

KOINONIA



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Koinonia

THE JOURNAL OF THE ANGLICAN & EASTERN CHURCHES ASSOCIATION

Editorial

FOUR YEARS AGO, as we began to mark the outbreak of World War I, the Advent edition of *Koinonia* contained two articles about wartime ecumenism – one about contact between Russia and the Church of England, and the other about the role of the Serbian cleric Nikolai Velimirovic (now canonised) in seeking support in Britain for the people of his homeland. Four years later, as we mark the end of that same war, this edition of *Koinonia* also contains articles about Russia and Serbia. Daniel Trott has written about his experience on a visit to Russia of young clergy and ordinands organised by the Moscow Patriarchate. At the same time, there are articles about Serbia during World War I and World War II, written by Mark Chapman and Jovan Culibrk respectively.

That 2014 edition of *Koinonia* reprinted a correspondence with Russia from the 1920 issue of 'The Christian East' (a precursor to *Koinonia*), and the first periodical by the Anglican-Eastern Churches Association after the Great War. The same edition also contained a great deal of discussion about the Church in Serbia and members of the Serbian Orthodox Church in England. In a section entitled 'Review of Four Years', Fr Fynes-Clinton wrote that amidst the many horrors of war there was one sign of hope, which was the '*wonderful growth of intimacy in our relations with the Churches of the Near East ... barriers of mutual ignorance and lack of desire for unity, born of long isolation, were broken down by the rough necessities of war.*'¹ It was the personal friendships formed during this time of crisis that laid the foundations for stronger and closer relationships during peacetime.

It is this personal aspect which is so important to the AECA. This is demonstrated by all three reports of visits and exchanges. The visit by Anglicans to Russia has already been mentioned. The second is of another visit to Iraq by our Chairman, Dr William Taylor to discover the work being done to

¹ *The Christian East*, 1920, p. 47.

reconstruct the country following the defeat of Da'esh, and how Iraqi Christians are faring in their native land. The third is a report from the AECA pilgrimage to Armenia, co-led by the Bishop of Southwark, Christopher Chessun, and His Grace Bishop Hovakim, the Armenian Primate of Great Britain, written by our new Treasurer, Alan Trigle. Such experiences are transformative for individuals and communities who are able to move beyond historic divisions into a real and direct relationship of Christian friendship.

My failure to produce an edition of *Koinonia* earlier in the year does, however, mean that there is no shortage of content, with book reviews by Nevsky Everett on Persian Christians in China, and Alexios Florides on a history of the Society of Saint Alban and Saint Sergius. There is also a report from the Chairman of the AECA on our activities over the year, and a Communiqué from the most recent meeting of the Anglican–Oriental Orthodox International Commission, which continues to make significant progress.

Recently, all Christians with a desire for the unity of the Church will have been distressed by the division between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Patriarch with regard to the status of the Ukrainian Church. The effects of this continue to ripple throughout the Orthodox world and beyond as the consequences of the division take effect on the ground at ecumenical events and gatherings. The heart-breaking tragedy of such a division in the body of Christ is expressed by George Herbert in his poem 'Church-Rents and Schisms:

*'... O Mother dear and kind,
Where shall I get me eyes enough to weep,
As many eyes as stars? since it is night,
And much of Asia and Europe fast asleep,
And even all Afric'; would at least I might
With these two poor ones lick up all the dew,
Which falls by night, and pour it out for you!'*

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WILLIAM TAYLOR is the Chairman of the AECA and Vicar of St John's, Notting Hill. He also regularly undertakes ecumenical engagements on behalf of the Church of England.

ALAN TRIGLE is an Anglican priest and professional translator. He is currently curate of St Nicholas' church, Chiswick in the Diocese of London. He is a member of the AECA, and has recently taken on the role of Treasurer.

DANIEL TROTT is the Assistant Curate of St John the Evangelist, Upper Norwood, in the Diocese of Southwark. Before training for ordination he studied Japanese linguistics while living in the House of St Gregory and St Macrina in Oxford.

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News and Notices

Archbishop of Canterbury as Co-Patron

We are pleased to announce that the Archbishop of Canterbury has renewed his role as Co-Patron of the AECA. The Archbishop regularly reviews his commitments in accordance with his priorities for ministry, and his continued patronage of the AECA reflects the importance he attached to the work of the Association and his support for ecumenism with the Orthodox churches.

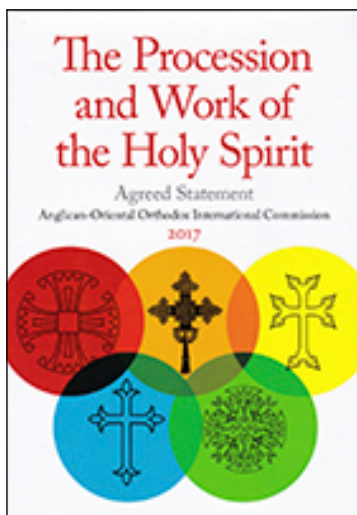
Metropolitan Bishop of Damietta

It was with great sadness that many will have heard of the passing of Metropolitan Bishop, Coptic Bishop of Damietta, theologian, monk and ecumenist, who died suddenly but peacefully on October 2nd, aged 76. Metropolitan Bishop was a member of numerous ecumenical dialogues, including the Anglican–Oriental Orthodox International Commission, of which he was Co-Chair. “Metropolitan Bishop was one of the great ecumenists of the modern era”, the Director for Unity, Faith and Order at the Anglican Communion Office, Canon Dr John Gibaut, said. His funeral was attended by the Chairman of the AECA on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury.



Publication of Agreed Statement between Anglican and Oriental-Orthodox Churches

The last edition of *Koinonia* (Advent 2017) included the full text of the most recent agreed statement between the Anglican Communion and the Oriental-



Orthodox Churches entitled *The Procession and Work of the Holy Spirit*. This has now been published and can be purchased from the Anglican Communion website. The announcement of the death of the Oriental Orthodox Co-Chair, Metropolitan Bishoy (see notice above) came just before going to print, and it was possible to dedicate the statement he helped to write in his memory.

New Treasurer of AECA

After over twenty years of service as the Treasurer of AECA, David Powell has retired from the role. In thanksgiving for his commitment and faithfulness, the AECA held a special dinner and presented Mr Pow-

ell with a cheque and other gifts. The skills of a treasurer are specific and often difficult to find, but we are delighted that Father Alan Trigle, has consented to take on the role. Fr Alan writes:

“I am happy to take on the position of treasurer of the AECA. I have been a charity treasurer before; I am a qualified financial analyst and spent 18 years as an investment manager running large institutional portfolios in the City before changing career to become a translator specialising in financial and legal texts from German, French and Russian into English. My latest major assignment was a six-month stint at the European Central Bank in Frankfurt. I am also a non-stipendiary priest in the Church of England, serving at St Nicholas, Chiswick. I look forward to getting to know members as the regular series of events take place.”



AECA Annual Chairman's Report

WILLIAM TAYLOR

2017 HAS been a quieter year than the exceptional year of 2016, which saw three Patriarchal visits to London and the UK.

The Bishop of Southwark succeeded Bishop Richard Chartres, former Bishop of London as Anglican President, working alongside The Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain as Orthodox President. We look forward to working with Bishop Christopher in the months and years ahead, and thank him for agreeing to take on this role which we know he will fill with grace and skill. He will chair the new Orthodox Round Table for Archbishop Justin at Lambeth Palace in which the AECA plays a role.

As Chairman, I have been called on to do representational work in the following ways:

- In a visit to Iraq in August, after the liberation of Mosul from its occupation by Da'esh. We were able to see remarkable reconstruction work in churches, schools, and homes, after the destruction visited on different communities by the warped ideology of Da'esh. There will be a follow up visit at the end of July 2018.
- Testifying twice in immigration tribunals on the position of Christian minorities in majority Muslim states. These are challenging in the current "hostile environment" to refugees and asylum seekers, which is the political environment in which we work.
- As a member of the Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Theological Commission at its meeting in Dublin in October, which produced further agreement in Christology and a new agreement on the work of the Holy Spirit.
- As co-patron of Iraqi Christians in Need (<http://icin.org.uk/>).
- Attending services, commemorations and other events organised by individual Orthodox Churches in the UK. These events grow in number, and the representational role is also shared with others.

Turning to work in hand, this year (2018), AECA has a key role in:

- Working with the Serbian Orthodox Church and Professor Mark Chapman at Cuddesdon College Oxford in preparing a major lecture and photographic exhibition in Oxford in September on the role of Serbian Orthodox theologi-



Pictures from Orthodox Leaders Reception 2018

cal students and clergy who were given refuge in the UK during the First World War.

- Hosting the annual Reception for all Orthodox clergy working in and around London, which is the only regular meeting where all clergy from the Oriental and Chalcedonian Orthodox families of churches are brought together.
- Working with the Museum of Genocide, Belgrade, (<http://www.muzejgenocida.rs/>) in preparing a continuation exhibition on the Jasenovac genocide, to be launched at the Constantinople Lecture 2018 (<https://www.aeca.org.uk/news/AECACL2018.pdf>) which will be given by the Bishop of Pakrac and Slavonia. This exhibition will also include a newly commissioned icon of the martyrs of Jasenovac, which we hope will travel to different locations in the UK during the course of 2019.

Orthodox-Anglican relations have never been better than they now are, and in this spirit of the hope which our common Gospel brings to us, we continue our work in 2018 with words of John the Theologian “Behold, I make all things new.”

New Martyrs and New Paradigm of Martyrdom: Jasenovac^{1, 2}

JOVAN ĆULIBRK

*«But if one were to ask, ‘Why is it only at this time
that these great and ineffable gifts are granted?
we should reply: because at this time more than all others
a man is prepared and collected
so as to give his attention to God,
and he yearns for and awaits mercy from Him».*

St. Isaac the Syrian, *Homily Twenty-Three*³

HARDLY AN authority besides St. Isaac is there to be consulted on the nature of Divine vision of a kind that was bestowed upon the Patron Saint of this lecture, St. Constantine the Great: «Divine vision is a non-sensory revelation of the mind. Divine revelation consists in the mind's being moved by spiritual insights concerning the Divinity. Yet the power to be moved at will [*by insights concerning*] the Divinity, without having received revelation from divine grace, is not even implanted in the nature of angels”.⁴

Yet there is much more recent source on Constantine's vision to be quoted here, though of a quite different origin and with a quite different view of Divine revelations *modus operandi*. American poet and singer Patti Smith wrote and performed ten-minutes meditation song named *Constantine's Dream* and included it into her album *Banga*. (The album was named after Pontius Pilate's dog – a biblical fact given in an as recent apocrypha as *Master and Margarita*.)⁵ *Banga* with *Constantine's Dream* on it was released in 2012 – right on time to serve as a prequel to the row of ceremonies marking the 1700th anniversary of the Edict of Milan, being crowned with the liturgy served by the Orthodox

¹ The Constantinople Lecture, delivered 22 November 2018 at St John's, Notting Hill, London.

² Dedicated to Metropolitan Paul of Aleppo and Assyrian bishop Gregory Yohanna Ibrahim, kidnapped in Syria on 22nd of April, 2013.

³ St. Isaac the Syrian, *The Ascetical Homilies*, Boston: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 2011, p. 243.

