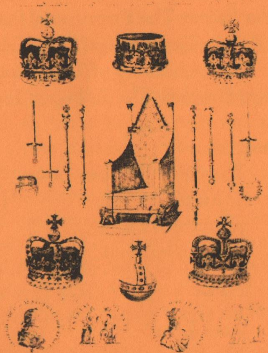
KOINONIA



The Journal of the Anglican & Eastern Churches Association

New Series No. 55, Lent 2009
ISSN No. 0012-8732

The Anglican & Eastern Churches Association

Founded 1864

Orthodox Patron: The Ecumenical Patriarch
Anglican Patron: The Archbishop of Canterbury
Orthodox President: The Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain
Anglican President: The Bishop of London

Chairman of the Committee:
The Revd William Taylor
St John's Vicarage
25 Ladbroke Road
London W11 3PD

General Secretary:
Janet Laws
The Bishop of London's Office
The Old Deanery
Dean's Court
London EC4V 5AA
Tel. 020 7248 6233
email: janet.laws@btopenworld.com
or bishops.secretary@londin.clara.co.uk

Treasurer:
Mr David Powell
32 Westminster Palace Gardens
Artillery Row
London SWIP IRR
Tel. 020 7222 3604
email: dp@dpcca.co.uk

Koinonia

The Journal of the Anglican & Eastern Churches Association

Editorial: *Church and State*

'THIS is the source of our confidence: the knowledge that God calls on us to shape an uncertain destiny.' These are the words of a new American president, Barack Obama, who speaks with the cadences of a Gospel preacher. Of course, it is no new thing for American politicians to invoke God's Name, but here there is a new tone. Gone is the certain belief in the 'manifest destiny' of the United States to rule the world, and the assurance that God is on America's side, regardless of the shape of American domestic or foreign policy. President Obama in his inaugural address called upon Americans to cooperate with God to shape a future for the good of all God's creation.

It is of course far from a uniquely American trait to assume that God favours a particular nation. The extensive coverage given to the death and funeral of Alexei II, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, is a reminder of how far Russian Orthodoxy, after decades of persecution by a militantly atheistic state, has reasserted its place at the spiritual heart of the nation. Whereas in the USSR functioning churches numbered only in the hundreds and there were fewer than a dozen monasteries, now the Russian Orthodox Church has some 20,000 parishes worldwide and in Russia itself some 700 monasteries have reopened. That recovery has come at a cost, however; Orthodoxy as an expression of Russian nationalism threatens the autonomy of neighbouring Orthodox churches, as *Archimandrite Grigorios* discusses here with particular reference to the Estonian Church. Alexei himself had been Chairman of the Conference of European Churches, but now the Russians are ecumenically isolated.

The relationship between Church and State is not only political but also cultural. *Renée Hirschon* and *Mark Chapman* reveal the ways in which a folk tradition of church belonging remains deeply rooted in the modern, secularising societies of Greece and England, complicating the relationship between governments increasingly uncomfortable with established religion and churches uncertain what their privileged positions might have to do with the communication of the Gospel.

Such questions are the luxury of Christians living in a stable European environment while Christians in the Middle East fight for their very survival. *Joshua Kassanis* relates the plight of Iraqi Christians driven away from their homes in Mosul and the efforts made by the Syrian Church to support them. Members of the Association who travelled on pilgrimage to Tur Abdin in southeastern Turkey were able to experience first hand both the pressure under which Christians live in this part of the world and the profound faith which sustains them. As Turkey seeks membership of the European Union, its treatment of its Christian minority should be a matter of urgent concern for European leaders.

Tony Blair notoriously did not 'do God' in public as prime minister. Now he works through his Faith Foundation to share his conviction that 'There is nothing more important than getting people of different faiths and cultures to understand each other better and live in peace and mutual respect, and to give faith itself its proper place in the future.' Perhaps Blair's change of approach is a sign that Christians are coming out of the political closet, convinced once again that their faith has something to offer a world jaded by the aridity of secularism and betrayed by the collapse of overaggressive market capitalism.

Perhaps Kevin Rudd speaks for a new generation of politicians who want to welcome the voice of religion back to the public square. The Australian Prime Minister, an Anglican who has described Dietrich Bonhoeffer as 'the man I admire most in the history of the twentieth century', welcomed participants to the 2008 World Youth Day with this call to discipleship:

> Some say there is no place for faith in the twenty-first century. I say they are wrong. Some say that faith is the enemy of reason. I say also, they are wrong.... It was the church that began the first schools for the poor. It was the church that began the first hospitals for the poor. It was the church that began the first refuges for the poor, and these great traditions continue for the future. And I say this, that Christianity has been an overwhelming force for good in the world.

The human destiny may be uncertain, but it seems manifest that the Christian religion for good and for ill is going to be an important part of that future.

– Peter Doll

Contents

Religion and Nationality: The Tangled Greek Case
Renée Hirschon p. 4

Minorities – Rights and Wrongs: Leslie Paul and the Deployment and Payment of the Clergy
Mark Chapman p. 25

'Without Confusion and Without Division': Communion and Otherness in the Church and its Relevance Today
Archimandrite Grigorios (Papathomas) p. 42

Findings of a Preliminary Study of the Iraqi Christian Refugees and their Effect on the Syrian Churches
Joshua Kassanis p. 59

Pilgrimage to the Tur Abdin p. 65

Contributors

Dr Renée Hirschon is Senior Research Fellow and Lecturer in Anthropology, St Peter's College, Oxford. She has made a particular study (*Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe* [1998], *Crossing the Aegean* [2003, 2004]) of the effects of the compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey in the early twentieth century.

The Revd Professor Mark Chapman is Vice-Principal of Ripon College Cuddesdon, Reader in Modern Theology in the University of Oxford, and Visiting Professor at the Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes University. Among many publications, he is author of *Doing God: Religion and Public Policy in Brown's Britain* (2008).

Archimandrite Grigorios Papathomas is Professor of Canon Law in the Institut de Théologie Orthodoxe Saint-Serge, Paris, and in the Faculty of Theology in the University of Athens.

Joshua Kassanis is a graduate student in the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London.

Religion and Nationality: The Tangled Greek Case

Renée Hirschon

In *When God Comes to Town: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Religion in Urban Contexts*
Edited by Rik Pinxten and Lisa Dikomitis Berghahn (Oxford, London, in press 2008)

GREECE stands out among European societies with regard to the way in which religion relates to social life. It has been one of the most homogeneous countries in Europe in terms of ethnic and cultural factors and it continues to present itself as such, despite widespread immigration over the past two decades from neighbouring Balkan and eastern European countries and from the third world. The continuing entanglement of religious and national identity is a particular feature of the country's modern history, and has had ramifications in all spheres of life. These features must be understood in the context of Greece's emergence as a nation-state in the nineteenth century, when it gained independence from the Ottoman state which has left interesting residues (see below). Ultimately failing in its irredentist aspirations after a military defeat in 1922, Greece's vaunted homogeneity was largely accomplished through the terms of the 1923 Lausanne Convention, a unique international agreement specifying a compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey. This was effectively a programme of mutual 'ethnic cleansing' which removed the bulk of the Muslim population from Greece and the Orthodox Christians from Turkey, leaving only a small population in each country as a recognised minority (see Hirschon 2003). The assumption of a common religious and national identity is firmly rooted in public consciousness, and to be Greek it is commonly assumed that one is also an Orthodox Christian (see below). It is a distortion to conflate these features but it is nevertheless true to say that contemporary Greek identity is a complicated amalgam of national, cultural and religious features. Greece's continued homogeneity is reflected in current census

returns which indicate that over ninety per cent of the population is Orthodox Christian.

Other distinctive characteristics should also be noted. One of these is that Greece is reckoned to be a nation with a high degree of religiosity. This is revealed in the observance of religious practices of various kinds and, even though church attendance may not have been high (though it has shown a marked increase recently), it is the interweaving of the religious with so many aspects of daily life that strikes the outsider. Related to this is another striking characteristic, viz. the inapplicability of a sharp separation between 'sacred' and 'secular' or 'mundane'. The classic Durkheimian dichotomy is not appropriate for understanding Greek life, as many anthropological studies have indicated. I have analysed some unexpected aspects of this phenomenon in an urban quarter of the metropolis, e.g., with regard to house furnishing (Hirschon 1993), seasonal activities, and in the philosophical outlook (Hirschon [1989] 1998, chs. 8, 9).

Similarly, the division between private and public, widely accepted in most western European countries, assigning the religious to a private sphere, does not correspond to Greek ways of thinking or of practice. At all levels, Church and state were, and continue to be, inextricably linked on all levels – at the institutional, official and informal, in politics, education, and personal life. This feature proves to be a major stumbling block for progressive reformers who wish to modernize old structures of civil administration (see Georgiadou 1996; Prodromou 1998; Molokotos-Lieberman 2003).

Transformations have nonetheless taken place through the various legislative and economic influences of the past twenty-five years, though their consequences are not always readily perceived (for the ramifications which affect notions of personal identity, see Hirschon 2008). Changes have been provoked through the pressures of European integration (entry to the EU in 1981), and through the modernizing programme of the socialist (PASOK) government which was in power for almost twenty years. The ambiguous value of modernization is hotly debated: far from being an uncontested area, political arguments about preserving Greece's national character continue in the face of a perceived threat to its consciously prized sovereignty and cultural integrity

The questions underlying this article, therefore, ultimately relate to major issues such as globalization, modernization and westernization, but my focus here is limited to showing how issues regarding religious identity and practice have certain unusual characteristics in Greece. One aspect of these larger processes, the question of secularization, has a particular complexity in the context of contemporary Greek society. The analysis suggests that a more nuanced approach to the topic of secularization is required in dealing with those societies which have not followed the western pattern (see Prodromou 1998). This chapter touches on wider issues regarding national identity as well as socio-personal levels of analysis. It is based on experience in the metropolis of Athens-Piraeus, where my activities were not limited to any specific locality but covered a wide range of urban settings and people of different social classes (from Kolonaki to Kokkinia).

Observations of Religious Practice/Religiosity

According to a recently published poll comparing the extent of religious devotion worldwide, Greece stands out among western European countries in the proportion of its citizens who declare that they are 'religious' (eighty-six per cent of those polled). It was among the top ten in the overall survey of sixty-eight countries on all continents.[1] During a two month stay in Athens (October to December 2005) and additionally in the spring (March to April 2006), I had the opportunity to observe some aspects of religious practice on a daily basis. People who are used to living in a secular society, whether visitors to Greece, or even diaspora Greeks who have lived abroad, notice the frequency of outwards signs of religious practice while they are in Athens. This kind of 'diffuse religiosity' or what Prodromou (1998: 102) calls 'religious vitality' is not self-conscious; simply, it is common practice for people to make the sign of the cross when they pass a church, or enter inside to light a candle and venerate the icons, taking a break in the course of other activities to interact with the divine realm.

The city itself provides many places for such casual unplanned observances. Indeed, the Athenian landscape is marked by the presence of sacred spaces of all historical periods, predominantly around the an-

cient centre, the rock of the Acropolis and the old quarters of Plaka and Monastiraki. Here, the ruins and excavated expanses, evidence of temples, houses and graveyards from the founding of the city through the classical, Hellenistic and Roman periods are usually what attract the attention of tourists. But more significant for contemporary city dwellers are the many churches, some dating from the late Byzantine period, others from the period following the establishment of the Greek state. These little churches set on the main shopping streets, near markets, in small squares, provide points of reference, reminders of the divine realm which transcends everyday concerns. Small shrines (*proskinitaria*) also dot the urban landscape, erected to commemorate some event (accident, or escape) which are similar reference points.

Churches abound in all the residential areas of the city too, many being of recent construction, often on sites of older churches. These buildings are not mere architectural features, they are set in a system of meaning and belief, and they provide a locus for conventional religious practice beyond the home, a place of comfort and recourse for believers. Though some Athenians may bewail the decline in religious adherence while others mock what takes place as 'simple habit', it is clear that these spontaneous acts of worship constitute an expression of religious activity. It is worth noting that the practice of such religious devotion is public – it is conducted in the eyes of others, beyond the home, and in this way contrasts with the more private nature of much Protestant Christian practice.

Typically, as in other Christian societies, churches are used as geographical orientation points, for example, to designate neighbourhoods, or where stations and stops on public transport lines are called after saints' names or after particular churches. This holds for the train, bus, tram and trolley services, as well as for the new Metro lines operating since the Olympics of 2004, some called after saints' names, e.g. two major termini being St Dimitrios, St Antonios .

During the period of Lent (*Megali Sarakosti*) before Easter, I was struck by the numerous shops and restaurant signs which advertised 'fasting foods' (*nystisyma*), as well as radio and TV shows focussing on the preparation of such dishes. There was a marked public awareness of the Lenten fasting period, unlike the unobtrusive style of an earlier pe-

riod when I lived in the city. My observation was reinforced by Greek colleagues who noted that this reaction could be interpreted as a kind of 'cultural resistance' both to the pressures of European integration and to a consciousness of the standardizing process of globalization. Indeed, we should note that religious practices constitute a major element in what is loosely characterized as 'Greek culture', in a society where religion is integral to worldview (as I have argued in Hirschon [1989] 1998, ch. 10).

The point here is that the presence of the sacred in everyday activity is a feature of Athenian life which strikes the casual observer, but it should not be subject to facile interpretations. Some devout people who are observant of religious practices nonetheless also express anti-clerical sentiments and criticize 'the Church' as a corrupt institution. This attitude was exacerbated recently following scandalous revelations. Multiple accusations of financial mismanagement, homosexuality, and links related to corruption in the judiciary rocked the Church of Greece and, at the time of writing, were still under investigation. Certain bishops and some clergy close to the Archbishop were implicated but the internal enquiry resulted in the removal of only one bishop (Panteleimon of Attika), currently subject to an appeal (2006), while insufficient evidence was said to have existed in the other seven cases. This was generally held to be a whitewash; it produced many critical reports in the national press and resulted in widespread disillusionment and disaffection in many circles.

Sceptics argue that the practice of going into church to light a candle or of signing oneself with a cross is merely a habit, an empty gesture without any real significance for the practitioner. This view was expressed to me by some educated Greeks who made it clear that they were not church goers; indeed, it is more common than in the past to hear urban educated people say that they are atheists. People in this group frequently noted their own contradictory conduct, saying that, although they were non-believers, they would go to the Easter church services because it was part of their cultural heritage and identity, and also that they enjoyed the experience for 'aesthetic reasons'. A clear illustration is provided by my historian colleague, a proclaimed atheist, who does not attend church but appears at major church festivals, say-

ing, 'I'm not a believer, but I'm Greek, so I'm Orthodox' (cf. a similar example quoted in Ware 1983: 208). This is by no means a unique statement for I have heard similar sentiments expressed by others of the same category (educated non-believers, left-wing).

In dealing with this topic, therefore, it is important to distinguish among people's various degrees of involvement with the religious sphere, and to be precise about those whom we observe and with whom we engage.[2]

Religion and Identity

The interweaving of what in much of the western world would be seen as separate spheres, the religious and the civil, continues to be a salient feature of contemporary Greece, despite the legal reforms of the past twenty-five years.

In 1983, the socialist (PASOK) government's programme of modernization introduced major reforms in the Civil Code, especially regarding family law. In particular, civil marriage and divorce were allowed for the first time as an alternative to religious marriage. Up to then, marriages were contracted and dissolved only through the Church, or the equivalent religious authorities for Jews and Muslims. These constituted a radical change, and the new Civil Code also consolidated previous civil reforms, reinforcing the measures for registration of a child specified in Law 344 of 1976. That law had established the procedures whereby a child's name should be recorded in the civil registry office, the *lyxiarcheio* (the individual's personal records are kept here). In doing so, it clarified the distinction between name giving (*onomatodosia*) and baptism (*baptisi*) (articles 22, 26) and the issues surrounding registration and naming are of particular interest in the context of the present discussion.

