

Occasional Bulletin

from the
MISSIONARY RESEARCH LIBRARY
3041 BROADWAY, NEW YORK 27, N. Y.

May-June 1964

Subscription: \$3.00 per year

Vol. XV, Nos. 5-6

THE SCOPE AND VITALITY OF ORTHODOX MISSIONARY ACTIVITY

by

Carnegie Samuel Calian

The substance of this article first appeared in The International Review of Missions Vol. LII, No. 205 (January 1963), under the title "Eastern Orthodoxy's Renewed Concern for Mission". Permission has been obtained from the IRM for the publication of this revised and expanded account. Dr. Calian currently is Visiting Professor of Theology at The Theological Seminary of the University of Dubuque, Dubuque, Iowa. Special attention is called to the many other works quoted or to which reference is made in the footnotes.

Orthodoxy¹ is no less missionary-minded than are Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. This will come as a surprise to the majority of Protestants and Roman Catholics. It has long been assumed and accepted that Orthodox churches are nationalist churches and therefore lack the missionary concern necessary for them to break out from these self-imposed boundaries.² Archbishop Iakovas, head of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America and one of the presidents of the World Council of Churches, presided over that now historic session of the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches which saw the Council's integration with the International Missionary Council. His presence at this session was a symbolic and significant indication that Orthodoxy is taking seriously its missionary responsibility in the Body of Christ.

Signs of Vitality

There are some noteworthy signs of renewal and vitality regarding missionary concern within Orthodoxy which can be examined. First and foremost is the establishment, in 1961, of an Inter-Orthodox Missionary Center, under the name Porefthentes, in Athens. The purpose of this Center is to promote within Orthodoxy the aims of missionary outreach, education, financial support and enlistment of personnel. The general director of the Center is Father Anastasios Yannoulatos and the scope of its work is: 1. Study and research on the theoretical and practical problems of Orthodox external mission. 2. The fostering of a missionary and ecumenical conscience within the

Orthodox Church throughout the world. 3. Assistance for the spiritual and scientific education of prospective missionaries. 4. Contact with the missionary churches and help in the solution of theoretical and organizational problems which arise.³ The healthy spirit manifested in the founding of this Center cannot be denied.

It is interesting to note that the inspiration behind the Center's creation has come from the youth of Orthodoxy, with the full blessing of the Ecumenical Patriarch, Athenagoras. By youth I mean the international organization of Orthodox youth movements known as Syndesmos.⁴ This organization, founded in Paris in April, 1953, is an assembly of Orthodox youth of different national churches. Its Greek title, syndesmos, means "bond" or "link", taken from Ephesians 4:3, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond (syndesmos) of peace". The fifth General Assembly of Syndesmos met in the summer of 1961 in Beirut, Lebanon, with the theme "Church and Mission"; and out of this conference came the establishment of the Inter-Orthodox Missionary Center.

In addition to the Center, signs of vitality may be seen in the initiation of an Institute of Afro-Asian Studies in Thessalonica. This institute, which is affiliated with the theological school of the University of Thessalonica, is designed to meet the needs of Orthodox students from Asia and Africa in various fields.⁵ Recently, the first African Orthodox priest was ordained. The priest, Father Theodoros Nankyamas,⁶ is to assist in the growing community in Uganda. The African Orthodox Church today consists of fifty-six communities, numbering some 20,000 Africans in Kenya, Tanganyika, and Uganda.

One reason for the increasing number of African Orthodox Christians in recent years is an appeal free of the weight of nineteenth century colonial stigma so often associated with Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.⁷

Also in 1961, four students of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary in New York gave themselves to the Orthodox Mission in Alaska. In Athens, a young Korean is studying for the priesthood, hoping to return for missionary activity in his homeland, where a small Orthodox community now exists in Seoul. The most significant fact to observe is that the youth of Orthodoxy recognize that missionary responsibility crosses national boundaries which their fathers formerly accepted as delimiting; this is one of the surest signs of revival today. As Father Yannoulatos puts it,

We do not preserve Orthodoxy by simply admiring her life of worship and her doctrine. The consciousness of the fact that "God hath made all men of one blood" (Acts 17:26) and [that] "He wants all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of truth" (I Timothy 2:4) forms an inseparable element of Orthodoxy. The salvation of "all the world" is a doctrine of the Church. And we must accept the consequences. A Church which shows no missionary activity, which does not participate in Christ's agony on the Cross for the salvation of the entire world, for the growth of the Body of the Church [sic] into its final dimensions, for the accomplishment of the divine plan of Redemption (see Matthew 24:24), is [not] really an alive Body of Christ, truly Orthodox, a guard of the spirit of the "one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church" to which our Lord entrusted the continuation of His redemptory work.⁸