⁴ St. Isaac the Syrian, *Homily Twenty-Two*, op. cit., p. 236.

⁵ Patti Smith, *Banga*, Columbia Records, 2012.

Patriarchs gathered in the Serbian city of Niš which was called Naissus at the time when Helen there gave birth to the future Emperor Constantine on 27th of February, 272 AD.

The song references four dreams: Smith's dream of St. Francesco of Assisi, Piero della Francesca's – who died on October 12, 1492, the day on which Columbus discovered the New World – dream of Constantine the Great, Emperor's own dream of the True Cross and Columbus' dream upon arrival to America. For Patti Smith, all four of them are narcoleptic dreams hardly distinguished from reality in which she is meditating in front of fresco of Constantine's dream in St. Francis' basilica in Arezzo, painted by della Francesca.⁶

The poem/song *Constantine's Dream* is a juxtaposition of utopian visions of St. Francesco, della Francesca, Constantine and Columbus and the apocalyptic “terrible end of man” at the foot of the XXI century. Even the angel who came to Constantine “and showed to him / The sign of the true cross in heaven / And upon it was written / In this sign shall thou conquer” turned to be also Columbus' guide to “the apocalyptic night” – “And Columbus saw all of nature aflame” – but surely was not a messenger of a “genuine vision” that comes only “with purification of the mind”, as described by St. Isaac the Syrian.⁷

When Patti Smith stepped up to the podium in Stockholm on Saturday morning, 10th of December, 2016 AD, in order to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature in the name of Alan Robert Zimmerman, we were one step deeper into a vision. Compared to *Revelation* of St. John Divine, in Mr. Zimmerman's poems “the first visions are present, brought down to the ground and into the everyday, but the seventh seal is missing”.⁸ Short of the final knowledge, the singer knows only one thing: “I've traveled through East Texas / Where many martyrs fell / And no one can sing the blues like Blind Willie McTell.”⁹

From this song, from his two Nobel Prize speeches – first read by Patti Smith on December 10, 2016 and second given by Dylan himself on June 5, 2017 – and finally from his poem *A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall* that Patti Smith sung in

⁶ In similar narcoleptic way Patti Smith is conferring with a bust of Serbian-American scientist and “the patron saint of alternating current” Nikola Tesla, as described in her autobiography *M Train* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), p. 76. The bust stood in front of the Serbian Church of St. Sava in New York, 25th Street until the Church – former Episcopal Trinity Chapel, purchased by the Serbian Orthodox Church in 1942 – burned down on Easter 2016.

⁷ St. Isaac the Syrian, *Homily Twenty-Two*, op. cit., p. 237.

⁸ Greil Marcus, *Bob Dylan*, New York: Public Affairs, 2010., p. 157.

⁹ Bob Dylan, *Blind Willie McTell*, from the album *The Bootleg Series Volumes 1-3 (Rare & Unreleased) 1961-1991*, Columbia Records, 1991.

Stockholm on December 10, we may in fact know several things about revelation.

First we encounter the fact that war is the father of all visions. All three favourite books of Bob Dylan, that influenced his poetic vision, are about the war: *Moby Dick* is a seafaring tale about the will to go to war; *All Quiet on the Western Front* is a book about being sucked up into a mysterious whirlpool of death and pain of war; and finally *The Odyssey* is a strange, adventurous tale of a grown man trying to get home after fighting in a war.¹⁰

Secondly, as it was obvious already in 1963, from both songs written “in same apocalyptic language” – *Masters of War* and in the song that Dylan and Smith offered at Stockholm ceremony, wars of our generation are apocalyptic wars and should be expressed in apocalyptic terms. The poet “heard the roar of a wave that could drown the whole world”¹¹ in his “Armageddon”¹² and the Masters of war lie and deceive “like Judas of old” and have “thrown the worst fear / That can ever be hurled / Fear to bring children / Into the world”. Therefore, ours is the time of the Judgement Day, and “even Jesus would never / Forgive what you do”.¹³

Third, this “apocalyptic language” is often wrapped in unexpected forms: it is blues in the case of Blind Willie McTell, the bard of the land “condemned all the way from New Orleans to Jerusalem,” where “many martyrs fell”.¹⁴ And blindness is as well sign of a vision of Christ bestowed upon Saul on the road to Damascus (*Acts* 9:3-9); blind was the singer of *The Odyssey* and many of his Balkan successors; and it was in a dark cave at island Patmos that the beloved disciple of Christ – and the patron of this sacred place – was given the revelation and saw innumerable martyrs before the Throne of God and before the Lamb: “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (*Revelation* 7:14).

Thus, martyrdom is the formative element in Dylan’s cosmos, place where war meets vision. Although he is using this term rarely and with subtlety,

¹⁰ Bob Dylan – Nobel Lecture. NobelPrize.org. Nobel Media AB 2018. Sun. 21 Oct 2018. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2016/dylan/lecture/>.

¹¹ Bob Dylan, *A Hard Rain’s A-Gonna Fall*, from the album *Freewheelin’*, Columbia Records, 1963.

¹² That is how Greil Marcus describes *A Hard Rain’s A-Gonna Fall* in his article for *Village Voice* in 1989; reprinted in Marcus’ book *Bob Dylan*, op. cit., p. 148. *A Hard Rain’s A-Gonna Fall*, he says in 1981, “has always been associated with the Cuban missile crisis of 1962”. Ibid., p. 102.

¹³ Bob Dylan, *Masters of War*, from the album *Freewheelin’*, op. cit.

¹⁴ Bob Dylan, *Blind Willie McTell*, op. cit.

its symbolic weight stands out, as “a trope of conflict of spirit, covenant, and faith animating these songs and Dylan’s work as a whole”.¹⁵ It is epitomised in the song *I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine* where – again in narcoleptic vision – the Saint is complaining to the leaders of his generation that “No martyr is among ye now / Whom you can call your own”.¹⁶

In such understanding of the importance of martyrdom, Bob Dylan goes into the very depth of the Judeo-Christian world, into its mystical spring: the cult of martyrs was – according to Daniel Boyarin – “fundamental constituent in the making of the ‘new’ religions of Christianity and rabbinic Judaism, and we observe an eminent structural and theological parallelism between the developing genres of Christian and Jewish martyrdom of the second, third, and fourth centuries.”¹⁷

Bob Dylan is obviously capable to recognise martyrdom, but he is looking deeper: by seeing the suffering of the righteous slaves in the American South or “that hollow place where martyrs weep and angels play with sin”¹⁸ and confirming “he himself can register their sacrifices with his own senses, then he is essentially admitting that he is no longer a mere bystander, but touching the very golden thread between heaven and earth he could not reach in the dream.”

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In 2012, Bob Dylan not only touched but also elaborated upon that “golden thread”. On the occasion of the half of century of his work – beginning with his first album *Bob Dylan* in 1962 – he gave an *gesamt-interview* for the French Edition of “The Rolling Stone” magazine. The interviewer goes deep back, into Dylan’s root subject – slavery, and Dylan admits that he does not have any hopes in the power of politics to change deep rooted prejudices and hatreds and states that only change of heart can really change a person and society. Then, he goes even deeper and says that long-suffering develops in the heart of a victim a sense to read heart of its tormentor, even if does not behave like one: “If you got a slave master or Klan in your blood, blacks can sense that.

¹⁵ Stephen Hazan Arnoff, *No Martyr Among Ye Now: Bob Dylan and Religion*, in: Nick Smart & Nina Goss (eds.), *Dylan at Play*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011, p. 25. In his previous essay, Arnoff notes that Dylan uses term “martyr” only four times in his canon.

¹⁶ Bob Dylan, *I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine*, from the album *John Wesley Harding*, Columbia Records, 1967.

¹⁷ Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God. Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 109.

¹⁸ Bob Dylan, *Dirge*, from the album *Planet Waves*, Asylum, 1974.

¹⁹ Stephen Hazan Arnoff, *No Martyr Among Ye Now: Bob Dylan and Religion*, op. cit., p. 37.

That stuff lingers to this day. Just like Jews can sense Nazi blood and the Serbs can sense Croatian blood.”²⁰

What kind of blood it should be? Here we are facing a different dimension of the martyrdom that we rarely encounter in ancient martyrologies: be it Rabbi Akiva or St. Polycarp, at the centre of the old narratives there is always a martyr as the bride of God, in his transformed eros, almost actively seeking martyrdom “as the only possible fulfillment of a spiritual need”.²¹

Here, besides equaling Croatians with their version of the Nazi regime with Ustaše party at its helm in the years 1941-1945 (“Ustaše” neither for Dylan nor for “The Rolling Stone” readers wouldn’t mean much),²² Dylan describes fascination with deeply seated hate that turned wartime Independent State of Croatia into a bloodbath: “The Ustasha regime was notorious in postwar Yugoslavia for the orchestrated campaign of extermination and terror it instigated against Serbs, Jews, and gypsies. [...] With the exception of the Nazi camps in Eastern Europe, it erected the largest concentration camp on the continent. The sadism and cruelty of the movement shocked even hardened Nazi commanders, who wrote of it with contempt. Months before the Wannsee Conference was even convened, the regime in Croatia had already inaugurated its own self-willed Holocaust.”²³

The camp Yeomans wrote about, Jasenovac²⁴, became already much more than the local symbol: even the doyen of the Holocaust research Yehuda Bauer felt compelled to say that – in a most morbid competition in human history – “Jasenovac was, if anything, more horrible than its Nazi counterparts”.²⁵ While Ustaše violence in the Second World War claimed hundreds of thousands of lives of women, elderly and children, we have ninety thousand names of Jasenovac camp victims only (24,000 of them children under age of 14), which is far from the final account. Though, it is the way of killing that pro-

²⁰ Mikal Gilmore, *Bob Dylan Unleashed* <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/bob-dylan-unleashed-189723/>. Published on September 27, 2012; downloaded on October 31, 2018.

²¹ Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God. Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*, op. cit., p. 114.

²² The interview was followed with a controversy among Croatians; a Croatian association in France filed a suit against Dylan and the editor “The Rolling Stone” but the French court dismissed both cases. Jay Michaelson, *In Pursuit Bob Dylan for Hate Speech, Croatian Group Denies Holocaust*, Forward; December 5, 2013. On Internet: <https://forward.com/culture/188725/in-pursuing-bob-dylan-for-hate-speech-croatian-gro/>; downloaded on November 1, 2018.

²³ Rory Yeomans, *Visions of Annihilation*, Pittsburgh: Pittsburg University Press, 2013, p. VII.

²⁴ It existed from late August 1941 until 22nd of April, 1945 on the swampy ground at the confluence of rivers Una and Sava.

²⁵ Yehuda Bauer, *Re-Thinking the Holocaust*, London-New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001, p. 50.

pelled Jasenovac into an apocalyptic symbol: specially designed knives, hammers, beating, cold, starving, torture and murderous labour – those were ways of extermination. Jasenovac was not a “factory of death”: death in Jasenovac was personal, the victim – be it a Serb, Jew, Gypsy or anybody that Ustaše perceived as their enemy – had to face the hate of its murderer. And hardly that Dylans’ verse “I saw a room full of men with their hammers a-bleeding”²⁶ can be about anything else than about the murderers of Jasenovac.