In particular, the procedures required to register a child's birth demonstrate the resilience of cultural patterns ('habitus' in Bourdieu's terms). It is widely believed that a person's full membership in Greek society requires a record of their religious affiliation. This was essentially a baptismal certificate or its equivalent for the recognized

religions, including Judaism and Islam (but excluding Catholics who do not enjoy official legal status, K. Tsitselikis, personal communication, Frazee 2002 and for Orthodox Old Calendarists see Ware 2002: 1-23). People have long believed that without a baptismal name – or its equivalent for Jews and Muslims – a child could not be registered and therefore could not be enrolled in school. Public consciousness apparently continues to hold that a child's registration at school requires the registration of a baptismal name/production of a baptism certificate.

In fact, this is a misapprehension because it has long been legally possible to confer a child's name without baptism. It is interesting to note that the possibility of civil registration (without baptism) can be traced to the mid-19th century Greek Civil Code (*Astikos Ellinikos Nomos*, TZA' 1856), a measure that was reiterated on the statute books in 1976, and finally applied strictly after 1983 (see Lixouriotis 1986; Stathopoulos 2005; Alivizatos, email December 2007). Nonetheless, it is a striking fact that even today the religious rites continue to be practised and only a tiny minority of people use the civil registration alone: the vast majority continue to employ baptism as the means of conferring names (Alivizatos, personal communication, 2006). The same is true with regard to marriage where only a small proportion of couples (five per cent) prefer to legitimate their bond solely through a civil marriage while the overwhelming majority of couples continue to marry in church and, for a variety of reasons, many have both civil and religious ceremonies.

As already noted, it has long been possible to confer a child's name without a religious rite but in practice this was seldom done. The 1983 law requires the immediate registration of the child's birth in the civil registry office (*lyxiarcheion*), but a name need not be specified. A child can still be registered in the civil registry without a name until the parents decide upon the name which will be officially registered; after that it cannot be changed. A progressive measure in the 1983 Civil Code allows choice regarding the surname of a child, so that either the mother's or the father's can be conferred (Stathopoulos 2005). Once registered officially, however, the surname cannot be changed. Likewise, if a first name is registered at this time, it cannot be changed (*ametaklito*), even if baptism confers a different name later, e.g., if

Leonidas is the name given at birth and Panayiotis is conferred at baptism, the only legal name is Leonidas. To facilitate the immediate registration of a birth, maternity hospitals in Athens provide the registration forms which do not require a name to be specified, but only the child's sex and parents' names.

The significance of the distinction between civil and religious naming practice is profound and should not be underestimated for it differentiates membership as a citizen in the state, i.e., nationality, from that of religious affiliation. Though this might be a commonplace in western Europe, from the Greek perspective it signals a radical break with the long-established equivalence of national and religious identity. The secularization agenda is promoted, too, by the introduction of civil marriage and divorce as legal alternatives to the religious rites (divorce has always been permitted in the Orthodox Church), and both possibilities are provided for equally as options in the 1983 law. In 2005 the Hellenic League for Human and Citizen Rights, a legal pressure group, suggested a more radical initiative in a Draft bill aimed at the full separation of the Church from the state (see below), which proposed, among other measures, that all civil procedures of family law would be compulsory while the religious rites would be optional. The bill's proponents argue that they are following a common western European model; in fact, it is actually based on the French case, and notably does not correspond with the situation in the three countries, the United Kingdom, Denmark and Greece, which can still be called 'confessional states' where there is an established religion.

Historical Features

It is necessary to refer briefly again to Greece's special features in the context of contemporary European society. These can be traced to a specific historical trajectory and to cultural differences dating back to the early centuries of the Christian period when Rome and Constantinople became the two separate centres of the Roman Empire. The different developments of the 'Latin West' and the 'Greek East' (see Sherrard 1959; Romanides 1975) are crucial considerations in our understanding of contemporary processes of change in this region of

southern Europe and the Balkans and can be referred to only briefly in this article.

Following the conquest of the Byzantine Empire in the fifteenth century the area that now constitutes the Greek state fell under Ottoman rule (for a general overview see Clogg 1979, pp.8ff.). Under the Ottoman system of government, the subject peoples of the imperial state were granted a considerable degree of communal autonomy if they constituted a group recognized as the People of the Covenant (*dhimmis).* As such they were organized into *millets* (literally 'nations'), the criterion of membership being that of religious affiliation. This was by no means a rigid system but had considerable variation through time and in different regions of the empire (Augoustinos 1992: 33-38; Zürcher 1993: 2-13). The important point is that religion provided the basis for personal identity and for group membership. The Orthodox Christians of the Empire, the *Romioi/Rumlar*, were administered by the hierarchy within the *Rum millet* which had jurisdiction over all family and inheritance matters, and even civil disputes (Braude and Lewis 1982). It was religion, not language or ethnicity which determined a person's membership in the polity (see Kitromilides 1989).

It is an extraordinary irony of history, therefore, that national and religious identity are not separated in Greek consciousness, an approach that resonates with a central feature of the Ottoman past. In fact, right up to the present, these two different criteria of identity can be seen as co-terminus for the vast majority of Greek citizens. What can be seen as a remnant of the Ottoman heritage is further illustrated by the legal status of the Muslims of Thrace. Following the provisions for minority rights entailed in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, these Greek citizens are adjudicated by a *mufti* under Islamic law for family and personal matters in an odd remnant of the *millet* system. Many complications arise, however, through the permitted application of two legal codes (see Tsitselikis 2004). Again, it is an unusual fact that Greece alone among western European countries allows the application of some aspects of *shari'ya* law.

The fact that it is religious identity which is seen to confer membership in the body politic is certainly resonant with the Ottoman system of administration (a point also noted *en passant* by Aarbakke

2003: 43 n.3; Kostopoulos 2003: 68-9). This is a remarkable irony, given the strong Enlightenment influence and Greece's engagement with western ways of thinking through the Philhellenes and educated diaspora Greeks in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire (1821-29), and the development of nationalistic thinking over the nineteenth century (Kitromilides 1989; Clogg 1992: 6-14, 20ff. For variations in ways that Greek national identity was defined at different periods, see Hirschon 1999.)

The fact that the religious rite of baptism was believed to be the main vehicle of personal identification for the vast majority of the citizens of the state and that the criterion for Greek nationality was based on an overall assumption of common religious identity as Orthodox Christians reflects the assumption of a homogeneous nation defined on religious criteria. The problems posed for minority groups who have other religious convictions has been a matter of increasing concern (see Aarbakke 2003; Alivizatos 1999; Christopoulos and Tsitselikis 2003; Pollis 1992; Stavros 1996, also Clogg 2002).

There are two points to underline here: firstly, the fact that religion is so intricately bound up with national identity that these elements can barely be disentangled and, secondly, that religion is not commonly seen to be an individual or a private matter (see below): religious conviction and practice is open and is not confined to the private sphere, it has a high public profile, for religious ritual accompanies national celebrations, and ritual is openly celebrated (lighting candles, venerating icons).

The Identity Card Controversy

Given this context, the issue of a new form of identity card (*taftotita*, also known as *astynomiki taftotita*) revealed the singularity of some key features of Greek society and deserves attention. Interestingly, religion is a central aspect of the controversy around ID cards, a debate which has raged for at least two decades. The variable stance of successive governments, the changes in the law together with many related policy changes and their contradictions – indeed what has amounted to total reversals – and the persistent debate about the inclusion or omission of

religious affiliation – deserves a monograph in itself, as one involved commentator has noted (Vlachos 2000:27).[3]

ID cards were introduced early in World War II, when Greece was under Axis occupation. They are thus long established and do not in themselves provoke consternation, since people are well used to being identified through a laminated card with a photo and thumbprint, and other basic data, including one's religious affiliation. In Greece objections to the ID card are not to the innovation, as in the UK (where they are not yet used), but to the change in the form of the document (electronic) and to the data included (religion or not).

Over a period of at least fifteen years various governmental proposals for a new type of ID card were debated, laws and their amendments were passed, and led finally to a crystallization of the tension between State and Church in 2000. Among the PASOK government reforms was the 1986 Law 1599/86 *Church-State Relations, adoption of new type of identity card and other measures (Skeseis kratous-politia, kathierwsi neou typou deltiou tautothtas kai alles diataxeis)* proposing the adoption of a new type of identity card, among other reforms. The highly controversial change was that religious affiliation was to be omitted.

The Law 1599/86 also proposed a single identifying number for each citizen (EKAM, *eniaio kwdiko arithmo mhtrwou* article 2) which would refer to the various numbers used in all other contexts (*'arithmo twn lhxiarchikwn praxewn, tou deltiou taytothtas, tou eklogikou bibliariou kai tou diabatiriou, tou asphalistikou bibliariou, tou phorologikou mhtrwou, ths adeias ikanothtas odygou, tou mhtrwou arrenwn, tou proxenikou mhtrwou, tou dhmotologiou kai tou eklogikou katalogou'*). This single number would be used for all registration purposes including ID and passport number, driver's licence, local and national electoral rolls, health service and tax registration, indeed for all official records. Widespread objections centred on the assignment of a single identifying number to each individual and on the fact that a person would no longer be identified by name, thus dehumanizing one. The similarity with concentration camps and political detention camps were pointed out while, on the extreme religious fringe, it was seen to be linked with the number '666', invoking the apocalyptic period heralding the last days and the end of the world.

The use of a single number invoked great concern in wider circles in relation to the new technology: it would also involve an electronic chip, and would open up the possibility for storing secret data, and thus permit widespread surveillance.

The Law was passed despite widespread objections. Five years later in 1991, however, the government admitted that it had proved impossible to apply the law 'for practical reasons', but also 'because of the almost universal rejection by the people' of a single identifying number (Vlachos 2000: 31). Amendments proposed at this time eliminated the use of the single identifying number (EKAM) but the card would still be readable through electronic means (ibid. 31-32).

In 1993 the debate about the inclusion of religious affiliation was re-awakened when the Holy Synod (College of Bishops) released two statements (*egkyklia*) anticipating that the government was finally about to enforce the law. These asserted that the country was being subjected to external pressures, and it called on the government not to proceed with the issue of this new type of ID, thereby 'bowing to foreign pressure' (ibid. 34). It also made the strong statement that the Church would not allow 'the bond (*desmos)* between Orthodoxy and Hellenism [*sic*] to be broken' (ibid. 32-34). But again in the follow up, no practical application of the law took place.

Early in 1997, however, under a European directive, the Data Protection Act (law 2472/1997) was introduced regarding the 'protection of data of a personal kind' (*prostasia twn dedomenwn proswpikou characthra*). Finally, under this general rubric a break was made for religion could now be detached if it was given the status of a private matter. 'The Hellenic Data Authority raised the issue in May 2000, and the then Prime Minister Simitis endorsed the Authority's decision and ordered the change of the relevant administrative act; the issue was not brought to Parliament' (Alivizatos, personal communication, Feb 2006; see Simitis 2005: 387-390).

In essence, this action reflects a clearly western secular view, viz. that religion is a private matter, and thus religious affiliation should not be included on an identity document. Supporting this development is the view that 'religion is an element in the internal world of the individual. ('..*ws stoixeio tou eswterikou kosmou tou atomou*..'(Alivizatos 2001:

312), a notion which is not widely shared by the majority of Greeks. The antithetical view and central objection is expressed succinctly by Bishop Vlachos: 'For us Greeks, the identity card is not simply a public/formal document, but a document which declares our identity as a people/race' (*Yia mas tous ellenes i taftotita then einai aplws ena demosio eggrafo, alla eggrafo pou dhlwnei thn taftotita tou yenous mas*) (ibid. 38). This reveals another key issue, already noted, differentiating the Greek situation from most other western countries, that of the public/private separation, a characteristic of the secular state, but which has a significantly different articulation in Greek social life (see Molokotos-Lieberman 2003). (In this respect, Greece and Israel provide interesting parallels). The root of the conflict and controversy around the declaration of religious affiliation on an ID lies, in my opinion, in the entangled nature of personal identification where religious and political features are intricately linked.

From late 1999 through 2000 the issue finally reached a climax after the Greek government re-introduced proposals that the new identity card would not specify the religious affiliation of the holder. At this point it reversed promises made earlier by government ministers to church leaders. The Holy Synod (College of Bishops) led by Archbishop Christodoulos, used the media and rallied support for their position. Negotiations with government ministers broke down and finally the clerics suggested that the people be consulted through a referendum. When the government did nothing to promote this proposal, the political clout of the Church was demonstrated. A huge mobilization resulted: street demonstrations took place, public meetings were called and petitions were circulated. Over 3m adults (in a total population of under 11m) signed the petition for a referendum to decide whether information on religion might be offered voluntarily. The government did nothing in response to this pressure while everyone expected that public opinion would reject the new type of ID, widely seen as an infringement of national sovereignty through a European-driven initiative.

Certainly, one element in this reaction was purely political since the Greek government was seen to be succumbing to pressure from outside, reflecting a loss of autonomy, a situation which Greeks do not

easily tolerate. The resistance was noteworthy and shocked the liberal establishment. Flamboyantly exploited by some populist currents in the Church establishment, it brought into focus starkly the problematic situation of Church-State relations in the context of European integration. Paradoxically, many who supported the Church's petition were not observant believers (left-wing and atheist protesters were objecting to the electronic card and the threat of surveillance) while, among the more religious, not all supported the petition as they felt that the Church was overstepping its role in a political arena.

What all this boils down to is a puzzle, and a challenge to any common-sense or simplistic conclusions about modernity and secularization in Greece. The short answer to why the vast majority rejected the government proposal to omit religious affiliation from the new ID cards is that religion in Greece is intimately bound up with national identity even today.[4] It is still widely held that to be a Greek is to be an Orthodox Christian. That this might pose a problem for the small minority of Muslims, Jews and other Christian denominations in the country has not been part of public consciousness until very recently when increasing immigration, illegal and permitted, has effected marked demographic changes. Once a country of emigration, Greece in the past twenty years has become the receiving location for many nationalities, and is grappling with issues of immigration policy and immigrants' rights, formerly quite unknown. Challenges to the notion of Greek national identity are at the forefront of many discussions in the media, and the situation is certainly one of flux at the present time.

Church and State – the Velvet Divorce

The degree of separation of Church and State at the institutional level, and of religiosity at the popular level are two different but related criteria which mark various expressions of democratization and secularization (see Prodromou 1998). Among the changes currently debated are those which challenge, both obliquely and directly, the long-accepted and deeply entrenched structures of Church and State. Greece is still a country where Church and State are not separated, a situation which is considered anachronistic by one section of the population, but by others as an unchallengeable and fundamental feature of the essential Greece. Heated debates take place about whether this is a negative or positive feature of the modern Greek nation-state.

The question then arises: What is entailed in the process of secularization in a country where religion overlaps so closely with national identity? Certainly this differs from the process in those western European states where private and public spheres have a sharper delineation. In the vanguard of the movement to create a secular polity, the Hellenic League for Human and Citizen Rights drafted a Draft Bill in December 2005 entitled *Reorganization of the relationship between State and Church, religious societies and the assurance of religious freedom*. Its sponsors are motivated by a human rights agenda, and the proposals aim at ensuring complete religious freedom for all groups, whatever the faith. The draft bill's proposals encapsulate radical measures in the Greek context, for its proposals separate the spheres of religious authority from those of the secular authority in order to diminish the hegemonic power of the Church of Greece. Some of the articles proposed, for example, were to remove religious phrases from oaths taken in court and in Parliament, to remove the ban on proselytization, to permit cremation as an alternative to burial, and various educational reforms. It was not, however, adopted as a package. Even the political parties who favoured secularization said that the 'political cost' would be too great. The Draft bill gained support for only some of the 20 proposed articles which were to be introduced piecemeal, as parts of other laws (Nikos Alivizatos, personal communication, January 2006).

The important point to note here is the continuing struggle to define the areas of separation between the religious and the civil in Greece, a problem that has specific permutations given its different historical and political experience. The modernization agenda of progressives and liberals is contested by strong resistance to disrupting the status quo. In trying to interpret the reaction in Greece to the proposal for a new form of ID which conceals religious affiliation, it was clear that it touched a sore spot. The omission of religious identity from the ID card was apparently perceived as a threat to national and therefore personal identity. It provoked so great a public outcry that the government had to allow the issue to lapse until the solution was found

Kultur Südosteuropas/ History and Culture of South Eastern Europe vol. 5, München: Slavica Verlag, 81-93.