Missionary Activity in the Past

It should not be forgotten, as we observe the present signs of renewal and vitality, that Eastern Orthodoxy has a rich heritage of missionary activity. We cannot go into great detail here, but we can indicate some of the missionary highlights of the past.⁹ Looking back to the seventh century we are reminded of the early and wide missionary

accomplishments of the Nestorians who proclaimed the Gospel throughout Central Asia.¹⁰ Later, in the ninth century the Byzantine Church with its base in Constantinople sent out two brothers from Thessalonica as apostles to the Slavic peoples, the Serbs, the Bulgarians and those in Russia. Their names, Cyril and Methodius, are canonized today as "equals to the Apostles". Their approach was to master the language and then proceed to translate the Christian Byzantine liturgy into the Slavic dialects.

The method used by these two Greek brothers met with opposition by the Germanic missionaries from the West. For example, the introduction of a Slavonic liturgy into Moravia was attacked harshly by the Germanic missionaries. According to Byzantine sources, the Western missionaries were accused of a new heresy, the "heresy of the three languages",¹¹ which maintained that only three languages were worthy to express the word of God, namely, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. "The Byzantines had no difficulty in refuting this curious theory and the Greek Church triumphed everywhere that political circumstances allowed. Thus the majority of the Slavs embraced Orthodoxy, adopted the Cyrillic alphabet [named after Cyril], and were integrated into the Byzantine ecclesiastical world."¹² Finally, with the baptism of Prince Vladimir at the end of the tenth century, Russia joined the family of Christian nations and was, until 1917, the chief initiator of modern Orthodox missions.

Russian Missionary History

During the period from 1237 to 1480 the Russians sent priests and monks out to the Mongol, Lithuanian and Finnish tribes. In 1658 Russia founded her missions in China and among the Muslims, and later, in 1794, her first mission in Alaska. In the 1860s she began missions in Japan, Korea, and Manchuria, and in 1882 established work in the Near and Middle East among the Arabic-speaking Syrians. Also during this time the first Orthodox Church in South America was begun. The Orthodox Missionary Society was founded in Moscow on January 25, 1870.¹³

The main reason for Russian leadership in missionary activity is the fact that the Orthodox Churches of the Near East and of the Balkan peninsula, right up to the twentieth century, were deprived by the Turks of any possibility of expansion. This allowed only the Orthodox Church of Russia, unfettered by foreign domination, the freedom of action necessary to carry out a mission program.¹⁴

There have been outstanding Orthodox leaders behind the missionary activities of the Russian Church. We can mention only a few. St. Stephen of Perm (1340-1396), one of the first missionaries of the Russian Church, like Cyril and Methodius, proceeded to translate the Gospel into the language of the Zyrians, a savage population of the northern forests. This was followed by the building of a church and a school. St. Stephen's example later inspired other priests and laymen to translate the Scriptures and liturgy into many other languages found throughout the expanse of Russia, such as the Votyak, Nogay, Cheremish, Tartar, Chuvash, Jakut, Tunguz, Buriat, Aleutian, Kolosh, Korelian, Samoyed, and others - and not to be forgotten are the Far Eastern languages, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean.¹⁵

St. Tryphon (1495-1583) illustrates the role of laymen in missionary work. Later becoming a monk but never losing his lay status, he carried the Gospel to the Lapps and founded Pecenga, the most northerly of Russian monasteries. Other laymen, like Cyril Soukhanov who went to the Unguz nomads and Paul Afansiev who served among the North Koreans, preached and taught with very meager financial resources.¹⁶