But one important circumstance distinguished Ustaši from their Nazi and Fascist masters: while Nazis were staunch anti-Christians, and Italian Fascists made their compromise with the Church, Ustaši had Roman-Catholicism as the very essence of their ideology. Archbishop of Zagreb “Stepinac rejoiced at the prospect of a Catholic Croatia that would replace the religiously and ethnically diverse creation of the Treaty of Paris that was the Yugoslav state”²⁷ but soon enough he found himself in consternation above crimes done by the new Croatian state. When he denounced its crimes in letters to Ustaše leadership, “he found that not a few bishops and priests in his homeland disregarded his authority”;²⁸ Many clergymen were involved in genocide both directly and indirectly, and also Archbishop of Sarajevo Ivan Šarić: “In the midst of the initial Ustasha terror against Jews, his diocesan newspaper carried the message that ‘there is a limit to love. The movement of liberation of the world from the Jews is a movement for the renewal of human dignity. Omniscient and omnipotent God stands behind this movement.’”²⁹

But, the most murderous was Franciscan Miroslav Filipović Majstorović, known as “fra-Satan” who became the commander of Jasenovac; “In 1942, when he ran the infamous Jasenovac concentration camp, 40,000 Jewish and Serbian prisoners perished there. Among the captives were 24,000 children, half of whom were murdered.”³⁰

Back in Vatican, “Cardinal Eugene Tisserant had smelled genocide in the air at the beginning of World War II and had suggested to Pius at that time that he addresses the issue in an encyclical. Rather, it was because the Holy See preferred to bring diplomatic pressure on the Ustasha government instead of

²⁶ Bob Dylan, *A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall*, op. cit.

²⁷ Michael Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000, p. 32

²⁸ Ibid., p. 34.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 35.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 38.

challenging the fascists publicly on the immorality of genocide.”³¹ Archbishop Stepinac followed the suit, and the heavy silence covered the Independent State of Croatia.

While obviously there was no love lost between two Christian Churches, a reverse and surely not planned process was going in-between the Orthodox Serbs and Jews in the lowest circles of the mutually shared hell. In the ancient times, the destruction of Temple in 70 AD gave birth to both rabbinic Judaism and Christianity. The martyrdom that both communities endured mostly at the hands of Romans in the first few centuries afterwards was the *topos* where their identities were created and where they competed, as well. “The Gentiles cannot understand who this God is for whom the Jews are willing to be killed all day. [...] And when the Nations of the World hear all of this praise, they say to Israel, Let us go along with you, as it is said, ‘Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? Whither hath thy Beloved turned, that we may seek Him with thee? (Cant. 6:1)”³²

In Jasenovac – and here it is understood in the fullness of its symbolical realm – there was no competition anymore. “The earliest total genocide to be attempted during the Second World War”³³ throw the victims into an apocalyptic whirlwind, where messianic hopes were buried under the pile of corpses steadily filling fields of Donja Gradina, Jasenovac’ subcamp and its killing and burial grounds. The perpetrators – Hitler and Ustaši leader Ante Pavelić – were unlike many tyrants Jews and Orthodox Christians met throughout the history; it was not either Babylonian or Ottoman slavery. It was best described in the dark, LSD-induced visions of Auschwitz survivor Yehiel De-Nur in his autobiographical book, *Shivitti: A Vision*:³⁴ it was kingdom of Asmodeus and Titus; for Christians, it was Neron and Antichrist – and for both it had a form of Inquisition.

From this hell, a new kind of martyrdom emerged: not anymore only *Kiddush HaShem* – “Glorifying of the Name” – being prepared to sacrifice the life rather than transgress any of God’s three cardinal laws as given in the archetypal tale of Maccabees, but *Kiddush HaHayim*: importance to survive the attempt to eradicate God’s people, to persevere and to allow God’s *domostroy* to

³¹ Ibid., p. 39.

³² Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God. Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*, op. cit., p. 110.

³³ Jonathan Steinberg, *All or Nothing: The Axis and the Holocaust*, New York: Routledge, 1990, p. 39.

³⁴ The book’s title is derived from David’s Psalm 16, “שיייתי ה' לנגדי תמיד”, more accurately translated in *Acts* 2:25: “I saw the Lord always before me”, or “I was always *beholding* the Lord in my presence”.

be fulfilled by the (Second, in the Christian case) coming of Messiah: “This struggle for aspiration and longing for life is a mitzvah [religious imperative] [to be realized by means of] *nekamah* [vengeance], *mesirat nefesh* [extreme dedication], and the sanctification of the mind and will.”³⁵

So, when we hear stories like this: “I recalled how a martyr-cleric in Mosul was murdered by a Muslim gunman who asked him why he did not close his church as he was ordered to do. The Christian said that he could not close the house of God. And he was shot, along with two of his fellow clerics.”³⁶ – it is obvious that the will to survive of an ordinary Christian of Mosul, Homs or the Mount of Lebanon, is as much defined by the newly defined *Kiddush HaHayim* as with the ancient deep seated confidence that the dream of the troubled King born in Naissus will dissolve into the Uncreated Light: “here let every mouth, every tongue become silent, and let the heart, and the mind, and their every device be still; for the Master of the house has come.”³⁷

³⁵ Rabbi Menachem Zemba’s plea for resistance prior to the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in April 1943; quoted from Pesach Schindler, *Hasidic Responses to the Holocaust in the Light of Hasidic Thought*, Hoboken: Ktav Publishing House, 1990, p. 65.

³⁶ Robert Fisk, *Can Christians stay in the Middle East now that they are being persecuted for their ancient religion?*, Independent, 12 October 2017; on Internet: <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/christians-middle-east-persecution-lebanon-syria-can-they-stay-a7996921.html>; downloaded on November 3, 2018.

³⁷ St. Isaac the Syrian, *Homily Twenty-Three*, op. cit., p. 239.

England and Serbian Orthodoxy in the First World War¹

MARK D. CHAPMAN

A POSITIVE perception of the Orthodox nations of the East was somewhat unexpected at the outbreak of war. They were frequently regarded as backward and superstitious: the ultra-patriotic paper, *John Bull*, for instance, had reacted to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in bold capital letters: 'TO HELL WITH SERBIA'.² Very quickly after the outbreak of war, however, Serbia became the Eastern equivalent of Belgium and was the focus of much sympathy in church and state.³ There were nevertheless many obstacles that had to be overcome. In the first place, there was a profound ignorance of the Balkans in general and Serbia in particular. In a booklet published soon after the outbreak of war Nevill Forbes, Reader in Russian at Oxford, observed: 'one often heard the question, "What have we to do with Serbia?" and to such a question it could until the end of July 1914 with a considerable amount of truth have

¹ This article is based on a lecture given at the conference 'Theological Refugees in Oxford', held on 6 September 2018 at Pusey House, Oxford to mark the centenary of the evacuation of St Sava's Seminary, Belgrade to Cuddesdon and Oxford. I am very grateful for the work of Professor Bogdan Lubardić of the University of Belgrade for all his help in organising the Conference and to financial support from the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association. See also my *Theology at War and Peace* (London: Routledge, 2017), esp. ch. 4.

² Quoted in Dominic Hibberd, *The First World War* (London: Macmillan, 1990), 27. On British perceptions of the Balkans, see Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, second edition, 2009), esp. 118-22. See also Bogoljub Šijaković, 'A Critique of Balkanistic Discourse: Contribution to the Phenomenology of Balkan "Otherness",' in Bogoljub Šijaković, *The Presence of Transcendence: Essays on Facing the Other through Holiness, History, and Text* (Los Angeles and Belgrade: Sebastian Press, 2013), 153-81. On Serbia and the First World War, see Andrej Mitrović, *Serbia's Great War* (London: Hurst and Company, 2007); and Mira Radojević and Ljubodrag Dimić, *Serbia in the Great War: 1914-1918* (Belgrade: Srpska Književna Zadruga/Belgrade Forum for the World of Equals, 2014). More generally, see David Dutton, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Britain and France in the Balkans in the First World War* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998).

³ See Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Penguin 2013), esp. chs 1, 5, 7, 10 for Serbia's role; Margaret Macmillan, *The War that Ended Peace: How Europe Abandoned Peace for the First World War* (London: Profile Books, 2013), esp. chs 18 and 19 for Serbia's role. See also Norman Stone, *World War One: A Short History* (London: Penguin, 2008), ch. 1.

been answered, “Nothing”.⁴ Soon, however, things had changed: Lloyd George spoke of the ‘dignity’ and ‘valour’ of the Serbian people,⁵ and a whole range of titles was produced discussing the plight of the Serbian people and the complexities of Balkan history.⁶ For example, in his lectures *The Guardians of the Gate* originally given to British forces in Salonica fighting along with Serbs, R. G. D. Laffan wrote:

Despite their unhappy divisions and their weakness in numbers [the Serbs] have never ceased to struggle against the barbarisms of Turkestan and Berlin, which at different times have threatened to overflow the Western nations and the Mediterranean lands.⁷

Practical steps were taken with the founding of the Serbian Relief Fund in 1914, the Yugoslav Committee the following year, and the Serbian Society of Great Britain in 1916. Even the spelling of the country changed from the earlier ‘Servia’. Paul Fussell observed: ‘once the war began that designation [Servia] for a friendly country wouldn’t do – it was too suggestive of servility. Sometime between August, 1914, and April, 1915, the name of the country was quietly “raised” by the newspapers to *Serbia*, and *Serbia* it has remained’.⁸ Large numbers of Englishmen and women went to serve in Serbia following a call from Herbert Bury, Bishop of North and Central Europe.⁹ A well-known example is Percy Dearmer who served as chaplain to the British Hospital Mission. His

⁴ Nevill Forbes, *The Southern Slavs* (London: Oxford University Press, 1914–1915), 3. Forbes produced a *Serbian Grammar* with Dragutin Subotić (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1918). See Gerald Stone, ‘Forbes, Nevill (1883–1929)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/39408> (accessed 8 Feb 2016).

⁵ David Lloyd George, ‘Serbia and Austria,’ in Garland Greever (ed.), *War Writing* (New York: The Century Co., 1919), 278–280.

⁶ Sir Valentine Chirol, *Serbia and the Serbs* (London: Oxford University Press, 1914); Nevill Forbes, *The Southern Slavs*. G. M. Trevelyan, *The Servians and Austria* (London: Wyman and Sons, 1914); See also Spenser Wilkinson, ‘The Question of Servia,’ in Spenser Wilkinson (ed.), *August 1914: The Coming of the War* (London: Oxford University Press, 1914–1915), 7–14.

⁷ Laffan, R. G. D., *The Guardians of the Gate: Historical Lectures on the Serbs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1918), 3.

⁸ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 175.

⁹ See Mitrović, Andrej, *Serbia’s Great War* (London: Hurst and Company, 2007), 111–12. See Monica Krippner, *The Quality of Mercy: Women at War Serbia 1915–18* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1980); and, more generally, Christine E. Hallett, *Veiled Warriors: Allied Nurses of the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), esp. ch. 3.

wife Mabel worked with Mabel St Clair Stobart at Kragujevac, which had once again become the capital of Serbia,¹⁰ where she died of typhus fever.¹¹

Among churchmen there were efforts to help remedy the general ignorance of the Orthodox Churches. The newly formed Anglican and Eastern Churches' Association worked hard to support the cause of the Serbian church through a programme of education and also promoted visits by church leaders.¹² Fr Nicolaj Velimirović,¹³ who went on to become probably the most celebrated Serbian church leader of the twentieth century, came to England in October 1915 after a visit to the United States. He stayed for much of the following year. He lectured at St Margaret's, Westminster on Serbian religion and on Reunion,¹⁴ and gave an address on 'England and Serbia' in the Chapter House at Canterbury Cathedral before Archbishop Davidson,¹⁵ who provided a preface to the subsequent compilation of the lectures:

The presence of Father Nicholai Velimirović in England during the last few months has brought to the many circles with which he has been in touch a new message and appeal enforced by a per-

¹⁰ See Mabel St Clair Stobart, *The Flaming Sword in Serbia and Elsewhere* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916).

