the members of the preparatory committee of this meeting, give thanks to God for bringing us together at the Monastery of the great Saint Bishoy in Wadi El Natroon, Egypt on Tuesday and Wednesday 10th and 11th of March 1998. We have gathered together as Heads of the Oriental orthodox Churches in the Middle East to re-affirm our unity of faith and our common ministry in the life of our people all over the world, and explore together the most efficient ways and means to strengthen our common presence and witness in the region.

On the basis of our Joint Agreed Statement issued on the 14th of June 1996 at the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilician, in Antelias, Lebanon, we studied a number of issues and questions of common concern. Hereunder we mention briefly some of the issues and perspectives which acquired an important place in our deliberations:

First: In our common witness to our faith in the Only Begotten Son, the Incarnate Logos, our Savior Jesus Christ, we hold firmly to the Apostolic Faith handed down to us from the Apostolic Fathers through the Holy Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments, from the three Ecumenical Councils of Nicea (325AD), Constantinople (381AD) and Ephesus (421AD); and through the teachings of the saintly fathers of our three churches who have struggled in keeping the doctrines of our churches and the teachings of these Councils. In fact, our Churches have strived throughout their history and at the cost of the blood of their martyrs to keep intact the teachings of the Council of Ephesus concerning the incarnation of the Logos based on the teachings of Saint Cyril the Great (444AD) as well as the decisions of the said Council. We want to mention here from among our Holy Fathers, especially Saint Gregory the Illuminator, Saint Dioscorus of Alexandria, Mar Philixenus of Mabbugh, Mar Jacob Baradeus and Saint Nerses the Gracious who have kept firm the Apostolic Faith and strongly defended the orthodoxy of the teachings of the first three Ecumenical Councils.

Second: The teachings of Saint Cyril the Great constitute the foundation of the Christology of our Churches. It was on the basis of these teachings that the Committee of the Joint Official Theological Dialogue between the Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches was able to formulate a joint agreement which is now under study by the Holy Synods of both families. In fact, the following statement was mentioned at the beginning of this agreement: "We have found our

common ground (i.e. in the Apostolic faith) in the formula of our common father Saint Cyril of Alexandria: "Mia Physis tou Theo Logou sesarkoumeni" One Incarnate Nature of God the Logos and in his dictum that "it is sufficient for the confession of our true and irrefragable faith to say and confess that the Holy Virgin Saint Mary is the Mother of God, the Theotokos."

Third: In accordance and in faithful obedience to the faith, doctrine and teachings of our Holy Fathers, we firmly re-state our common rejection of all the heretical teachings of Arius, Sabellius, Apollinarius, Macedonius, Paul of Samosata, Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Nestorius, Eutyches and all of those who follow these and other heretics and propagate their erroneous and heretical teachings.

Fourth: We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ the Logos, Son of God, came in His own person. He did not assume a human person, but He Himself by hypostatic union took full and perfect human nature, rational soul and body, without sin, from the Virgin Saint Mary through the Holy Spirit. He made His own humanity one incarnate nature and one incarnate hypostasis with His divinity in the very moment of incarnation through a true natural and hypostatic union. His Divinity did not separate from His Humanity even for a moment or a twinkling of an eye. This union is superior to description and perception. When we speak of "One incarnate nature of the Word of God" we do not mean His divinity alone or His humanity alone i.e. a single nature, but we speak of one united divine-human nature in Christ without change, without mixture, without confusion, without division and without separation. The properties of each nature are not changed and destroyed because of the union; the natures being distinguished from each other in thought alone.

Fifth: We agreed on the necessity of maintaining a common position of faith in all theological dialogues. Thus, henceforth, we will engage as a family of Oriental Orthodox Churches in the Middle East in any theological dialogue with other Churches and Christian world communions. We hope that this basic principle will also be accepted by other beloved Churches of our family, as is happening now in many theological dialogues.

Sixth: We re-affirm the vital importance of establishing more organized and close collaboration between our churches to ensure the oneness of our faith, our full communion in the ecclesial and liturgical life and our partnership in evangelism, diakonia and in witnessing Christ the Lord in the Christian world and to the entire humanity. We believe that this goal could be achieved by several means, some of which are:

- 1 – To meet periodically and regularly every year.
- 2 – To have a common doctrinal and theological attitude in all theological dialogues.
- 3 – To have a common position on issues of vital concern for our churches in the Middle East Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches, Pro Oriente and other ecumenical organizations.