Nikita Struve, editor of Le Messager Orthodoxe, reports that "from the sixteenth century until the end of the eighteenth, missionary expansion was more closely linked with the fortunes of the state which gradually succeeded in imposing its tutelage upon the Church".¹⁷ In 1555 Tsar Ivan the Terrible commissioned Bishop Gurji to preach the Gospel among the Muslims in Russia-Kazan. The results of his missionary activity were

surprising when compared with Protestant and Roman Catholic encounters with Islam.¹⁸ Thousands of Muslims were converted to Christianity. Bishop Gurji built a monastery and missionary training school. It is interesting that the latter half of the nineteenth century was to see the establishment of the Ecclesiastical Academy of Kazan.¹⁹ Later, Peter the Great sent Philotheus Lestchinski (1650-1727), Bishop of Tobolsk, into Siberia. Many thousands of natives in the area were converted through his evangelical zeal. In 1714, Peter the Great commanded the first Orthodox mission to China, but in this case as in others, the outward support of the state also carried diplomatic involvement which hindered rather than helped the cause of the missionaries. In short, it cannot be denied that state support was responsible for Orthodox missionary activity, for there are numerous cases in which the opposite was true and barriers were placed in the paths of the missionaries.²⁰

Moving on into the nineteenth century, missionary endeavors by the Russians experienced a marked revival under the leadership of Macarius Glukharev (1792-1847), John Veniaminov (1797-1879), and Nicholas Kassatkin (1836-1912). Glukharev is noted as the apostle to the Altai people in the region of Siberia and was the first to develop an embryonic missionary theology that was later developed and refined by Nikolay Ilminski. Veniaminov is referred to as the apostle of Alaska and of the Siberian East. He became the first bishop of North America and later, due to his outstanding missionary work, Metropolitan of Moscow. He was responsible for establishing the Orthodox Missionary Society and for setting aside the Sunday of Orthodoxy (the first Sunday in Lent) for collections to support the widespread missionary efforts of Orthodoxy. Kassatkin, known as the apostle of Japan, went first to this island kingdom as chaplain to the Russian Consulate and in a short time found himself concerned for the spiritual welfare of the Japanese. At this period, Christianity was still a forbidden religion in Japan. "Father Nicholas succeeded none the less in converting a Shintoist [sic] priest, Swabe, an implacable enemy of foreigners, Sakai, a doctor, and a third Japanese. With the help of these three he set to work immediately on the translation of the Scriptures and of the liturgical books. In 1871, Father Nicholas, whose community now numbered twelve baptized Christians and twenty-five catechumens, returned to Russia and persuaded the Holy Synod to organize officially an Orthodox mission. Two years later Father Nicholas was laying the first foundations in Tokyo of the Orthodox Cathedral of the Resurrection, which was to become (and still is) the most beautiful Christian building in Japan, was inaugurating a seminary for the training of an indigenous clergy and a school for catechists, and was entrusting a committee of nine members with the translation of works on Orthodoxy into Japanese."²¹

Suffice it to say that after the Russian Revolution the freedom to promote missions was curtailed, but the work that was begun in various countries continues to exist and to thrive, with indigenous leadership, and often under difficult circumstances, as in the Peoples Republic of China, Japan, Korea and elsewhere. Reliable statistics are not available, but we suspect that these small communities of Orthodox Christians are often making their Christian witness very effectively, because of their close affinity with Asian culture.

Much of the success of the Russian Church's missionary activity was clearly inspired by the principles laid down by the illustrious Russian orientalist, N. Ilminski (1822-1891): 1. Orthodoxy must be preached to each nation in its own tongue. This meant that each mission must translate the sacred scriptures and Orthodox liturgical books into the language of the people. 2. As soon as possible, indigenous clergy and teachers must be trained and the Russians withdrawn. 3. Each mission should be made ready to stand on its own feet without continuing to rely on Russian funds and missionaries. The Church would thus avoid bureaucracy and be prevented from making the mission churches into imitations of Russian churches.²² It is surprising how modern these principles sound to our ears, especially when we are reminded that they come from an Orthodox Christian of the nineteenth century.²³

Implications for the Future

In light of both the current signs of vitality and the past history of Orthodox missions, there are several positive implications that can be drawn, as well as several potentially negative ones which must be honestly confessed, and by the grace of God avoided. Positively, we are heartened by the fact that nationalist boundaries are being broken in Orthodoxy, thereby re-establishing the missionary imperative which is inherent in true Orthodoxy.²⁴ Furthermore, the present missionary re-awakening has the approval of the Church's hierarchy, but significantly the weight of responsibility is being carried by the youth, which ensures a promising future. Also we should note that the clergy and laity of the Church are together supporting the revival, and in Orthodoxy this is never a factor to be taken lightly, since the theologically trained laity are often less conservative than the clergy in pursuing new ideas. Finally, Orthodox churchmen are beginning to see that fellow-Christians in the member churches of the World Council of Churches can indicate many instructive and helpful techniques from their experiences in carrying out missionary programs. For example, during the summer of 1961 the writer saw such simple and meaningful sharing at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, Switzerland, during a course for pastors and missionaries. There a Greek Orthodox churchman "cornered" an experienced Lutheran missionary who has spent the greater part of his life laboring among the Papuans of New Guinea. He asked him countless questions, eagerly making notes to report to his group. Later he remarked to me, "That is exactly the kind of work which my Church wants to do, too".