¹¹ See the notice in *The Times*, 15 July 1915; see also *Anglican and Eastern Association for promoting Intercommunion between the Anglican and Eastern-Orthodox Churches*, Sixth report: October 1914-March 1921, 46-7. See Anne Powell, *Women in the War Zone: Hospital Service in the First World War* (Stroud: The History Press, 2009), 389.

¹² *Anglican and Eastern Association for promoting Intercommunion between the Anglican and Eastern-Orthodox Churches*, Sixth report (October 1914-March 1921). A slightly modified version was published as: *The Anglican and Eastern Churches: A Historical Record 1914-1921* (Published for the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1921).

¹³ Velimirović became probably the most celebrated Serbian church leader of the twentieth century and has been referred to as the 'New Chrysostom'. He was sent to Dachau Concentration Camp during the Nazi occupation of Yugoslavia and spent the last years of his life in exile in the USA. He was canonized in 2003 by the Serbian Synod of Bishops. For an appraisal of the problematic legacy of Velimirović, see Jovan Byford, *Denial and Repression of Antisemitism: Post-communist Remembrance of the Serbian Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2008).

¹⁴ *Anglican and Eastern Association for promoting Intercommunion between the Anglican and Eastern-Orthodox Churches*, Sixth report, 38-48. He was to give the Lenten addresses at the same venue the following year: published in 1916, Nicolaj Velimirović, *Sermons On Subjects Suggested By The War. The Religious Spirit of the Slavs: Three Lectures Given in Lent at St. Margaret's, Westminster* (Third Series), (London: Macmillan, 1916).

¹⁵ 'England and Serbia', in Nicholai Velimirović, *Serbia in Light and Darkness with a foreword by the Archbishop of Canterbury* (London: Longmans, 1916), 3-23.

sonality evoking an appreciation which glows more warmly the better he is known.¹⁶

In early 1916 Velimirović at Holy Trinity Church, Stroud Green he expressed his gratitude for those who had come to the aid of Serbia: 'God save the gracious King of England and God save all the sons of England who are now fighting for their little brothers in Serbia'.¹⁷ In the following Spring he gave three lectures as part of a longer series at St Margaret's, Westminster 'to help English people to enter into the *ethos* of Slavonic religion'.¹⁸ The lectures were accompanied by prayers as well as hymns and anthems by Russian composers.¹⁹ Velimirović's first lecture on 30 March was on 'The Slav Orthodoxy',²⁰ where he reminded his audience of the origins of Slavic Christianity in the triumph of Constantinople: Christ was 'the essence of human drama and the essence of God' which stood against Protestantism where, he felt, 'the drama of Christianity has ceased'. 'Slav Christianity,' he concluded, 'is not juristic like the Roman, nor scientific like Protestantism, nor reasonable and practical like Anglicanism, but dramatic'.

A week later he lectured on 'The Slav Revolutionary Catholicism'²¹ emphasizing the importance of such figures as John Hus who had fought against paganism and united the world that the anti-pope John XXIII had divided. The following week's lecture was on 'The Religious Spirit of the Slavs'.²² The *Church Times*' correspondent noted: 'This wonderful Serbian priest, so utterly different in appearance from any Western cleric, went to the root of the question, and shed a flood of light on the way the Slav conceives Christianity'. Christianity, Velimirović concluded, 'came not to bring a new civilization but a new religious force, and it was a ready to fight a pagan civilization and a pagan barbarism'. Velimirović had a number of other engagements, preaching at sung mass at St Peter's, Acton Green,²³ and lecturing in Cambridge before an audi-

¹⁶ Randall Davidson, Preface in Velimirović, *Serbia in Light and Darkness*, xi.

¹⁷ *The Guardian*, 20 January 1916, 49.

¹⁸ 'Russian and Serbian Religion', *The Church Times* (24 March 1916): 286. In addition Stephen Graham lectured on 'Religious Symbolism in Russia': see 'Russian Religion', *The Church Times* (31 March 1916): 311.

¹⁹ 'Slav Orthodoxy', *The Church Times* (7 April 1916): 338.

²⁰ 'Slav Orthodoxy', *The Church Times* (7 April 1916): 338.

²¹ 'Slav Revolutionary Catholicism', *The Church Times* (14 April 1916): 373.

²² 'Slav Religion', *The Church Times* (20 April 1916): 387.

²³ *The Church Times* (12 May 1916): 439.

ence that included the Vice-Chancellor.²⁴ He also spoke before British troops, where he emphasized the barbarity of the Germans before offering a patriotic call to arms: 'Martyred Serbia, your loyal ally, oh noble sons and daughters of Great Britain, is now silent and powerless. ... I am sure everyone of you will do his best to redeem Serbia'.²⁵ He later spoke to ordinands on the life of Serbia as 'one long day, or rather night, of sorrow for the 500 years since the disaster of Kossovo, and looked forward to the closer intercourse that must come after the war between the Serbian and the English Churches'. It was the Christian vocation of suffering that the Serbian Church could teach Anglicans.

Following Velimirović's tour, there was a concerted effort across the Church of England to raise the profile of the Serbian Church and of Serbia more generally. This was aided by other visits including Crown Prince Alexander and Archbishop Dimitrije Pavlović of Belgrade who attended²⁶ services at St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey in London.²⁷ With Velimirović acting as translator, Dimitrije addressed the Anglican and Eastern Churches' Association, where he praised the doctors and nurses in Serbia, as well as noting that 'the glory of Christianity was in the Union of the Churches'.²⁸

Later in the year at a meeting of the Anglican and Eastern Churches' Association prominent Anglicans including Bishop Gore of Oxford met the Serbian Minister Mateja Bošković along with Velimirović and two other Serbian priests. A eucharist was celebrated at St Augustine's, Queensgate earlier in the day at which Velimirović preached. At the end of the meeting a resolution was passed thanking the Archbishop of Belgrade for becoming a patron and 'expressing sympathy with the Church and people of Serbia in its suffering'. Velimirović gave a vote of thanks, noting that 'circumstances had made it possible for some of the smaller Orthodox Churches to advance the cause of intercommunion more than the great communities, and added that he and many of his compatriots gladly availed themselves of the hospitality extended to them by the English Church, and constantly communicated at English altars'.²⁹

In 1916 Henry Fynes-Clinton reported that the Chapel of the House of Charity, 1 Greek Street, Soho had been authorized for use by the Serbian Church by the Bishop of London with the approval of the Archbishop. The

²⁴ 'Serbia at Peace' in Velimirović, *Serbia in Light and Darkness*, 48-73.

²⁵ 'Serbia at Peace', 72-3.

²⁶ *The Guardian*, 19 April 1916, 354.

²⁷ *Church Times*, 5 May 1916.

²⁸ *The Guardian*, 4 May 1916, 394.

²⁹ *The Church Times* (27 October 1916): 35.

eucharist was celebrated for the first time in commemoration of the Battle of Kosovo in June. Similarly, since 'Serbian boys are now dispersed in many homes', the Bishop of Oxford had sanctioned the use of St John's College Chapel for the liturgy. When he returned to England in 1917, Velimirović preached at the statutory service in St Paul's on 22 July, an unprecedented event in such a prominent church. He also celebrated the eucharist at St John's College, Oxford for the exiled Serbian and Romanian students who had by that stage arrived in Oxford.³⁰

Kosovo Day, 1916

Most important in raising the profile of Serbia was the celebration of Kosovo Day on 28 June 1916 to remember the battle in 1389 between Prince Lazar and Sultan Murad which led to the loss of Serbia to the Ottomans. The planning Committee was headed by Fynes-Clinton and the historian R. W. Seton-Watson, secretary of the Serbian Relief Fund.³¹ A lecture was read out in 12,000 schools across the country, and a film was shown in numerous cinemas, to raise awareness of Serbia. The intention was to 'interpret to the people of Great Britain the place that Serbia has in civilisation, in the arts and religion; the part that she has taken in history and will certainly take in the future of Eastern Europe; and lastly the place she must take in the hearts of those who love her simplicity and know her greatness'.³²

The Kosovo Day events culminated in a service held in St Paul's Cathedral,³³ 'to pray, and to thank God for the brave lives, Serbian and British, nobly laid down'.³⁴ The form of service included the Russian Kontakion for the departed. Those attending included 200 nurses and a number of ambassadors. In addition to the Dean and Chapter and the Archbishop, Velimirović attended in a 'phainolion of cloth-of-gold' taking his place in the procession immediately before the Archbishop's chaplain with the primatial cross.³⁵ Archbishop Davidson preached a rousing sermon:

Few things, he said, would have seemed less likely two years ago than the holding in St. Paul's Cathedral of a service of amity, sym-

³⁰ *Anglican and Eastern Association*, Sixth report, 39.

³¹ See *The Guardian*, 29 June 1916, 565.

³² Cited in Salter, *Anglican Papalist*, 64.

³³ On the celebration of Kosovo Day, 1916, see Thomas A. Emmert, *Serbian Golgotha: Kosovo, 1389* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1990), 135-7.

³⁴ *The Church Times* (14 July 1916): 29.

³⁵ *The Church Times* (14 July 1916): 29.

pathy and commemoration in connection with Serbia and the Serbians – a European people about whom few in England had any but the scantiest knowledge, and, it must be confessed, little sympathy. ... Much had been learned ... Serbia, in her sorrows and in her courage, has taken a new place in English minds, and also a new place in European affairs.

Serbia had proved an example of a powerful faith that could withstand all the vicissitudes of history. In particular, he concluded, the resistance to 'Asiatic invaders' who had occupied the 'Serbian crossroads', depriving her of freedom, allows us to ask: 'Is my faith as strong as that? What shocks has it ever withstood? Can I say that it is withstanding now?' Despite years of oppression, 'her hope has been indestructible'.³⁶

By all accounts, the service itself was very impressive: 'all hearts were deeply stirred by the moving and pathetic sound of the voices of 300 refugee boys under the dome singing in their national tongue the hymn which they had last heard amid the horrors of the great retreat through the mountains'.³⁷ It was reported that '30,000 copies of the Serbian National Anthem, with English words, were printed and distributed, and numerous post card reproductions of Mr. Bernard Partridge's cartoon "Heroic Serbia," from "Punch"'.³⁸

Shortly after the service Velimirović gave an address on Sunday 2 July on Serbian Saints and Sinners at St Margaret's, Westminster which found its way into the *Church Times* 'Anglo-Catholic Pulpit' column.³⁹ He offers a long overview of Serbian history focusing on the period from independence in 1804 to the outbreak of war in 1914. This was the period that 'began with Christianity and ended with confusion'. In the nineteenth century, Serbian sons went off to their northern Christian neighbour and returned infected by doubt and rationalism quite different from the 'Christianity for which our ancestors died at Kossovo and elsewhere, and for which we sacrificed half a thousand years of our history'. With the outbreak of War, the confused German and Austrian Gospel was overcome as Serbia became the 'leader of Christian crusade in the Balkans'.

