

EASTERN CHURCHES NEWS - LETTER

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Anglican and Eastern Churches Association*

*The General Committee does not hold itself responsible for every
expression of opinion in the News-Letter*

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EDITORIAL

It is with sincere regret that this is only the third issue of the "Newsletter" this year. The irregularity of publication has been due partly to illness, partly also to the printing strike.

Little has been said yet about two outstanding events that closely concern all who are working for the reunion of historic Christendom: the suggested Conference in Venice between the Orthodox and Catholics of the Roman obedience, and the Ecumenical Council called by His Holiness Pope John XXIII, with its main emphasis on Reunion. It is hoped that an article on this subject will appear in the next number of the "Newsletter."

SECRETARY'S NOTES

We go to press a little time before the Annual Festival, and so any comment on that event must await our next issue. Meanwhile we have reason to expect a successful day, if there is a good response from members and friends.

We have made an act of faith in arranging the course of addresses on Orthodoxy in S. Dunstan's, Fleet Street — by kind permission of the Revd. J. R. Satterthwaite — and we hope it will be well attended by church people who work in the city, as well as by others.

May we again mention the strong possibility of another journey to Greece next year. It will be by chartered plane, and will include Athens and Salonika. At present three trips are planned: (1) 12th April for 12 days. (2) 22nd April for 16 days. (3) 16th May for 16 days. The cost is really remarkably low, and it affords an excellent opportunity for first-hand contact with the Orthodox Church, as well as a holiday in a truly lovely land in company with one's fellow-Anglicans. I shall be glad to hear from anyone who is interested, and shall be ready to give further information.

There are still quite a number of subscriptions unpaid. Would those whom this may concern please let me have theirs as soon as they can, so that they may be included in this year's accounts?

A Series of Lunch-time Talks on

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

will be given in S. Dunstan's Church, Fleet Street, E.C.4
on Thursdays in November at 1.15 p.m.

- Nov. 5. The Saints. The Revd. G. Cheremeteff.
Russian Orthodox Church in Exile.
„ 12. Monasticism. The Rt. Revd. Bishop Anthony of
Sergievo. Russian Orthodox
Patriarchal Church.
„ 19. Marriage. The Very Revd. V. Rodzianko.
Serbian Orthodox Church.
„ 26. Ikons. The Revd. R. M. French.

In each case the whole service will last approximately
35 minutes.

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN RUSSIA

1. Thirty-eight churches are open for worship in Moscow. A priest's income (from donations by the faithful) is sometimes over 5,000 roubles per month, the equivalent of the salary of a university lecturer or Stakhanovite miner. Priests benefit from social insurance, and receive an old-age pension from the Patriarchate.

2. Church attendance is highest in the 18-30 age group. After 30 it falls, especially among men, but appears to rise again after 50.

3. At Zagorsk (50 miles from Moscow) there are 100 monks, 50 priests, a faculty of theology and a seminary turning out 250 priests per year.

4. At Tiflis there are 18 Orthodox churches (13 Georgian, 3 Russian and 2 Armenian) and one Catholic (of Latin rite), all well attended even by young people. A Greek Catholic (Melkite) church has *not* been re-opened.

5. According to the Metropolitan Nicholas of Moscow, the Orthodox Church in the U.S.S.R. is divided into 78 Eparchies, each ruled by a Bishop appointed freely by the Patriarch. Parish priests send part of their income to the

Eparchy, which in turn gives a percentage to the Patriarch. This is used to provide clerical pensions and to support poor parishes at home and abroad.

6. There are claimed to be altogether 30 million Faithful, in 20,000 parishes with 35,000 priests; also 69 religious houses with 5,000 monks or nuns (3 convents and 900 nuns in Kiev alone). Monks are obliged to earn their living on monastery farms or by craftsmanship in the towns. There are two Academies of Theology (Moscow-Zagorsk and Leningrad) and 8 seminaries: the course is of four years, and postponement of military service is allowed. Over 1,000 priests are ordained yearly, of whom over half study by correspondence. The number of students at Leningrad has grown from 74 in 1946 to 396 in 1953.

7. The Church is entirely responsible for the maintenance of buildings. It is reckoned that a congregation of 2,000 is required to keep a church going, and on this basis, church attendance is reckoned at about one-half the figure for 1915. The Patriarchate press is allegedly free (apart from severe paper-rationing), but religious publications may not be sold except in churches, seminaries or religious houses.