- 4 – To exchange teachers and students among the seminaries and theological institutes of our Churches.
- 5 – To exchange pastoral letters dealing with matters of faith and issues related to the witness, mission, evangelism and diakonia.
- 6 – To exchange books, periodicals and publications pertaining to Christian education, theological formation and moral teachings of our churches.
- 7 – To exchange information related to the various activities of our churches.
- 8 – To take a common stand on issues of justice, peace and human rights.
- 9 – To encourage our clergy and people to establish close collaboration on the diocesan and parish levels in the Middle East and every where.

Seventh: We hope that through our common efforts the scope of our meetings will be widened in the near future to include other beloved Churches of the Oriental Orthodox family, in continuation with the historic meeting of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 1965.

Eighth: We wish to meet periodically with the Heads of Eastern Orthodox family to enhance our ecumenical theological dialogue and strengthen further our collaboration at local, regional and global levels.

Ninth: We discussed the celebration of the 2000 anniversary of the birth of Christ our Lord, and gave a special responsibility to the Standing committee to organize properly this important event.

Tenth: We discussed the prevailing situation in the Middle East. The difficulties that the peace process is facing actually are due to Israel's uncompromising and hard-line policy. We shall together exert strong and continuous efforts through the world-wide ecumenical fellowship and in international community so that the people of the Arab world may regain their violated rights in Jerusalem, Palestine, Golan and South of Lebanon. It is also our demand that the embargo and sanctions imposed on the people of Iraq be lifted immediately. We pray that peace with justice prevails throughout the entire world.

Eleventh: A Standing Committee was appointed by us to implement the decisions of this meeting. This committee shall meet twice a year. The members of the Standing Committee are: H.E. Metropolitan Bishoy and H.G. Bishop Moussa from the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria; H.E. Metropolitan Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim and H.E. Metropolitan Mar Theophilus George Saliba from the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch; H.G. Bishop Sebouh Sarkissian and Archimandrite Nareg Amezian from the Armenian Orthodox Church (the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia).

At the conclusion of our meeting we joyfully present our thanks to Almighty God who has promoted and sustained our endeavours. We ask Him to always assist our efforts for the well-being of our Churches, for the unity of all Churches and the salvation of the world.

We thank the Church of Alexandria for its love and kind hospitality. We also thank all who prayed and worked for the success of this meeting. Glory be to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, forever, Amen.

Pope Shenouda III
Mar Ignatius Zakka I
Catholicos Aram I

BOOK REVIEWS

Visions of Ararat: Writings on Armenia. Christopher J Walker, I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd (£19.95) ix + 157 pp. ISBN 1 86064 111 3.

Christopher Walker is a true friend to friends of Armenia. Since 1980 (1990 for the second revised edition) the student of Armenian history has been beholden to him for his magisterial *Armenia: The Survival of a Nation*, but in *Visions of Ararat* he complements this earlier work with a collection of writings on Armenia, its people and its fortunes through the eyes and first-hand experience of British travellers, diplomats, historians, novelists, poets and clergymen. Put together, spanning many interests and four centuries, they present a three-dimensional image of this mountain country which in terms of geography, politics and religion has the destiny to be "between Iranian Shiites, Turkish Sunnis and the rags of Soviet communism, between three worlds and an adherent of none." (p. 146)

Sources from which to garner his writings are, it appears, not over-abundant until the nineteenth century, for as Walker points out, "from the middle ages until the early 19th century there were few contacts with Armenia save for missionaries; the age of travel for its own sake lay dormant, and when it awoke, Armenia was too far off the beaten track for the Grand Tour." Indeed, it would have taken more stamina than could be raised by a Georgian fop to undertake the perilous journey by land and sea to reach the land of the Armenians, but what rewards awaited those undertook the adventure! What haunting scenery, village festivities, religious fervour are recounted in this book, all against the backdrop of the great mountain Ararat, and the glowering political background of three empires, the Russian, Persian and Ottoman, frequently at war with one another, and frequently the merciless persecutors of this minority caught by the receding tide of Armenian national fortunes within their borders.