³⁶ In *The Guardian*, 13 July 1916, 615.

³⁷ *Anglican and Eastern Association for Promoting Intercommunion between the Anglican and Eastern-Orthodox Churches*, Sixth report (no publisher or date), 47.

³⁸ In F. W. Harvey (ed.), *The Lay of Kossovo: Serbia's Past and Present (1389-1917)* (London: Kossovo Day Committee, 1917), 36.

³⁹ *Church Times* (14 July 1916): 45-6.

The Serbian cause attracted widespread support in Britain. G. K. Chesterton wrote a popular article in the *Daily News* to coincide with the Kosovo Day celebration: 'Serbia,' he held, 'must be called the eldest brother of the Alliance,' because she possesses 'that particular spirit which remembers a defeat rather than a victory ... Kossovo of the Serbians towers in history as the most tragic of such instances of memory.'⁴⁰ Serbia 'is a symbol of nearly all the crucial ideas of this conflict'.⁴¹ After the service Seton-Watson noted that the celebrations 'had succeeded in transforming the blood-stained and murderous *Servia* of *John Bull* into the transfigured and martyred *Serbia* of St Paul's and Kossovo'.⁴²

There were other more concrete steps in the improvement of relationships between Britain and Serbia. In 1916, Fynes-Clinton announced that the Anglican and Eastern Churches' Association was 'hoping, with the hearty co-operation of Fr. Velimirović, to maintain some dozen or more of their picked theological students, monastic and secular, in our theological colleges, under careful tutorship, in order that they may learn what may be useful for the future reconstruction of the life of the Serbian Church, from our educational methods, our parish system and work, retreats, missions, and our monastic life.' There were already two at the House of the Cowley Fathers in Oxford and a further two at St Stephen's House, with several more at Mirfield, and St Edward's House, the Cowley Fathers' house in London. There was an appeal for more funds which would provide an opportunity 'of succouring a sister Church, in many ways other than financial, and we confidently appeal for help from Churchpeople for this work of spiritual co-operation which is desired by their leading clergy amongst us, and which we hope will not cease with their longed-for restoration'.⁴³

⁴⁰ G. K. Chesterton, 'The Thing Called a Nation: The Spiritual Issue of the War,' *The Daily News*, 28 June 1916, in F. W. Harvey (ed.), *The Lay of Kossovo*, 32-35. Other titles published in support of Serbia were Sir Arthur Evans, 'Serbia's Greatest Battle,' *Times*, 28 June 1916, in *The Lay of Kossovo*, 18-20; Charles Oman, 'An Old Treason Against Christendom,' in *The Lay of Kossovo*, 5-10.

⁴¹ G. K. Chesterton, 'On Rescuing the Serbs,' *The Illustrated London News*, April 15, 1916, in *The Collected Works of G.K. Chesterton*, edited by George J. Marlin, et al. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986-), vol. 30, 411. See William M. Klimon, 'Chesterton, Kossovo of the Serbians, and the Vocation of the Christian Nation', *The Chesterton Review*, 20:1 (1994), 41-53.

⁴² Cited in Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe: R. W. Seton-Watson and the last years of Austria-Hungary* (London: Methuen, 1981), 175.

⁴³ *The Church Times* (15 December 1916): 524. Funds were to be sent to the treasurer Canon John Howard Bertram Masterman (1867-1933), afterwards first Anglican Bishop of Plymouth.

Part of the inspiration behind the attempts to establish a Serbian Orthodox house of studies in Oxford was undoubtedly the effort to counter the influence of liberalism and materialism on seminarians in Eastern Europe, which had become more pressing after the Bolshevik revolution.⁴⁴ The house in Oxford was to be, as Pullan put it, an

antidote to the poisonous influence which for a generation has been exercised by Continental Universities upon the so-called “intellectuals” of Eastern Europe. ... Today the remnant of the Eastern Church is threatened by organised materialism and Bolshevism. We have a debt to pay. And justice, which is no other thing than charity, tells us what debt is due.⁴⁵

While the House never came to fruition, a number of seminarians remained in Oxford, as we shall hear later today.

Conclusion

There is obviously much more that can be said about the relationships between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Church of England during and immediately after the First World War. What is most important to stress, by way of conclusion, is the close connection between the politics of war and the development of theology and ecumenism. This resulted in an increasing openness to the drama of Orthodoxy as many in the Church of England were prepared to challenge their Protestant heritage. As Velimirović noted on his return to England after the armistice:

Even amid the destruction of the war, spiritual men discerned the germs of good for the future. The bards and spiritual seers of Serbia had foretold the help of a great kingdom in the west; they looked to Rome and to Canterbury; and they were conscious of essential unity.⁴⁶

That essential unity was to build on the opportunity presented by the rapid collapse of theological liberalism after 1914 on account of its guilt by association with the belligerent religion of Prussian Teutonism. This approach to

⁴⁴ See Salter, *Anglican Papalist*, 65-9. Fynes-Clinton was to visit Serbia in 1921.

⁴⁵ Pullan Papers, Pusey House Library, Oxford, Box 2, ‘The Church of England in its relationship to the Orthodox Churches of the East’, printed lecture, undated, 11.

⁴⁶ Pullan Papers, Pusey House Library, Oxford, Box 4, Fol. 32, ‘The Eastern Orthodox Church’, 42.

ecumenism became a key influence on the famous Appeal of the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican bishops in 1920, and which led to far closer relations between the Church of England and the Churches of the East in the years that followed.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ See Charlotte Methuen, 'An account of the making of the Appeal to All Christian People by George Bell and an edition of the redactions of the Appeal, with an introductory essay' in Melanie Barber, Gabriel Sewell and Stephen Taylor (eds), *From the Reformation to the Permissive Society: A Miscellany in Celebration of the 400th Anniversary of Lambeth Palace Library* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer 2010), 521-64.

Anglican–Oriental Orthodox International Commission Communiqué 2018



THE ANGLICAN–ORIENTAL Orthodox International Commission held its seventh meeting from 22–26 October 2018 at the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchal Residence, Atchaneh, Lebanon.

The Commission greatly appreciated the generous hospitality of His Holiness Mor Ignatius Aphrem II, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, and the kindness of the sisters of the Mor Jacob Baradeus Convent, and all those assisting His Holiness.

The Commission noted with deep sadness the recent passing of one of its founder-members and its former Oriental Orthodox Co-Chair, His Eminence Metropolitan Bishop of Damietta. The Commission gave thanks for his contribution to Anglican–Oriental Orthodox relations, and for his leadership in the ecumenical movement. The Commission offered prayers for the repose of his soul, and continues to hold his diocese in its prayers.

The Procession and Work of the Holy Spirit, the agreed statement of the 2017 meeting of the Commission, was published in October 2018. It is dedicated to Metropolitan Bishop, ‘monk, bishop, theologian, champion of the Orthodox faith and unity of the Church’.

The members of the Commission welcome the unanimous elections, by its Oriental Orthodox members, of His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos of

London as the new Oriental Orthodox Co-Chair and of the Very Revd Dr Roger Akhrass as the new Oriental Orthodox Co-Secretary.

The Commission resumed its work on Authority in the Church, with papers on bishops and synods (councils), and the Ecumenical Councils. It seeks to draw on established ecumenical agreements in the framework of this Commission, and the distinctive characteristics of the two families of Churches. The Commission hopes to finalise and make available the fruits of its work on Ecumenical Councils in 2019.

The Commission was received in audiences by His Holiness, Patriarch Mor Ignatius Aphrem II, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, and His Holiness Catholicos Aram I of the Holy See of Cilicia, in which they both spoke about the present critical situation of Christians in the Middle East, particularly on difficulties in Iraq and Syria.

The Commission was acutely mindful that its meeting took place in Lebanon, itself home to over a million of refugees from war and conflict in the region. The Commission holds before the wider *oikumene* the costly witness of the Churches in this country, offered in love and service to the dispossessed and the victims of war.

The members of the Commission assured Their Holinesses that their prayers would be matched by concrete actions, visible support and solidarity on the part of their respective Churches. In particular, the urgent need for pastoral and ecumenical visits to Syria is vital at this time, and Churches in both families are strongly encouraged to respond in this way. Both Co-Chairs pledged themselves to facilitate such a visit in the near future, as a concrete sign of the faith, trust in and love and for the people who have remained in Syria, at considerable danger to themselves throughout the period of war.

The Commission realises that its own theological work requires the practical expression of love as an outworking of the theological convergence already discerned around Christology and the Holy Spirit. Members of the Commission recognise that it is no longer a question of speaking of the Churches of 'the East' or of 'the West', as we have become truly global communities. Moreover, today we experience one another in different regional contexts and share together in Christian witness and civic engagement in a wide range of countries where Anglicans and Oriental Orthodox are living together.

In the course of the meeting, members of the Commission had the opportunity to encounter local Christians, which included visits to the Monastery of St Maron, Annaya, where they were welcomed by the Abbot and brothers of the Lebanese Maronite Order, and to the Armenian Theological Seminary,

Bikfaya, where students were introduced to the work of the Commission, and had the opportunity to ask questions about the Anglican tradition.

The members of the Commission continue to hold in their prayers the two bishops of Aleppo abducted in April 2013, Metropolitan Mor Gregorios Youhanna Ibrahim of the Syriac Orthodox Church, and Metropolitan Boulos Yazigi of the Greek (*Rûm*) Orthodox Church of Antioch.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Commission thanks the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the mutual understanding and friendship that has been experienced and shared, and looks forward to continuing its work.

Present at the meeting in Atchaneh 2018

Anglican Communion

The Rt Revd Gregory K Cameron	Church in Wales (Co-Chair)
The Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut	Anglican Communion Office (Co-Secretary)
The Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson	Church of Ireland
The Ven Dr Edward Simonton OGS	Anglican Church of Canada
The Revd Stephen Stavrou	Church of England
The Revd Canon Dr William Taylor	Church of England
The Revd Neil Vigers	Anglican Communion Office (Staff)

Oriental Orthodox

COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA

His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos London, United Kingdom (Co-Chair)

SYRIAC ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ANTIOCH

His Eminence Metropolitan Polycarpus Augin Aydin The Netherlands
The Very Revd Fr Dr Roger Akhrass Syria (Co-Secretary)

ARMENIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH – HOLY SEE OF CILICIA

The Very Revd Boghos Tinkjian Lebanon
The Very Revd Zareh Sarkissian Lebanon

MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH

The Revd Fr Dr KM George India

From Surviving to Thriving: Visit to the Christian Churches of Iraq¹

WILLIAM TAYLOR²

THIS WAS a follow up visit to the one made in July 2017 – *From Darkness to Light*³ soon after the liberation of Mosul and the Nineveh Plain from the destructive occupation of Da'esh. Then, the focus was on the immediate reconstruction of homes, churches, schools, and infrastructure of the communities (Christian and Yezidi) which had been devastated by the three-year occupation of Da'esh. Now, one year on, huge progress has been made in restoring the physical infrastructure of the community – but still, much remains to be done. The focus is now changing from immediate repair and reconstruction to providing a stable means of livelihood – employment, income generation, and education at all levels, so that the Christian community will not only have a continuing meaningful existence in Iraq/KRG, but also will thrive and prosper as they continue to contribute to the healthy mosaic of community life which has always been Iraq at its best. The Christian leadership in Iraq are determined to provide the framework for Christians to prosper in their historic homeland and not be forced to flee into exile. In this visit, I was representing ICIN (<http://icin.org.uk/>) and AECA (<https://www.aeca.org.uk/>), and accompanied by Christopher Segar (former British Ambassador in Iraq) representing *firme* (<https://firme.org/>), William Salomon, representing St John, Notting Hill (<http://www.stjohnsnottinghill.com>), and Denny Chan. Hong Kong-based British architect and photographer (<http://www.dennychankl.com>).