8. Relations between Moscow and Istanbul seem quite good, and there is talk of the convocation of a Pan-Orthodox Council. The Russians have shown signs of wanting liaison with the World Council of Churches, which they boycotted in 1948. Middle Eastern countries in which the Russian Church plays a significant role are Israel, Egypt and Ethiopia.

“OLD BELIEVERS”

9. These (Orthodox schismatics of 17th-century origin) number some 850,000 faithful under 12 bishops; 50,000 in Moscow alone. They enjoy the same privileges as the Orthodox and are about as numerous proportionately as in 1915.

ORTHODOX SEMINAR AND HOLY WEEK

In April of this year an Orthodox Seminar took place at the Ecumenical Institute, the Château de Bossey. Where is Bossey? It is situated quite close to the little Swiss village of Celigny, which stands within three miles of the French border, the wooded slopes of the French Jura behind and in

front the wonderful vista of Lake Leman itself, with the snow-capped peaks of the Savoy Alps beyond. Set within a country that has devoted itself to peace, Bossey leaves this benediction with all who visit it. The Chateau, together with Petit Bossey, stand in about seventy acres of its own farmland, a place of rural peace and tranquility, for ever since the World Council of Churches established the Ecumenical Institute there in 1946, its name has been known among Christians throughout the world as a place of pioneer thinking and of ecumenical encounter. So here on the late afternoon of Sunday, April 19th, 30 or more young people arrived for the Seminar which was to be held for a week, and which took the form of an Introduction to the Holy Liturgy of the Holy Orthodox Church. We were all warmly received by the staff of the Institute.

The Seminar opened on the Monday morning with an address by Dr. Nicholas Nissiotis, Assistant Director of the Ecumenical Institute, and lay theologian of the Church of Greece. The Seminar met four times each day to hear lectures on the liturgy by Orthodox Professors, among them several Russian and one Greek. The Lectures gave us a deep insight into Orthodoxy and made clear the rich spiritual life of the Eastern Church.

Apart from the interest of the lectures, it was a wonderful experience to meet so many people from other Churches and countries; we soon got to know each other and were able freely to exchange views. It was a pleasure to meet other Anglican representatives, Bishop Steven Neill and the Reverend Francis House, both members of the World Council of Churches. On the Friday evening, the General Secretary of the W.C.C., Dr. Visser 't' Hooft, visited the Seminar and addressed the members on the Ecumenical Movement.

From principles we proceeded to practice. On Saturday morning, April 25th, we said goodbye to the staff of the Institute, who had been so very kind to us all through the week, and we left for Paris, where we were all to take part in the Orthodox Holy Week and Easter services. We travelled from Bossey to Paris by road and arrived there late on Saturday night.

Sunday, April 26th, was Palm Sunday for our Orthodox brethren, but I was not able to attend the Holy Liturgy that day. Instead I was present at the Holy Eucharist at the

Anglican Church — Saint George's, Paris. It was a great day in the history of the church, for it was honoured by a visit from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, and Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret, with the British and Commonwealth Ambassadors and other dignitaries. At this service it was my privilege to attend Bishop Meletios of Reggio, Greek Orthodox Bishop in Paris, who with the preacher, the Bishop of Chelmsford, sat in the sanctuary. On Monday I rejoined my friends of the Seminar at the Russian Orthodox Seminary of Saint Sergius, which is under the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. I received a warm welcome from the Rector, Bishop Cassian, and was asked to sit with him for lunch that day. On the first three days of Holy Week the only Liturgy celebrated is that of the Presanctified, the Elements having been consecrated previously on Palm Sunday. The faithful may receive Holy Communion at this Liturgy, which is also celebrated every Wednesday and Friday in Lent. Apart from this Liturgy, we also attended the great Mattins, which occupied two to three hours each evening, and Vespers before the Liturgy.

In the afternoons I was able to visit some of our Orthodox friends. I had received a kind invitation from the Armenian Bishop in Paris, Bishop Serobo Manoukiou, to call on him while staying in Paris. I was very happy indeed to be able to accept this invitation on Tuesday afternoon, April 28th. His Lordship received my friend Mr. Wydrew and me most warmly; it was a great joy to meet the Bishop again: he visited this country in the spring of 1956, when His Holiness the Supreme Catholicos of all Armenians came here for the first time in history, to visit his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, and also his own people in this land. Bishop Serobo asked us to visit the beautiful Armenian Cathedral in Paris, which we were pleased to do, and to say some prayers there. Before we took our leave of his Lordship he gave us his blessing. That same afternoon my friend and I called upon Bishop Meletios. He gave us a very fatherly reception, and we were happy to accept his kind invitation to the service that evening in the lovely Greek Cathedral in Paris. We were deeply touched by the Christian love which our Greek friends showed us. We shall long remember the kind words which were spoken of our Church.