The exception to the threat and actuality of state sponsored terror seemed to have been Persia. Walker makes the point that life for Armenians was better under the Shah than the Sultan, for an Armenian town dweller in the purpose built city of New Jolfa than for the peasant under Ottoman rule "weighed down by tyranny ... which might briefly lift, but for no more than the duration of a religious festival." Despite this, all the authors represented in this book report on the ability of the Armenians to celebrate life and faith, even when suffering the worst outrages. Perhaps, suggests Walker, the undoubted talents of the Armenian population within the Persian empire were valued by the Shah, who allowed a degree of tolerance of diversity, whereas the Ottoman system of absolute control by the Sultan had within it no place for any belief outside the ruling faith of Islam nor for any race outside the ruling ethnicity. When that ruling system was

challenged by outside forces, as history knows too well, and the western nations to their shame, massacres of millions resulted.

Walker prints the core of the impassioned speech delivered by the 86 year old Gladstone in Liverpool in 1895, which cannot fail to move even now. Interestingly, Gladstone's sympathy for the plight of the Armenians in Turkey was understood by the Armenians themselves to have his deep rooted Anglicanism as its main moral driving force. Indeed, the links forged between the two national churches receive a chapter to themselves in Walker's book. Much had changed since 1593 when John Cartwright, the earliest English traveller we know to have visited Armenia, rejoicing in his new-found purity of Elizabethan religion commented that the church he found in this Christian land was 'spotted with superstition.' Unlike the Church of Rome or the American protestant denominations, the Church of England did not seek converts; rather the aim of the educational mission at the end of the last century was (as in the Assyrian mission of 1877) "not to bring over these Christians to communion with the Church of England, nor to alter their ecclesiastical customs and traditions - but to strengthen an ancient church." Sadly, by the time plans had been formulated by the Revd Charles Robinson for Anglican funded schools, the massacres by the Turkish authorities changed priorities from seeking to develop schools and education to the mere survival of the people amid a reign of terror

Of the many figures who feature in this fascinating book, both as writers and as written about, I should like to read the biography (if such has been written) of a certain Garabed Stephanian who hailed from Diyarbakir, the black-walled city in south eastern Turkey, and who in Jerusalem in 1862 was ordained priest by Bishop Samuel Gobat, the bishop of the joint Lutheran-Anglican, Prussian-British bishopric. He is just one of the characters who come alive in the pages of *Visions of Ararat*. In its pages Walker offers many rich treats, garnered with academic precision and with an obvious love of Armenia and its people, and this book deserves to be bought and read alike by the student of history, the traveller and the armchair explorer.

Philip Warner

Between Desert and City: The Coptic Orthodox Church Today (pp. 289)

This collection, edited by Nelly van Doorn-Harder and Kari Vogt (published by Novus forlag for the Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, Oslo. Price 295 kroner. [12 kroner to £1]) tackles subjects historical, cultural, spiritual, liturgical and biographical in eighteen essays. Members of the Coptic church have a distinct identity, which with the upsurge in militant Islam, has come under attack (literally in many cases) and which is ever in need of emphasizing by the church community.

The word itself, 'Copt' means 'Egyptian', coming as it does through the Arabic *qibt* from the Greek *aigyptos*, which was the word used by the cosmopolitan Alexandrian Greeks for the entire indigenous population, which was wholly Christian for six hundred years until the Arab conquest (AD 639-642), using the Coptic language, which was the last manifestation of the ancient language of the pharaohs.

However, due to the conquests made by the followers of the Prophet, the majority of the population turned to Islam, so that by the 9th century Christians were in a minority, and the Coptic language gave way to Arabic as the *lingua franca*.

With time, 'Copt' came to mean Christians of Egyptian stock, as distinct from Moslems or Christians of non-Egyptian origin. During the period of the Mameluke persecution (1250–1517) the proportion of Copts to the population as a whole fell to 6–8%, where it remains today, and although the population of Egypt has doubled in the last forty years, so overall numbers are higher, the ratio of Christian to Moslem remains the same, though numbers are stronger in some areas, such as Upper Egypt and the capital itself. The Coptic church has therefore been used to being in a minority for half a millennium.

Yet this land of Egypt has a fine Biblical pedigree, having been visited by Abraham and Joseph, being the birth place of Moses, and the only country outside the Holy Land to have been visited by the Incarnate Word. The origin of Christianity is traced back to St Mark the Evangelist, who was the first patriarch of Alexandria, the present one, Shenouda III being counted as 117th after him.