The Monastery of Mar Mattai

Our first visit, direct from the airport at Erbil, was to one of the most important Christian sites in Iraq, the Syriac Orthodox Monastery of Mar Matta. Founded in the fourth century by the hermit Mar Mattai, the monastery has held a pre-eminent place in the history of Christianity in Mesopotamia/ Iraq, and the dissemination of the religion throughout Asia. It was from here, after

¹ July 30th – August 2nd, 2018

² Photography by Denny Chan, <http://www.dennychankl.com>

³ http://icin.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Iraq-ICIN-2017_DRAFT_170822.pdf



the Council of Chalcedon in 451, that hundreds of Syriac speaking monks took Christianity east along the silk roads to the then Chinese imperial capital and eastern terminus of the silk roads, Xi'an. The monastery has been an important centre of scholarship and houses the tomb of the famous thirteenth century polymath and philosopher Maphrian Bar Hebraeus. Mar Mattai is situated on the escarpment of Mount Alfaf – the Syriac origin of its name (Syriac thousands) testifies to the fact that at its height, the monastery and surrounding caves were home to thousands of monks. It has survived war and peace and the various vicissitudes of history, most recently providing shelter for dozens of families from 2014-17 fleeing from the persecution of Da'esh. Now, as throughout its history, the monastery is at the centre of community reconstruction in the communities and villages around it. We were privileged to be accompanied by the Abbot of the Monastery and Metropolitan, Mor Timothy Mousa Alshamany, to a number of towns and villages in the area, with which the monastery is working closely. Mar Mattai is the leading player in the region and has ambitious plans to use its own lands on Mount Alfaf for the creation of a stone quarry, a breeze block (cement) factory, agricultural development, and bore holes for irrigation and a water bottling plant. The monastery has also half built a new building to serve as a seminary and accommodation for visitors/tourists. On a government to government level, or through larger NGO's, the development of tourism in northern Iraq/Kurdistan holds out real possibilities,

with its rich archaeological heritage from antiquity, its natural beauty, and its vibrant and varied religious sites.

Bashiq, Behzane and Bartella (Al Hamdaniya District, Nineveh Plain)

Bashiq and Behzane

Bashiq and Behzane are large villages within walking distance of each other. We visited the Parish priests in each place, the churches, community centres, kindergartens, and schools. Most are being rebuilt with speed, dedication, and vision and the communities are very clear that they are here for the long term, despite the political instability. In Bashiq, 750 out of 1500 families have returned and about 250 may have left for good. In Behzane, 160 families have returned. Both communities lie in an area disputed by the Iraqi and KRG governments, and thus controlled by four different armies/militias (Peshmerga/Iraqi Army/Al-Hashd Al-Sha'abi/NPF). Bishop Mousa clearly commands the respect of all of them, making checkpoints easy to negotiate, which would otherwise not be the case.

Bashiq and Behzane, like most villages in the Nineveh plain, are mixed communities of Yazidis, Shabaks, and Christians. Plans are in hand with the Syriac Orthodox Church to rebuild the ruined kindergartens there (one of which is now razed to the ground) to serve all the community, regardless of religious affiliation. Rebuilding the kindergarten in Bashiq would dramatically illustrate this inter-faith aspect of the work, as the site is within a stone's throw (and clear sight lines) of both mosque and Yazidi shrine.



Bartella

Bartella is the largest town in the district and was fiercely fought over by different forces during its liberation from the occupation of Da'esh (Da'esh used the community centre as an information HQ and prison). Here, destruction from ground forces' fighting and airstrikes is much more apparent. As in Bashiqa and Behzane, the Syriac Orthodox Church is at the forefront of community reconstruction – schools, kindergartens, homes, shops, and businesses, as well as supporting the development of agriculture in the surrounding farms. In this town, 1200 families have returned, while 600 still remain in Ainkawa in temporary accommodation (see below).

Al Qosh and Tell Uskuf (Tell Kepe District, Nineveh Plain)

Al Qosh

From the Monastery of Mar Matta, where we spent two nights, we moved on to the Chaldean Catholic communities of Al Qosh and Tell Uskuf, and were accommodated in the Mutraniyya at Al Qosh, thanks to Bishop Mikha Pola Maqdassi. Here, we were able to see the inspirational work being done in the New Hope Trauma Centre working in the neglected area of mental health, particularly for people affected by PTSD, having been through war and occupation (though Al Qosh itself was not occupied by Da'esh), and now living with political instability. Al Qosh is also home to the shrine of the Prophet Nahum, who ironically predicted the end of the Assyrian Empire. This was an important pilgrimage site for Jews, reflected in the Jewish saying “He who has not made the pilgrimage to Nahum's tomb has not yet known real pleasure.” Important plans are being made now for its restoration in the bigger context of the development of tourism/pilgrimage to the region. Equally important in Al Qosh is the Chaldean Catholic Monastery of Rabban Hormuzd. Dating from the sixth century, it too was at the forefront of the missionary expansion along the silk roads, from where monks carried the Christian religion and the Syriac language as far as China. In this hauntingly beautiful site, there was some contemplation time on the future of Christianity in Asia, particularly in China in the twenty-first century, with its Syriac roots here in the monasteries of Mesopotamia.

Tell Uskuf

This large Chaldean Catholic village has seen much reconstruction in the past 12 months. Here, 1,000 families have returned with the prospect of 400 more

returning soon. Meaningful employment is seen to be the key to retaining and developing the community – we saw an illustrative example in a small enterprise producing take away food and bread, already providing employment for 5 families. This could be duplicated dozens of times. The church is largely reconstructed, new schools and kindergartens are being built, shops and businesses are being rebuilt, and the town centre is once again busy in the cooler summer hours of the evening, with shops and cafes thriving. We were able to visit the building site of the new occupational youth centre, constructed with support from a Parish of the Church of England. Last year, we had been able to see the devastation in the neighbouring town of Batnaya – 80% destroyed in the occupation of Da'esh and the air and land battle to remove them. Unfortunately, this year we were unable to visit as the town is in the disputed zone between Hash'd as Sha'abi and Peshmerga, though this may be resolved in the near future. We were able, however, to make a visit to the local Peshmerga Commander in his new headquarters.

Erbil

From Al Qosh, we returned to the regional centre of Erbil and the Chaldean Catholic Mutraniyya of Archbishop Bashar Warda. He leads his community with energy, vision, determination and foresight, fully aware of the dangers and challenges but always with the bigger picture in mind. Here, we saw the construction of a new state of the art hospital, as well as sharing in his plans for exchanges of teachers, students, and others. For him, higher education and health are the keys to keeping the community intact as it moves from surviving to thriving. The emptying of the camps for IDPs in the last year illustrates this shift in emphasis from surviving to thriving. We re-visited the large Ainkawa 2 camp and were hosted



by the Syrian Catholic priest Fr Emmanuel. Here, just 100 families remain (most with the prospect of leaving soon) whereas just one year ago it housed more than 1,000 families. As we prepared to leave to the airport, Archbishop

Warda issued a passionate and clear challenge to the Church of England as a whole to move from internal pre-occupations and circular discussion to active solidarity and support for the frontline mission of the Church in Iraq. This was an inspirational note on which we ended our visit, determined to walk alongside the Christians of Iraq as they move from surviving to thriving.

Thanks

We are deeply grateful for the hospitality shown to us in Iraq - from Bishops Bashar Warda, Moussa Al-Shamani, and Mikha Pola Maqdassi, from Fathers Aram and Salar, and from Deacons Basman and Milan. Their hospitality and practical help made this visit possible. The visit was a snapshot impression of the inspirational work being done by the Churches of Iraq, working closely together for the good of the whole community. It does not attempt to be an exhaustive analysis of the situation in the region, but a call to action in partnerships for all those who wish a better future for our brothers and sisters in Iraq – from whom we receive far more than we give.



Donations can be given through:

Iraqi Christian In Need (ICIN) – <http://icin.org.uk/>

The Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East (FRRME) – <https://frrme.org/>

A Visit to Russia

DANIEL TROTT

FROM 4TH to 14TH September 2018, I had the privilege of being one of the representatives of the Church of England who participated in a Summer Institute programme organized by the Moscow Patriarchate's SS Cyril and Methodius Theological Institute of Postgraduate Studies. These programmes are part of the Moscow Patriarchate's engagement with other Christian churches. The group of thirteen clergy and ordinands of the Church of England was led by the Rt Revd Jonathan Goodall (Bishop of Ebbsfleet and the Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Orthodox Church), the Revd Dr Jamie Hawkey, and the Revd Andrei Petrine.

The programme began with four days in Moscow. There we met representatives from the Department for External Church Relations (including Metropolitan Hilarion), the Synodal Department for Relations between the Church, Society and the Mass Media, and the Synodal Department for Catechisation. In those meetings we learnt about the work of those departments, and discussed the ways in which the Church of England's approach is different from that of the Russian Orthodox Church. We visited Chernigov Patriarchal Metochion, St Daniel Monastery, Red Square and Zaryadye Park, the (recently rebuilt) Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, and the Sretensky Theological Seminary and Monastery. We attended a Eucharist at St Andrew's Anglican Church, and we visited the Church of SS Cosmas and Damian, where we heard about their work with the homeless and were introduced to the life and work of Fr Aleksandr Men'. We were impressed by the beautifully redecorated churches everywhere we went, in which we were invited to venerate significant icons and relics.

On the third day in Moscow we visited the Trinity Lavra of St Sergius in Sergiyev Posad. Founded by St Sergius of Radonezh in 1337, it is the largest male monastery in Russia. When we were given free time at the end of the day to explore the monastery, we discovered beautiful services of vespers taking place, one sung antiphonally by powerful choirs of seminarians either side of the church, and one sung simply but no less beautifully by a small consort of nuns. On the way back from the lavra we visited the Fr Aleksandr Men' Memorial on the site of his murder, and we heard more about his life and influence.



The Anglican delegation with Archimandrite Alexius, abbot of the Danilov Monastery, Moscow.

The final day in Moscow began with breakfast with the British Ambassador at the British Embassy, where his diplomatic skills were put to good use in answering questions about Russian internal and external politics. We visited the State Tretyakov Gallery, where we saw not only a collection of original Andrei Rublev icons, but also had our eyes opened to the amazing richness of nineteenth-century Russian painting. After a tour of the Kremlin, we left Moscow for Diveyevo Convent in Nizhny Novgorod Oblast.