There are, however, implications in this new fraternization which must be seen as potentially negative, and therefore as elements to be overcome. A conscious mistrust remains lest relations between Protestant and Orthodox Christians (and Roman Catholics, too) lead eventually to proselytizing (perhaps in more subtle forms than in the past) rather than to the evangelization of non-Christians. Proselytizing, of course, violates the integrity of all Christian traditions. Western missionaries have been accused of proselytizing among Eastern Christians in the past, especially where Islam has held sway;²⁵ even as today Western Christians are accusing Eastern Christians of proselytism in reference to the Orthodox mission in Africa.²⁶ There is a sense in which all the respective Christian traditions, motivated with enthusiasm both for the Gospel and for their churches, have at times confused witnessing with proselytizing. "Proselytism is not something absolutely different from witness; it is the corruption of witness. When cajolery, bribery, undue pressures of intimidation are used--subtly or openly--to bring about seeming conversion; when we put the success of our church before the honor of Christ; when we commit the dishonesty of comparing the ideal of our own church with the actual achievement of another; when we seek to advance our own cause by bearing false witness against another church; when personal or corporate self-seeking replaces love for every individual soul with whom we are concerned--then witness has been deformed into proselytism. It is very easy for us to recognize these sins in others; it is necessary to acknowledge that we are all liable to fall into one or another of them ourselves."²⁷ We can readily see that there is a real distinction between witness and proselytism in purpose, motive, and spirit--the means and ends of each are antithetical to the other.

However, it is not enough to distinguish witness from proselytism. We must go on to answer the other question of how we can have freedom in our Christian witnessing within the widening ecumenical atmosphere that exists among Christians today. Churches of all traditions have been hurt in the past, and as a result present ecumenical ties are suspected and strained in some quarters. Today, for example, one has only to travel in Orthodox lands to experience the hostility and resentment toward Protestant missions. The real issue is not whether the resentment is justified or not (for frankly in some cases it is not), but rather the heart of the matter is that this hostility has undermined and limited the growth of ecumenical relations with one another. Ecumenicity cannot be fostered where there is mistrust and lack of confidence in the other's intentions. There is an unfinished task of mission ahead for all Christians, and nothing

less that the concerted effort toward reconciliation among the churches is necessary if we are to realize our goal.

In today's ecumenical era we must each learn to confess the shortcomings of the past, accepting the fact of the young churches that now exist as expressions of God's judgment and God's grace coming about in spite of ourselves. Together we must look ahead for creative new beginnings, urged on by the Holy Spirit to go beyond narrow-minded confessional polemics, and address ourselves anew to the unending task of evangelism.

Concretely, potential negativism can be overcome by increasing the contact between Christians of the East and those of the West, not so much on earlier battlefields where past hostility is not entirely gone, but rather by concentrating on one another's "backyards". That is to say, greater opportunities should be found for the exchange of theological students--for example, by Protestants studying in Orthodox lands, as well as by an increase in the number of Orthodox students in Protestant schools. The exchange of students, books, scholars and techniques must all be developed and continued until we are able to speak one another's "spiritual language", learning to listen together to the one Spirit of God calling us to go out and proclaim the good news of the Gospel. To this end, it would be both exciting and stimulating to see a permanent East-West Institute, something on the order of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, started here in the United States where this exchange of ideas, projects and personnel might take place. Thus as a result of the enrichment gained through mutual contacts²⁸--East with West--together we shall be able to enter into the deeper mysteries and glories of the Triune God who has called us to fulfill His great commission. In this respect, the scope of Orthodoxy's vital concern for mission--past, present and future--can be nothing less than a source of greatest joy for all Christians of good will.

FOOTNOTES

1. The usual designation "Eastern Orthodoxy" at times overlooks the fact that Orthodoxy is also worldwide and not limited to the East.