Clogg, R. 1979. *A Short History of Modern Greece*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Clogg, R. 1992. *A Concise History of Greece*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Clogg, R. (ed.) 2002. *Minorities in Greece. Aspects of a Plural Society*. London: Hurst and Co.

Frazee, C. 2002, 'Catholics' in R. Clogg (ed), *Minorities in Greece. Aspects of a Plural Society*. London: Hurst and Co, pp.24-47.

Georgiadou, V. 1996. 'Kosmiko Kratos kai Orthodoxy Ekklisia: Skeseis thriskeias, koinonias kai politikis stin metapoliteufsi', in X. Lyrintzis, E. Nikolakopoulos and D. Sotiropoulos (eds), *Koinonia kai Politiki: opseis ths Ellhnikhs Dhmokratias 1974-1994*. Athens: Themelio, 247-86.

Hirschon, R. 1993. 'Essential Objects and the Sacred', in S. Ardener (ed.), *Women and Space*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Berg.

Hirschon R. [1989] 1998. *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe: the Social Life of Asia Minor Refugees in Piraeus*.2nd ed. Oxford: Berghahn.

Hirschon, R. 1999. 'Identity and the Greek State : Some Conceptual Issues and Paradoxes', in R. Clogg (ed.), *The Greek Diaspora in the Twentieth Century*. London: Macmillan, 158-180.

Hirschon, R. (ed.). 2003. *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey*. Oxford: Berghahn.

Hirschon, R. 2008 in press. 'Indigenous Persons and Imported Individuals: Changing Paradigms of Personal Identity in Contemporary Greece', in C. Hann (ed.) *Eastern Christianities in Anthropological Perspective*. Berkeley, University of California Press.

Iera Synodos tis Ellados. 2000. *Ekklisia kai Taftotites*. Athens: Ekdosis Kladou Ekdosewn Epikoinwniakis kai Morphotikis Yphresias ths Ekklisias Ellados.

Kitromilides, P. 1989. 'Imagined Communities and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans', in M. Blinkorn and T. Veremis (eds.), *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality*. Athens: Sage, ELIAMEP, 23-65.

Kostopoulos, T. 2003. 'Counting the "Other": Official Census and Classified Statistics in Greece (1830-2001)', in *Jahrbücher für Geschichte und Kultur Südosteuropas History and Culture of South Eastern Europe*, vol. 5, München: Slavica Verlag, 55-78.

Lixouriotis, I. 1986. *Koinonikes kai Nomikes Antilipseis gia to Paidi ton Proto Aiona tou Neoellinikou Kratous,* (Social and legal perceptions of the child during the first century of the Neohellenic state). Giannena, Athens: Dodoni , 329-330.

Molokotos-Lieberman, L. 2003. 'Identity Crisis: Greece, Orthodoxy, and the European Union', *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 18(3): 291-315.

Pollis A. 1992. 'Greek National Identity: Religious Minorities' Rights and European Norms', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 10(1): 171-95.

Prodromou, E. 1998. 'Democracy and Religious Transformation in Greece: an Underappreciated Theoretical and Empirical Primer', in P. Kitromilides and T. Veremis (eds), *The Orthodox Church in a Changing World*. Athens: ELIAMEP, Centre of Asia Minor Studies, 99-153.

Romanides, I. 1975. *Romiosyny*. Thessaloniki: Ekdoseis Pournara.

Sherrard, P. 1959. *The Greek East and the Latin West*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Simitis, K. 2005. *Politiki yia Mia Dhmiourgiki Ellada 1996-2004*. Athens: Ekdoseis Polis.

Stathopoulos, M. 2005. 'Prosopiki Katastasi kai Thriskeftikes Epiloges', Unpublished manuscript. Athens: Hellenic League for Human Rights.

Stavros, S. 1996. 'Citizenship and the Protection of Minorities', in K. Featherstone and K. Ifantis (eds), *Greece in a Changing Europe: Opportunities and Constraints*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Tsitselikis, K. 2004. 'Personal Status of Greece's Muslims: a Legal Anachronism or an Example of Applied Multiculturalism?', in B.-P. R. Aluffi and G. Zincone (eds.), *The Legal Treatment of Muslim Minorities in Europe*. Leuven: Peeters.

Vlachos, I. 2000. *Taftotita kai Taftotites*. Livadia, Monastery of the Birth of the Theotokos.

Ware, K. 1983. 'The Church: a Time of Transition' in R. Clogg (ed.), *Greece in the 1980s*. London: Macmillan, 208-230.

Ware, K. 2002. 'Old Calendarists' in R. Clogg (ed.), *Minorities in Greece. Aspects of a Plural Society*. London: Hurst & Co, 1-23.

www.tns-global.com. Tniscap poll, released 16 November 2005.

Zürcher, E.J. 1993. *Turkey, a Modern History*. London: I.B.Tauris.

Minorities – Rights and Wrongs: Leslie Paul and the Deployment and Payment of the Clergy

Mark Chapman

FIRST, a word of warning: this is not an article about multiculturalism. Instead it is about the character of Christianity, a religion which, as I shall suggest, is all the better for being a minority religion. But since what I am saying is unusual, especially for a member of the Church of England, I shall spend most of my time discussing the alternative.

In 1964 the journalist and theological educator, Leslie Paul (1905-85), and founder of the Woodcraft Folk, published his celebrated Report, *The Deployment and Payment of the Clergy*.[1] Its 135,000 words represent the first serious methodical attempt to map the geography and finance of the Church of England.[2] This research was vital, since although some of the grossest abuses and inequalities had been removed through the work of the Ecclesiastical Commission in the 1830s and '40s, the Church had never been subjected to a rationally thought through reform of its antiquated systems of patronage and finance. Despite energetic church-building programmes from the early nineteenth century onwards there were still huge discrepancies between the numbers of people being served by a clergyman. In the countryside many clergy ministered in very small villages, while those in the cities often worked in parishes of tens of thousands.[3]

Given the huge population shifts in the post-War period, the parochial system appeared under strain. Most importantly this had resulted in what Paul called 'urban failure'.[4] In the Report he cites many statistics showing decline in the numbers of people attending

[1] *The Deployment and Payment of the Clergy* (London: Church Information Office) 1964.
[2] On the problems of Paul's use of statistics, see Robin Gill, *The Empty Church Revisited* (Aldershot: Ashgate) 2003, 161.
[3] *Deployment*, 58-80.
[4] *Deployment*, 77.

churches. At the same time, however, he emphasised the latent religiosity of Englishmen and women, even of those living in the city: few people refused to declare an explicit religious allegiance to a denomination; relatively few babies remained unbaptised; and there were very few non-religious funerals. Although on first sight the statistics on decline might seem gloomy, the Report retains a strong note of optimism. In the conclusion to his main statistical survey, Paul wrote:

> A majority still declare themselves Church of England and their recourse to it for the basic rites confirms their allegiance is just that much more than nominal. We have the right to deplore our failure to bring this formidable group to church, or their failure to come, but we cannot ignore it. Its potentiality and its goodwill remain. The overall conclusion must be that however much the Church may be oppressed by a sense of decline, or of national apostasy, there remains a broad platform of faith and works which makes possible its renewal and recovery.[5]

Here the legacy of Christendom is strong: what Grace Davie calls 'vicarious memory' is still clearly supported by Paul's statistics. Even though the regular liturgy is enacted *on behalf of* the people, and even though they may not attend churches regularly and entrust their management and organisation to the professionals and to the committed, they nevertheless still use the churches' services when required, particularly during moments of personal crisis or transition. For the most part, religion is enacted on behalf of the people who give the churches passive support, and who are happy to be associated with their prayers. This means that the label 'Christian' is, as Paul suggests, more than purely nominal. This general pattern of northern European religion, however, presents obvious problems: the maintenance of passive support becomes crucial for the survival of churches. Without it there will be a form of religious amnesia which can lead to a loss of memory. Without passive support, religion will become something for the aging minority who like that sort of thing but completely dispensable for the bulk of the population. As Davie writes: 'religious institutions cannot function without the passive acceptance of larger numbers in the population and that the future of religion in Europe will depend very largely on the complex relations between the two'.[6]

[5] *Deployment*, 33.
[6] Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 2000, 80-1.

Paul recognised this problem of the maintenance of the religious tradition or memory. He saw it as caused principally by the effects of the population explosion brought about by what he called the 'second industrial revolution'.[7] This had unsettled the traditional patterns of community, and meant that church structures had to be adapted to meet the changed circumstances. Population growth was clearly not evenly distributed and the resources of the past no longer met the needs of the present. Paul consequently suggested a number of solutions, particularly in relation to the changing demography of declining inner cities and growing, but anonymous, suburbia. His solutions were primarily structural. For instance, in addressing the fact that clergy frequently felt unsupported and isolated both in towns and in the countryside, he recommended the establishment of clergy teams ('colleges of clergy') and the wholesale reform of patronage, freehold and the parochial system so that ministry could be rationalised to meet the needs of a changing society.[8] The Report's sixty-two recommendations were deeply influential on the development of the Church, even though many were watered down through the process of implementation by the group chaired by Canon W. Fenton Morley.[9] While incomes were equalised, patronage and freehold remain to this day, even though both have declined through the expansion of Team Ministry.

Demography among clergy and the general population provided the fundamental premise of the Report. This meant that the chief remedies were based both on redistribution of clergy and expansion of their numbers. In a remarkable graph, the Report suggested that there would need to be about 7,100 extra clergy by 1971 to meet projected population growth, and also to reduce the size of benefices to no more than 5,000 people. In one of his most optimistic projections, Paul went even further, however, suggesting that the real need was for one clergyman for about every 2,500 people. This would have led to nearly 30,000 full-time clergy by the year 2001.[10] This would in turn require a

[7] *Deployment*, 35.
[8] *Deployment*, 210-14.
[9] *Partners in Ministry: Being the Report of the Commission on the Deployment and Payment of the Clergy* (London: Church Information Office) 1967.
[10] *Deployment*, 163.

significant rise in the numbers of ordinations and redeployment of resources to training institutions.

The concept of Team Ministry (established through the Parochial Measure of 1967) was predicated on these sorts of predictions: in practice, the idea of a college of clergy sharing their gifts and pooling their talents has become a very rare luxury. Paul's predictions proved disastrously wrong. Ironically, perhaps, the number of clergy ordained in the Church of England fell for the first time ever in 1964 (the year of the publication of the Report) from its all time high in 1963 when 636 men were ordained. By 1970 this number had fallen to a mere 437. Between the same years confirmations had declined from 27% to 19.7% of the population aged between 12 and 20.[11] Paul turned out to be hopelessly optimistic.

In a collection of essays published ten years after his Report, Paul discussed the continued decline in church attendances in the cities: his diagnosis of the problem remained shaped by the standard theory of the 'unholy city', an explanation which has shaped much thinking on secularisation.[12] The basic thesis is straightforward: urbanisation, particularly following the industrial revolution, uprooted people from the more stable village environment which had been upheld by traditional religious practices. In a lyrical passage about funerals from his *Stripping of the Altars* Eamon Duffy offers an excellent if rather romanticised illustration of the stability of pre-industrial society:

> Funerals in late medieval England were intensely concerned with the notion of *community*, a community in which the living and the dead were not separated, in which the bonds of affection, duty, and blood continued to bind. The means of this transaction between the living and the dead was charity, maintained and expressed in prayer. The dead, whose names were recited week by week in the bede-roll at the parish mass remained part of the communities they had once lived in, and the objects they left for use in the worship of that community preserved their names and evoked the gratitude of the living towards them.[13]

Such a form of close-knit and stable community was dissolved by the far looser social networks of industrial society. Describing this process

[11] Figures in Leslie Paul, *A Church by Daylight* (London: Geoffrey Chapman) 1973, 184-5.
[12] See, for example, A. D. Gilbert, *The Making of Post-Christian Britain* (London: Longman) 1980.
[13] Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven: Yale University Press) 1992, 474-5.

of what he calls 'societalization', Bryan Wilson wrote: 'Human life is increasingly enmeshed and organised, not locally, but societally (that society being most evidently, but not uniquely, the nation state).'[14] With the rise of the cities what sociologists called 'community' had changed into 'society'. While the theory of the secularising trends of urbanisation has been challenged by some – most recently by Callum Brown[15] – its basic shape has been maintained by most sociologists and historians, even if there has been some debate over the particularly critical moments in decline.[16] Leslie Paul certainly upheld the theory: the problems facing the church today, he claimed, stemmed from the move 'from village society to the ghettoes of the industrial revolution where it was a psychological mockery as well as a social impossibility to worship'.[17]

While he recognised there could be no simple remedy to the decline of the churches, Paul's proposed cure was based on the need for the churches to supply what was missing from the unholy city. Any solution would have to understand the conditions in which modern people live. Using a form of rhetoric which has continued into the present day, Paul criticises the emptiness of materialism and consumerism, which, he felt, could not hope to satisfy the unspoken need for spirituality latent in the population. This task of paying attention to the population became the major task of the churches:

> One may speak of the strident, secular life of the great cities as inimical to the cultivation of religious experience and Christian devotion. And so, one lets the Church off the hook. On the other hand, and as expressed by its deployment system, one might speak of the Church as a whole, as *unable to pay attention to, incapable of focusing upon*, the urban scene because of the impediment of its historical forms.[18]

Although he did not put it straightforwardly, Paul's suggestion for the future of urban ministry seems to have been to redirect resources to the

[14] *Religion in Sociological Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1982, 154.
[15] Callum Brown *The Death of Christian Britain* (London: Routledge) 2001.
[16] Hugh McLeod offers a particularly judicious reading in *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 2007; see also Callum Brown, *Religion and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Harlow: Pearson Longman) 2006.
[17] *Church by Daylight*, 182.
[18] *Church by Daylight*, 187.

city so that the church could understand the needs of the urban population, and so that at the same time the church could be understood by its inhabitants. Appropriate patterns of ministry could then be created that would re-establish the local community through that 'delicate creation of trust and understanding'.[19]

Faith in the City

Twenty-one years after Leslie Paul published his widely-read Report (which sold 11,000 copies within a fortnight after its publication), the General Synod published another highly influential report, *Faith in the City*. In many ways it takes Paul's themes further. The demographic trends he had predicted continued, particularly in the inner-city, which had led to widespread poverty and social exclusion as well as huge inequalities between the rich and the poor. The problems of material prosperity highlighted by Paul, however, had given way to a different form of alienation present in what were called Urban Priority Areas (UPAs), which were identified by various social indicators (such as unemployment, single-parent households and overcrowding).[20] The report discusses the role of the church and its apparent irrelevance in many parts of the inner-city (e.g. §2.3). As with the Paul Report there are lengthy discussions of the deployment, financing and training of clergy, as well as an analysis of the 'middle-class' character of most ministers (e.g. §2.18). What are called Local Non-Stipendiary Ministers are proposed as a possible solution to this particular problem (§§6.31-6.55). Worship too 'must emerge out of and reflect local cultures' (§6.101) rather than simply maintain a traditional middle-class pattern of prayer.

In distinction to the Paul Report, *Faith in the City* contains a theological chapter which seeks to root concern for the poor and dispossessed in the Christian tradition. It also focuses on the need to engage in appropriate ways with the spirituality and educational abilities of those living in UPAs. The leading premise is that God is present already in the city especially among the marginalised and dispossessed: what is desperately needed is that the church devote its resources and

[19] *Faith in the City*, 185.
[20] *Faith in the City*, 10.

energies to revitalising ministry and mission in these areas in order to reveal this latent tendency. In a purple passage (and a very long sentence) the Report suggests:

> We believe that God, though infinitely transcendent, is also to be found, despite all appearances, in the apparent waste lands of our inner cities and housing estates; that men and women are created to glorify God in and through his creation and to serve their fellow human beings in the power of his love; that, even if material values must always be subordinate, salvation involves, not indifference to, but a proper stewardship of, material things; that the city is not to be shunned as a concentration of evil but enjoyed as a unique opportunity for human community, that the justice of God, as revealed in Scripture, is a standard by which all human institutions must be judged; that society, in our fallen world, cannot be purged of its imperfections by careful planning, maintenance and repair (necessary though these are) but requires redemption through suffering and self-giving undertaken in solidarity with Christ; that the gospel, when faithfully proclaimed in word and deed, effects a transformation of individual lives, of families and of communities, and that the Church has a responsibility at all these levels; that St Paul's injunction, 'to be subject to one another' (Eph. 5.21) implies finding means, both personally and in the institutions of Church and state, to receive the gifts and attend to the voices of our ethnic minority communities; that the Holy Spirit is at work in the churches of our cities as he is elsewhere; that the hope given to us in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ can never be quenched.[21]

The church's duty is thus to attend to the spiritual and material needs of its inhabitants, as well as to awaken in them a sense of the need for redemption by means of a suffering and self-giving solidarity. Even though they are important material solutions in the last analysis are empty; the missing spiritual dimension can be supplied by a suitably reformed church.