Diveyevo Convent is the largest female monastery in Russia, counting several saints among its sisters. It is situated near the town of Sarov, from where St Seraphim served many of the nuns as their spiritual father (*starets*). While there we attended a liturgy presided over by Metropolitan Georgy of Nizhny Novgorod and Arzamas, walked in an evening procession with the nuns, met and talked with Metropolitan Georgy, and visited the nearby town of Arzamas. Our visit ended with a trinitarian three dips in the Healing Spring of St Seraphim of Sarov.

From Diveyevo we travelled to Nizhny Novgorod, where we visited a seminary, participated in a procession for the feast of the Beheading of John

the Baptist, were shown around the historic sites of the city, and attended part of vespers in St Aleksandr Nevsky Cathedral.

We travelled by sleeper train to St Petersburg, where the next day we attended another procession, this time for the feast day of St Aleksandr Nevsky. We visited Feodorovsky Cathedral, saw some amazing art in the State Hermitage and took a boat trip along the canals. On the final full day we visited the Church of the Saviour on Spilt Blood, built over the place where Tsar Aleksandr II was fatally wounded by political dissidents in 1881, and St Isaac's Cathedral, and spent some time with staff and students at the St Petersburg Theological Academy.

Throughout our very busy trip we were treated with wonderful hospitality wherever we went, and were often given very honoured places at the Divine Liturgy. We valued the few opportunities we had to speak to seminarians and other young Orthodox, which both parties found interesting and valuable. Our experiences left us with an impression of a church that has suffered much in living memory, but which is now confidently engaging with the present – a church which has experienced an amazing reversal of fortunes in the last 25 years, but which is aware of the missionary task it faces. We were reminded of the close relationship that has often existed between the Church of England and the Russian Orthodox Church, and felt a real sense of kinship between our two churches.

It was while we were in Russia that the recent sad events concerning the Ukrainian Orthodox Church were beginning to unfold. Nevertheless, our trip to Russia was an amazing experience, and I hope that all who participated will find that they now have a connection with the Orthodox Church and with Russia that cannot be broken. At a time when churches and nations sometimes seem to be moving further apart, I pray that the personal links formed on this visit will increase mutual understanding and enable Anglicans and Orthodox to walk more closely together in the way of Christ.

AECA 2018 Pilgrimage to Holy Armenia

ALAN TRIGLE

PILGRIMAGES HELP us to grow in several ways. We make new friendships with our fellow pilgrims and cement existing ones. We learn about the places we visit. We are able to see our own faith tradition in a different light as a result of the broader perspective we acquire. Finally, and probably most importantly, we hope to encounter God in a new way. For me at least, the AECA 2018 pilgrimage to Holy Armenia was successful in all of these.

The present day country of Armenia is only a part of the territory that has had the name in the past and sits in the southern Caucasus with Georgia to the north, Azerbaijan to the east and Iran and Turkey to the south and west. With justifiable pride, Armenians point out that they were the first people in the world to adopt Christianity as the state religion, in 301 AD - well ahead of the toleration granted by the Edict of Milan under Constantine in 313 and the Edict of Thessalonica of 380 making it the official religion of the Roman empire. Living in a part of the world with few obvious or effective natural borders, the Armenians have constantly been in contact and not infrequently conflict with their neighbours, and Christianity is deeply associated with the national sense of identity. Tradition has it that the country was visited by the apostles Bartholomew and Thaddeus, hence the name Armenian Apostolic Church (there is also a smaller Armenian Catholic Church, which accepts papal primacy). This of course casts a different slant on western claims to apostolic descent through Peter and Paul.

The trip was well subscribed, and 28 of us took part. It was pleasing to see that the vast majority of the pilgrims had no previous connection with the AECA, so our marketing efforts had been effective and we were able to introduce ourselves to a new interested audience. Religious affiliations ranged from Church of England (the majority) of varying degrees of active commitment through to Russian Orthodox and a couple of members of the Armenian diaspora going “home” for the first time.

On 24 September we flew from Heathrow to Moscow and on to Yerevan, arriving at around midnight and finally reaching our hotel rooms in the centre of the capital at about 2am. Remarkably, McCabe were staging two pilgrimages from London to Armenia departing on the same date; this resulted

in us having to rescue one of our group from being kidnapped on the wrong bus when leaving the airport!

Our first visit the next morning was to the Matenadaran, the national manuscript museum. The Armenian alphabet invented by Mesrop Mashtots in the fifth century is one of the distinctive signs of Armenian identity, and we saw a remarkable range of works translated into Armenian from a very early date; not only religious and devotional works, but also ancient Greek philosophy, medicinal and herbal texts.

In the afternoon we went to the Genocide Memorial Complex, which is comparable in purpose to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. It documents the events that took place under Ottoman rule during the first world war when the authorities attempted to solve what they saw as the Armenian “problem” by killing all Armenians. Intellectual leaders in all areas of life were arrested and executed in Istanbul and huge numbers of people, including women and young children, evacuated from their homes and sent on forced marches into the desert to either die on the way or be executed when they got there. Sombre viewing in the extreme, the architecture is cleverly designed to take the visitor on a journey that parallels the route the victims followed. Outside is a flame of remembrance, around which we gathered in prayers led by Bishop Christopher. Hard as it is to find meaning in such awful events, I was struck by the consolation offered by our guide: the genocide failed, it did not wipe out the entire Armenian race, and the survivors and their descendants are resolutely determined to maintain their national identity, not least as Christians.

The second day we drove out to Khor Virab, a monastery in the fertile Araxes valley with fabulous views of Mount Ararat, the symbol of Armenian national identity but today in Turkey. Looking across the rows of vines to the huge twin summits of Ararat is spectacular, and we were so close to the border that my mobile phone pinged “Welcome to Turkcell”. The site of the monastery is famous for being the place where St Gregory the Illuminator was imprisoned for 12 years in solitary confinement underground by King Trdat. It was on his release that the king proclaimed Christianity as the state religion. I wriggled through a small hole and climbed down a ladder into Gregory’s cell; for a time I was the only person in it, and kneeling to pray on the bed ledge in the dark while thinking what it would have been like to be a prisoner there was a very powerful experience.

From there we drove on to the pink stone monastery at Norovank and then continued to Lake Sevan, which is about 40 miles long and 15 miles across. As the day was ending we called at a cemetery in Noratus which has a stunning



Mount Ararat, with Khor Virap monastery in the middle distance

collection of khachkars – a form of gravestone unique to Armenia; because there are so many in one place you can trace how the artistic tradition has developed over time. The dominant feature is a cross, but this gradually has become more stylised and decorative, and as with some of the church architectural decorations we saw there are clear signs of contact with an Islamic artistic tradition. Equally, there is a degree of similarity with Celtic designs, prompting me to think of the cross at Bewcastle in Northumbria, which is said to show signs of Iranian influence.

The third morning we were welcomed at Sevan seminary on a peninsula in the lake, one of three seminaries in the country. Seminarians wear Tsarist-style uniforms with a purple frock coat that comes down to their knees, and have to lead a life with much emphasis on discipline and no mobile phones. Bishop Hovakim, who had studied there himself, recalled being punished for a minor misdemeanour by having to write out the whole of Mark's Gospel in longhand in just three days. Watching the young men sit at rows of school desks I was thinking how unlike my own ordination training this seemed, but then I realised that they were all reading exactly the same Nestle-Aland edition that I had used in my New Testament Greek lessons. It was a striking reminder of what we have in common – the scriptures, and a devotion to studying them and trying to live them out.



Seminarians in Sevan with some of the AECA pilgrims

From there we exchanged our bus for two more nimble minibuses to go up the extremely rough track to the monastery of Makaravank. This, like most of the church buildings we saw, is still undergoing restoration after neglect in communist times. Interestingly, the fact that Armenia is in an earthquake zone is less of a problem, since traditional architecture developed construction methods that were flexible enough to cope with earth tremors. Here we celebrated an atmospheric Eucharist at the ancient altar in semi-darkness, and as we came out some local pilgrims had also made their way up the difficult road and were offering flowers to Our Lady.

The following day involved a long journey along the road northwards towards Georgia, which is not always of high quality. On the sides of the wild and isolated Debed Gorge are the two monasteries of Sanahin and Haghbat. Both founded by the same family, these were historic rivals: Sanahin means “older than the other one”. Signs of Soviet industrialisation and then the later collapse following the end of communism are all too apparent in this part of the country in the large numbers of derelict factory buildings and abandoned



Young people queueing to venerate a relic of the True Cross

chimney stacks; though it is probably a consolation that these are no longer pouring out fumes from copper smelting.

On Saturday, before returning to Yerevan we encountered a procession through the streets of Dilijan as a relic was paraded as part of one of Armenia's several feasts of the Holy Cross; it was fascinating to see how many people were attracted to this and queued up to venerate the relic, especially young people.

Sunday was one of the highlights of the pilgrimage for me: we were honoured guests at the celebration of the liturgy in the cathedral in Ejmiatsin, the spiritual centre of Armenian Christianity, and our hosts offered us seats and an explanation of proceedings. As one would expect, everything was complex and precise; I particularly noted the way the celebrant removed his shoes as he approached the altar for the Eucharist, just as Moses did to approach the burning bush. Our group was given the opportunity to make our confessions, so we were welcome to receive communion and many of us did. As we left, after a



Generous home hospitality offered by Bishop Hovakim

shorter than expected two hours, the retired bishop sitting near me shook my hand and said “Thank you for coming to pray with us.”

Sadly we were unable to meet the Catholicos, the Head of the Armenian Apostolic Church, who is based in Ejmiatsin, because he was opening an exhibition of Armenian art at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, but in his absence we were given a formal welcome by Archbishop Nathan, the church’s Head of Protocol and a former primate of the Armenian diocese of Great Britain.

Afterwards the current Armenian bishop in the UK, our group co-leader Bishop Hovakim, gave us a wonderful example of Armenian hospitality by inviting all 28 of us to his mother’s house for tea and cakes on the terrace, with a splendid spread of local and home grown fruits. Returning to Yerevan we

stopped at the church of St Hripsime, where a wedding had just taken place – complete with photographer's drone.

Our final day took us to the spectacular pagan temple at Garni, where we finally met up with the other British pilgrim group (from Southwark) for lunch. In the evening Bishop Hovakim took us to see one of a series of after-school activity centres run by the Apostolic Church, which were acquired at the initiative of the Catholicos from what had been communist pioneer centres. We saw children engaged in a whole range of structured activities from painting, carving, carpet making and chess (the national sport) through to music and circus acrobatics. The grand finale of our pilgrimage was a hugely impressive series of performances put on for us by the children with outstanding skill, energy and commitment. Even our bus driver was impressed.

I realise I have not written much about the buildings and architecture we saw, but maybe that is a reflection of what I was looking for on the pilgrimage, and what I found: new friendships, a new perspective on my own church and its traditions, and a sense of how the Holy Spirit is so clearly active today in the life of the people of Armenia and its church.

On behalf of all the pilgrims I would like to thank Fr Andrei for his tireless work organising the trip, Bishop Christopher for leading us in prayer and offering so many spiritual insights as we travelled round, and Bishop Hovakim for all his patient introductions, explanations and generous hospitality.

Bishop Hovakim has invited all pilgrims (and anyone else who would like to come) to join in the celebration of the Eve of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple at the Armenian Church in Kensington on Wednesday 13 February, 2019 for a reunion.

Book Reviews

NEVSKY EVERETT

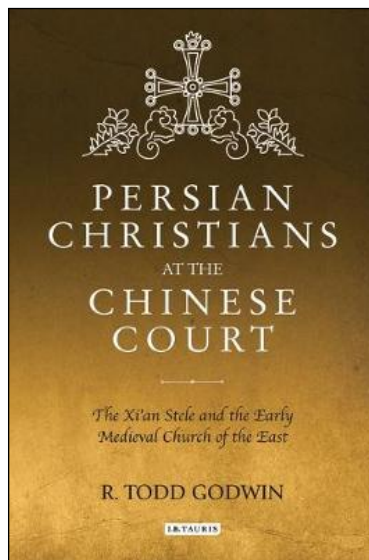
Persian Christians at the Chinese Court: The Xi'an Stele and the Early Medieval Church of the East. R. Todd Godwin. I. B. Tauris, 2018. xii + 306 pp.

THE FAMOUS Xi'an Stele was erected in 781 by the Church of the East and the rulers of the Tang dynasty, in what was then China's capital city of Chang'an. The stele, written mostly in Chinese with a little Syriac, commemorates the official recognition of the Chinese diocese of the Church of the East, beginning in 638.

The stele is at the heart of this book. Godwin's central thesis is that the text of this stele allows us fundamentally to reassess our understanding of the relationship between the Church of the East and the Chinese court.

In the first chapter, Godwin explores the place of the Church of the East in the context of the late-Sasanian court. He begins with Tabari's account of the burial of the last Sasanian monarch, Yazdegird III, by Christians in Merv, showing a close connection between the Church of the East and the Sasanian Imperial family. He then draws on a wide range of evidence to demonstrate the role of the Church in the diplomatic missions of the Sasanian court. This is significant, as until recently, the study of the relationship between the Church and the State has been dominated by the question of persecution as seen in the East Syrian martyr acts. Godwin repeatedly points to the agency of the Church of the East in the shifting political milieu that arose after the fall of the Sasanian Empire.

The second chapter seeks to situate the Church of the East in the context of the Tang court, where it was given the title 'the Persian religion.' Of particular interest here is Godwin's use of Chinese sources to show the inter-



connectedness of the Tang court with the Church of the East and the Sasanian royals in exile.

The third chapter then shifts the focus from China to the Abbasid court, again concentrating on the way the Church of the East negotiated changing dynamics of power. Godwin argues that the success of Patriarch Timothy I in this regard owed much to the transnational nature of the Church of the East in this period. The Church's connection to Imperial power in China and to the Sasanian exiles gave it social leverage in the Abbasid period.

The final chapter returns to China, in the decade following the erection of the Xi'an stele. Again, Godwin situates the Church of the East in the context of the Tang court and explores a fascinating range of Chinese Christian sources.

The conclusion draws together the many themes of this book. In essence, Godwin argues that the Church of the East in China (and indeed throughout its territories) had a political agency that resulted from its strong ascetic tradition, combined with its Imperial Persian past.

The end matter includes appendices listing Persian, Arab and Chinese leaders along with the Church of the East's Patriarchs, and the text of the Xi'an stele. The bibliography is thorough and helpfully groups primary sources by language.

One of the great strengths of this book is its use of a wide-range of sources, in Syriac, Greek, Arabic, Persian and Chinese. As a result, this book will have a wide appeal: to those studying late-Sasanian Persia; to those interested in the history of the Church of the East, particularly along the Silk Route; and to scholars of Medieval China. This is not without its problems, however, and some of the material could have been better contextualised for non-specialists.

Nevertheless, this is an important book that tells an important and often forgotten story: it shows the richness of the East Syrian tradition, and the ways in which the Church of the East understood itself in a cultural context far removed from its historic heartlands.

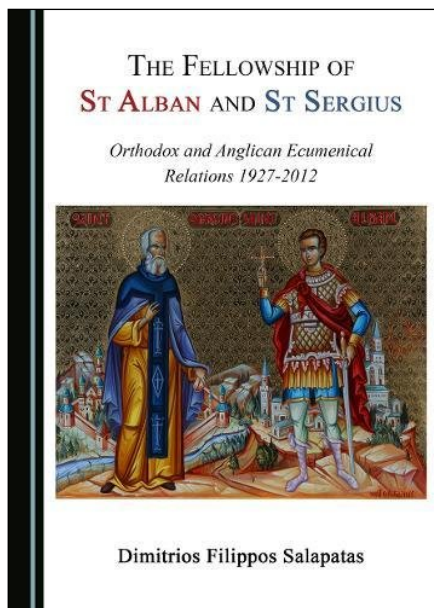
ALEXIOS FLORIDES

The Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius – Orthodox and Anglican Ecumenical Relations 1927-2012. Dimitrios Filippou Salapatas. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018. 301 pp.

AS ONE of the first readers of Dimitrios Salapatas' book titled 'The Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius,' I should express my joy of summarising and reviewing his recent piece of work that, for me, not only conveys his loyalty to the Fellowship and to the ongoing Orthodox-Anglican dialogue (that he himself plays a significant part in, as a representative of our Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in Great Britain) but also fundamentally expresses his unending passion and work for Ecumenical theology.

Dimitrios Salapatas' book takes the reader on a journey through the history of the fellowship; from its formation in 1927, to the inauguration of the World Council of Churches, then on to its history following the WCC's establishment until its eighty-fifth birthday. He then discusses the contribution and work of Nicolas Zernov, followed by the topics of Icons and the role of women within the two traditions according to Rowan Williams and Metropolitan Kallistos.

While encapsulating the history and contribution of the Fellowship, Demetrios simultaneously highlights and expresses, throughout his book, the need for today's theologians to 'search for true ecclesiastical and existential life within the tradition of a unified and undivided Christendom,'¹ following Christ's commandment of unity (Jn 17:21) and the prayer within the Divine Liturgy: 'For the peace of the world, for the welfare of God's holy Churches and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.' The writer, beyond his concise



¹ Dimitrios Filippou Salapatas, *The Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius – Orthodox and Anglican Ecumenical Relations 1927-2012* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018) 153.

evaluation and description of the fellowship's life, work and role within the Ecumenical movement, argues that such movements are needed if solutions are to be found on crucial issues of Christian unity. The fellowship, for Dimitrios, has been and will continue to be an exemplary context in which such dialogues, innovative discussions, the creation of mutual understanding, and further steps towards common prayer and unity can take place. Its Eucharistic approach, centralisation of common prayer and reflection has resulted in significant contributions to Orthodox-Anglican relations. Its publications and activity have attracted the support and participation of significant Orthodox and Anglican academics throughout the United Kingdom, fundamentally leading to the development of not only an academic body but a crucial community within the United Kingdom's theological circle, in a spirit of dialogue and cooperation.

Following his historical account, in the third chapter, Dimitrios discusses the important contribution of Nicolas Zernov (1898-1980) to the Fellowship's evolution. As a consequence of Zernov's experiences with both western Christians in England and the Oriental-Orthodox Christians of India, his personal pain caused by the disunity of Christianity resulted in his involvement with inter-Christian dialogue and in particular with the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius. Beyond the discussion on the problematic and uncanonical theory of the 'third Rome,' the chapter highlights Zernov's vision of the Church as one of ecumenicity – following St Sergius' teaching of every nation and race being able to contribute to the life of the One Catholic Church. His approach to Orthodox-Anglican relations was one of reconciliation. Zernov fervently believed that the two Churches were able to offer experience, understanding and inspiration to one another, pointing out the similar organisational structures, with the view that 'the restoration between the East and the West is an indispensable condition for the invigoration of the Church and for the expansion of Christian culture.' Dimitrios successfully uses Zernov as a crucial example of a contributor not only to the fellowship but to the ecumenical movement in general, as someone who (although holding his own patriotic, rather ethnocentric views on Russia) is able to admit to the need of putting aside political, nationalistic, cultural barriers when discussing the notion and process of unity. Zernov conveys a positive outlook on the future of Christianity; a future based on each Church' self examination, acknowledging the particular gifts of each denomination as well as our errors, while upholding the belief that 'only within Orthodoxy could the fullness and integrity of the Christian faith

be found.² Demetrios' chapter on this important Christian Russian émigré, theologian and founding member of the fellowship, truly offers the reader a clearer understanding of the Fellowship's background as well as the spirit, ethos and vision of its members.

The fourth chapter fruitfully examines Metropolitan Kallistos' discussions on the issues of deaconesses and women priests and Roman Williams' understanding of icons. This chapter creates a realistic bridge and discussion between the two traditions in light of these two important Hierarchs of the respected Churches and their contributions to the aforementioned topics. Throughout the two interesting interviews Dimitrios manages to unfold the essential themes of Priesthood, Scripture & Tradition (and their relationship) and Anthropology within the two traditions, as well as the revival of Iconography within the Anglican communion and its positive consequences.

Commenting on the words of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor 1:10) His All-Holiness, our Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, at the 60th anniversary of the World Council of Churches, underlines that 'Paul was exasperated by the internal quarrels and divisions in the church at Corinth, which he had founded some years earlier. So, in this first letter sent to the members of that young fellowship, he made this appeal.' St Paul then asks his Church 'Is Christ Divided?' His All-Holiness then writes, 'In so doing he was wishing to remind the Corinthians that division in the Church contradicted its nature, damaged its witness and caused its mission in the world to fail.'

It is precisely for this Biblical reason and truth of the Gospel that, as Demetrios highlights throughout this impressive, important and historical work, the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius was founded along with the WCC (in 1948) and the wider Ecumenical Movement. It is the Orthodox Church' responsibility, especially in a world overcome by secularism, to give attention to this pressing question of Christian unity, by establishing such bonds of fellowship between divided churches (as is being done in the example of this particular fellowship in the United Kingdom) building bridges to overcome misconceptions and fear of the other.

This book on the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius reflects the fact there is a need for this particular fellowship, as well as other societies and groups, to work alongside the WCC and ecclesial bodies in order to promote healthy fruitful relations between Christian Churches, educating one another

² Metropolitan Kallistos, Interview within Dimitrios Salapatat' *The Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius*.

on our traditions, our differences, ways we can cooperate in common prayer and dialogue for greater unity and for the Glory of God. As is proclaimed through the recent document released by the Holy & Great Council, the *‘Orthodox Church which prays unceasingly “for the union of all,” has always cultivated dialogue with those estranged from her; those both far and near. In particular, she has played a leading role in the contemporary search for ways and means to restore the unity of those who believe in Christ, and she has participated in the Ecumenical Movement from its outset, and has contributed to its formation and further development. Moreover, the Orthodox Church, thanks to the ecumenical and loving spirit which distinguishes her, praying as divinely commanded that all men may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:4), has always worked for the restoration of Christian unity. Hence, Orthodox participation in the movement to restore unity with other Christians in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church is in no way foreign to the nature and history of the Orthodox Church, but rather represents a consistent expression of the apostolic faith and tradition in a new historical circumstances.’* Dimitrios Salapatas’ latest work on the Fellowship (as one of the most historical and crucial forums for Western Christians to encounter Eastern Orthodox worship) is a paradigm of how this teaching and synodical position (of the Orthodox Church) is put into practice on a local level, within the context of Orthodox and Anglican relations.

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Cover Photo:

An Iraqi Christian family in the ruins of a church damaged by Da'esh.

Photo: Denny Chan