2. It is interesting to note the admission of Protestant Samuel McCrea Cavert regarding Orthodoxy: "I assumed that the Orthodox Church was static and impervious to renewal, weighted down under the dead hand of the past. I thought of it as preoccupied with an endless repetition of ancient rituals unrelated to the ongoing currents of life in today's world. The practice of invoking the saints and reverencing icons appeared to me to be expressions of unenlightened credulity. The ascetic and monastic forms of life looked like outmoded medievalism. The long centuries of subservience of church to the state struck me as intolerable. A sacramental mysticism seemed to me to have taken the place of a prophetic mission in contemporary society....Not until I began to share in ecumenical gatherings and to have personal friends among Orthodox priests and theologians and laymen did I discover among them a dimension of Christian faith and devotion that I had wholly failed to recognize." /On the Road to Unity (Harper & Brothers, 1961), pp. 78-9/

3. A. Yannoulatos, "'Porefthendes' - An Inter-Orthodox Missionary Centre", in Porefthendes, No. 11 (July-September, 1961), p. 36. (Copies of Porefthendes can be obtained by writing to Father Yannoulatos, 41 Academias St., Athens 1, Greece.)

4. Outstanding younger Orthodox churchmen such as Father John Meyendorff, Professor of Church History and Patristics at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in New York, and Dr. Nikos Missiotis, Associate Director of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, are actively engaged in Syndesmos.
5. Porefthendes, No. 10 (April-June, 1961), p. 18. It was reported in a recent issue of Christianity Today, Vol. VIII, No. 16 (May 8, 1964), p. 55, that the Coptic Church in Egypt is also under way with plans for increased missionary activity in Africa.
6. Porefthendes, loc. cit.
7. According to Timothy Ware, "African Orthodoxy did not arise through the preaching of (Orthodox) missionaries from the traditional Orthodox lands, but was a spontaneous movement among Africans themselves. The founders of the Ugandan Orthodox Church--both of them still very much alive--are two native Ugandans, Rauben Sebanja Mukasa Spartas and Obadiah Kabanda Basajjakitalo. Originally brought up as Anglicans, they were converted to Orthodoxy in the 1920s, not as a result of personal contact with other Orthodox, but through their own reading and study". The Orthodox Church (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), pp. 196-7. Ware himself is a British convert to Orthodoxy, and perhaps overlooks the question of proselytism which has been raised in connection with the establishment of African Orthodoxy. The purpose of this article is not to weigh the merits of the discussions concerned, but only to indicate concretely that the problem of proselytism continues to be an issue for all churches in this ecumenical era of ours. See in this connection the Provisional Report approved by the Central Committee of the WCC at Galyateto, Hungary, July 28, 1956, entitled "Christian Witness, Proselytism and Religious Liberty in the Setting of the World Council of Churches", reported in The Ecumenical Review, Vol. IX, No. 1 (October, 1956). Testimonials and articles on the progress of the Orthodox in Africa can be found in issues of Porefthendes. In fact, one of the expressed aims of this modest Orthodox journal on missions is to inform and to assist the Orthodox work in Uganda, Tanganyika, Kenya, as well as elsewhere. The very word "Porefthendes" means "Go ye", taken from Matthew 28:19.
8. Porefthendes, No. 11 (July-September, 1961), p. 38.
9. To my knowledge there is no comprehensive book on the history of Orthodox missions. The only recent books of importance are limited to Russian missions. Written by Josef Glazik, they are: Die Russisch-Orthodoxe Heidenmission seit Peter dem Grossen (1954), and Die Islammission der Russisch-Orthodoxen Kirche (1959), both published by Aschen-dorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Munster.
10. Cf. Porefthendes, No. 10 (April-June, 1961), pp. 28-30.
11. Cf. John Meyendorff, "Orthodox Missions in the Middle Ages" in History's Lessons for Tomorrow's Mission, edited by World Student Christian Federation [Geneva, 1960], p. 102.
12. Loc. cit.
13. Ibid., p. 113. See also S. Bolshakoff's "Orthodox Missions Today" in The International Review of Missions, Vol. 42 (July, 1953), pp. 275-284; and Nadejda Gorodetzky's "The Missionary Expansion of the Russian Orthodox Church" in The International Review of Missions, Vol. 31 (Oct. 1942), pp. 400-411; and G. Florovsky, "Russian Missions: An Historical Sketch" in The Christian East, Vol. XIX (1933).