Though divided by religion, Copts have much in common with their fellow Egyptians, but with the struggle against foreign domination, which has resulted in the concept of 'national unity' for the whole people of Egypt, a question has been asked as to whether the disappearance of the Coptic church is necessary for the fulfillment of that national unity – one people, one religion. Whatever they would like Copts and Moslems together form the national reality of the same country, and have done so from the very beginning of the existence and expansion of Islam. It is this *modus vivendi* which has been so cruelly shattered by the atrocities, arson attacks and murders directed against churches and Christians by the extremist Islamic groups. Yet the church has always lived with persecution, and martyrs are very much venerated as witnesses to the faith, and the Coptic church calendar emphasizes this by computing its years from AD 284, which was the accession to the Imperial throne of Diocletian, the archetypal persecutor of the Way.

One result of this tension between the faith communities is that Copts are more and more searching for a definite identity to underline their Christian allegiance. One way is for young people to react against the pressure for 'Islamization' to which they are subjected at school and college. One example of this is that more and more female teachers wear the *hijab*, the scarf worn over head and neck, and they encourage their students in its use too. The *hijab* is seen as a Moslem symbol, and as an attempt to convert the girls, or force them to hide the fact that they are not Moslems. Therefore they look for other ways to show their modesty, (which is expected of all females in Egyptian society), but which marks their Christian identity. Girls will wear religious jewelry, or have Christian stickers on their handbags or books. Many young people of both sexes have a small cross tattooed on the inside of their wrist just below the palm of their right hand, which can be shown or concealed at will. In fact there is a children's rhyme which begins "I am a Christian, a Christian/(Look at) The tattoo on my

hand", but given the burning of a church because the cross on its tower overshadowed the neighbouring mosque, they must learn discretion in showing this symbol.

To counter further this Islamic emphasis in education, many colleges have Coptic clubs which provide educational and cultural activities: prayer, Bible reading, outings to monasteries and shrines amongst them. Because Christian missionary activity is prohibited in Egypt, and because if a Christian woman marries a Moslem man, the children are counted as Moslem, and if a Christian man wants to marry a Moslem woman, he must first convert to Islam, the Church makes sure that those born into the community of faith remain there, so Christian education begins with the very young, all who are offspring of Coptic parents. One of the growing success stories of the modern Coptic church is the Sunday school movement, championed by Pope Shenouda III, and drawing tens of thousands of children and young people. These schools actually meet on Fridays (being part of the weekend in Egypt), where through learning about the church tradition the children become more and more attached to the church community, and by spending time with other Coptic children, they develop a sense of belonging to their religious group. Having a Christian identity is valued within the church community, and is especially important for children in Egyptian society where being a Christian often means being the odd one out.

This identity is further strengthened by communion with the saints, and pilgrimages (*mouled*) to the tombs of saints are especially festive events. They are occasions to celebrate the faith, and on arrival there are chances to pray, hear instruction, venerate the icons and relics, make intercessions and vows, meet Christians from other regions, buy religious artifacts, be tattooed (see above). In fact just about anything relating directly or indirectly to the Faith, not unlike a medieval fair! The larger of these *mouleds* can attract tens of thousands of the faithful, which means that the pilgrims can enjoy a respite from being in the minority as they share their joy in the faith without the trials and persecutions (petty as well as grave) of everyday life as a Christian. They are manifestations of the power and unity which "reflects the dream of the Coptic world that would be strewn with churches and crosses in neon light, administered by holy bishops, holy priests and holy monks." (p. 221).

It is this communion with the saints of the past (sometimes the recent past) which gives Copts their greatest sense of identity. The sayings of the desert fathers are increasingly known in the west, but these holy monks are seen not as figures from the past, but as contemporaries of their spiritual children, who walk the same desert ways, and inhabit the same cells and caves. The Coptic church knows about martyrdom, and not only from the examples of the past, but from the reality of the present. If there is to be a future in the land of its birth, then the Coptic church must count on the martyrs for prayer and protection.

This book assembles a wide spectrum of subjects, from the role of nuns in the church revival, Coptic women in a changing society, biographical essays on Kyrillos VI and Shenouda III, as well as the state of Christians outside Egypt. The book contains short biographic

notes on the essayists, the style of writing and the translations are accessible throughout, though a general index would have been useful.