On Wednesday afternoon, we were at a small Greek

Church for the anointing of the faithful with holy oil, a service which left upon us a very deep impression, and one that did show us the living faith of our Orthodox brethren in the power of the living God. We were very happy to have been able to attend the service in this homely little church.

On Holy Thursday we attended the Liturgy at the Russian Institute and the long Mattins from 6.00 until 10.00. On Good Friday there is no Liturgy, but in place of it a service of readings from the Gospels and the singing of antiphons; in the evening there was the carrying of the Epitaphion, representing the bier of Christ, to which the faithful had been bringing flowers all day.

On the morning of Holy Saturday there were Vespers and the Liturgy, which started at 10.00 and ended at 2.15. Now the faithful were awaiting the great moment in the life of the Church, the great Easter service, which started at 11.00 p.m. and ended at 3.15 a.m. This is the Easter Mattins, with the reading of the Resurrection narrative and the singing of the Easter Anthem, after which everyone receives the Easter kiss of peace, this being followed by the Holy Liturgy. I shall never forget the joy and happiness of this Easter service and the vast numbers of people coming to the Church. Here once again we were at the Festival of Festivals, Christ was risen, joy and thankfulness were in the hearts of all.

On Monday morning, May 4th, Easter Monday for the Orthodox, I attended the Holy Liturgy in the Greek Cathedral, and in the afternoon visited the clergy and deacons at the Clergy House. My time in Paris was quickly drawing to a close and the next morning I had to leave for England. I was deeply moved by some of our dear Orthodox friends coming to see me off at the station. I shall never forget the kindness and the love which was shown to me while staying among them. May God richly bless our work for the full unity of our two Churches in His good time.

CUTHBERT, O.S.B.

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES INFORMATION REPORT FROM RHODES

Speaking officially on behalf of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Archbishop Iakovos noted that the Patriarchate has

given no authorisation for any conversations between the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church.

He said that no representatives have been named and there has been no official communication between the Patriarchate and the Vatican concerning such conversations.

He said officially the Patriarchate "knows nothing" about plans announced by the Vatican Radio for conversations with Orthodox representatives in Venice next year.

Further, he said, the Eastern Orthodox Church will "never participate in any conversation with the Roman Catholic Church which does not have as its eventual aim the inclusion of Protestants."

He stressed that the Patriarchate would not consider the possibility of a meeting with Roman Catholic representatives until it receives an official overture from the Vatican. When that is done, he added, "the Patriarchate will make the decision as to when and where the meeting will be held."

Archbishop Iakovos emphasized that "the ecumenical movement is not a movement between Protestant and Orthodox or between Orthodox and Roman Catholics, but a move towards the unity of all Christians."

"We are not interested in the restoration of the unity broken by the division with Rome, but in the unity of the body of Christ," he observed.

"Unity can never be materialized if the Roman Catholic Church says, 'Come to me'. It must recognize that it must also come to us or (any agreements) would represent submission on our part.

"We must meet in humbleness, love and understanding of what our role in the world is. When Rome approaches us in this way, it will mean that it has decided to talk with us on this level."

It is this attitude achieved in conversations with representatives of the World Council of Churches, he added, "that makes us feel so free in talking with them."

SUBSCRIPTIONS Many members have not paid their subscriptions for some considerable time. Nevertheless the News Letter has been sent to them, and we are reluctant to delete their names from our list. To all whom it may concern please let us have your subscription as soon as you can, and so help us to maintain our work.

LOCAL MEETINGS. The Association is willing to provide speakers on Eastern Christendom for both large and small groups of people — of parishes or societies. For information apply to the General Secretary.

THE ANGLICAN AND EASTERN CHURCHES ASSOCIATION, which was founded in 1864, exists to unite members of the Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Churches for the following objects:

To promote mutual knowledge, sympathy and intercourse.

To encourage the study of Eastern Christendom.

To pray and work for the restoration of the visible unity of the Church.

The normal annual subscription is 10/-, but none will be excluded from membership solely on account of inability to pay this amount, while it is hoped that those who can afford to pay more will do so. All members are entitled to receive the *Eastern Churches News-Letter*, which is published quarterly.

Please note that all correspondence, subscriptions, etc., should be addressed to the Reverend H. R. Stringer, St. Stephen's Vicarage, 25, Talbot Road, London, W.2.

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