Some fallacies

Despite the gap of over twenty years, what emerges from these two reports is a surprisingly similar picture of Christianity and of the Church of England. First, the premises of both reports are based on universal demographic data. Church statistics are set against national statistics: this means that mission and ministry strategy is derived from a perception of the nation as at least latently Christian. All people are regarded

[21] *Faith in the City*, §3.45 (70).

as created in the image of God and therefore in some sense Christian and members of the church (whether they know it or not). In *Faith in the City* their knowledge would be awakened through the transformation of their lives through both advocacy and social transformation. The Paul Report took a more structural approach, suggesting the need to understand the context and to supply greater manpower to the unchurched areas of the inner city – this was a widely held solution at the time. John Robinson, much of whose theology assumed that real Christians were to be found primarily outside rather than within the church, also thought that 'releasing 1000 clergy to work in urban parishes would increase 100000 communicants in urban areas'.[22] Secondly, the assumption behind both reports is that people are basically religious. While there is not usually an explicit understanding of Christianity among the inhabitants of the cities, there is nevertheless, according to *Faith in the City*, a 'common belief in God' which needs to be nurtured so that it develops into what it calls an 'authentic Christian faith'.[23] In short, the Report claims, the British are a 'believing people' (a theme which Grace Davie later developed at length in *Religion in Modern Britain*.[24]

The principal assumption undergirding both reports is emphasised by the subtitle of *Faith in the City*: 'A Call for Action by Church and Nation'. Their fundamental approach hardly differs in kind from what was presented by some of the great Victorian writers on church and state, most importantly Thomas Arnold: 'I would gladly ... include in the Church', he wrote, 'all nominal Christians, and by so doing we should greatly increase its efficacy, and it might be raised gradually'.[25] More recently Paul Avis has maintained something similar: he emphasises a national church as a bulwark against congregationalism and as a witness to the holistic mission of the Church of England which exists for all people regardless of their background or levels of belief. Indeed, Avis suggests, 'it is the catholicity and apostolicity of the Christian Church, not any prejudice or sentiment about nationality, that drives

[22] 'Manpower and the Ministry' in *Prism* 80 (December 1963), 18.
[23] *Faith in the City*, §3.39.
[24] *Faith in the City*, §3.38; see Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell) 1994.
[25] Thomas Arnold in David Nicholls, *Church and State in Britain since 1820* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul) 1967, p. 38.

its mission to the whole of a people, a nation'.[26] The logical extension of this understanding, he suggests, is establishment, or what he calls 'the cream on the cake'. Establishment is 'the recognition of the contribution of Christian ministry to the health of civil society [that] can provide a basis for the pastoral responsibility of the Church at large'.[27] Even those from other faith backgrounds, he claims, are likely to favour the continued historic establishment of the Church of England as a defender of national morality and English virtues against the evils of secularism.[28]

Paul Avis does not takes matters much further than what was suggested in Henry Chadwick's report of 1970, *Church and State*, which recommended (and basically achieved) a gentle reform of establishment which would continue to tie the Church of England to the State, while also allowing it a significant amount of independence. The Commissioners consequently suggested:

> The people of England still want to feel that religion has a place in the land to which they can turn on the too rare occasions when they think that they need it; and they are not likely to be pleased by legislation which might suggest that the English people as a whole were going unChristian.[29]

Valerie Pitt: the great dissenter

Unlike many church reports there was a significant amount of opposition from within the Commission itself. While there were criticisms of the specific recommendations,[30] one Commissioner, Miss Valerie Pitt (1925-1999), was more concerned with the fundamentals of Christianity. Throughout her life Pitt, who was a lecturer in English at what became the University of Greenwich, was frequently a lone prophetic voice speaking the unspeakable, often from the chamber of General Synod. In her 'Memorandum of Dissent' added to the Report, she out-

[26] Paul Avis, *Church, State and Establishment* (London: SPCK) 2001, 17.
[27] Avis, *Church, State and Establishment*, 16.
[28] Avis, *Church, State and Establishment*, ch. 8.
[29] *Church and State: Report of the Archbishops Commission* (London: Church Information Office) 1970, 65.
[30] See Peter Cornwell, *Church and Nation* (Oxford: Blackwell) 1983.

lined the understanding of the Church which she though had been adopted throughout the Report:

> What it believes is that the historic relationship of Church and people in England is still live, if only as a sentiment inhibiting change, in our society. The Englishman's traditional indifference or antipathy to the Church's institutions, his habitual neglect of its common worship is, though regrettable, irrelevant. Established religion, the parish church, bishops in the House of Lords, the Thirty-nine Articles, are so much his cultural context that, unless he explicitly opts out of membership and into another religion, he is, he must be, deep down C. of E. Indeed he says he is to pollsters and on the appropriate forms. The fact that he also expresses views totally at variance with any form of historic Christianity is a minor difficulty: what matters is the continuance and preservation of this 'folk religion'. The members of the Commission see it in various ways - as the aliveness of the Christian past in our less faithful present, as a true but inarticulate belief wickedly undervalued by sectarian intellectuals, and as a pastoral opportunity. Whatever it is, this cultural Anglicanism, the 'givenness' of Christianity in English life would be deeply affected, they believe, by radical changes in legal Establishment.[31]

It is worth noting, if also perhaps surprising, given the date of publication, just how close this analysis resembles far more recent discussions of the nature of religion. Pitt goes on to ask a simple question: 'But is it true?' 'It would be surprising,' she continues:

> or rather culturally impossible, if after so many centuries, the nation had taken no imprint in the forms and its moral style from its association with the Church. Only unlike the Commission I am not persuaded that what remains of this C. of E. idiom in our way of life represents a lively faith in the gospel that it is, any longer, a pastoral opportunity or an effective sentiment outside the Church's own institutions. This is the crucial difference between myself and the Commission, and it is not so much a difference about the interpretation of statistics as of experience and theology. All of us readily admit that the strength of cultural Anglicanism is more evident in some areas and classes than it is in others, but of us who work and live in great conurbations, or among the young, the argument that the doings of the Church of England are central in the lives of our colleagues, our families and our acquaintances is just unreal ... The encounter with the third generation of urban indifference, documented right back to the Victorian Church, gives a slightly different picture of the place of the Church in English life. In this a man who involves himself with the Church, who practises his faith does so not with but against the conventions of society and increasingly against the grain of his cultural inheritance. He is forced to make a choice and that, I believe, is no desperate ill. For in fact Christianity is not a folk or a tribal religion, it is not bred into us by the traditions of our ancestors. It is a gospel, a revealed religion, demanding an active and personal assent. To be a Christian a man must himself answer – *Jesus is Lord*. Writing 'C. of E.' on a form is not quite enough.[32]

The principal issue here is over the nature of Christianity: for Valerie Pitt there is a profound difference between the residual Christianity embodied in the historic constitutional settlement maintained by the *Church and State* report, and the real religion of what might be called 'traditioned belonging'. Indeed it is possible to see the Report as representing a kind of longing for a dying Christendom: Pitt sees such nostalgia as characterised by 'folk memories of life in small, close-knit local communities – ways of life now outside the experience of millions'.[33] Even though it is usually a tacit assumption, this longing for a universal Christian culture is equally true of both the Paul Report as well as *Faith in the City*. But it also shapes much recent political and religious rhetoric: it is behind the ideas of community cohesion, as well as the promotion of a vague ideal of Britishness which has been one of Gordon Brown's most often repeated ideas (and which I have discussed at length in *Doing God*).[34] For the most part, however, religion is equated with a sub-culture which provides something called 'community', and which governments seek to utilise for the ends of social order and harmony, especially among the members of the new religious communities.

In her response to Leslie Paul's report in the journal *Prism*, which functioned as the house journal of the so-called South Bank Theology, Valerie Pitt offered a trenchant criticism of what she called his 'delusions of a past grandeur'. She went on:

> His kind of nostalgia is the sad surprising thing about all our reformers who see clearly enough that there is a ruin but hope against hope, somehow, to restore it, to see the kingdom realised and alienation of the people removed. *Prism* itself has followed hard in this grail quest, for somewhere it thinks there must be a magical vessel, a charm which will restore the wasteland and undo what is done. Pop liturgies, discussion groups, team ministries, public relations – something will do it.

[31] *Church and State*, 72-3.

[32] *Church and State*, 73-4.

[33] *Church and State*, 74.

[34] *Doing God: Religion and Public Policy in Brown's Britain* (London: DLT) 2008, ch. 3.

> Or if we repeat the word love often enough and in capital letters surely that will kiss it all better. It really is no go. What's done can't be undone by an abracadabra. If that past and this present are to be redeemed we have to carry this cross, to live with the situation as in fact it is.[35]

For Pitt, the facts of the situation meant that all the experiments of the 1960s with their religionless Christianity and liturgical renewal were ultimately doomed to fail. Quite simply, she held, Christianity was not a universal religion, but a religion for a minority of disciples: the liberal assumption of a primal religious consciousness which had underpinned so much theological thought for so long had proved to be a false move. Religion was not a vague intrinsic or folk feeling but instead – as any prophetic dissenter already knew – it required commitment and belonging. For Pitt – and for other like-minded Anglicans – the Church came first rather than a vague more or less religious form of nostalgic piety.

The contemporary situation

Of course, since this time Britain's cities have changed beyond recognition: there are now significant numbers of practitioners of non-Christian religions. At the same time the decline noted by Leslie Paul has continued in virtually all churches except those with a strong ethnic component (which includes the Church of England in some urban areas including London). Without going into statistical detail it is likely that the number of people who identify in any way with Christianity has fallen to 53 per cent. At the same time the number of people who say that they would never attend a church under any circumstances, except for a funeral or wedding, is something like 60 per cent of UK adults.[36] What this means is that active Christianity is a minority religion, and even residual Christianity is only slightly over half the adult population. The assumption of most Christian writers when dealing with other religions is that Christianity is in some sense dominant. While this is true to the extent that it has profoundly shaped history and culture, it is also

[35] *Prism* 99 (July 1965), 18-19.
[36] Jacinta Ashworth and Ian Farthing, *Churchgoing in the UK: A research report from Tearfund on church attendance in the UK* (London: Tearfund) April 2007 at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/03_04_07_tearfundchurch.pdf>

crucial to recognise that its contemporary status is marginal, even if still relatively less marginal than many other groups. It is not clear to me, however, that many Christians, especially those in leadership positions, have recognised this sense of marginalisation.

For example, the recent *Faithful Cities* Report still assumes the potency and power of so-called faith groups in shaping social policy. Indeed they are seen to be the most important forces in the construction of community. They are crucial for building up a particular form of social capital that has been classified as 'faithful capital'.[37] The underlying theology of the Report rests on the importance of community and the creation of a more altruistic form of moral sense than that advocated by secular agencies: churches and other faith communities are in it for the long term. The Report states: 'Our case is that it is this "moral sense", maintained by religious teaching and a form of religious discipline, which proves such a potent source of transformation of individuals and neighbourhoods.'[38] While this is obviously true in that many groups are inspired by religious ideals and commitments in their social action – which it is sometimes difficult to distinguish from their beliefs – at the same time there is a sense of undue optimism in the Report about the influence of religious groups. Large numbers of social schemes are consequently discussed but there is remarkably little on the life of religious communities: all that emerges is a highly idealised picture of what it calls 'healthy religion', which amounts to an open and humble group of people promoting tolerance and embracing the stranger.[39] While this is no doubt laudable, what is conspicuously lacking is a detailed discussion of what it is to live as a religious minority, including as a Christian, in a culture dominated by other values, frequently imposed by bureaucracies which are often perceived as unaccountable. There is somehow an assumption that faith is still a central part of the life of most people and vital for promoting something called the 'common good'.[40]

[37] The Report from the Commission on Urban Life and Faith, *Faithful Cities: A Call for Celebration, Vision and Justice* (London: Church House Publishing and Peterborough: Methodist Publishing House) 2006, §§1.11-1.16.
[38] *Faithful Cities*, §8.18.
[39] *Faithful Cities*, §8.32-3.
[40] *Faithful Cities*, §8.53.

What is not questioned in *Faithful Cities* is whether there is any longer a 'common good', nor indeed is there much discussion of what it might look like. In a country where there are many different religions and a majority who are simply not religious at all (even if they are not necessarily hostile to religion) the inherited and unquestioned sense of right and wrong which characterised the 'common good' in the past is at the very least opened up to debate. Despite protests it may even be a redundant concept: Christians – and, for that matter, members of other faiths – may well have an understanding of the 'common good' of all people which might be quite different from the 'common good' decided upon through the democratic process. The assumption, which underpinned so much of the Church of England's thinking, that all people were really Christian, whether they liked it or not, is nothing more than a piece of wishful thinking – or what Valerie Pitt called a piece of nostalgia (a bit like Gordon Brown's concept of Britishness). Similarly, writing about the 1960s in contrast to the inter-war years, Matthew Grimley claimed: 'The belief that society could, or should, pursue a single, broadly agreed version of virtue, or the good life, was abandoned.'[41]

In his lecture at the Royal Courts of Justice in February of 2008 the Archbishop of Canterbury discussed how Islamic communities and lawyers might be able to exercise a limited and specified jurisdiction in certain matters relating to family law: they would do so within the overarching legal framework of the state. In part, this was provoked by his conviction, which is rare in a Church of England bishop, that Christianity itself is a minority religion. While Christians might not be able to impose their will on the rest of society, there was a sense in which their first concern was with their vocation to live within their communities of discipleship as a witness to an alternative form of life. And this might mean conflict with the established norms, for instance, about abortion or euthanasia.[42]

It is important to note that this understanding by Williams of Christianity as a minority religion is no recent development: his political theology was shaped by the Jubilee Group of which Valerie Pitt was

[41] Matthew Grimley, *Citizenship, Community, and the Church of England: Liberal Anglican Theories of the State Between the Wars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press) 2004, 210.

[42] See 'The Judgement of the World', in *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell) 2000, 35.

a prominent member. In 1983 Kenneth Leech and Rowan Williams published a collection to celebrate 150 years of the Oxford Movement, called *Essays Catholic and Radical*.[43] Pitt's essay is a typically trenchant critique of much of the lacey and frilly side of Anglo-Catholicism. And it is equally critical of nostalgia and romanticism. Singling out Walsingham as a bizarre medieval fantasy, she asks: 'How is [the modern pilgrim] not to identify Christian prayer with that fantastical existence, and so distort it?' She goes on: 'The real fault is that the Tractarians, unconsciously, made religion a life substitute rather than a life revealer, not a way into the splendours of the visible world but a way out'.[44] What she seems to have in mind as the locus of authentic Christianity is the idea of a church struggling against the odds to live up to its calling. Indeed those called out to form a church were inevitably a minority.

For Valerie Pitt, and much later for Rowan Williams, it was pointless to suppose that there was much alternative to minority status. And here the influence of Donald Mackinnon is strong. At his most prophetic he claimed in his 1968 Gore lecture that Christians who focus on their churches will inevitably be 'flirting with obscurity'.[45] Indeed, churches may well be pushed to the margins, or even into the ghetto. Where some lamented, however, MacKinnon rejoiced: this was precisely where the church should be. As he put it with typical hyperbole: 'I would ask, but what of the Warsaw ghetto? That was a place of suffering certainly, but one surely nearer the centre than the periphery of the world's travail.'[46] It is in the ghetto that new life begins. According to Mackinnon, however, where the church so often cultivated a status of invulnerability by siding with the ruling powers or seeing itself as indispensable for the good functioning of society, it inevitably succumbed to the way of Caiaphas.[47] It compromised with power, 'issu-

[43] (London: Bowardean Press) 1983.

[44] 'The Oxford Movement: a case of cultural distortion?', 205-223, here 223.

[45] Donald MacKinnon, 'Kenosis and Establishment' in *The Stripping of the Altars* (London: Fontana) 1969, 13-40, here 34.

[46] MacKinnon, 'Kenosis and Establishment', 33.

[47] MacKinnon, 'Kenosis and Establishment', 29; cf. 'Authority and Freedom in the Church' in *The Stripping of the Altars*, 51-61, here 53.

ing in a devotion to the structures that preserve it'.[48] Yet, he claimed, in its new situation where it has been robbed of inherited status the church is exposed to life, 'stripped of the kind of security that tradition, whether ecclesiological or institutional, easily bestows'.[49] For MacKinnon such a stripping away of security was demanded by the doctrine of Christ, who similarly laid bare the masquerade of human power.[50]

Conclusion

For these radicals – including Rowan Williams – there is a sense in which becoming a minority is part of obedience to the Gospel: there are naturally profound implications for the future of mission and evangelism. In this context it means that the question of the rights of minority religion stems less from any legal protection than from an inevitability which is perhaps inherent in the very notion of discipleship itself. The early twenty-first century may be revealing to us the painful truth that it is simply wrong to believe that Christianity will be anything other than a minority religion. This does not imply that those who are not Christians are inevitably destined to eternal perdition nor alternatively that mission should cease. Instead it shows that Christianity is a very serious thing and not escapist nostalgia. Writing of her own church, Valerie Pitt noted:

> We are, let me repeat, not a Church *of England*. We are a minority body which has to suffer a deserved isolation and needs to withdraw to learn to live as a body. Withdraw? From the nightmare of this shaken clergymen shrink appalled in convocation and the columns of *The Times*: 'We shall become', they say, 'A ghetto'. ... If we withdraw into ourselves, into the limits of our beliefs, there is a risk that we shall see ourselves stagnating in a provincial backwater. This risk is real. ... It is frightening surely, to think of oneself, caught forever in the Parish Communion Culture of the twentieth century Church. ...
>
> [The Anglican's] response, his attitudes, his tastes are the middle-class accumulations of the last hundred years and his Christianity is traditional and suburban, a blend of kindness to neighbours and Scout's honour, pure in thought and word. It will stay so – so long as we interpret the Koinonia to him in the old C of E way as a stabilising social 'fellowship'. ...
>
> To undo the terrifying effects of the Anglican synthesis, all of us have, really, to withdraw into the Church's society, into the cosy circle of the household of faith – which is not in the least like the High Table at King's. Indeed, I daresay for a while it will be dreadfully provincial – like the Lord's life in Galilee.[51]

There is more to Christianity than social capital and the promotion of community stability. But the roughness and complexity of Christian discipleship are hardly likely to appeal to the majority – even if in the long term the witness of such discipleship might shape how all of us live. If that is the case, then becoming a minority religion might be the best thing to have happened to Christianity for a very long time.

[48] MacKinnon, 'Kenosis and Establishment', 33.
[49] MacKinnon, 'Kenosis and Establishment', 34.
[50] Cf. MacKinnon, *Borderlands of Theology* (London: Lutterworth) 1968, 50. See also Rowan Williams, 'Incarnation and the Renewal of Community' in *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell) 2000, 225-38, esp. 234.

[51] *Prism* 99 (July 1965), pp. 19-20.

'Without Confusion and Without Division': Communion and Otherness in the Church and its Relevance Today

Archimandrite Grigorios (Papathomas)

This paper applies the Church's understanding of the dual human and divine nature of Christ to the issue of the strained post-Soviet relationships between the Church of Russia and the Churches of Estonia and Latvia. The author takes as his starting point the Chalcedonian understanding of Christ as human and divine in one person and argues that the Church, as the Body of Christ, enshrines in its very nature a combination of otherness and communion. He argues that these characteristics are undermined by the twin distortions of nationalism and 'ecclesial absorption' which have marred the relations between these churches. This paper previously appeared in The Messenger, *the Journal of the Episcopal Vicariate of Great Britain and Ireland, and is reproduced with the kind permission of the author and the editor.*

The Chalcedonian definition as a description of the Church

THE so-called 'Chalcedonian definition' of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, held in 451, is well known. In opposition to the monophysite heresy,[1] the Council declared Christ to be:

> acknowledged in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way abolished because of the union, but rather the characteristic property of each nature being preserved, and concurring into one person and one subsistence (*hypostasis*), not as if Christ were parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten god, Word, Lord, Jesus Christ.[2]

[1] The heresy that Christ had only one (divine) nature, rather than uniting both human and divine natures.

[2] From 'The Creed of the 150 assembled at Constantinople', J. Stevenson (ed.), *Creeds, Councils and Controversies* (London: SPCK) 1966, 353.

In making this definition, the Council also expressed a paradoxical characteristic of the mode of being, or *hypostasis*, of the locally established Churches throughout the world: they, too, are 'without confusion and without division'. This paradox – or antinomy – is filtered through two theological, ecclesiological (and also canonical) realities: otherness, or alterity, and communion. That is, the existence of local, or locally established, Churches relies on both the affirmation of their otherness in geographical and ecclesiastical terms, *and* on the preservation of unity and communion between them. In other words, the vision of the Council of Chalcedon requires the simultaneous existence of both ecclesial otherness and ecclesial communion as a realisation of the Trinitarian mode of existence of locally established Churches.

Throughout the centuries, this Chalcedonian vision of the Churches, as being at the same time in complete otherness and in complete communion, was changed in two important ways. The changes are so fundamental that even to the present day, the Orthodox Church has never ceased being tempted by two symmetrically balanced distortions of the true nature of the Church: on the one hand turning otherness into autonomy, which leads to the devaluation of ecclesial communion and to isolationism (i.e. division); and on the other hand, the distortion of communion into *confusion* (in the Chalcedonian sense), whereby otherness collapses into absorption.

Division and confusion in the life of the Local Church

Two important components are involved in these distortions of the true nature of the Church. One is the definition of a locally established Church by the principle of ethnicity rather than on its geographical location. The local Church is thus identified by the people it represents and their national autonomy, resulting in a total indifference towards ecclesiastical unity and communion.

The other – and in some ways, opposite – component is the excessive promotion of ecclesial communion in an Orthodox country, in the name of an essentially ethnically-based form of unity, hidden behind the authority of the Church. This leads to the annihilation of the ecclesial otherness of a neighbouring people – even when this has been

already established through canonical ecclesiastic jurisdiction. The result is the absorption of one locally established Church by another, causing *confusion* (again in the Chalcedonian sense) between two locally established Churches.

The first kind of ecclesiological distortion – leading to division – can be observed in the modern 'National Church' which, today, prospers, and undermines the unity of the Orthodox Church. The second, i.e. the absorption of ecclesial otherness in the name of a broader ecclesial unity under on ethnic group, is fully visible in the situation in Estonia and Latvia since 1945. Both the Autonomous Church of Estonia (which existed from 1923 to 1945), and the Autonomous Church of Latvia (which existed from 1936 to 1945) have been absorbed by the Russian Orthodox Church.

The 'National Church' as a source of division

The first distortion we have identified, that of the 'National Church', is certainly present and visible today. It is seen principally in the uncanonical and, in church terms unacceptable, claims of an ecclesial body with nationalistic tendencies within the borders of the State, which, at the same time, exercises a global, 'ethno-ecclesiastical' jurisdiction outside the borders of the State. It is because of such claims that the recent challenge to the historical and canonical title of 'Ecumenical' – as applied to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople – have arisen. These claims have no ecclesiological or canonical foundation, and undermine the canonical order inherited by us from the Tradition. They have the sole purpose of creating a multiple equi-jurisdictional regime throughout the world for national(istic) profit. The result of this is well known. In the whole Orthodox 'diaspora', we find the ecclesiologically grotesque phenomenon of the coexistence in the same city (Paris, for example, among others), completely undermining the Chalcedonian Orthodoxy of unity for each locally established ecclesial body.

Although this problem is obvious and known to Orthodox people throughout the world, the Orthodox all exhibit a common weakness: although all agree the situation is unacceptable, they still cling to their own 'ethno-ecclesiastical' jurisdiction as well as to its expansion, utterly

indifferent to the realisation of the new unified Church in any given territory.

Moreover, a careful reading of the Statutory Charters of the various National Orthodox Churches shows that, what is clearly and universally considered ecclesiologically inadmissible, appears in the Baltic Countries as the clear statutory conviction of the Russian Orthodox Church.[3] One example from the Statutes of the Russian Orthodox Church is sufficient to illustrate this:

> The jurisidiction of the Russian Orthodox Church shall include persons of Orthodox confession living on the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia, Ukraine, Byelorussia, Moldavia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Latvia, Lithuania, Tajikstan, Turkmenia, Uzbekistan and Estonia, and also Orthodox Christians living in other countries and voluntarity joining the jurisdiction.[4]

Estonia and Latvia, of course, are independent states, and consequently are not part of the 'canonical territory' of the Russian Orthodox Church, yet the phrase itself implies that other Orthodox Churches besides the Russian Orthodox Church do not exist, and do not have a right to exist there. This is a key to understanding the problem we have in the Baltic region, since the Russian Orthodox Church does not recognise any other Orthodox Church as a religious entity, nor, by extension, Catholic and Protestant Churches in this region. All these Churches do certainly exist, but on Russian 'canonical territory'.

There is a further problem from the point of view of international law, as these Russian statutes do not recognise Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as independent states, because they constitute part of the 'All Russia' of the ecclesiastical domain. In other words, the Russian Orthodox Church does not recognise the independence and self-government of these states even though the Russian State does, and the fact that she does not is actually recorded within her statutes. How is it possible to have a National Church that declares the territories of different *independent* states as her 'canonical territory', and uses her official constitutional statutes both to claim these territories and to deny the existence of the other indigenous Orthodox Churches?

[3] See my analysis published in *L'Année canonique*, vol. 90 (4-6/2004) 37 ff.
[4] Article I, § 3, Statutes of the Orthodox Church of Russia (2000).

In 1996, the restoration of autonomy to the Orthodox Church of Estonia resulted in a temporary break of communion between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church. This was resolved by the Zurich agreement of 22 April 1996, by which the existence of the Autonomous Orthodox Church of Estonia *and* the diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church in Estonia were both recognised. To the present day, however, the Russian Orthodox Church has never applied this agreement. As the Autonomous Church of Estonia does not exist for the Russian Orthodox church, the agreement counts for nothing.

The Orthodox Church of Estonia existed as an autonomous Church from 1923, when it was granted autonomy by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, following the ratification of the treaty of Tartu (2 February 1920), through which Russia recognised Estonia's independence.[5] But subsequently, recently even, the Russian authorities, both civil and ecclesiastical, never ceased to object openly. According to them, the Estonian state has existed only since 1991, and Stalin's army never occupied the country. Rather, it even liberated it from Nazism, and Estonia continues to be canonical territory of the Patriarchate of Moscow, despite the fact that the Church of Estonia was never included within the borders of the Tomos of Autocephaly (1589) of the Church of Russia.

[5] Despite repeated affirmations by the Russian Orthodox Church, it should be noted that in 1920, Patriarch Tikhon only granted Estonians an internal autonomy of a diocesan form, mainly in the domains of pastoral, educational and economic administration; he never promulgated a *Tomos*, and never granted a real and canonical autonomy. The only *Tomos* of Autonomy is thus that of 1923. Even if we assume that Russia's recent tenacious claims that *canonical* autonomy was granted by Patriarch Tikhon in 1920 are true, then clearly a new question has to be asked: Why, after the invasion of Stalin's troops in 1944, was autonomy dissolved so violently and brutally, and why was the autonomous Church of Estonia immediately absorbed and replaced by a Russian Diocese under the name 'Russian Orthodox Diocese' on 9 March 1945? If we assume that all this happened purely from a political perspective and *manu militari*, why then was autonomy not restored after 1991 by the Patriarchate of Russia, especially as Patriarch Alexis II originated, ecclesiologically, from Estonia? Instead, in order to recover ecclesiastical assets and to convince the Estonian authorities – without success – that this Diocese was the natural successor of the Estonian Autonomous Orthodox Church, he proclaimed in 1993 a new 'autonomy', *still of diocesan form*, which was even more restrictive than that of Tikhon.

It should be emphasised here that, according to the Tomos of Autonomy of 1923, from 1923 to 1945, *all* the Estonian Orthodox people, both Estonian and Russian, formed a single Church – that of the Estonian Autonomous Orthodox Church. Likewise, this Tomos of Autonomy was reactivated by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in February 1996, after the troubled Soviet period. Thus, it has now been ten years that the Russian Orthodox Church, according to its Statutes, has failed to recognise this autonomous Church, since Estonia is considered to belong it its '*cultural* canonical territory' (*sic*).

Moreover, despite all ecclesiological conciliar declarations, the National Church continues to create dioceses everywhere, on the canonical territory of other locally established Churches. These dioceses are not based on canonical arguments – for there are none – but on arguments which are ethno-cultural and of a sentimental nature, creating the anti-ecclesiological theory of 'cultural canonical territory'. Ultimately, what politics is no longer in a position to carry out, due to international political agreements, is instead assumed by the National Church under the cover of religion, by purely political activity, despite their distinct roles (ecclesiastical and political) having always been clearly defined.

The close collaboration between the Church and the 'exterior political services of Russia', officially inaugurated after the year 2000, was acknowledged by the Patriarch of Moscow Alexis II, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation during a reception on 6 March 2003: 'We work hand in hand', he said.[6] This was confirmed on 15 February 2006 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Serge Lavrov, during a trip to Vienna: 'We are directing common actions with the Patriarchate of Moscow, in order to advance the interests of Russia on the international scene'.[7] Moreover, this takes place while the ROC blames the 'Pre-Chalcedonian Churches' for not accepting the definition of Chalcedon, while we, true to Tradition, have accepted and adopted it completely!

[6] SOP, No. 277 (4/2003) 19; SOP, No. 314 (1/2007) 17.

[7] Quoted from the information agency Itar-Tass; SOP No. 306 (3/2006) 9, and SOP No. 314 (1/2007) 17.

Absorption resulting in confusion (*in the Chalcedonian sense*)

The second distortion of the nature of the Church is the absorption, or assimilation, of the ecclesial otherness of a people, in the name of a fictive ecclesial unity for clearly ethno-centric purposes. This remains hidden and unnoticed to this day, as if bearing out the words of our wise ancestors, that 'truth is difficult to perceive'. Who, today, clearly understands the hardship suffered by the locally established Orthodox Churches in Estonia and Latvia in the last fifty years, when the invasion of Stalin's troops brutally and un-canonically abolished the autonomy of the Church of Estonia and of the Church of Latvia? And all this with the complicity – if not under the direction – of the Patriarchate of Moscow, which claims to adhere to Chalcedonian Orthodoxy. This purely political attempt of national assimilation ('Russification') of Estonians and Latvians and their subjection to the Russian Patriarchate, was attempted in the name of ecclesiastical unity arbitrarily 'proposed' by the Russian multi-ethnic Church.

The Russian Orthodox Church is therefore responsible, in both Latvia and Estonia, for the absorption of the autonomy of a Church and of the ecclesial otherness of a small people taking their first steps towards geographical and political emancipation. The weight of a large people imposes its conditions of public order and public life on a small people, using violence and ideological mechanisms. In this way the smaller people loses its valuable and barely obtained rights, once after the other: freedom, civil and state emancipation, ecclesial otherness and autonomy. It is then the 'justice' of the powerful which writes history; and now, in all our tolerance, this is what history teaches us, leaving the weaker people in the wrong.

The 'justice' of the powerful – a political myth

The same thing was suffered by Greece during its turbulent history, when a handful of Greeks rose against the Ottomans to achieve much sought-after freedom – that same freedom which was unattainable for Estonia and Latvia during fifty years of Soviet occupation. At the time of the Greek uprising, in the nineteenth century, the Austrian Metternich and the three great powers (England, France and [not

accidentally!] Russia) used the same argument: the large and powerful is just, since he is large and has the majority on his side. The small and weak is the ill-willed rebel, who upsets the ***status quo***, and is thus by definition unfair. And so, by letting things be, we accept that only the powerful have the right to live, while the weak must be incorporated, assimilated ... and disappear.

Similarly, according to ethno-ecclesiological arguments, the autonomy of the Churches of Estonia and Latvia never existed in the first place, for the same reasons that the Baltic states 'did not exist', and therefore it is not possible to speak of their abolition and absorption, simply because Estonia has always been the Russian Church's 'canonical territory'.

> For this reason, everything established by Estonian Orthodoxy in its fertile years of free existence and autonomy (1923-1945) had to be Russified and entered into the Mother Church, which proclaimed – with no circumlocutions: 'Everything Estonian is Lutheran – Everything Russian is Orthodox'. In this phrase implicitly lies the dogma of the Russification of the Orthodox Estonian people, but also the betrayal of Chalcedonian Orthodoxy. Consequently, according to this 'dogma', Orthodox people in Estonia [and, indeed the Baltic states generally] are only – or can only be Russian; or, more precisely, to be Orthodox there, one must be Russian. The Estonian people, and the other Baltic peoples, therefore, had to renounce their national identity to become, or at least to appear, Russian.[8]

For a long time, an unrelenting struggle took place to Russify the Churches of Estonia and Latvia, led mainly by clerics. In the process they destroyed anything locally established by Estonian Orthodoxy. And so, the Russian Church liquidated and absorbed the autonomous Churches of the Baltic countries, Churches which belong, canonically, to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, and which received their ecclesiastical autonomy from it in the twentieth century. Today, the Russian Church openly protests because the Ecumenical Patriarchate is intervening in Baltic territories which belonged to the autonomous Church of Estonia before the military Soviet occupation, and under whose jurisdiction they should rightfully be.

Certainly, the relationship linking Russia to the Baltic countries predated the Soviet Union. The Soviets of the twentieth century never

[8] Metropolitan Stephanos of Tallinn and of all of Estonia, 'Our relation to the Patriarchate of Moscow', in *To Vema*, Athens, 5 March 2006, No. 14706, p. A44/88.

forgot the two centuries of the tsar's dominion in these countries; in any case, they were always seeking to extend their influence towards the West. And in spite of internal ideological differences between the two opposite political tendencies, the ambition of expanding their influence towards the West remains a common denominator.

Recently, however, a new element has arisen which changes things significantly and makes a decisive difference. From 1991 onwards, there can be no Russian political claim whatsoever to the Baltic territories, since these now permanently constitute independent states, officially recognised by the global community and the other European states. There is only one possibility left, therefore, for extending influence towards the West: a Russian Orthodox Church conforming to the model of the National Church and all that goes with it. This is why it is now necessary to adopt the new ecclesiological theory of 'cultural canonical territory' – precisely because, owing to political circumstances, what the State is no longer able to carry out on an international leverl through its ideological mechanism, is now carried out by the National Church.

Chalcedon and the 'justice' of the powerful

What is the relationship between the political myth of justice residing with the majority, and Chalcedonian Orthodoxy? Indeed, there is one, as even in the ecclesiastical sphere itself, it would seem that the political argument of larger size has significant weight. In particular, it is characteristic of the theory of the 'Third Rome'.[9] However, as far as the definition of Chalcedon is concerned, otherness is an ontological

[9] The canonical order of the Church does not include locally established Churches in its Diptychs. It places Constantinople-*New* Rome (and by no means Constantinople-*Second* Rome) before the locally established Church of Alexandria, and not a hpothetical 'Third Rome' as a 'historic cure' of the previous two. This poses the question: why the obsession – and this is a unique occurrence – to use the name of a city in the title of the Patriarchate of Russia and not the title which derives from the name of the country in which the locally established Church is found, as is the case with other new Patriarchates (e.g. 'Patriarchate of Romania' and not 'Bucharest Patriarchate', 'Patriarchate of Georgia' and not 'Tiflida Patriarchate' etc.); The Patriarchate of Russia is the only one which has adopted this type of designation – for reasons which are by now understood – and persistently insists on its use.

category, whilst size is clearly a political category, confined to the created and its ephemeral nature. This is why the essential priority of Chalcedon for the founding of a Church is otherness and not size, while for the Patriarchate of Russia, as is by now obvious, the size (of political or ecclesiastical power), and not synodal otherness or identity, decides the fate of a Church. To further prove the point, the absolute priority of other ness as a prerequisite condition for communion was institutionalised, after Chalcedon, by the subsequent Council in Trullo (691):

> Since our brother and fellow-worker, John, bishop of the island of Cyprus, together with his people in the province of the Hellespont, both on account of barbarian incursions, and that they may be freed from servitude of the heathen, and may be subject alone to the sceptres of most Christian rule, have emigrated from the said island, by the providence of the philanthropic God, and the labour of our Christ-loving and pious Empress; we determine that the privileges which were conceded by the divine fathers who first at Ephesus assembled, are to be preserved without any innovations, viz.: that new Justinianopolis shall have the rights of Constantinople and whoever is constituted the pious and most religious bishop thereof shall take precedence of all the bishops of the province of the Hellespont, and be elected by his own bishops according to ancient custom. For the customs which obtain in each church our divine Fathers also took pains should be maintained, the existing bishop of the city of Cyzicus being subject to the metropolitan of the aforesaid Justinianopolis, for the imitation of all the rest of the bishops who are under the aforesaid beloved of God metropolitan John, by whom, as custom demands, even the bishop of the very city of Cyzicus shall be ordained (Council of Trulloa, Canon 39).

And so today, in reality, Chalcedonian conciliar truth as well as canonical Orthodoxy has, consciously or unconsciously, been essentially overturned and abolished.

A historical detail is of interest here. In 1978, Patriarch Alexis II (who was baptised within the Autonomous Church of Estonia), at that time Metropolitan of Tallinn and at the head of the Diocese of Estonia of the Patriarchate of Russia (not the Patriarchate of Moscow as the uncanonical theory of the 'Third Rome' would have it), addressed himself to the Ecumenical Patriarchate to ask for the suppression of the Tomos of the Autonomy of 1923 for reasons of ecclesiastical unity (*sic*). The Patriarch of Constantinople, due to the political situation at the time, simply suspended – and did not suppress – the Tomos, which he

once again put into effect in 1996, once public civil order had been completely restored in Estonia after 1991.[10]

His recourse to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, however, signifies that he recognised that jurisdiction over the Church of Estonia is held by the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Secondly, this act confirms the prior attempt to assimilate and absorb Estonia – and, by extension, the Baltic States – ecclesiologically. Thirdly, had he obtained the 'blessing' of the Ecumenical Patriarchate as the competent jurisdictional authority – and he went as far as attempting to do so – this blessing would have 'facilitated', in the eyes of the Estonians, the process of Russification which had begun in 1945. After all this, how can one say that the Ecumenical Patriarchate has no jurisdiction in Estonia and the Baltic countries? And the Primate of the Russian Church himself, still the same one now as in 1978, seems surprised and perplexed that it should be possible for the Ecumenical Patriarchate to reactivate the autonomy of the Orthodox Church of Estonia, granted in 1996, describing this as 'invading the canonical territory' of the Church of Russia.[11]

Comparison can be made with Albania. Despite the brutal dissolution and uncanonical absorption of the Church of Estonia in 1945, it has never ceased to exist historically, for the same reason as the Church of Albania never ceased to exist: violence and uncanonical action can never destroy a Church locally established, much less its identity. Everyone applauds the rebirth of the autocephalous Church of Albania. In the case of the Church of Estonia, however, some are apprehensive, for although the two cases appear to be the same, there is a small but significant difference. In Albania, the abolishers were atheists, so it was easy to blame them. In Estonia, the abolishers were our Russian Orthodox brothers so, by definition, they must have justice on their side and we are loath to blame them. At this point, the people of the whole Europe can really comprehend the problem.

Finally, to illustrate the extent to which truth can be twisted, it is necessary to point out the following. In 1923, the procedure leading to the international community's recognition of Estonia as an independent state was accomplished. This process took practically three years (1920-23), from the ratification of the treaty of Tartu (2 February 1920), which was also signed by Russia, to 1923, the year when the United States became the last country to recognise Estonia as an independent state. The Ecumenical Patriarchate, in the same year (1923), granted autonomy to two locally established Churches, both following the same historic course in relation to their neighbouring country, Russia: the Church of Finland, and the Church of Estonia – followed by the Church of Latvia a few years later (1936). In fact, looking back in time, the Byzantine people, considering the northern European territories from a geographical perspective, called the Baltic Countries 'the north beyond Russia', a fact which also determines jurisdictionally (*canonically*) Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland.[12] Consequently, these countries, apart from the period of forced military occupation by the Russians, were never part of Russia's territory historically, and certainly not part of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Russia.

Why, then, is there no question posed about the jurisdictional presence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Finland, which is even further away, beyond the Baltic Sea, while there is for Estonia and the Baltic Countries? A particular detail is the key to understanding this difference. In Finland, there was no successful Russian invasion, despite the attempts, and Stalinism was never imposed and did not create a new order of things by spreading Russification. Furthermore, the Archbishop of Finland did not become Patriarch of Moscow to call for the annexation of Finland into the Church of Russia, with all the ensuing manifestations of sentimentalism and emotion seen after the reinstatement of the autonomy of the Church of Estonia (1996). Finally, why should the Church of Finland have the canonical right to exist as an autonomous Church, and not the Church of Estonia? Why is

[10] See the patriarchal and synodal act of 13 April 1978, deciding the momentary suspension of the *Tomos* of 1923, in *Istina* vol. 49 no. 1 (2004), 95.

[11] Cf. Metropolitan Stephanos of Tallinn and All Estonia, *op. cit.*

[12] The Byzantine people are the 'baptisers' of the northern region (*Baltic* region, *Baltic* sea), identifying it by its geomorphologic situation: in Greek '*baltic*' land signifies the land composed of '*baltos*' (= marsh), because of its numerous shallow lakes on territorially flat land. In the whole world, Estonia is the third country, after Sweden and Finland, having most marshland ('*baltos*'), thereby earning the Greek (Byzantine) name of Baltic. This fact is eloquent, and if we 'were to keep quiet, the *marshlands* would cry out' (cf. *Luke* 19.40). Indeed, in the Estonian national and historical Archives, Byzantine missionary activity has been confirmed in 1030 (just 40 years after the baptism of the Russian) in the Baltic countries, notably in Estonia.

there no issue of submission to the Ecumenical Patriarchate for the Church of Finland, but there is one for the Church of Estonia? Why today do they recognise the autonomous Church of Finland but do not recognise the autonomous Church of Estonia? Because today we are reading the history of Estonia as written by the 'justice' of the powerful, the conqueror – who is now re-offending. Furthermore, the whole issue is driven more by emotional and historical reflexes and an underlying nostalgia for dominion, than by current geo-ecclesiastic realities. It is about time for the Patriarchate of Russia – after its final failure to achieve ecclesial absorption – to put an end to its unfair and unjustifiable aggressive stance towards the Orthodox Autonomous Church of Estonia, which bears no relation to ecclesiology and the canonical Tradition of the Church. And now, given the Patriarchate of Russia's ecclesial absorption of the Church of Estonia, which lasted fifty years (1945-95), the former must now answer to the ecclesial pan-Orthodox conscience, and to the whole of Christianity, indeed to all of the history of humanity, for this anti-conciliar, anti-Chalcedonian and uncanonical act.

To conclude, in 1991 Estonia once again recovered its political independence. The Tomos of Autonomy was reactivated on 24 February 1996. At the same time, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, *by economy*, granted the Russian Orthodox Church the possibility of continuing to maintain its own ecclesiastical jurisdiction (treaty of Zurich, 22 April 1996), in the hope that one day there would be only one Orthodox Church in Estonia, as was the case before the brutal dissolution in 1945.[13]

[13] For background to all that has been discussed here, and for other important matters which piece together the puzzle of the ecclesiological issues in Estonia and the Baltic countries, we refer the reader to a small bibliography: (1) Nicholas I. Dovas, *The Estonian ecclesiastical question as an inter-Orthodox question* (Thessaloniki: Brothers Kyriakidis) 2000, in which are published for the first time the official documents concerning this problem; (2) the bilingual book (English-French): Archim, Grigorios D. Papathomas and R. P. Matthias H. Palli), *The Autonomous Orthodox Church of Estonia / L'Église autonome orthodoxe d'Estonie* (Thessalonica: Katerini) 2002, which contains thirty-five documents from 1992 until 2002, as well as studies by professors from Estonia, Finland and Greece); (3) a special issue of the French theological periodical, *Istina*, focused exclusively on this issue, with an analysis: *'Le plaidoyer de l'Église orthodoxe d'Estonie pour la défense de son autonomie face au Patriarchat de Moscou'* (The defence of the Orthodox Church of Estonia's Autonomy against the Patriarchate of Moscow), *Istina*, vol. 49, no. 1 (2004) 3-105. None of these studies has as yet been contested by the Russian Church.

Recent events in Ravenna

Just before this present text was sent for publication, an official public declaration was made by Bishop Hilarion (Alfeyev), delegate of the Russian Orthodox Church, about the Autonomous Church of Estonia, before withdrawing from the meeting of the Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church on 9 October in Ravenna.[14] This declaration was subsequently reiterated in an interview broadcast over the internet on 18 October.[15] I myself was an eyewitness to this statement (not Metropolitan Stephan of Tallinn and All Estonia, as the press reported erroneously and as was subsequently diffused through the Russian news agency *InterFax*, on 10 October.

This statement included two crucial elements:

> 'The so-called Autonomous Church of Estonia has only existed since 1996' and 'this Church was founded by the Patriarchate of Constantinople on the canonical territory of the Patriarchate of Moscow.'[16]

As we have seen, this declaration has no historical or canonical basis, and casts doubt on the position held by the Russian Orthodox Church towards the Church of Estonia, and on the various unofficial declarations that ecclesiastical authorities have made until now. It is evident that the Russian Orthodox delegate has confused two canonical realities which are chronologically and canonically clearly distinct: the Tomos of 1923 and the reactivation of the Tomos (after its suspension in 1978) in 1996. The *Tomos* proclaiming the Church of Estonia dates back to 1923, whilst the *reactivation* of the Tomos, suspended in 1978, dates back to 1996. It is clear that the reactivation of a Tomos does not canonically *create* a locally established Church. It is the Tomos itself which exclusively grants such a status of autonomy. And the Tomos historically and canonically dates back to 1923, as was the case of

[14] See http://www.exarchate-uk.org/Ecumenism.ECUindex.html

[15] See www.orthodoxie.com, 18 October 2007.

[16] *Ibid.*

the Autonomous Church of Finland. After all, an army does not create *canonical* territory.

The famous Russian theologian, Fr Georges Florovsky, said, 'He who knows not history, cannot practice theology'. In addition to theology, I would personally add canonical Tradition. Moreover, one could raise questions about the importance of uninterrupted ecclesial praxis in the comprehension of canonical Tradition. The Church of Russia, Christianised at the end of the first millennium (from 988), has inherited this Tradition, but was relatively late in following its teachings. Many events in the history of the Russian Church show that the Tradition was not fully assimilated.[17] The fact also explains the current political involvement of the Russian Orthodox Church and the anti-Chalcedonian confusion of State policy with the ecclesial domain.

It also explains Bishop Hilarion's contention that the meeting of Ravenna in October 2007 was a failure because the Russian Orthodox Church, which is 'numerically the largest' (*sic*) was not present. And this, despite the positive conclusions of the work of the Joint Commission, already highlighted in the final communiqué issued jointly by the two delegations, Roman-Catholic and Orthodox, on 14 October 2007.[18] If we will remind ourselves of certain declarations by Russian ecclesiastical authorities about the validity of ecclesial canons, which, seemingly, no longer correspond to the modern age, we can observe that the Russian Church's lack of experience of the ecclesiastical and canonical praxis of the first millennium risks deforming the integrity and the coherence of the one and unique Orthodox presence by gradually introducing the idea that Orthodoxy is some sort of Confederation of ethnic Churches, and no longer an ecclesial body spread throughout the world. Such a vision and such a State-based realisation of the Church will one day lead each Church fatally to develop its own theology at the risk of permanently shattering the two thousand year old theological and Patristic heritage of the Orthodox Church. In face of this risk, which is becoming increasingly evident, the Orthodox present

[17] One must remember the unrelenting fashion with which the Church of Russia bargained for the patriarchal title of its Primate, and how it extended its jurisdiction over all of Ukraine in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, soon after the annexation of the whole Ukrainian territory by Tsarist Russia, before arriving at the *anti-Chalcedonian* dissolution and absorption of the Baltic Orthodox Churches.

[18] See http://www.exarchate-uk.org/Ecumenism/ECUindex.html

at Ravenna, unanimously were not swayed by the attitude of the Patriarchate of Russia with regard to the autonomous Orthodox Church of Estonia. And for this reason, the bilateral dialogue really unfolded under normal and positive conditions, despite the departure of the Russian delegation, and the absence of the Bulgarian delegation.

Implications for Europe as a whole

Europe has always been sensitive to issues which it itself has suffered throughout history. These issues concern the existence of small peoples and, by extension, minor Churches. Every time their existence and historic foundation are put in jeopardy, the questions of freedom and of communion arise simultaneously. In other words, the Chalcedonian affirmation of otherness will always and everywhere remain inseparable from the recovery of truth, both human and theological. Orthodox people, but also Christians in general, have a taste of this experience. In the spring of 1946 (a year and a half after the Stalinist invasion of Estonia) an Estonian peasant said to the French Catholic missionary Charles Bourgeois:

> We are such a small country which owes nothing to anything or anyone, and which asks for nothing more than to *remain free* [...] So please, when you see these free people, tell them how much we suffer here. We are happy, free, and asked for nothing from anybody. And now they have taken away everything, and there is no way for our voice to be heard.[19]

This peasant's voice carries a timeless weight in Estonia, in the Baltic countries, in Europe, and in the whole world. We need the discernment of Solomon and the theological foundation of Chalcedon for this voice to be heard – and even more so for it to be understood.

Summary and conclusion

This paper, with the help of the systematic and canonical theology of the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon, has investigated the

[19] Hieromonk Vassily [Charles Bourgeois, SJJ], *My encounter with Russia (Narva-Esna-Tartu-Moscow)* (Buenos Aires 1953) 101 and 146.

problem of ecclesial absorption in the name of the uniformity of the National Church, in particular the absorption of the Churches of Estonia and Latvia, in the name of the uniformity of the National Russian Church. For fifteen years now, this situation has placed a burden on relationships between the Orthodox, and at an ecumenical level. More precisely, the ecclesiological vision of the Council of Chalcedon was the simultaneous coexistence of ecclesial otherness and communion as a clearly paradoxical, or antinomial, feature of the Trinitarian mode of existence of locally established Churches.

In general, however, there is a double and symmetrical divergence from Chalcedon: on the one hand, division arises from turning otherness into autonomy; and on the other hand, absorption of the smaller autonomous Churches takes place, leading to 'confusion' (in the Chalcedonian sense). In the first case, priority is given to being 'without confusion' at the detriment of being 'without division'; whereas in the second, we observe the predominance of 'without division' and the total abolition of 'without confusion' (otherness). From a theological and canonical perspective, it is precisely this latter point that describes, within the Orthodox Church throughout the world, today's ***double*** problem, which appeared – and continues to develop – during the twentieth century in the north of Europe, along the border between the former Soviet Union and the European Union: Karelia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Moldavia.

Findings of a Preliminary Study of the Iraqi Christian Refugees and their Effect on the Syrian Churches

Joshua Kassanis

I was privileged to be able to come to Hassake from 23 July – 23 August 2008 to conduct a preliminary study of the recent migration of Iraqi Christian refugees on the Syrian Churches. I was kindly and superbly hosted by Metropolitan Archbishop Matta Roham, staying in the Syrian Orthodox Archbishopric, St George's Cathedral. Metropolitan Matta Roham assigned as my guide Mr A[1], a man who is deeply concerned with and, personally much involved in the affairs of Hassake's Iraqi Christian refugee population.

My task in this preliminary study was simply to meet a few of the Iraqi Christian refugee families living in Hassake, to listen to what they had to say and so to make a first acquaintance with their situations with particular reference to the Syrian Churches, which I intend to study in detail from the forthcoming academic year. I visited the Iraqi Christians by families in the company of Mr A, and his college, Mr B, an Iraqi refugee himself.

A note on the aid afforded to the Iraqi Christian refugees in Hassake by the Syrian Orthodox Church

There are 252 Iraqi Christian refugee families in the Governate of Hassake. It is primarily the Syrian Orthodox Church who provides aid to these Iraqi Christian refugees in Hassake. The Syrian Orthodox Church provides financial aid, food and many free educational courses. The Church is supported in this very important and much appreciated work by foreign charitable organizations and the local community.

[1] The names of the guides and families are omitted to protect their identities.

A summary of the information received from the families visited

Family 1: Mr C. *Armenian Orthodox. From Baghdad. Had been 1 year in Syria.*

His brother, whose family lived in the same house, had been kidnapped. He showed me his missing teeth, photographs of where he had been whipped with metal canes, and a letter from the hospital reporting fully on his state upon his arrival after having been released. He had been held under water five times and threatened with drowning, if he did not convert to Islam – he refused each time. His kidnappers had at first demanded $250,000 for his release, which was subsequently reduced to $30,000 and had been paid by the owner of the factory where he worked.

Further the family told me that the situation for Christians in Iraq had become untenable: one could not venture out of one's neighbourhood because of the high risk of being killed or kidnapped or robbed; Christians were openly called 'unclean' on the streets; and many churches were destroyed.

Finally, I asked them about their faith, as to how badly it had been shaken by their horrendous experiences. I was told that their faith had simply increased, that they did not by any means blame the Lord, but rather trusted in, and had experienced, his provision.

Family 2: *Mr D. Armenian Catholic (originally Syrian Orthodox). From Mosul. Had been in Syria two-and-a-half years.*

I was told that the Syrian Orthodox Church had been an immense help to him and his family, that, amongst other things, as well as financial aid, his daughters were taking part in hairdressing courses which had been provided free of charge by the Syrian Orthodox Church in Hassake. This family had just been informed by a cousin still in Iraq, that their house had been broken into and looted.

Family 3: *Mrs E. Assyrian. From Mosul, but had also lived in Baghdad. Had been in Syria 1 year.*

I was told that the relations between the different faiths in Iraq had been very good before the war, as if there were no such religious divides. However, once the war had begun sectarian strife came to the fore. Christians suffered greatly. As a result she had left with her family to come to Syria where they could have a break from the threats and violence. She had to make a choice between staying at home where at least there were means of making a living, and fleeing to Syria where she would not be allowed to work, but at least there was safety. She said that safety was of a much higher priority to her than eating.

She struggled to find enough money in Syria to look after her family, but was very grateful for the support she had received from the Syrian Orthodox. In her words, they had given everything. She was very keen to emphasize that there were people in a much worse state than she.

Family 4: *Mr F. Syrian Catholic. From Mosul. Had been in Syria for three years, initially staying in Qamishly for three months when he first arrived, in 2005, and then moving on to Hassake because of a perceived lack of support.*

I asked about how the relations between the Muslims and Christians were before and after the American Invasion. I was again told that the relations were very good and then became very bad. I was told about a priest, Abou Raghid, who was killed outside his church. I was told that all the religious sects in Iraq were subject to kidnappings, not just the Christians.

I was further informed about the conditions of daily life, in that people could work but that they would only go outside when strictly necessary, and that their lives were threatened. The Allied Forces in the country apparently did not manage to do anything significant to make the conditions better.

When asked about what the most pressing need of the Iraqi Christian refugees, I was told without hesitation that it was for them to be granted asylum abroad. I was told that they could theoretically be required to leave Syria at any time and that it was simply not feasible to return to Iraq.

Family 5: *Mrs G. Inter-marriage between the Assyrian and Chaldean Churches. From Mosul but had lived in the (Kurdish) north and most recently lived in Baghdad. In Syria for eight years.*

Husband still in Iraq as an effective prisoner of Kurds involved in the 'Labour Party'. Had problems even during the rule of Saddam Hus-

sein because of the aforementioned Kurdish group. The family is waiting for the father to raise enough money to pay these Kurds to be allowed passage out of northern Iraq to come to his family, now in Syria. Should the father return, the family would then try to gain asylum in abroad. When asked what their greatest need was, I was again told without hesitation that it was facilitation gaining asylum in abroad.

Family 6: *Mr H. Inter-marriage between the Assyrian and Chaldean Churches. From Baghdad. In Syria for nine months.*

He had owned three off-licences in Baghdad. He was told by a masked man to close his shop or die. He immediately shut up his shop, and few days later perceived a couple of men heading towards him and so immediately packed up his belongings and fled with his family for Syria, fearing for his life. His son had just graduated with a degree in Sports Science. He had prospects of becoming a university teacher but now had no work They had stayed in Iraq for as long as possible, holding on to a hope that the situation may have been about to improve.

I was told in answer to my question that relations between Muslims and Christians had been very good before the American invasion, but that since they had deteriorated, not meaning that their former friends had genuinely changed in their attitude towards them, but more that they were scared of speaking to Christians. It was the opinion of this family that Muslims, in their inner-most thoughts, despise Christians because they are 'heretics'. With regard to their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, I was told that He always sends them hope, that He never leaves them, and so they never lose their hope in Him.

Family 7: *Mr I. From Mosul. Had been in Damascus for four months, but found the cost of living far too expensive and so moved to Hassake.*

He had been the owner of a garage. He said that he had been threatened and so fled to Syria. He said that he considered the most pressing need for Iraqi Christian refugees was that of gaining asylum in abroad. He was pessimistic about the future of Christianity in Iraq, in his words, it had failed.

Family 8: *Mrs K*

This family had fled Iraq because they were threatened. I was told that in the Iraqi churches, after the American invasion, the sermons

given had encouraged the Christian community to stay in Iraq despite the threats. Because of these sermons, those clergy who gave them were killed: amongst their number was the Chaldean Archbishop. I was also told that though there was relative safety to be found in the Christian villages inside Iraq itself, the conditions there were so bad (without electricity, gas or running water, as well as there being an effective lack of opportunities to work) that it was far more expedient for the Christian refugee families to flee to neighbouring countries, particularly Syria.

They told me that it was impossible for Christians to live in Iraq, that there was an immense deal of hatred felt towards them on behalf of the Muslim population, for reason of their being 'heretics'. I was thus again told that the greatest need for them was facilitation in finding asylum in the West.

Family 9: *Mr L. Chaldean. From Mosul. In Syria for four years.*

This family had fled to Syria after an attempted kidnapping of one of their daughters, who now works in Syria to provide the family's meagre earnings. The father is unable to work. They also said they were very grateful to the Syrian Orthodox Church for a large amount of assistance. They have a perception that among the Iraqi refugees, Muslim families are being favoured by the UN above Christian families in receiving assistance in gaining asylum abroad. They told me that the Chaldean Church in Hassake was previously sparsely attended, but is now full with Iraq refugee families. They claim this as a testimony to a very strong Christian faith in Iraq.

Family 10: *Mr M. Syrian Catholic. From Mosul. In Syria for eleven months.*

Mr M. had been a professor of Agricultural Engineering, and could speak English to an intermediate level. His eldest son had been specialising in Information Technology at university, but had had to cut short his studies. He too had good English. He had not been able to complete his studies in Syria though, because the family could not afford the fees.

This family were particularly strong in their faith. They used to attend church services regularly despite that fact that they would otherwise stay in because of the lack of security. The mother told me that her father had owned a garage and that he was forced to pay the 'jizya'

(Islamic tax on non-Muslims within the Islamic world). They also told me that they had never left the Lord Jesus Christ, that they had complete confidence in Him.

When asked about their greatest need, I was told that it was for the children's future, which meant, as unanimously attested before, the need for assistance in gaining asylum abroad. They also requested that the Church in England might pray and fast on their behalf.

Summary

I visited ten Iraqi Christian refugee families during my stay in Hassake, Syria, 23 July – 23 August 2008. It gave me a first acquaintance with the experiences, hopes and faith of this greatly suffering people. The families came from various different Christian denominations (Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Syrian Orthodox, Syrian Catholic and the Assyrian Church), and from the localities of either Mosul or Baghdad. Their experiences varied from feeling implicitly threatened, to having a family member kidnapped. All of them had lost their houses and most of their possessions, and all saw the only hope of a future in a new life abroad.

It was clear from the responses I received about the assistance of the Syrian Orthodox Church for the the Iraqi refugees that it was significant and greatly appreciated. Mr A, who is very heavily involved in the Church's aid to the Iraqi refugees, was warmly invited into all the homes we visited because of this work and thus, by proxy, so was I.

On a personal note, I was very encouraged spiritually to be given, without exception, an unshaking testimony of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ when I asked about the spiritual impact of the war.

Pilgimage to the Tur Abdin

The 2008 AECA Pilgrimage was made to the Tur Abdin in South East Turkey. The flavour of the pilgrimage can be obtained from the following extracts of articles written by some of the pilgrims which follow an introduction by Bishop Christopher Chessun, the pilgrimage leader.

HAVING the most of several days in Istanbul including an evening with Fr William Taylor, Chairman of AECA, the highlight of our pilgrimage as we journeyed between the great rivers of the Tigris and Euphrates was undoubtedly Tur Abdin, above the plains of Mesopotamia. The Mountain of the Servants of the Lord is the spiritual and historic heartland of the Syrian Orthodox Church, now so widely dispersed as a consequence of all that has happened there over the past century.

AECA pilgrims formed the largest group as yet from England since the return of relative stability to this part of southeastern Turkey. We were well served by the zeal of our pilgrimage secretary, Fr David Bond, the logistical support of Pax Travel as well as the wisdom and enthusiasm of Fr Stephen Griffith who had been commissioned by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland in the late 1990s to monitor human rights among the small but resolute communities of Suriani Christians in Tur Abdin. Invitations abounded wherever we went to sit, drink tea and converse together and this both revived our spirits and gave us space to ask questions and learn from our hosts. There was much laughter as well as serious reflection as we were challenged to bear each other's burdens.

Above all, staying both at Deir Mor Gabriel and Deir Zafaran we were welcomed as beloved brothers and sisters in Christ receiving generous hospitality and sharing in the monastic cycle of daily prayer and life. Both monasteries, under strong leadership from their abbots, have been renewed in their centuries-old role of guarding the identity of the community of faith and holding it together in common purpose, strengthening contact and communication across the world with those whose spiritual roots remain in Tur Abdin, and welcoming many of them back, especially young pilgrims from the diaspora.

Metropolitan Saliba Ozmen, who welcomed us to Deir Zafaran, had only recently returned from a visit to the UK. We were given safe lodging along with young Suriani pilgrims from Germany and a large group from Mosul, Northern Iraq, who arrived late at night singing chants. At sunrise their priest, Fr Josif, asked for the prayers of fellow pilgrims and said, 'we are within the fire': telling words in the light of the violence and disruption inflicted on many Christian households and families in Mosul in the weeks following our return. At the Common Word Conference, a meeting of leading Muslim and Christian clerics and scholars in October, hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace, the final communiqué stated: 'As we were meeting together, we were deeply troubled to learn of the situation in Mosul (Iraq) where threats to the Christian community have further added to the tragic Iraqi refugee situation. These threats undermine the centuries-old tradition of local Muslims protecting and nourishing the Christian community, and must stop....We unequivocally declare that, in Iraq as anywhere else in the world, no person or community should be persecuted or threatened on account of their religious faith. We must all have a particular concern for religious minorities in our midst.'

At Mor Gabriel, Metropolitan Samuel Aktas who entered the monastery as a boy in 1960 and now serves as its abbot and archbishop of Tur Abdin said, 'We need our brother Christians to keep an eye on this Monastery. If it does not endure there will be no Christian presence in Tur Abdin. Do not forget us!' Finding appropriate ways of sustaining the friendships which have been forged as well as demonstrating solidarity in prayer and support is something I hope AECA will help to bear fruit and commend to the wider Christian family.

Fr. Philip Warner

OUR first two days were not pilgrimage as such, since on our first full day we joined several thousand of other tourists streaming off their cruise ships and into the old city. It was distracting to jostle around the Hippodrome, Blue Mosque, Hagia Sofia and Top Kapi palace, but the shouted commentaries to the various groups in different languages did, I suppose, give a flavour of what life in the Byzantine and later Ottoman capital might have been like.

In this country we were still painting ourselves with woad when Emperor Justinian caused to be built the great church of Holy Wisdom with its great domed space, that remained unsurpassed for centuries. The Dome it is said was not so much supported by the immense walls as suspended by a golden chain from heaven. Although given over to Moslem worship by Mehmet after he took the city in 1453, it is now a museum, and marvellous mosaics have come to light, peering out from the whitewashed walls. Possibly the greatest is a panel showing Christ as judge, flanked by the adoring figures of Mary his mother and John the Baptist. I was reminded of the story which tells that when the city walls were being breached, a priest was celebrating the holy liturgy at an altar below this mosaic. As he reached that part when the gifts are offered in preparation for consecration, the Ottoman soldiers burst into the building itself. Picking up the sacred vessels he walked into the wall which closed behind him. There he remains until Hagia Sofia is once more used as a church, when he will appear and carry on the liturgy where he left off.

Sunday saw us up at 4.30 a.m. to be on the bus in time for our 7.30 departure to Diyabakir, a seedy and sometimes violent Kurdish city some two hours flight from Istanbul. Here we left behind the cloudy windy weather we'd had on the shores of the Golden Horn and were treated to blue skies and warm sunshine. We did not linger in Diyabakir, though had we done so we could have seen the famous black city walls, made from volcanic rock, as well as some notable mosques and churches.

Rather, we were driven for an hour or so to the village of Hasankeyf with its citadel, remains of a Roman bridge and, (most important for us at the time) lunch at the parish church. We had understood that this was dedicated to St James the Reckless, and we naturally enquired as to whether this St James had been reckless in any particular event, or famed for just general recklessness. The question proved to be academic, as the dedication was actually that of St James the Recluse, but I think I prefer the former. There we ate gratefully of chicken, rice and salad, a combination which we were going to get used to during our stay in monasteries. It never fails to impress me that Orthodox parishes are organised to feed large numbers of people, whilst in many of our home parishes, the most we are prepared to offer is a cup of tea.

Our first night in Tur Abdin was to be spent in the monastery of Mor Gabriel, where I had been a guest 30 years previous, and I remembered then the primitive sanitation and the guest rooms that were stuffy and fly-blown. The monastery was certainly in a better position now, and money from Syrian Orthodox communities in the USA and Australia, to which many had emigrated during previous decades marred by warfare between the Kurdish separatists and the Turkish authorities had paid for improved washing facilities. Indeed the new toilet block just outside the main monastery gates was designed like a medieval chapter house, with a single large pillar radiating into spans that supported the ceiling. Water was heated by solar panels and there were loos that flushed, as well as the more traditional footsteps-in-the-sand variety. What had not changed were the guest rooms, and nine of us were expected to share one stuffy room. However, I did this time what I had done on the previous occasion, which was to pull my mattress and a duvet outside into the courtyard and sleep under the stars. Once the lights were out, the few of us who chose this option could see the stars clearly, and once the moon rose, although it was only a half-moon, it still cast a shadow. What a change from the moon in London which we glimpse only from between the street lights.

The second monastery in which we were guests was that of Deir Zafaran (The Saffron Monastery), which had a similar community of monks and boys but was more frequently visited by locals and Syrians from other countries. It had once been the seat of the Patriarchate of Antioch, the Patriarchs of which trace their succession from St Peter the Apostle, and who were carried around in wooden litters when they went out to visit their flock.

Whilst staying here (with only four to a room, so outdoor sleeping was not necessary) we overlapped with a group of pilgrims from Mosul in northern Iraq, and on the Wednesday morning the Liturgy was celebrated by their priest, Fr Yousef, who was a consultant physician who had trained in London. He told us of the hardships of living in the cross-fire of violence, and how radical Moslems in that city had kidnapped his priestly colleague and beheaded him. He asked us to remember that when we exercise our free speech in the west, our words can affect events there for the worse. This is the church of the martyrs, when priest and people do not know if they will meet on the next Sunday, or whether some will have been killed. Please pray for them.

We had retired early to bed in the small dormitory at the Syrian Monastery of Deir Zafaran in Turkish Mesopotamia. Suddenly the silence of the cloudless night was broken by singing – women chanting an Orthodox hymn, followed by the distinctive Middle Eastern sound of joyous ululation. Unbeknownst to us, there had arrived a group of some of the bravest Christians in the world. As we gathered at dawn the following morning, it was clear that we were not the only guests at the monastery as the ancient church was filled with a group of forty-odd, mainly women, pilgrims participating devoutly and vigorously in the Holy Liturgy. They were clearly at home in this Syriac Orthodox environment.

The pilgrims, along with their priest who was celebrating, live in Mosul, in Northern Iraq. They were on the first day of a pilgrimage-cum-holiday in Turkey. They were clearly delighted to visit such a beautiful and ancient monastery but, given what we heard from them over breakfast, they were also understandably pleased to have a break from life at home. Although Christians formed a significant minority in Mosul and, indeed, across much of Iraq, since the fall of Saddam Hussein they have suffered severe persecution at the hands of extremists. Whilst much of this persecution has now been controlled elsewhere in the country, in Mosul (an Al-Qaéda stronghold) it is rife. In recent weeks it has become much worse: at least 14 Christians have been killed and more than 1300 Christian families have fled the city in the last month alone.

This picture was borne out by the pilgrims we met. A number spoke some English and explained how life was becoming worse and worse for Christians in the city. But despite this they – unlike so many of their compatriots – had stayed in Iraq: this was their home and they did not wish to leave. We can only pray for their safety and an end to this persecution; encourage our church and secular leaders to speak out against these atrocities; and rue the day that Iraq was invaded with so little thought given to the consequences.

Our stay at the Monastery of Deir Zafaran was at the centre of a visit to the Tur Abdin area of SE Turkey, home to one of the oldest Christian traditions which has survived through more than sixteen centuries. At the centre of this tradition were at one time some 80

monasteries of the Syriac church, celebrating the liturgy in a dialect of Aramaic close to that Christ Himself would have used. It is used to this day.

Despite the fact that there are only some 2000 Syriac Christians left in Tur Abdin, the monasteries that have survived are thriving, thanks to the vision and energy of the handful of priests and the generosity of the Syriac diaspora. We stayed in two – Deir Zafaran, founded in the sixth century, and Mor Gabriel which dates back to 397, two hundred years before St Augustine landed in England.

Both are architecturally very striking. The ancient monastery buildings have been sympathetically restored and extended to a high quality in local limestone. Most of this building has taken place over the last ten years and is a clear signal that the church intends to stay there for the next thousand years. The money and help in kind – designing and construction itself – has largely come from the Syrians who have emigrated to the US, Sweden and all over the world. The monasteries have now become a tourist attraction for local Turks, many of them Muslims, who are finding out about this local Christian heritage for the first time.

Whilst this has helped understanding of the Christian community, the monasteries would be nothing without the people inside them. Here we were even more impressed. Each monastery we visited had a staff of young students and volunteers living the monastic life and helping to look after the guests. In addition, each was the home of 20-30 schoolboys, from 8 to 18 who lived in the monastery where they sang the morning and evening services and learnt ancient Syriac while attending the local Turkish state school during the day. Unsurprisingly, many have gone on to university and professional lives – quite an achievement for such a poor area – but, more importantly, they are able to pass on the traditions of their faith to a younger generation. Some have become monks or, as one we met, a teacher of Syriac – who also runs the local football team.

The current relative prosperity of the Tur Abdin monasteries hides a recent history of persecution by the Turkish authorities which reached its height in the latter part of the last century. Even now the priests in our group were warned to avoid wearing crosses or cassocks in public. Minor violence on Christians continues, as the security at the monasteries and the barbed wire-topped walls surrounding the ancient

church in the village of Urdnus, attest. This same church, abandoned in 1991 but now occupied for six months a year by an 88 year old priest and his wife (who somewhat incongruously live in Switzerland during the winter) illustrates the renaissance of the Syriacs in the area.

Fr Tim Atkins

CONTEMPLATING the fate of the seven Churches of Revelation, we could be forgiven for assuming their demise was due to the various judgements the risen Christ makes on those churches of Asia Minor. Living in the environment and seeing the fortitude and faith of the Christians in Mor Gabriel and Mor Yacob and Deir Zafaran enables us from the West to see just how tough it is to live and worship in their environment. Such is that faith that it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that Mor Awgel should once again be inhabited as a monastery with clergy, youth and a thriving community.

The monasteries offer a bridge of hope for the scattered community of Christians, especially to the boys privileged to gain a place there. Living many kilometres from home they serve in the monastery, attend local schools because they are near to towns, learn a liturgy and grow up in a monastic community with its discipline and worship. Between themselves they are learning love and forbearance, the scriptures and their church history. As they mature varied opportunities become available – from University to farming, from ordination to business studies.

Visiting one of those small rural communities and entering an ancient parish church of Urdnus, with its part time priest (living in Switzerland when not here for the summer), we learned there were probably 50 Christian families in that village. How vital for those Christians that this elderly man with his wife returns here each year to serve the community. Pray for someone to succeed him when the time comes.

We experienced the awesome sense of God's presence as thirty of us stood in the Church of Mor Awgen singing 'Praise to the Holiest in the height'. In a church shaped like a tomb (intentionally) but now half buried in rubble resulting from earthquake tremors, it seemed as if 'and in the depth be praise' was entirely appropriate. Clambering up the NE stairs (with minimal candle light) to find a burial chamber of past Bish-

ops emphasised the point that God is 'most sure in all His ways', whatever the outward appearance to the contrary.

I am so glad that we were able to experience the hospitality of those monasteries. It was an additional blessing on Thursday morning the 25th to discover that the singing group which arrived about 11 p.m. the night before were from Mosul in Iraq. Singing no doubt with joy that they had crossed the border and found themselves in a place where they could freely worship, meet other Christians and go on to visit the home village where their priest was born and raised.

FR JOHN INNES

THE journey (from Diyabakir to Midyat) was through rather arid rolling hills. Where there was cultivation it was in large fields in contrast to the strip farming still found in some parts of Europe. Mehmet our guide explained to us that a sort of feudal system still survived. The local leader of the tribe, clan or family would own all the land, and other members of the clan would work on it. In former times, the chief also owed a loyalty to his clan members; but this system was breaking down.

At one point, the road crossed the upper reaches of the Tigris. There were some ruins of a citadel on top of the range of hills. We were given very full background talks about Turkey and its history by the guide, and about the Syrian Orthodox communities by Fr. Stephen. He had been an emissary for the Archbishop of Canterbury in the late 1990s when the Syrian communities were under severe pressure from the Turkish government and the Kurdish insurrection was making life in the villages very difficult. Rather as happened in Peru, whichever side the villagers supported they were likely to be punished by the other. We passed only one checkpoint; but Fr. Stephen recalled how on the same road there had been several, and we did see evidence of some abandoned villages. The army sometimes cut down trees and orchards, as the insurgents would use them as cover. The majority of the population was of Kurdish origin. The Syrian communities had numbered about 30,000 people in the 1930s, but now it was between two and three thousand. We drove past Midyat to the monastery of Mor Gabriel where it had been arranged for us to stay the night.

When a service in the monastery was about to begin a single bell boomed out. On the Sunday we attended evening prayer. The form was new to most of us. There were a number of boys living in the monastery as boarders, attending classes in the Syrian language and Orthodox Church practice. During the day they would go by bus to Turkish State schools. In the service they formed two choirs, one on either side of the nave. They chanted the psalms; but not quite together. The rhythm passed from one to the other with a swell in the sound. Then at certain points in the service they unwound as choir circles and formed a straight line across the church, with the tallest on the outside and the shortest in the middle. During certain prayers they would prostrate, as in a mosque. Some Syrian churches are even built with a very wide crossing and the congregation line up as in a mosque, except that the women are on one side and the men are on the other.

We were told that morning prayer would be at 5.30 am. Some set alarm clocks, because when the bell boomed it was to announce that the service was about to begin. When we got to the church, the boys were assembling and grouping into their two choirs. The boys were singing the service and then going out for a full day in school and then singing the evening service. Eventually, one or two of them might join a monastery, but some of the others would get work on the monastery's farms and the others would have to make their way in the world.

We visited Nusaybin (ancient Nisibis). This city was on one of the silk routes to the Far East. Near here there was a centre of the Nestorian Church. The Nestorians were an extremely missionary Church. Their missions reached and established communities as far as China. It was in Nusaybin that the poet and teacher Ephrem of Syria worked as deacon and composed numerous hymns. We visited the Church of St. James (Mor Yakub) built in 359. Ephrem had been present at its consecration. However when the Emperor Julian the Apostate was killed at or after the battle with the Persians in 362, the town was handed over to the Persians and many of the population fled or migrated west to Edessa (now Urfa).

Near Nusaybin are the ruins of a church, community buildings and hermit cells at Mor Augen. We travelled by bus, and then a minibus up the hill and finally a walk. In the third century and before persecution had really ceased in the Roman Empire, ascetic movements grew up in Syria and in Egypt. Some of the practices may seem today extreme or

even bizarre, such as the tradition of praying on a rock as with St. Simon Stylites, yet the Stylites were often greatly revered and some were given virtually celebrity status. Another group formed called 'The Sons and Daughters of the Covenant'. They eschewed marriage and lived in extreme austerity. They were the first to settle at what is now Mor Augen. In later Christian history groups like the Shakers in 19th century America have shown some similar characteristics. Later this community near Nusaybin became an Orthodox monastery and when Gertrude Bell visited in the early 20th century there was still a Bishop who was a hermit.

On our drive to the town of Mardin the guide explained that there was a dark side to life there. Honour killings sometimes happened. This arose out of tribal custom. There was now a women's charity which among other things ran a restaurant to fund their work. If a woman was accused and at risk of being killed, members of the charity would try to arrange for one or more of their members to visit the family together with an Imam or, if there was a political association, a sympathiser of the PKK (Kurdish insurgency). They would then try to persuade those who wanted to kill their family member, who they believed had betrayed them, that this had no foundation in the Koran. We were told many lives had been saved.

even bizarre, such as the tradition of praying on a rock as with St. Simon Stylites, yet the Stylites were often greatly revered and some were given virtually celebrity status. Another group formed called 'The Sons and Daughters of the Covenant'. They eschewed marriage and lived in extreme austerity. They were the first to settle at what is now Mor Augen. In later Christian history groups like the Shakers in 19th century America have shown some similar characteristics. Later this community near Nusaybin became an Orthodox monastery and when Gertrude Bell visited in the early 20th century there was still a Bishop who was a hermit.

On our drive to the town of Mardin the guide explained that there was a dark side to life there. Honour killings sometimes happened. This arose out of tribal custom. There was now a women's charity which among other things ran a restaurant to fund their work. If a woman was accused and at risk of being killed, members of the charity would try to arrange for one or more of their members to visit the family together with an Imam or, if there was a political association, a sympathiser of the PKK (Kurdish insurgency). They would then try to persuade those who wanted to kill their family member, who they believed had betrayed them, that this had no foundation in the Koran. We were told many lives had been saved.

Pilgrimage Secretary:

The Revd David Bond
6 Denton Close
Maidstone
Kent ME15 8ER
Tel. 01622 202239
email: dwbond@blueyonder.co.uk

Editor of Koinonia:

The Revd Dr Peter Doll
56 The Close
Norwich NR1 4EG
Tel. 01603 218405
email: canonlibrarian@cathedral.org.uk

The views expressed in Koinonia do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or of the Committee of the Association.

www.aeca.org.uk

Cover Illustration:
The Ancient Coronation Chair and Regalia of England, &c.
Hume's *History of England,* 1814