Philip Warner

John Mason Neale and the Quest for Sobornost: by Leon Litvak, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1994, 295 pp.

J.M. Neale appears in the new Church of England Calendar probably mainly for his translations, Good King Wenceslas and other hymns, and for the religious communities he set up. Litvak's eminently readable book tells us much more as he demonstrates the significance of Neale's contribution to Anglican-Orthodox understanding and knowledge. The establishment at Neale's initiative, of the Eastern Churches Association (now AECA) features in the concise but comprehensive biography in the Introductory chapter.

The main body of the book is divided into three parts. "Neale's Orthodox Consciousness" culminates in a critique of his "History of the Holy Eastern Church", following a survey of both Anglican dealings with Orthodoxy and Western European attitudes not only to Orthodoxy but to Islam and the "Orient" in general. This helps to explain Neale's attitude to the "Mahometans", though I feel the quote from Flaubert on the "sexual practices of the Egyptians" would have been better omitted. Neale's personal experience of the East was limited to a trip to the Balkans and contacts with men such as Popov, the Russian Chaplain in London. Beyond this, he relied on the writings of others. What he was unsure of when writing his "History" his imagination filled in, as it did in his novels, which are the subject of Part III.

But his hymnology remains his finest legacy to the Church. Part II shows the development of his knowledge of Orthodox music, leading to the publication of "Hymns of the Eastern Church" in 1862 and the inclusion of several of these in "Hymns Ancient and Modern" in 1868, just two years after his death. Shortly before he died, he expressed his thankfulness that through his "Hymns" the Eastern Church was more widely brought before ordinary congregations: "God grant that this may be one little help towards the great work of reunion." At the time of the decision to ordain women to the priesthood in the Church of England, at least one diocesan referred to the Orthodox as "exotic" as an alternative home to Rome for disaffected Anglicans, so there's sadly still a long way to go to sobornost, the harmony of the book's title.

Neale wrote the novel "Theodora Phranza" at the time of the Crimean War, when the British and French were ranged with the Turks against the Russians. Against the background of the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, Neale portrayed Catholic and Orthodox Christians reconciled in suffering at the hands of the Turks, and the marriage of Theodora to an Englishman was a sign of hope, symbolic of Neale's belief that the Church of England had a special role in bringing together Eastern and Western Christendom.

Neale's poem "The Battle of the Alma" make clear that his sympathies lay with the Russians, their troops martyrs for the Christian cause, an unpopular view in Britain. There is some parallel with attitudes of the

British media over the conflicts during the break up of Yugoslavia, depicting the Serbs as the chief "baddies". We would not condone the atrocities committed by any of those involved, but the situation was highly complex. The Serbian people as a whole have been largely misrepresented, along with the Serbian Orthodox Church which pleaded for a peaceful solution. Perhaps another Neale should write a historical novel showing the Serbs as guardians of Christianity in the Balkan region.

Present day Neales are needed to bring a greater awareness of Eastern Christianity to people in our churches and beyond. Our Association plays its part. Litvak's book makes a fine contribution. It concludes with a useful glossary of liturgical terms and a very full bibliography.

Ian Falconer

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Sir

I read with great interest the report of the talk given by Metropolitan Daniel of Moldavia and Bukovina on 'The Situation of the Romanian Orthodox Church Today' in issue 42 of E.C.N.L. One of the problems most acutely facing the Church in Romania in these post-Communist years is the 'missionary' activity of various sects and cults, mostly emanating from and financed by the USA. They entice the unchurched with social and educational opportunities, capturing their souls by material lures.

I came across this quote in my recent reading which seemed appropriate:

At the present moment the Orthodox Churches in many countries are being attacked, as they have never been before, by Protestant missionaries, chiefly from America. Seventh-Day Adventists and Baptists and other similar bodies, full of enthusiasm and well financed, are pushing their way into villages and remoter towns, and are threatening to disintegrate the unity of national religion.

These words were not penned following the fall of the Communist regimes but in 1925 by the then Bishop of Gibraltar in an article in *Theology* on the Orthodox Churches. The problem facing the churches today would seem not to be a new one.