14. A recent article by Archpriest Vsevolod Spiller, Prior of the Nikolo-Kuznetsky Church, Moscow, in The International Review of Missions, Vol. LII (1963), pp. 197f, entitled "Missionary Aims and the Russian Orthodox Church", contends that mission "was much more closely related to the work of the church as a whole than was the case in the West. From the start it was free from that disintegration which gave a doubly professional character to missionary service in the Western churches. There were indeed some attempts along these lines, due to Western influence, but in spite of them our missionary work did not become a separate profession, and the word 'missionary' did not gradually acquire the narrow professional sense that it seems to have in the Western churches. From the Orthodox point of view, the Church as such is mission. The 'mission field' for the Russian Orthodox Church has never been closely restricted to the activities of specialists with high but strangely narrow qualifications. It remained a wide field of activity on the part of the whole Church as such, preaching a new life which in all its beneficent fullness enlightens the world."

While I agree with Spiller that the Church as such is the missionary Body of Christ, it does not follow that this is at the exclusion of specialized missionary training as found in the past activities in Russian church history, from St. Stephen of Perm to John Veniaminov, not to mention the founding of the Orthodox Missionary Society nor the current activities of Syndesmos, Zoe and the Inter-Orthodox Missionary Center. It could be argued that all these missionary achievements are subject to "western influence" and in part this may be true, but to contend that such missionary concern in a "professional sense" is foreign to Orthodoxy is either a misreading of Orthodox history or else we need to clear up the ambiguity around the term "professional".

15. N. Struve, "The Orthodox Church and Mission" in History's Lessons for Tomorrow's Mission, pp. 106-7.

16. Ibid., p. 108.

17. Loc. cit. N. Struve has written a very informative book published recently under the title Les Chrétiens en U.S.S.R. Chapter XIII of the book was published in St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly, Vol. 7, No. 4 (1963), under the title "New Ordeals for the Church in Russia". It seems to me that Spiller's interpretation of Russian missionary activity (see footnote 14) must be read within the context of chapter XIII of Struve's book.

18. Of course, the defeat of the Tartar Khan by the Tsar gave a psychological atmosphere which was helpful to Bishop Gurji's work, even though the Tsar made the stipulation "that the conversion of the native inhabitants was to be achieved by persuasion and gentleness and that every resort to violence should be systematically avoided". (Ibid., p. 109)

19. Loc. cit. For further description of Orthodox missionary activity among the Muslims, see Birbeck and the Russian Church, edited by Athelstan Riley (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1917), especially Chapter XVI, "Russian Missions to the Mohammedans".

It is appropriate to point out here that, by comparison, Protestant and Roman Catholic activity has not been as successful in the Middle East as has Orthodox. Charles W. Forman of Yale has raised the question as to whether or not Protestants should "Abandon Mission to Moslems?" (Christian Century, February 4, 1959) Forman answered the question in the negative, but it is evident that there is a disappointing lack of significant results for the many years of labor among Islamic people. Kenneth Cragg, an outstanding Protestant missionary and scholar of Islam, has given a different kind of answer from Forman's. In Operation Reach (March-April, 1961), in an article titled "Idolatry and the Arts: An Islamic Dilemma", Cragg raises a provocative question. He writes: "In these days it could be argued that one of the most obvious and promising areas of Christian-Muslim encounter is just this issue of idolatry, bringing together as it does the deepest concern in original Islamic mission with the central Christian

diagnosis of man in sin (p. 13)." And what expression of Christianity and the arts is more qualified to bring about this encounter than Eastern Orthodoxy? This question merits further exploration by Protestant missionaries in the Middle East, especially in light of past achievements by the Russian Orthodox Mission to Islam. [Cragg's article may be obtained by writing to The Near East Christian Council Study Program in Islam, P. O. Box 235, Beirut, Lebanon.]

20. Struve, in History's Lessons, p. 110.

21. Ibid., pp. 113-4.

22. Bolshakoff, op. cit., p. 277.

23. For further introductory material on Orthodox missionary work, see Ernest Benz, The Eastern Orthodox Church, Its Thought and Life [Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1963], translated from the German, Geist und Leben der Ostkirche, Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag. Also, John Meyendorff, The Orthodox Church [New York: Pantheon Books, 1962]; Nicholas Zernov, Orthodox Encounter [London: James Clarke & Co., 1961]; and Alexander Schmemmann's chapter, "The Missionary Imperative in the Orthodox Tradition", in The Theology of the Christian Mission, ed. by Gerald H. Anderson [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961], pp. 250-257.

24. On the negative side Ernest Benz comments: "Modern Orthodox efforts to achieve closer ties among the member churches have only revealed that national egoism is stronger than the consciousness of membership in a universal church. Even among the emigrant churches with their ecumenically minded world organizations, such as Syndesmos, a league of Orthodox youth organizations, national tensions are forever asserting themselves. Grave difficulties crop up in any collaboration among Greeks, Arabs, and Slavs. And in Syria, Palestine and Egypt, joint work between the Greek and Arab or Coptic portions of the Church has been impeded by rivalries for spiritual and practical leadership within the Church." (The Eastern Orthodox Church, p. 212)

Benz's critical observation must be balanced with a consciousness of the constructive efforts of such Orthodox churchmen as A. Schmemmann, J. Meyendorff, P. Evdokimov, N. Zernov, N. Nissiotis, and T. Ware, who wish to overcome national barriers. Also to be noted in this connection is Alexander A. Bogolepov's recent book Toward an American Orthodox Church, which reveals something of the tendency of Orthodoxy in North America to go beyond nationalistic backgrounds. The movement of Western Rite Orthodoxy is another expression of this extension beyond ethnic consciousness. The "daughter churches" of Orthodoxy in the "New World" have a missionary vocation which they are only beginning to discover. This vocation involves a rediscovery of the "universality of Orthodoxy", as T. Ware pointedly discusses in his book, The Orthodox Church, pp. 191-2. "If Orthodox are to present their faith effectively to other people, two things are necessary. First, they need to understand their own faith better: thus the fact of the diaspora has forced Orthodox to examine themselves and to deepen their own Orthodoxy. Secondly, they need to understand the situation of those to whom they speak. Without abandoning their Orthodoxy, they must enter into the experience of other Christians, seeking to appreciate the distinctive outlook of western Christendom, its past history and present difficulties." (Loc. cit.) This concern for renewal and outreach can be seen in the Zoe Brotherhood, active in Greece, and the high regard for dialogue among Orthodox here in America. See John S. Romanides' excellent article, "The Orthodox: Arrival and Dialogue", in The Christian Century, November 13, 1963. Romanides is on the faculty of Holy Cross Greek Catholic Theological School in Brookline, Massachusetts. Examples of Zoe's activities can be read in the Zoe paper, Vol. 51, Easter, 1961, in their special issue on "Orthodoxy", as well as in Herbert Stroup's informative article "The Zoe Brotherhood", The Christian Century, March 16, 1955.

25. Historically the Orthodox point to Protestant missionaries who desired to work beside them in the Middle East but who for numerous reasons founded Protestant churches which were made up largely of former Orthodox Christians, while the declared goal of evangelism among the Muslims remained relatively untouched. This is also true of the harsh attitude of some Greek Orthodox (even today) toward the Roman Catholic Church and the latter's maintenance of Uniate Churches in communion with Rome. When the Latin missionaries "found what a difficult task it was to convert the Moslems, they turned their attention to the Orthodox Christians living in those parts, Greeks and Arabs, and thought nothing of depriving them of the sole remaining treasure which had been preserved to them: their Orthodox faith". (Meyendorff, The Orthodox Church, p. 99)

26. Protestants (particularly Anglicans) and Roman Catholics point to the questionable converts in Uganda and Kenya as proselytism by the Orthodox mission rather than actually carrying out the Gospel to non-Christians. This situation remains a hotly contested debate among the churches concerned.

27. Taken from the WCC report on Proselytism (op. cit., pp. 4-5; see footnote 7).

28. Meyendorff also rightly has this in mind. He writes: "The historical estrangement of East and West, linguistic, spiritual, intellectual, is bound to disappear in a world which becomes too small. The 'non-theological' elements of our estrangement will soon belong to the past. Orthodoxy today is no more--and will become less and less--an 'Eastern' Church, just as Western Christianity ceases to be only 'Western'. This will help us to forget the relative issues and concentrate on the real ones. Let us see in all this the hand of God." / "The Significance of the Reformation in the History of Christendom", in The Ecumenical Review, Vol. XVI, No. 2 (January, 1964), p. 179/