Yours faithfully,

Philip Warner

A LETTER TO THE HONORARY SECRETARY FROM HOLY ETCHMIADZIN

Greetings to you all from Armenia

I left Armenia in August for a short but very enjoyable holiday in Turkey. There I stayed first as the guest of the Armenian Church at their Church centre on Kinali Island just off Istanbul. The weather in Istanbul was dreadful with heavy rain, and flooding and sadly several people being killed. The weather however, did not stop me enjoying myself and I spent two afternoons in the glorious Basilica of Aya

Sophia. As always this is a breathtaking place to visit. Firstly a tour round to stand in amazement at the size of the Basilica and its glories, which neither its conversion into a mosque nor time can ever really dim. On the second visit I spent much more time looking at the graffiti on the columns and marble facings. Particularly in the gallery round the Basilica there is a great deal of interesting graffiti which dates from the time of the sack of Constantinople by the Crusaders and Venetians. After the fall of Constantinople, the invaders carved their names in the Basilica – some of them English, and left sketches of Viking long ships and much else. This really brings the sack of Constantinople to life for me. Another place well worth a visit was one of the underground water cisterns which are now open to the public. All the time I was there it was pouring outside and the rain began to drip (pour) into the cistern!

After that I then travelled down the coast to see Troy and the Dardenelles. There I actually managed to spend one afternoon on the beach swimming in the sea and sunbathing. From there to London to prepare for my visit to Yugoslavia.

This was to attend the synod of the Eastern Archdeaconry of the Diocese in Europe in Belgrade. We were made very welcome by Graham Doyle and by all at St Mary's Anglican congregation who worship in a Roman Catholic convent centre – also the centre of Caritas in Belgrade. Sadly the convent is now all but deserted, since as a result of the war, all but one of the sisters have now had to leave. How sad that Christians at the end of the twentieth century can hate each other so ferociously. The crucifixes which can be seen across the countryside cry out silently and despairingly, proclaiming the message from the prince of peace.

We were all looked after very well, and it was a great joy to be present at the Mass where Bishop Henry confirmed two members of the congregation. It was also a great pleasure to meet so many fellow Christians from other parts in the Archdeaconry, and to hear about their experiences. Having spent time in Armenia and Georgia, conditions in Yugoslavia came as no surprise, but until you see the conditions, it is not possible to appreciate just how fortunate we are in England insulated from war and poverty which still eats into the heart of Europe.

Yugoslavia is such a beautiful country, and its people are so welcoming to all visitors. It seems so sad, therefore, that war can be seen as the only solution to problems.

After yet another few days in London I caught the weekend flight to Yerevan and returned to Holy Etchmiadzin. The only complaint being why had I been away so long! People here are no hospitable and time passes so quickly. Tomorrow I will be lecturing the Seminararians about Anglicanism, and on Saturday, the newly renovated Seminary, which stands in all its glory outside the main entrance to the Monastery will be blessed by the Catholics.

May God bless you all.

Phillip Storr Venter

1998 CONSTANTINOPLE LECTURE

Wednesday 2nd December

at

St Dunstan in the West
Fleet Street, London EC4

6.30:

Evensong

7.15:

CONSTANTINOPLE, CANTERBURY
AND ROME: LEARNING FROM OUR
PRESENT DIFFICULTIES

by

The Right Reverend
CHRISTOPHER HILL
BISHOP OF STAFFORD

followed by a Reception

PILGRIMAGE TO YORK 14–21 August 1998

There are still places available. For details please send s.a.e. to The Pilgrimage Secretary, Fr. David Bond, 6 Denton Close, Willington Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 8ER

PILGRIMAGE TO FINLAND

The Association is contemplating arranging a pilgrimage to Finland for approximately 10 days at the end of May/beginning of June 1999. If you would like to know more once the preliminary outlines of the pilgrimage have been settled please send s.a.e. to The Pilgrimage Secretary.

ANNUAL FESTIVAL
SATURDAY, JULY 11TH 1998

St Sarkis Armenian Cathedral
(by kind permission of His Grace Archbishop Gizirian)

Iverna Gardens, London W8
(nearest Tube, High St Kensington)

Holy Liturgy of St James 11.30 a.m.

Celebrated in Syriac and English

Lunch in Cathedral Hall: Please bring your own.

A.G.M. followed by a

Talk by Mr William Dalrymple

Author of From the Holy Mountain

A journey in the Shadow of Byzantium

ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND