

For the Peace from Above

An Orthodox Resource Book
on War, Peace and Nationalism



Edited by
Fr. Hildo Bos & Jim Forest

For the Peace from Above

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on War, Peace and Nationalism***

Revised Edition

**Edited by
Fr. Hildo Bos & Jim Forest**



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Introduction

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

Matthew 5:9

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. For the peace from above and the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Opening litany of the Divine
Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

All religious communities must turn to the very depth of their doctrine and to the best pages of their respective traditions in order to find the principles of a sacred anthropology which puts the emphasis on sincere respect of the whole human person.

Archbishop Anastasios of Albania

Since the early days of the Church, Christians have struggled to come to terms with Christ's words of peace and His example of peace. In Christ's life, as recorded in the New Testament, it is striking that He neither killed anyone nor summoned any of His disciples to kill. Indeed, the final miracle Christ performed before His execution was to heal an enemy's wound, an injury caused by the Apostle Peter in an attempt to defend his master.

Yet, in the course of more than twenty centuries of Christian history, we see Christians often involved in war and, in surveying the

calendar of saints, find not only those who refused to take part in war but also those who served in the military, though no one has been canonized due to his skill as a soldier. Besides the millions of Christians who have fought in armies, often against fellow Christians, we also find many priests, bishops and theologians who have advocated war and blessed its weapons.

Our subject is an urgent one. Many people today live either near conflict areas or are directly touched by war or in areas where terrorist actions may suddenly occur. Everyone on the planet is in some way affected by wars in progress or wars in the making as well as the consequences of wars in the past. Every day thousands of Christians struggle in thought and prayer with some of the most difficult of questions: May I fight injustice by violent methods? Am I allowed to kill in combat? Are there limits on what I can do in the defense of my country? Am I as a Christian allowed to disobey demands that I believe are unjust or violate the Gospel? When the demands of my country seem at odds with the demands of the Kingdom of God, how do I respond to this conflict?

Rarely do we find easy answers to these and similar questions. Thus, those of us in the Orthodox Christian tradition search for help in Holy Scripture, the canons provided to us by ecumenical councils, the witness of the saints, the writing of the Fathers of the Church as well as theologians of recent times.

Imitation of saintly forebears alone, however, will not solve our problems. Different eras have adopted different attitudes. Also many of today's problems never existed before, not least the changed character of war in an era of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and mass propaganda. Yet knowledge of the thought and action undertaken by the Orthodox Churches on the issues of war and peace in recent decades surely can help us find ways out of the dead ends that many communities are experiencing today. This is the aim of this book.

This resource book is a revised and expanded edition of a book first published in 1999 by Syndesmos, the World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth, working in cooperation with the Orthodox Peace

Fellowship. Now thanks to the Orthodox Research Institute, it will reach a broader audience, not only Orthodox, we hope, but Christians from other churches.

No matter who is reading it, we hope this resource book will assist the reader in coming to a deeper clarity about the issue of war and the challenge of peace. Those who preceded us in the faith offer us examples to follow, and also examples to reject. The tradition of the Orthodox Church has much to give every Christian caught up in the horrors of modern warfare.

* * *

The present resource book attempts to provide original resource texts concerning Orthodoxy, War, Peace and Nationalism. In compiling the book, to supplement the primary texts, we have also sought to gather documents that express a variety of points of view.

We express our gratitude to all those who have made this book possible. We especially thank His All-Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for blessing this book and permitting us to quote from several of his speeches. We also thank Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania, Metropolitan George of Mount Lebanon, Bishop Irinaeus of Backa, Fr. Stanley Harakas, Archimandrite Grigorios Papathomas, and the late Olivier Clément for permission to use their texts.

Finally, this book would not have been possible without the support of many others, including: Alan Kreiger, André Lossky, Fr. Andrew Louth, Mr. Albert Laham, Metropolitan Jeremy of Switzerland, and the Secretariat of the Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church. We also owe a special word of thanks to Fr. Cosmas Shartz and John Brady for the many hours they spent discovering errors, tidying up sentences and helping us make this a better text and to Fr. Alexis Vinogradov for assistance with the translation of a difficult passage.

Fr. Hildo Bos and Jim Forest

A NOTE REGARDING THE COVER OF THE BOOK

The icon on the cover is a panel from the border of a large St. Nicholas icon that was probably painted in Moscow in the early sixteenth century and now is in the collection of The Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg.

Saint Nicholas wrote no books, nor have any of his sermons or letters survived, but few saints have been the object of such universal affection.

Born in Asia Minor in about 280, he was the only child of wealthy parents who arranged for their son to receive a Christian education from his uncle, the bishop of Patara. Taking literally the words of the Gospel, after his parents died he distributed their property to the poor, keeping nothing for himself. Though initially drawn to monastic life, he felt led by God's will to serve as a priest in the world. After his ordination, he was chosen as archbishop of Myra. During the persecutions of Diocletian and Maximian at the end of the third century, Nicholas was among the many thousands imprisoned and tortured.

Nicholas was one of the bishops participating in the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea in 325, where, according to legend, he was so outraged by the heretic Arius, who denied that Jesus was the Son of God, that he struck him on the face. For his violent act, he was briefly excluded from the Council. Tireless in his care of people in trouble or need, he was regarded as a saint even during his lifetime. At times, it is said, his face shone like the sun.

Over the centuries, Nicholas's life was embroidered with many legends, several of which seem solidly historical. One of these relates how, while was visiting a remote part of his diocese, several citizens from Myra came to Archbishop Nicholas with urgent news: the governor of the city, Eustathios, had condemned three innocent men to death. Nicholas set out immediately for home. Reaching the city outskirts, he asked those he met on the road if they had news of the prisoners. Informed that their execution was to be carried out that morning, he hurried to the executioner's field where he found the

three men kneeling with their arms bound, awaiting the fatal blow. Nicholas passed through the surrounding crowd, took the sword from the executioner's hands and threw it to the ground, then ordered that the condemned men be freed. His authority was such that the executioner left his sword where it fell. Eustathios later confessed his sin. Nicholas absolved him, but only after the ruler had undergone a period of repentance.

He died on December 6, 343 and was buried in Myra's cathedral. In the eleventh century, his relics were brought to Bari, Italy, where they remain. He is the patron of prisoners, seafarers and orphans. Countless churches bear his name. He is the patron saint of many towns and cities, including Aberdeen, Amsterdam, Barranquilla, Bari, Beit Jala, Fribourg, Kozani, Liverpool, Paternopoli, Saint Petersburg, Sassari, Siggiewi and Lorraine.

— JF

CHAPTER ONE

Defining Terms:

Definitions from Dictionaries and Church Authors

ETHNARCH, ETHNARCHY

Noun: The ruler of a province or a people. Etymology: Greek *ethnar-ches*: *ethnos*, nation.

— *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Boston 1992.

Ethnarchy is the designation to the Church, by the political authorities of state, of the right to administer subjects of the state, taking place in specific historic circumstances. It represents a well-known phenomenon in the Orthodox tradition, particularly in situations when political authority falls away. During the period of Ottoman rule (the *Ottomanocracy*), the Christians were considered a separate nation whilst the Patriarch of Constantinople was designated *ethnarch*, ‘head of a nation,’ residing on the territory of the Ottoman Empire. This function existed from the fall of Constantinople in 1453 to the Lausanne Treaty in 1923. In Cyprus, the rule of Archbishop Makarios III (1950–1977) can be considered a form of *ethnarchy*, as well as the interim rule in Greece by Archbishop Damaskinos of Athens from 31 December 1944 to 29 September 1946 (including ten months as Prime Minister). Similarly, in the former Yugoslavia, the proposition made in 1992 to Patriarch Paul of Serbia to assume governance “as a person acceptable to all” can be viewed along the same lines. Ethnarchy cannot be considered as a political or ecclesiastical institution justifying claims of governance by the Church (*theocracy*

or *papo-caesarism*); it always occurs under the pressure of specific historic needs.

—“Canonical Glossary,” in *The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in the United Europe* by Archimandrite Grigorios Papathomas Athens, 1998 (in French).

After the fall of Constantinople, the Church was not allowed to revert to the situation before the conversion of Constantine; paradoxically enough, the things of Caesar now became more closely associated with the things of God than they had ever been before. For the Muslims drew no distinction between religion and politics: from their point of view, if Christianity was to be recognized as an independent religious faith, it was necessary for Christians to be organized as an independent political unit, an Empire within the Empire. The Orthodox Church, therefore, became a civil as well as a religious institution: it was turned into the *Rum Millet*, the ‘Roman nation.’ The ecclesiastical structure was taken over *in toto* as an instrument of secular administration. The bishops became government officials; the Patriarch was not only the head of the Greek Orthodox Church, but the civil head of the Greek nation — the *ethnarch* or *millet-bashi*. This situation continued in Turkey until 1923, and in Cyprus until the death of Archbishop Makarios III (1977).

— Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia, *The Orthodox Church*, Penguin Books, third edition, 1993.

ETHNICITY

Ethnicity is a collective group consciousness defined by reference to a configuration of elements, such as language, homeland, descent, religion and values.

— *World Council of Churches Consultation on “Ethnicity and Nationalism,”* Sri Lanka 1994.¹

¹ Report in T. Tschuy, *Ethnic Conflict and Religion, Challenge to the Churches*, WCC Publications, Geneva, 1997, p. 156

If ethnicity were part of the essence of the Church, there would be a dogma on ethnicity.

— Panayiotis Bratsiotis, 1936²

ETHNOPHYLETISM (RACISM)

Phyletism (from *phylī* — race, tribe) is the *principle of nationalities* applied in the ecclesiastical domain: in other words, the confusion of Church with nation. The term *ethnophyletismos* designates the idea that a local autocephalous Church should be based not on a local [ecclesial] criterion, but on an ethnophyletist, national or linguistic one. The term was used at the Holy and Great [Meizon: enlarged] Pan-Orthodox Synod in Constantinople on the 10th of September 1872 to describe “phyletist (religious) nationalism,” which the synod condemned as a modern ecclesial heresy, sometimes called “the Balkan heresy.” The synod declared that the Church should not be confused with the destiny of a single nation or race; Orthodoxy is hostile to any forms of racial messianism. Also, one should clearly distinguish between *ethnicism* (which has a positive content) and *nationalism* (which has a negative content and which in Greek is called *ethnikismos*): the former should be considered the servant, the latter the enemy of the nation.

— Archimandrite Grigorios Papathomas, “Canonical Glossary,” Archimandrite Grigorios Papathomas, *The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in the United Europe*, Athens 1998 (in French).

Pogroms are the victory of your enemies. Pogroms are a disgrace, both for you and for the Holy Church.

— St. Tikhon of Moscow, “Appeal to the flock of the Russian Orthodox Church to abstain from violence against the persecutors of the Church, July 8/21, 1919,”³ L. Regelson, *The Tragedy of the Russian Church (1917–1945)*, Paris 1976 (in Russian).

² Proceedings of the pan-Orthodox pedagogical consultation in Dassel, 1936 (see Case Study 8)

³ This letter refers to pogroms in the parts of Russia reconquered by the White armies during the civil war.

IDENTITY

The word ‘identity’ can be used in several ways. In its proper sense, as its etymology from the Latin word *idem* suggests, it means selfsameness, that which makes a given object to be one and the same yesterday, today and forever. But in everyday English (and possibly in other languages as well), it is also used in a looser sense, to mean individuality or personality, that which distinguishes a given subject from others, “the set of behavioural and individual characteristics by which a thing is definitively recognisable or known.”⁴ Thus, in the United States, for example, we can speak of an underworld informant being given a new identity as part of a government witness protection programme.

When referring to the Church, Orthodox theologians most often have used ‘identity’ in the former sense, to mean self-sameness. Consider this passage from an essay by Fr. George Florovsky:

*“The Orthodox Church claims to be the Church ... The Orthodox Church is conscious and aware of her identity through the ages, in spite of all perplexities and changes. She has kept intact and immaculate the sacred heritage of the early Church, of the Apostles and of the Fathers, ‘the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.’ She is aware of the identity of her teaching with the apostolic message and the tradition of the Ancient Church, even though she might have failed occasionally to convey this message to particular generations in its full splendour and in a way that carries conviction.”*⁵

What gives the Orthodox Church her identity, Florovsky continues, is “living tradition.” This is not “just a human tradition, maintained by human memory and imitation.” Rather:

⁴ *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Boston 1992.

⁵ “The Quest for Christian Unity and the Orthodox Church,” Georges Florovsky, *Collected Works* vol. 13 (Vaduz: Buechervertriebsanstalt, 1989) 136–44 at pp. 139–140, originally published *Theology and Life*, 4 (August 1961) pp. 197–208.

“It is a sacred or holy tradition, maintained by the abiding presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. The ultimate identity of the Church is grounded in her sacramental structure, in the organic continuity of the Body, which is always ‘visible’ and historically identifiable and recognisable, although at the same time it transcends and surpasses the closed historical dimension, being the token and the embodiment of the divine communion once granted and also the token and the anticipation of the life to come.”⁶

Most Orthodox theologians would accept this understanding of the identity of the Orthodox Church, though like Florovsky they would usually add some words of caution against triumphalism. For, as Florovsky observes:

“There is no pride and arrogance in this claim. Indeed, it implies a heavy responsibility. Nor does it mean ‘perfection.’ The Church is still in pilgrimage, in travail, in via. She has her historic failures and losses, she has her own unfinished tasks and problems.”⁷

And like Florovsky, most Orthodox theologians would locate the ultimate identity of the Church “in her sacramental structure, in the organic continuity of the Body” — in her sacramental and spiritual life, which “has ever been the same in the course of ages”⁸ despite the “historic failures and losses.” They also would be able to point to times when this underlying sacramental structure has been determinative for the course of church history — to the Byzantine Empire, for example, where the institutional claims of patriarchs and emperors and the charismatic claims of monastics were equally subject to the test of the Church’s sacramental ethos.⁹

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ On the role of liturgy in maintaining Orthodox ecclesial identity, see, among others, J. Meyendorff, *The Byzantine Legacy in the Orthodox Church*, Crestwood, NY, 1982,

A full account of how these distinctive characteristics have emerged and have gained prominence in Orthodox self-understanding would require many volumes. At the risk of oversimplification, we may identify two main ways in which this has occurred:

By emulation, i.e., by imitation or appropriation for oneself of the claims, institutions or practices of another; and

By contradiction, i.e., by rejection of the claims, institutions or practices of another and concurrent development of claims, institutions and practices more or less directly opposed to them.

— John H. Erickson, “The Formation of Orthodox Ecclesial Identity”: *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly*, 42 (1998).

NATION

I. 28.a. An extensive aggregate of persons, so closely associated with each other by common descent, language, or history, as to form a distinct race or people, usually organized as a separate political state and occupying a definite territory. In early examples, the racial idea is usually stronger than the political; in recent use, the notion of political unity and independence is more prominent.

b. A number of persons belonging to a particular nation; representatives of any nation.

2a. **The Nations.** In and after Biblical use: The heathen nations, the Gentiles.

b. The peoples of the earth; the population of the earth collectively.

4. a. **The nation**, the whole people of a country, frequently in contrast to some smaller or narrower body within it.

b. **Two nations:** phrase used of two groups within a given nation divided from each other by marked social inequality; hence one nation, a nation which is not divided by social inequalities ...

9. Attributive and combined, as nation-building, the creation of a new nation, specifically a newly independent nation; hence nation-

pp. 122–3, and also J. Erickson, ‘*The Hermeneutics of Reconciliation. Perspectives from the Orthodox Liturgical Experience*’: *Reformed Liturgy & Music* 30.4 (1996), pp. 196–8.

builder; nation-state, a sovereign state the members of which are also united by those ties such as language, common descent, etc., which constitute a nation; nation-wide, as wide as a nation; extending over, reaching, or affecting the whole nation.

— *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1989.

When a nation, civil or ethnic, represents fully or predominantly a mono-confessional Orthodox community, it can in a certain sense be regarded as the one community of faith — an Orthodox nation.

— “Bases of the social concept of the Russian Orthodox Church,” adopted in 2000 at Bishops’ Council of the Russian Orthodox Church.

NATION, ROMAN (RUM MILLET)

Muslim rulers had long treated religious minorities within their dominions as *millets*, or nations, allowing them to govern their own affairs according to their own laws and customs, and making the religious head of the sect responsible for its administration and its good behaviour towards the paramount power. The Orthodox became the *Rum millet*, the ‘Roman nation.’ (...) The Patriarch, in conjunction with the Holy Synod, had complete control over the whole ecclesiastical organization, the bishops and all churches and monasteries and their possessions. (...) His control was almost as complete over the Orthodox laity. He was the *ethnarch*, the ruler over the *millet*.

— Steven Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity*, Cambridge, 1999.

The *millet* system performed one invaluable service: it made possible the survival of the Greek nation as a distinctive unit through four centuries of alien rule. But on the life of the Church it had two melancholy effects. It led first to a sad confusion between Orthodoxy and nationalism. With their civil and political life organized completely around the Church, it became all but impossible for the Greeks to distinguish between Church and nation. The Orthodox faith, being universal, is limited to no single people, culture, or language; but to the Greeks of the Turkish Empire, ‘Hellenism’ and Orthodoxy became inextricably

intertwined, far more so than they had ever been in the Byzantine Empire. The effects of this confusion continue to the present day.

— Bishop Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia, *The Orthodox Church*, Penguin Books, 1993, p. 89.

NATIONALISM

1. Theology. The doctrine that certain nations (as contrasted with individuals) are the object of divine election.

2. Devotion to one's nation; national aspiration; a policy of national independence.

— *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1989.

Nationalism is a collective group consciousness built around the boundaries of an actual or perceived nationhood.

— *World Council of Churches Consultation on "Ethnicity and Nationalism,"* Sri Lanka 1994.

The Christians dwell in their own countries, but only as sojourners; they bear their share in all things as citizens, and they endure all hardships as strangers. Every foreign country is a fatherland to them, and every fatherland is foreign.

— *The Epistle to Diognetus*,¹⁰ Chapter 5.

The temptation of religious nationalism remains one of the most basic weaknesses of contemporary Orthodoxy. In fact, it represents a capitulation before a subtle form of secularism, which Byzantium with its universal idea of the empire always avoided.

— Fr. John Meyendorff, "The Christian Gospel and Social Responsibility," *Rome, Constantinople, Moscow: Historical and Theological Studies*, Crestwood, NY, 1996.

¹⁰The Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus (Greek: Πρὸς Διόγνητον Ἐπιστολή) is probably the earliest example of Christian apologetics. The Greek writer and recipient are not otherwise known, but the language and other textual evidence dates the work to the late 2nd century; some assume an even earlier date and count it among the Apostolic Fathers.

Nationalism is a form of collective individualism. In times such as ours, when this collective individualism is strong, we, Christians, should weaken it and incite, instead, feelings of humanity, of *ecumenicity*, of catholicity. What a pity it is that we, the Orthodox, cannot succeed in convoking an ecumenical council. Our Church, permeated by paganism and phyletism, has failed yet to create its own “Lambeth Conference.”¹¹ Moreover, we will not create such a conference given our fragmentation. We have not even succeeded in convoking a pan-Orthodox synod.’

— Panagiotis Bratsiotis, 1936¹²

PEACE

I.1.a. Freedom from, or cessation of, war or hostilities; that condition of a nation or community in which it is not at war with another.

b. A ratification or treaty of peace between two powers previously at war. Also a temporary cessation of hostilities, a truce. Often defined by or with the name of the place at which it was ratified.

2. Freedom from civil commotion and disorder; public order and security.

3.a. Freedom from disturbance or perturbation; quiet, tranquility, undisturbed state.

b. In and after Biblical use, in various expressions of well-wishing or salutation. Following Latin *pax* and Greek *eirini* ‘peace’ often represents Hebrew *Shalom*, properly safety, welfare, prosperity.

4.a. Freedom from quarrels or dissension between individuals; a state of friendliness; concord, amity.

5. Freedom from mental or spiritual disturbance or conflict arising from passion, sense of guilt, etc.; calmness; peace of mind, soul, or conscience.

15.a. To make peace: to bring about a state of peace, in various senses:

¹¹ Worldwide conferences of the Bishops of the Anglican communion.

¹² Proceedings of the pan-Orthodox pedagogical consultation in Dassel, 1936 (see Case Study 8).

(a) to effect a reconciliation between persons or parties at variance; to conclude peace with a nation at the close of a war;

(b) to enter into friendly relations with a person, as by a league of amity, or by submission;

(c) to enforce public order;

(d) to enforce silence.

b. To make one's, or a person's, peace: to effect reconciliation for oneself or for someone else; to come, or bring someone, into friendly relations (with another).

Kiss of peace: a kiss given in sign of friendliness; spec. a kiss of greeting given in token of Christian love (see *pax*) at religious services in early times; now, in the Western Church, usually only during High Mass.

— *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1989.

The biblical notion of peace does not coincide with the neutral and negative concept that defines peace as the mere absence of war. The biblical notion of peace corresponds with the restoration of all things to the original wholeness they enjoyed prior to the Fall, when man still lived and inhaled the life-giving breath of creation in the image and likeness of God. In other words, peace is understood as the restoration of the relationship and peace between God and mankind.

— Third Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference in Chambésy, October 28–November 6, 1986.

Peace in our souls is impossible unless we beg the Lord with all our hearts to give us love for all men. The Lord knew that if we did not love our enemies, we should have no peace of soul, and so He gave us the commandment, “Love your enemies.” Unless we love our enemies, we shall only now and then be easy, as it were, in our souls; but if we love our enemies, peace will dwell in us day and night.

— St. Silouan the Athonite, Archimandrite Sophrony, *Saint Silouan the Athonite*, Tolleshunt Knights, 1991.

STATE

28.a. A particular form of polity or government. The state, the form of government and constitution established in a country; e.g. the popular state, democracy (cf. French *état populaire*).

29.a. The state: the body politic as organized for supreme civil rule and government; the political organization which is the basis of civil government (either generally and abstractly, or in a particular country); hence, the supreme civil power and government vested in a country or nation.

b. Distinguished from ‘the church’ or ecclesiastical organization and authority. In the phrase ‘church and state’ the article is dropped.

— *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1989.

Absolute states on earth are the image of man deified, of anti-Christi-anity, they are the incarnation of the spirit of the prince of this world, from whom it is said, “and to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority” (Rev. 13:2).

The task of the State of Christians is to serve Christian morality. However, such a service presupposes a certain spiritual equilibrium, where the state does not go beyond its own legal tasks. Still even this situation always remains unstable; when the state crosses these boundaries, it turns into the beast.

— Fr. Sergei Bulgakov, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, Paris 1948 (in Russian).

WAR

I.1.a. Hostile contention by means of armed forces, carried on between nations, states, or rulers, or between parties in the same nation or state; the employment of armed forces against a foreign power, or against an opposing party in the state.

3.a. In particularized sense: A contest between armed forces carried on in a campaign or series of campaigns.

Frequently used with definite article to designate a particular

war, especially one in progress or recently ended. Hence between the wars, between the war of 1914–18 and that of 1939–45. Often with identifying word or phrase, as in the Trojan War, the Punic Wars, the Wars of the Roses, the Thirty Years' War. Holy war: a war waged in a religious cause: applied, e.g. to the Crusades, and to the *jiḥād* among Muslims. Sacred War in Greek History, the designation of two wars (BC 595 and 357–346) waged by the Amphictyonic Council against Phocis in punishment of alleged sacrilege. War Between the States (especially in the use of Southerners), the American Civil War.

— *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1989.

War is a great evil, even the greatest of evils. But because enemies shed our blood in fulfillment of an incitement of law and valor, and because it is wholly necessary for each man to defend his own fatherland and his fellow countrymen with words, writings, and acts, we have decided to write about strategy, through which we shall be able not only to fight but to overcome the enemy.

— Byzantine Manual of Strategy (6th century).

On the one hand, war is sin and misfortune and catastrophe; on the other hand, there is something egoistically vegetarian in consistent pacifism, which makes one sick at heart. (...) War is the wing of death spread over the world, war is for thousands and thousands of people an open gate to eternity, war is collapse of philistine order, coziness and stability. War is a call, war is an insight.

— St. Maria Skobtsova, "Insight in Wartime," *Mother Maria Skobtsova: Essential Writings*, Orbis Books, New York 2002.

War is a tool in the hands of God, as well as peace. War is a lethal poison which at the same time cures and heals. It is better to have one great and mighty river than many small streams that easily freeze in frost and are readily covered with dust and filth. A war that gathers an entire people for a great cause is better than a peace which knows as many petty causes as people, dividing brothers,

neighbours, all human beings, and hiding within itself an evil and hidden war against all.

— St. Nicholas (Velimirovic) of Ochrid, *Missionary Letters*, Belgrade 2002 (in Serbian).

War is a physical manifestation of the latent illness of humanity, which is fratricidal hatred (Gen. 4:3–12). Wars have accompanied human history since the fall and, according to the Gospel, will continue to accompany it.

— “*Bases of the social concept of the Russian Orthodox Church*,” adopted in 2000 at the Bishops’ Council of the Russian Orthodox Church.

CHAPTER TWO

Reference Texts from Holy Scripture

NATION, NATIONALISM

The True Homeland of the Christians

Jesus answered, “My kingship is not of this world; if My kingship were of this world, My servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but My kingship is not from the world.”

John 18:36

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

John 14:27

I have said this to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

John 16:33

Let those who deal with the world be as though they had no dealings with it. For the form of this world is passing away.

1 Corinthians 7:31

For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come.

Hebrews 13:14

Our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3:20

Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

James 4:4

We know that we are of God, and the whole world is in the power of the evil one.

1 John 5:19

For we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.

1 Timothy 6:7–10

And he said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Job 1:21

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go. (...) For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the sea-shore. These all died in faith, not having received what was promised, but having seen it and greeted it from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

Hebrews 11:8–13

These all died in faith, not having received what was promised, but having seen it and greeted it from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had an opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared them a city.

Hebrews 11:13–16

So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Ephesians 2:18–22

National Identity of the Christians

And Peter opened his mouth and said, “Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him.”

Acts 10:34–35

In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Galatians 3:26–29

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own

people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

1 Peter 2:9

And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain and by your blood did ransom men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on earth.”

Revelation 5:9–10

To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 1:5–6

The Lord is the strength of His people, and the champion of salvation for His anointed one. Save your people, and bless your inheritance; shepherd them and bear them up unto eternity.

*Psalms 27:8-9 (LXX)*¹

PEACE

Peace in Ourselves

Let not yours be the outward adorning with braiding of hair, decoration of gold, and wearing of fine clothing, but let it be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious.

1 Peter 3:3–4

¹ The abbreviation *LXX* designates the Greek translation of the Old Testament (Septuagint) in use in the Orthodox Church; both text and numbering slightly differ from the Hebrew text.

There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked.

Isaiah 57:21

Peace with Each Other

Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.

Mark 9:50

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life.

Romans 5:10

Strive for peace with all men, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

Hebrews 12:14

Making Peace

They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace.

Jeremiah 6:14

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Matthew 5:9

Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

Romans 14:19

What man is there that desires life, who loves to see good days? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking guile. Turn away from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

Psalms 33:12-14 (LXX)

With those who hate peace, I was peaceable; when I spoke to them, they warred against me without a cause.

Psalms 119:6–7 (LXX)

The Lord will give strength unto His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace.

Psalms 28:11 (LXX)

Behold now, the Assyrians are increased in their might; they are exalted, with their horses and riders; they glory in the strength of their foot soldiers; they trust in shield and spear, in bow and sling, and know not that You are the Lord who crushes wars; the Lord is your name.

Judith 9:7

For God is the Lord who crushes wars, for He has delivered me out of the hands of my pursuers, and brought me to His camp, in the midst of the people.

Judith 16:3

God's Peace

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, goodwill among men."

Luke 2:13–14

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

John 14:27

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:1

I have said this to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

John 16:33

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, even so I send you."

John 20:19–21

For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit; he who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.

Romans 14:17–19

For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

1 Corinthians 14:33

Finally, brethren, farewell. Mend your ways, heed My appeal, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.

2 Corinthians 13:11

And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:7

For He is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in His flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the

hostility to an end. And He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

Ephesians 2:14-17

And through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross. And you, who once were estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before Him.

Col. 1:20-22

And to Him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of His name, King of righteousness, and then He is also King of Salem, that is, King of peace.

Hebrews 7:2

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Romans 16:20

Many peoples shall come, and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Isaiah 2:3-5

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder, and His name will be called "Wonderful

Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Isaiah 9:6

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Isaiah 11:6–9

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Hebrews 13:20–21

NONVIOLENCE AND MARTYRDOM

Christians Should Not Revenge; Forgiveness

You have heard that it was said, “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” But I say to you, do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if anyone would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.

Matthew 5:38–41

Love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant

in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; never be conceited.

Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head.”

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:10–21

Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love of the brethren, a tender heart and a humble mind. Do not return evil for evil or reviling for reviling; but on the contrary bless, for to this you have been called, that you may obtain a blessing. For “He that would love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile; let him turn away from evil and do right; let him seek peace and pursue it.”

1 Peter 3:8–11

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.

Ephesians 4:31–5:1

For it is better to suffer for doing right, if that should be God’s will, than for doing wrong.

1 Peter 3:17

You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason with your neighbor, lest you bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

Leviticus 19:17–18

Nonviolence

And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.”

Matthew 26:51

Test everything; hold fast what is good, abstain from every form of evil. May the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:21–23

Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom! Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah! What to Me is the multitude of your sacrifices, says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When you come to appear before Me, who requires of you this trampling of My courts? Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of assemblies — I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; they have become a burden to Me, I am weary of bearing them. When you spread forth your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil,

learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land. But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Isaiah 1:10–20²

Martyrdom

Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life.

Hebrews 11:35

LOVE OF NEIGHBORS AND ENEMIES

Love of Neighbor

You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Exodus 22:21

You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

Leviticus 19:18

You have heard that it was said to the men of old, “You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.” But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and who-

²This prophecy is read in the Orthodox Church the first day of Great Lent.

ever says, "You fool!" shall be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Make friends quickly with your accuser, while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison; truly, I say to you, you will never get out till you have paid the last penny.

Matthew 5:21

And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that He answered them well, asked Him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Mark 12:28–30

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "you shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence, "you shall love your neighbor."

Romans 13:8–9

He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still.

1 John 2:9

Love of Enemies

Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles; lest the Lord see it, and be displeased, and turn

away His anger from him.

Proverbs 24:17–18

You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 5:43–48

But I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.³

Luke 6:27–28

And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

Luke 6:34–36

³“This phrase confronts us with all that is absolute and — though one hesitates to say so — inaccessible in the Christian duty to love. To be merciful as the Father is merciful does not mean that our mercy could ever reach to the infinity of divine mercy; but, that in our own small measure, we should be inspired by the same feelings as the Father; it is from the ocean of the Father’s mercy that the minute drops of water which are our acts of mercy must come, and it is into this ocean that they must finally flow. We are not able to perform the merciful acts of the Father, but we can share in his spirit of mercy.” (Archimandrite Lev Gillet, “Sermon on the Gospel of the 19th Sunday after Pentecost,” *The Year of Grace of the Lord*, Crestwood, NY 1980)

WAR

Inevitability of War

Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes will be those of his own household.

Matthew 10:34–36

Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.

Luke 12:51

You will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: all this is but the beginning of the sufferings.

Matthew 24:6–8

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.

Eccl. 3:1–8

Causes of War

The harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. What causes wars, and what causes fighting among you? Is it not your passions that are at war in your members? You desire and do not have; so you kill. And you covet and cannot obtain; so you fight and wage war. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. Unfaithful creatures! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

James 3:18–4:4

O Lord my God, if I have done this, if there be injustice in my hands, if I have paid back evil to them that rendered evil unto me, then let me fall back empty from my enemies. Then let the enemy pursue my soul, and take it, and let him tread down my life into the earth, and my glory let him bring down into the dust.

Psalms 7:3–5 (LXX)

The Lord Grants Victory

And whenever the ark set out, Moses said, “Arise, O Lord, and let Your enemies be scattered; and let them that hate You flee before You.”

Numbers 10:35

When the Lord your God brings you into the land which you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than yourselves, and when the Lord your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them; then you must utterly destroy them; you shall make no covenant with them, and show no mercy to them.

Deuteronomy 7:1–2

Let us sing to the Lord, for He is greatly glorified: horse and rider He has cast into the sea. Helper and protector He has become for my salvation: He is my God and I will glorify Him; my father's God and I will exalt Him. The Lord shatters wars; the Lord is His name. Pharaoh's chariots and army He has cast into the sea; His chosen mounted captains He has drowned in the Red Sea. With the deep He covered them: they sank to the bottom like a stone. Your right hand, Lord, has been glorified with strength; Your right hand, Lord, has crushed enemies; and by the multitude of Your glory You have smashed the opponents.

Exodus 15:1–6⁴

A king is not saved by great might, nor shall a giant be saved by the magnitude of his own strength. Futile is the horse for salvation, nor by the magnitude of his might shall he be saved. Behold, the eyes of the Lord are upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy, to deliver their souls from death, and to nourish them in famine. Our soul shall wait for the Lord, for He is our helper and our defender.

Psalms 32:16–20 (LXX)

“They,” said [Judas Maccabe], “trust in their weapons and boldness; but our confidence is in the Almighty who at a beck can cast down both them that come against us, and also all the world.”

2 Maccabees 8:18

And Joshua said, “Hereby you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites.”

Joshua 3:10

⁴This text opens the first of the nine canticles (odes) of the canon of Orthodox matins.

Then you shall rise up from the ambush, and seize the city; for the Lord your God will give it into your hand. And when you have taken the city, you shall set the city on fire, doing as the Lord has bidden; see, I have commanded you.

Joshua 8:7–8

Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin; but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down, and cut off your head; and I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord’s and He will give you into our hand.” When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone, and slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine, and killed him; there was no sword in the hand of David. Then David ran and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath, and killed him, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

1 Samuel 17:45–51

And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets — who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

Hebrews 11:32–34

The Lord of Hosts

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “The people of Israel shall encamp each by his own standard, with the ensigns of their fathers’ houses; they shall encamp facing the tent of meeting on every side.”

Numbers 2:1–2

The Lord of hosts is with us; our helper is the God of Jacob.

Psalms 45:11 (LXX)

How Soldiers Should Behave

Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” And He said to them, “Collect no more than is appointed you.” Soldiers also asked Him, “And we, what shall we do?” And He said to them, “Rob no one by violence or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.”

Luke 3:12–14

KILLING AND BLOODSHED

Who Has the Right to Kill

You shall not kill.⁵

Exodus 20:13 (LXX 20:15)

I kill and I make alive. I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of My hand. For I lift up My hand to heaven, and swear, As I live for ever, if I whet my glittering sword, and my hand takes hold on judgment, I will take vengeance on My adversaries, and will requite those who hate Me. I will make My arrows drunk with blood,

⁵ Biblical translators are divided on the translation of this commandment. Some consider that a better translation of the Hebrew word *ratsach* is murder.

and My sword shall devour flesh — with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the long-haired heads of the enemy ... Praise His people, O you nations; for He avenges the blood of His servants, and takes vengeance on His adversaries, and makes expiation for the land of His people.

Deuteronomy 32:39–43⁶

Vengeance is mine, and recompense.

Deuteronomy 32:35

You shall not thus pollute the land in which you live; for blood pollutes the land, and no expiation can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of him who shed it.

Numbers 35:33

So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people raised a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. Then they utterly destroyed all in the city, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and asses, with the edge of the sword.

Joshua 6:20–21

So Joshua defeated the whole land, the hill country and the Negeb and the lowland and the slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded.

Joshua 10:40

If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son, or your daughter, or the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul, entices you secretly, saying, “Let us go and serve other gods,” which

⁶This text opens the second canticle (ode) of the canon of Orthodox matins.

neither you nor your fathers have known, some of the gods of the peoples that are round about you, whether near you or far off from you, from the one end of the earth to the other, you shall not yield to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him, nor shall you conceal him; but you shall kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. You shall stone him to death with stones, because he sought to draw you away from the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Deuteronomy 13:6–10

The righteous man shall be glad when he sees the vengeance; he shall wash his hands in the blood of the sinner.

Psalms 57:10 (LXX)

As they continued to ask Him [whether or not to stone the woman caught in adultery], He stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” And once more He bent down and wrote with His finger on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the eldest, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before Him. Jesus looked up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go and do not sin again.”

John 8:7–11

In the morning I slew all the sinners of the land, utterly to destroy out of the city of the Lord all them that work iniquity.

Psalms 100:9 (LXX)

And He said to them, “When I sent you out with no purse or bag or sandals, did you lack anything?” They said, “Nothing.” He said to them, “But now, let him who has a purse take it, and likewise a bag. And let him who has no sword sell his mantle and buy one. For I tell

you that this scripture must be fulfilled in Me, 'And He was reckoned with transgressors'; for what is written about Me has its fulfillment." And they said, "Look, Lord, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough."

Luke 22:35–38

Bloodshed Calls for More Bloodshed

And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword."

Matthew 26:51

The Sin of Bloodshed

You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? Therefore, I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly, I say to you, all this will come upon this generation.

Matthew 23:33–36

Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, "I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute," that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it shall be required of this generation.

Luke 11:49–51

Also [the dragon] was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain. If any one has an ear, let him hear: If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone slays with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

Revelation 13:7–10

The whole earth followed the beast with wonder. Men worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshipped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?”⁷ And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months; it opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming His name and His dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain. If anyone has an ear, let him hear: If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone slays with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

Revelation 13:3–10

⁷ “And the whole earth followed the beast with wonder. Men worshipped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshipped the beast saying, ‘Who is like the beast,’ and ‘who can fight against it?’” (13:4). It is difficult to add anything to the simplicity of these words, which may be applied to the totality of world history. Today’s caesarism, both the Russian and the Germanic type, are in their own way new and almost unexpected parallels of Roman absolutism, its victorious self-affirmation, leading entire peoples which are under its power to a state of madness. (Fr. Sergei Bulgakov, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, Paris 1948 (in Russian; written during World War II).

CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS

Jesus said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they were amazed at Him.

Mark 12:17

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore, he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute His wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore, one must be subject, not only to avoid God’s wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay all of them their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.

Romans 13:1–7

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way.⁸

1 Timothy 2:1–2

Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. For it is

⁸This exact demand is found in the text of the augmented litany of the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom.

God's will that by doing right you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Live as free men, yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil; but live as servants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

1 Peter 2:13–17

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

The Real Enemy

You will not be afraid of the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flies by day. Nor for the thing that walks in darkness, nor for the mishap and demon of noonday.

Psalms 90:5–6 (LXX)

And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems upon its horns and a blasphemous name upon its heads. And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority. One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth followed the beast with wonder. Men worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?" And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months; it opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain. If anyone has an ear, let him hear: If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he

goes; if anyone slays with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

Revelation 13:1–10

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Matthew 10:28

THE JUDGMENT

He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day.

John 12:48

And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The words of Him who has the sharp two-edged sword. “I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is; you hold fast My name and you did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells... Repent then. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of My mouth.”

Revelation 2:12–16

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name inscribed which no one knows but Himself. He is clad in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which He is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, followed Him on white horses. From His mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

Revelation 19:11–15

THE GOOD FIGHT

But as for you, man of God, shun all this; aim at righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

1 Timothy 6:11–12

Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier on service gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to satisfy the one who enlisted him.

2 Timothy 2:3–4

Besides this you know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy.

Romans 13:10–13

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray at all times in the Spirit,

with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that utterance may be given me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Ephesians 6:10–20

CHAPTER THREE

Canonical and Synodical Reference Texts

EARLY CHURCH DOCUMENTS OF A CANONICAL NATURE

The Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus of Rome¹ (between 202 and 118 AD)

Canon XVI: On professions. A soldier under authority shall not kill a man. If he is ordered to, he shall not carry out the order, nor shall he take the oath. If he is unwilling, let him be rejected.

He who has the power of the sword or is a magistrate of a city who wears the purple, let him cease or be rejected.

Catechumens or believers who want to become soldiers, should be rejected, because they have despised God.

¹ The Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus of Rome is dated between 202 and 218 AD. The document, ascribed to one of the first Bishops of Rome, dates back to the early 3rd century and has survived in Latin (4th c.), Coptic (8th c.), Arabic (10th c.) and Ethiopian (13th c.). Several other documents were later added to the Tradition, reflecting the practices of early ecclesiastical order in other parts of the Roman Empire: the Canons of Hippolytus (Egypt, between 336 and 340), the Apostolic Constitutions (Syria around 380), the Epitome of the Apostolic Constitutions (Syria, early 5th c.), the Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Syria, 2nd half 5th c.) and the Octateuch of Clement (Syria, 5th c.). Although widely spread in the early Church, the Canons of these documents have not been affirmed by Ecumenical Councils; indeed, the Apostolic Constitutions were denounced by the second Council in Trullo (Canon II).

The Canons of Hippolytus (between 336 and 340 AD)

Canons XIII-XIV: Penance in event of killing. Concerning the Magistrate and the Soldier: they are not to kill anyone, even if they receive the order: they are not to wear wreaths. Whoever has authority and does not do the righteousness of the gospel is to be excluded and is not to pray with the bishop.

Whoever has received the authority to kill, or else a soldier, they are not to kill in any case, even if they receive the order to kill. They are not to pronounce a bad word. Those who have received an honor are not to wear wreaths on their heads. Whoever is raised to the authority of prefect or to the magistracy and does not put on the righteousness of the Gospel is to be excluded from the flock and the bishop is not to pray with him.

A Christian is not to become a soldier. A Christian must not become a soldier, unless he is compelled by a chief bearing the sword. He is not to burden himself with the sin of blood. But if he has shed blood, he is not to partake of the mysteries, unless he is purified by a punishment, tears, and wailing. He is not to come forward deceitfully but in the fear of God.

The Apostolic Constitutions (c. 380 AD)

Canon VIII.32.10. If a soldier come, let him be taught to do no injustice, to accuse no one falsely, and to be content with his allotted wages; if he submit to those rules, let him be received; but if he refuse them, let him be rejected (cf. Luke 3:14).

The Testament of Our Lord (second half of the 5th century)

Canon II.2: (for catechumens). If anyone be a soldier or in authority, let him be taught not to oppress or to kill or to rob, or to be angry or to rage and afflict anyone. But let those rations suffice which are given to him. But if they wish to be baptized in the Lord, let them cease

from military service or from the (post of) authority. And if not, let them not be received.

Let a catechumen or a believer of the people, if he desire to be a soldier, either cease from his intention, or if not let him be rejected. For he hath despised God by his thought and, leaving the things of the Spirit, he hath perfected himself in the flesh, and hath treated the faith with contempt (cf. Luke 3:14).

CANONICAL TEXTS FROM THE APOSTOLIC PERIOD

The 85 Canons of the Holy and Altogether August Apostles²

Canon VI. Let not a bishop, presbyter, or deacon undertake worldly business; otherwise let him be deposed.

Canon XXVII. We command that a bishop, or presbyter, or deacon who strikes the faithful that offend, or the unbelievers who do wickedly, and thinks to terrify them by such means, be deprived, for our Lord has nowhere taught us such things. On the contrary, “when Himself was stricken, He did not strike again; when He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not.”

Canon LV. If anyone of the clergy abuses his bishop unjustly, let him be deprived; for says the Scripture, “You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people” (Acts 23:5).

Canon LVI. If anyone of the clergy abuses a presbyter or a deacon, let him be separated.

Canon LVII. If anyone of the clergy mocks at a lame, a deaf, or a blind man, or at one maimed in his feet, let him be suspended; and the like for the laity.

²The 85 Canons of the Holy Apostles most probably originate from Syria in the 3rd century. They were confirmed by the Quinisext Ecumenical Council ‘in Trullo’ (the Church where the Council took place) in 691, which issued the Canons of the Fifth and Sixth Ecumenical Councils. The Canons of the Holy Apostles should not be mistaken for the Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolyte of Rome, which has not been confirmed by the Councils.

Canon LXVI. If any clergyman shall strike anyone in a contest, and kill him with one blow, let him be deposed for his violence. If a layman do so, let him be excommunicated.

Canon LXXXI. We have said that a bishop or presbyter must not give himself to the management of public affairs, but devote himself to ecclesiastical business. Let him then be persuaded to do so, or let him be deposed, for no man can serve two masters, according to the Lord's declaration.

Canon LXXXIII. If a bishop, presbyter, or deacon, shall serve in the army, and wish to retain both the Roman magistracy and the priestly office, let him be deposed; for the things of Caesar belong to Caesar, and those of God to God.

Canon LXXXIV. Whosoever shall abuse the king or the governor unjustly, let him suffer punishment; and if he be a clergyman, let him be deprived; but if he be a layman, let him be suspended.

CANONS FROM THE ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea

The 20 Canons of the 318 Holy and God-inspired Fathers who gathered in the city of Nicaea under Constantine the Great in the year 325 AD before the 13th day of July:

Canon XII. As many as were called by grace, and displayed the first zeal, having cast aside their military girdles, but afterwards returned, like dogs, to their own vomit, (so that some spent money and by means of gifts regained their military stations); let these, after they have passed the space of three years as hearers, be for ten years prostrators.³ But in all these cases it is necessary to examine well into their purpose and what their repentance appears to be like. For as many as give evidence of their conversions by deeds, and not pretence, with

³ Prostrators are one of the categories of penitents.

fear, and tears, and perseverance, and good works, when they have fulfilled their appointed time as hearers, may properly communicate in prayers; and after that the bishop may determine yet more favorably concerning them. But those who take (the matter) with indifference, and who think the form of (not) entering the Church is sufficient for their conversion, must fulfill the whole time.⁴

IV Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451)

The 28 Canons and two more in the form of questions and answers, of the 630 Holy Fathers gathered in Chalcedon during the reign of Marcianus.

Canon VII. Those who have entered the clergy or have been tonsured into the monastic state may no longer serve in the army or accept any civil charge; otherwise those who have dared do so, and who have not repented and returned to their prior occupation for the love of God, shall be anathematized.

VI Council in Trullo (691)

Canon LXIX. It is not permitted to a layman to enter the Holy Altar (sanctuary), though, in accordance with a certain ancient tradition,

⁴In his last contests with Constantine, Licinius had made himself the representative of paganism; so that the final issue of war would not be the mere triumph of one of the two competitors, but the triumph or fall of Christianity or paganism. Accordingly, a Christian who had in this war supported the cause of Licinius and of paganism might be considered as a *lapsus* (those who fell away from the Faith), even if he did not formally fall away. With much more reason might those Christians be treated as *lapsi* who, having conscientiously given up military service (this is meant by the soldier's belt), afterwards retracted their resolution, and went so far as to give money and presents for the sake of readmission, on account of the numerous advantages which military service then afforded. It must not be forgotten that Licinius, as Zonaras and Eusebius relate, required from his soldiers a formal apostasy; compelled them, for example, to take part in the heathen sacrifices which were held in the camps, and dismissed from his service those who would not apostatize. *Comment by the Canonist Lambert.*

the imperial power and authority (i.e. the emperor) is by no means prohibited from this when he wishes to offer his gifts to the Creator.

VII Ecumenical Council

Canon III. That it does not pertain to princes to choose a Bishop.

Let every election of a bishop, presbyter, or deacon, made by princes stand null, according to the Canon which says: *If any bishop making use of the secular powers shall by their means obtain jurisdiction over any church, he shall be deposed, and also excommunicated, together with all who remain in communion with him.* For he who is raised to the episcopate must be chosen by bishops, as was decreed by the holy Fathers of Nicaea... (...).

CANONS FROM THE LOCAL COUNCILS

The Local Council of Ancyra

The 25 Canons of the August Fathers gathered in Ancyra in 314 AD, Canons which precede the Council of Nicaea but which come in second position given the authority of the Ecumenical Council.

Canon XXII. Concerning willful murderers let them remain prostrators; but at the end of life let them be indulged with full communion.⁵

⁵ An ancient epitome of this Canon reads: "A voluntary homicide may at the last attain perfection." Constantine Harmenopolus the Scholiast in the *Epitom. Canonum.*, Sect. V, tit. 3, tells the following story: "In the time of the Patriarch Luke, a certain bishop gave absolution in writing to a soldier who had committed voluntary homicide, after a very short time of penance; and afterwards when he was accused before the synod of having done so, he defended himself by citing the Canon which gives bishops the power of remitting or increasing the length of their penance to penitents. But he was told in answer that this was granted indeed to pontiffs but not that they should use it without examination, and with too great lenity. Wherefore the synod subjected the soldier to the Canonical penance and the bishop it mulcted for a certain time, bidding him

Canon XXIII. Concerning involuntary homicides, a former decree directs that they be received to full communion after seven years (of penance), according to the prescribed degrees; but this second one, that they fulfill a term of five years.⁶

CANONS OF THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

Canons of St. Gregory of Neocaesarea

The Canonical Epistle of St. Gregory, Archbishop of Neocaesarea (270 AD), who is called Thaumaturgus, concerning them that, during the incursion of the Barbarians, ate of things offered to idols and committed certain other sins.

Canon VI. Against those who detain them prisoners who had escaped from the barbarians, the holy man expects that such should be thunder-struck, and therefore desires that some enquiry be made upon the spot by persons sent for this purpose.

Canon VII. They who joined the barbarians in their murder and ravages, or were guides or informers to them, should be not permitted to be hearers, till holy men assembled together do agree in common upon what shall seem good, first to the Holy Spirit, then to themselves.

Canons of St. Athanasius the Great

From the Canonical Epistle of St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria (373 AD) to the Monk Ammun:

cease from the exercise of his ministry.” *Comment by the Canonist van Espen.*

⁶Of voluntary and involuntary homicides St. Basil treats at length in his Canonical Epistle *ad Amphilochem*, can. VIII, LVI and LVII, and fixes the time of penance at twenty years for voluntary and ten years for involuntary homicides. It is evident that the penance given for this crime varied in different churches, although it is clear from the great length of the penance, how enormous the crime was considered, no light or short penance being sufficient. *Comment of the Canonist van Espen.*

In other matters also which go to make up life, we find differences according to circumstances. For example, it is not right to kill, yet in war it is lawful and praiseworthy to destroy the enemy; accordingly not only are they who have distinguished themselves in the field held worthy of great honors, but monuments are put up proclaiming their achievements. So that the same act is at one time and under some circumstances unlawful, while under others, and at the right time, it is lawful and permissible. The same reasoning applies to the relation of the sexes. He is blessed who, being freely yoked in his youth, naturally begets children. But if he uses nature licentiously, the punishment of which the Apostle writes shall await whoremongers and adulterers.

Canons of St. Basil the Great

The first Canonical Epistle of our Holy Father Basil (378 AD), Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, to Amphilochius, Bishop of Iconium:

Canon VIII. He that kills another with a sword, or hurls an axe at his own wife and kills her, is guilty of willful murder; not he who throws a stone at a dog, and undesignedly kills a man, or who corrects one with a rod, or scourge, in order to reform him, or who kills a man in his own defense, when he only designed to hurt him. But the man, or woman, is a murderer that gives a *philtrum*,⁷ if the man that takes it dies upon it; so are they who take medicines to procure abortion; and so are they who kill on the highway (...)

Canon XI. He that is guilty of involuntary murder, shall do eleven years' penance—that is, if the murdered person, after he had here received the wound, do again go abroad, and yet afterward die of the wound.

Canon XIII. Our fathers did not think that killing in war was murder; yet I think it advisable for such as have been guilty of it to forbear communion three years.

⁷ Meaning 'secret mixtures' intended to cause insanity.

Canon XLIII. He who gives a mortal wound to another is a murderer, whether he were the first, aggressor, or did it in his own defense.

Canon LIV. It is in the bishop's power to increase or lessen penance for involuntary murder.

Canon LV. Those attacking robbers are repelled from the communion of the Holy Mysteries if they are not ecclesiastics; clergymen are deposed.

Canon LVI. He that willfully commits murder, and afterwards repents, shall for twenty years remain without communicating of the Holy Sacrament. Four years he must mourn without the door of the oratory, and beg of the communicants that go in, that prayer be offered for him; then for five years he shall be admitted among the hearers, for seven years among the prostrators; for four years he shall be a co-stander with the communicants, but shall not partake of the oblation; when these years are completed, he shall partake of the Holy Sacrament.

Canon LVII. The involuntary murderer for two years shall be a mourner, for three years a hearer, four years a prostrator, one year a co-stander, and then communicate.

Canons of St. Gregory of Nyssa

The Canonical Epistle of St. Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa (395 AD), to St. Letoius, Bishop of Melitene:

Canon V. Scripture not only prohibits inflicting the slightest wound, but moreover all foul talk and slander (Col. 3:8; Eph. 4:31) and similar things that proceed from the incensive power of the soul;⁸ yet only against the crime of murder our fathers have imposed canonical sanctions. With regard to this crime a distinction is made between

⁸ Gr. *thymikon*, one of the three powers of the soul according to the tripartite division of the human soul generally adopted by the Greek Fathers. *Thymikon* can be described as the force of the soul that provokes vehement feelings, often in the form of anger.

involuntary homicide and premeditated murder. As voluntary murder is considered, first of all, when someone dares to commit this act in a premeditated manner. Secondly those are considered as voluntary murderers who during a fight, while exchanging blows, strike in some dangerous place. For once overcome by wrath and giving way to the movements of anger, during their passion they will not accept anything into their minds that may prevent evil. Therefore a killing that results from a fight is attributed to the effect of compulsion, and not considered an accident. Involuntary homicide can be recognized by the feature that someone, aiming to achieve something else, by accident inflicts such great evil. For those who wish to heal the crime of premeditated murder by repentance, a triple lapse of time is required. Three nine-year periods of penitence are imposed, with nine years in each degree of penitence. (...)

Involuntary homicide is considered worthy of indulgence, although not praiseworthy. I say this in order to make clear that someone who has defiled himself with murder — be it involuntarily — is considered impure through his impure deeds and the canon considers such a person unworthy of the grace of priesthood.

STATEMENTS OF PAN-ORTHODOX SYNODS, PAN-ORTHODOX MEETINGS AND LOCAL SYNODS OF ORTHODOX CHURCHES

Pan-Orthodox Synod of Constantinople, 1872

Extract from the Statement of the Local Synod that met in Constantinople in August 1872 to discuss 'Ethnophyletism,' that is, ecclesial nationalism and racism.⁹ The Statement summarizes the work of the Synod's

⁹The Local Synod of Constantinople was convened by Patriarch Anthimos VI of Constantinople in 1872 in order to address the unilateral establishment of a separate bishopric (exarchate) by the Bulgarian community of Constantinople. It was the first time that a diocese for a specific ethnic group was created, in violation of the principles of the territorial principle of Orthodox ecclesiology — and on the territory of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The 1872 Synod con-

special commission on racism that defined ethno-phyletism (see Case Study 1 below for full text).

We renounce, censure and condemn racism, that is racial discrimination, ethnic feuds, hatreds and dissensions within the Church of Christ, as contrary to the teaching of the Gospel and the holy canons of our blessed fathers which “support the holy Church and the entire Christian world, embellish it and lead it to divine godliness.”

Third Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference in Chambésy, 1986

Extract from the text adopted at the Third Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference in Chambésy, October 28–November 6, 1986¹⁰ on “The

demned the newly created Bulgarian Exarchate, which remained in a schism that lasted until 1945. The Statement of the Synod was adopted by the Synods of the Orthodox Churches of Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem (in a slightly modified form) and Greece. The Russian Orthodox Church did not recognize the Bulgarian Exarchate, yet it did not ratify the Synod’s Statement either. The Serbian and Romanian Orthodox Churches failed to express themselves on the matter.

¹⁰ Following the decision, at the First Pan-Orthodox Conference in Rhodes in 1961, to work towards a council that would address the major issues of Orthodox Church life (the Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church), a number of pan-Orthodox consultations and conferences have been held in order to discuss the themes to be addressed at the Council: the Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission (1971) and the first (1976), second (1982) and third Pan-Orthodox Preconciliar Conferences in Chambésy. These meetings, in which all local Orthodox Churches participate, are defined as follows: “Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conferences are extraordinary meetings of the Orthodox Church which are summoned according to the Pan-Orthodox established customs of the canonically appointed representatives of the local Autocephalous and Autonomous Orthodox Churches, aiming to cover the collective preparation of the Holy and Great Council.” The *Regulations of the Preconciliar Conferences* adopted at the 1986 meeting in Chambésy state the following about the canonical significance of its decisions: “Decisions of the Pan-Orthodox Preconciliar Conferences on each of the topics of the agenda of the Great and Holy Council have a preparatory character. For this reason, although reflecting the authentic Orthodox Tradition regarding the issues under discussion, prior to the decision

contribution of the Orthodox Church to the realization of the Christian ideals of peace, justice, freedom, fraternity and love between the nations as well as to the elimination of racial and other forms of discrimination” (see Case Study 2 for full text).

Conscious of the burning issues that concern the whole of today’s humanity, the Orthodox Church has from the very beginning inscribed “the contribution of the Orthodox Church to the realization of the Christian ideals of peace, justice, freedom, fraternity and love between the nations as well as to the elimination of racial discrimination” on the agenda of the Holy and Great Council. Needless to say, this concern is not limited to the Orthodox Church. Peace is a matter of concern for all Christians and for all religions and it reflects, in diverse shapes and forms, the preoccupations of humanity as a whole. (...)

A. The value of the human person as the foundation of peace

A1) First and foremost it must be emphasized that the biblical notion of peace does not coincide with the neutral and negative concept that defines peace as the mere absence of war. The biblical notion of peace corresponds with the restoration of all things to the original wholeness they enjoyed prior to the Fall, when man still lived and inhaled the life-giving breath of creation in the image and likeness of God. In other words, peace is understood as the restoration of the relationship and peace between God and mankind. (...)

A3) All Fathers of the Orthodox Church who devoted their attention to the mystery of divine providence took the sanctity and divine origins of the human person as their source of inspiration. In this context, St. Gregory the Theologian points out that the Creator “placed man on the earth as a sort of second world, a microcosm

of the Great and Holy Council they have no authority to directly engage the Local Churches.”

within a macrocosm, a new angel, a mingled worshipper, fully initiated into the visible creation, but only partially into the intellectual; king of all upon earth ... a living creature, living in this world but aspiring to another one; and, to complete the mystery, deified in his inclination to God.”¹¹ In the incarnation of the Logos of God and the deification of man, creation finds both origin and fulfillment. “Christ, remodeling the old man”¹² “so doing deified man as a whole, which is the premise of the fulfillment of our hope.”¹³ For in the same manner in which mankind as a whole was already present in Adam, the whole human race is similarly comprised in the new Adam. With regard to this, St. Gregory the Theologian remarks that “for us humanity is one, namely the entire human race.”¹⁴ This teaching of Christianity on the sanctity of humanity is the everlasting source of all Christian endeavors for safeguarding the value and dignity of the human person. (...)

D. Peace and Justice

D1) Humanity struggles for the hatred and mistrust that poison international relations to give way to friendship and mutual understanding, for the arms race to give way to complete disarmament, for war as a means of international conflict resolution to be once and for all removed from the life of mankind.

D2) The Orthodox Church works for the realization of the Christian ideals of peace, freedom, equality, fraternity, social justice and love between the nations. Christ’s revelation is qualified as a “Gospel of peace” (Eph. 6:15), for Christ, “making peace by the blood of His Cross” (Col. 1:20) “came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near” (Eph. 2:17). He became “our peace” (Eph. 2:14). This peace, “which passes all understanding”

¹¹ Greg. Naz., Or. 45,7. PG 36,632

¹² Hipp., Haer., 10,34. PG 16,3454

¹³ Eus., d.e. 4,14. PG 22,289

¹⁴ Greg. Naz., or. 31,15. PG 36,149

(Phil. 4:7) as Christ Himself told His disciples at the Last Supper, is wider and more fundamental than the peace promised by the world: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you" (John 14:27). Christ's peace is the seasoned fruit of the recapitulation of all things in Him: of the sanctity and magnificence of the human person as the image of God; of the manifestation of the organic unity of humankind and the world in Christ; of the universality of the ideals of peace, freedom, equality, and social justice in the body of Christ; finally, of the fruitfulness of Christian love between persons and nations. Genuine peace is the fruit of the triumph of all these Christian ideals on earth. In its daily prayers, the Orthodox Church incessantly invokes God to grant this peace from above, for His is almighty and answers the prayers of those who call upon Him with faith.

D3) The above demonstrated clearly why the Church, as the "Body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:27), has been defined as the "world's vision of peace,"¹⁵ understood as the real and universal peace proclaimed by Christ. "We [the Church]," Clement of Alexandria claims, "are a people of peace,"¹⁶ for we are the "soldiers of peace."¹⁷ Elsewhere, Clement affirms that peace and justice are synonyms of each other.¹⁸ St. Basil adds to this that "I cannot persuade myself that without love to others, and without, as far as rests with me, peaceableness towards all, I can be called a worthy servant of Jesus Christ."¹⁹ This is such a natural attitude for the Christian that one could state that "nothing is so characteristically Christian as being a peacemaker."²⁰ The peace of Christ is a mystical power whose source is the reconciliation of man with the Heavenly Father, "in accordance with the Providential Purpose of Jesus who works all things in all and makes peace, unnut-

¹⁵ Or., Or. 9:2; PG 13:349

¹⁶ Paed. 2:2, PG 8:428

¹⁷ Prot. 11, PG 8:236

¹⁸ Str. 4:25, PG 8:1369-72

¹⁹ Ep. 203:2, PG 32:737

²⁰ Ep. 114, PG 32:528

terable and foreordained from eternity, and reconciles us to Himself, and, in Himself, to the Father.”²¹

D4) At the same time, it must be stressed that the spiritual gift of peace also depends upon human collaboration. The Holy Spirit grants spiritual offerings when the human heart is lifted up towards God, when man sets out on the quest for God’s justice with a contrite heart. The divine gift of peace becomes a reality in those situations where Christians work with diligence for the faith, love and hope that are in Christ our Lord (cf. 1 Tim. 1:3).

D5) When we speak about the peace of Christ as the true peace, we mean a peace that has been achieved in the Church. Sin is a spiritual disease, which reveals itself in the visible symptoms of anger, discord and war and their tragic effects. The Church not only attempts to heal the visible symptoms of this disease, but also the sin that lies at its cause. (...)

E. Peace as a shield against war

E1) Orthodoxy condemns war in general, which it considers a consequence of evil and sin in the world; by condescension, it has permitted wars that were waged for the reestablishment of oppressed justice and freedom.

E2) For this reason, the Church proclaims without hesitation that it is opposed to all forms of armament, whether conventional, nuclear or in space, whatever its origin, for the consequence of war, nuclear war in particular, is the destruction of creation and the eradication of life from the face of the earth. The obligation of Orthodoxy to oppose armament is all the greater given the knowledge we have today of the destructive force of nuclear weapons. The consequences of an eventual nuclear war would be terrifying indeed, not only for causing the death of innumerable scores of human beings but for making the lives of the survivors unbearable as well. Even if life were to con-

²¹ Dion. Ar. D.n. 11:2:4, PG 3:953

tinue on earth, irremediable diseases would appear and genetic mutations engendered with disastrous effects for future generations. In the opinion of expert scientists, another horrifying effect of nuclear war would be the so-called nuclear winter: the climate of our earth would be upset to a degree that all life would disappear. As a consequence, nuclear warfare is unacceptable from all points of view, natural as well as ethical. It is a crime against humanity and a mortal sin before God, for it destroys His work. The Orthodox Churches, other Christians and humanity as a whole are, therefore, obliged to prevent this peril. At the same time, we express the certitude that the peaceful and constructive exploration and utilization of space is not against the will of God. (...)

F. Racial discrimination and other forms of discrimination

F1) The Lord, the King of peace (cf. Heb. 7:2–3), disapproves of violence and injustice (cf. Ps. 10:5) and condemns inhuman treatment of man by his neighbor (cf. Mark 25:41–46 and James 2:15–16). In His Kingdom, which begins here on earth and which is spiritual in essence, there is no place for hatred between the nations or for whatever forms of enmity or intolerance (cf. Isa. 11:6 and Rom. 12:10).

F2) In this context, special mention needs to be made regarding the Orthodox position on racial discrimination. This position is clear indeed: the Orthodox Church believes that God “out of one man created every nation to live on all the face of the earth” (Acts 17:26) and that in Christ “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one” (Gal. 3:28). In agreement with its faith, the Orthodox Church refuses all forms of racial discrimination, since they presuppose an unequal appreciation of human races and a hierarchy of rights. Nevertheless, while asserting the urgent need for the total abolition of racial discrimination and for the creation of full opportunities for development for all inhabitants of the earth, the Orthodox Church does not wish to limit itself to the mere abolishment of color-based discrimi-

nation and forms of discrimination that occur only in specific world regions, but expands its support to the struggle against all forms of discrimination that threaten various minorities.

F3) Whether religious, linguistic or ethnic, minorities must be respected for what they are. Human freedom is related to the freedom of the community to which man belongs. Each community must grow and develop according to its own qualities. With this regard, pluralism should govern the life of all countries. The unity of nations, countries or states is to be understood as the right of human communities to their uniqueness.

F4) Orthodoxy condemns in an irrevocable manner the inhuman system of racial discrimination and the sacrilegious affirmation whereby such systems claim to be in agreement with Christian ideals. When asked “who is my neighbor?,” Christ answered with the parable of the Good Samaritan. Thus, He taught us to demolish all barriers of enmity and prejudice. Orthodoxy confesses that each human being — independently of color, religion, race, nationality or language — is a bearer of the image of God, is our brother or sister, an equal member of the human family. (...)

H. The prophetic mission of Orthodoxy: a witness of love in service

H1) In the circumstances of today’s world, the contribution of the Orthodox Church towards peace, freedom, justice and fraternity between the nations should be above all other things a testimony of love. This witness should be made at all times, making use with the utmost efficacy of the means at the disposal of each Church in their specific conditions. Being witnesses of love also means that the Orthodox churches can intervene in situations they judge contrary to the Gospel and their tradition. Here we observe the necessity of a prophetic witness of Orthodoxy, its obligation to witness “the hope that is in us” in each case where the progress of peace, freedom, justice, fraternity and respect for the human person as the image of God are jeopardized. It goes without saying that in the fulfillment of this

prophetic mission, the Orthodox churches are to preserve the spiritual peace of the communities they are called to guide on the path of the Gospel. We believe that this will be achieved by the power of love, a power that will galvanize the determination of the Orthodox churches to bring their witness — a witness of faith and hope, in collaboration with their brothers from other Churches and Christian confessions — to a world that may be needing it more than ever.

H2) By the very fact of having access to the meaning of salvation, we Orthodox Christians have the obligation to struggle for the relief of illnesses, grief and fear. Since we have experienced peace, we cannot remain indifferent in the face of its absence from today's society. Since we have benefited from God's justice, we struggle for greater justice in the world and for the eradication of all forms of oppression. Since every day, we experience divine clemency, we combat all forms of fanaticism and intolerance between men and nations. Since we incessantly proclaim the incarnation of God and the divinization of man, we defend human right for all men and all nations. Since by the mercy of Christ's salutary exploits we experience the divine gift of freedom, we can declare its universal value for all men and all nations in a more comprehensive manner. Since, having been nourished by the Body and Blood of the Lord in the Holy Eucharist, we experience the need to share God's gifts with our neighbours, we have a better understanding of famine and deprivation and struggle for their abolishment. Since we await a new heaven and a new earth where absolute justice will reign, we struggle here and now for the rebirth and renewal of man and society. (...)

Local Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, 2000

*Extracts from the "Bases of the social concept of the Russian Orthodox Church" adopted at the 2000 Jubilee Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church*²²

²²The "Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church" were ad-

II. Church and nation

II.1. In the contemporary world, the notion of ‘nation’ is used in two meanings, as an ethnic community and the aggregate citizens of a particular state. Relationships between Church and nation should be viewed in the context of both meanings of this word. (...)

God’s chosen people of Israel are opposed to other nations throughout the Old Testament books associated in one way or another with the history of Israel. The people of Israel were chosen not because they surpassed other nations in number or anything else, but because God chose and loved them (Deut. 7:6–8).²³ (...) In addition to their sharing one religion, the unity of the people of God was secured by their ethnic and linguistic community and their rootedness in a particular land, their fatherland. (...)

Being universal by nature, the Church is at the same time one organism, one body (1 Cor. 12:12). She is the community of the children of God, “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people... which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God” (1 Pet. 2:9–10). The unity of these new people is secured not by its ethnic, cultural or linguistic community, but by their common faith in Christ and Baptism. The new people of God “have no continuing city here, but seek one to come” (Heb. 13:14). The spiritual homeland of all Christians is not earthly Jerusalem but Jerusalem “which is above” (Gal. 4:26). The gospel of Christ is

opted at the Bishops’ Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in 2000. The document is intended “to serve as a guide for the Synodal institutions, dioceses, monasteries, parishes and other canonical church institutions in their relations with various secular bodies and organizations and the non-church mass media” and “shall be used by the church authorities to make decisions on various issues.” Although created without consultation with other Local Orthodox Churches, the text represents a first attempt at defining an authoritative Orthodox position on many issues not dealt with in the canons of the Ecumenical and local Councils. The full text is available at www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru/sd00e.htm.

²³ Scripture quotes in this text are from the “Authorized” or “King James” translation.

preached not in the sacred language understandable to one people, but in all tongues (Acts 2:3–11). The gospel is not preached for one chosen people to preserve the true faith, but so that “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10–11).

II. 2. The universal nature of the Church, however, does not mean that Christians should have no right to national identity and national self-expressions. On the contrary, the Church unites in herself the universal with the national. Thus, the Orthodox Church, though universal, consists of many Autocephalous National Churches. Orthodox Christians, aware of being citizens of the heavenly homeland, should not forget about their earthly homeland. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Divine Founder of the Church, had no shelter on earth (Matt. 8:20) and pointed that the teaching He brought was not local or national in nature: “the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father” (John 4:21). Nevertheless, He identified Himself with the people to whom He belonged by birth. Talking to the Samaritan woman, He stressed His belonging to the Jewish nation: “Ye worship ye know what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22). Jesus was a loyal subject of the Roman Empire and paid taxes in favor of Caesar (Matt. 22:16–21). St. Paul, in his letters teaching on the supranational nature of the Church of Christ, did not forget that by birth he was “an Hebrew of the Hebrews” (Phil. 3:5), though a Roman by citizenship (Acts 22:25–29).

The cultural distinctions of particular nations are expressed in the liturgical and other church art, especially in the peculiarities of Christian order of life. All this creates national Christian cultures. (...)

In all times, the Church has called upon her children to love their homeland on earth and not to spare their lives to protect it if it was threatened. (...)

II. 3. Christian patriotism may be expressed at the same time with regard to a nation as an ethnic community and as a community

of its citizens. The Orthodox Christian is called to love his fatherland, which has a territorial dimension, and his brothers by blood who live everywhere in the world. This love is one of the ways of fulfilling God's commandment of love to one's neighbor which includes love to one's family, fellow-tribesmen and fellow-citizens.

The patriotism of the Orthodox Christian should be active. It is manifested when he defends his fatherland against an enemy, works for the good of the motherland, cares for the good order of people's life through, among other things, participation in the affairs of government. The Christian is called to preserve and develop national culture and people's self-awareness.

When a nation, civil or ethnic, represents fully or predominantly a mono-confessional Orthodox community, it can in a certain sense be regarded as the one community of faith — an Orthodox nation.

II. 4. At the same time, national sentiments can cause such sinful phenomena as aggressive nationalism, xenophobia, national exclusiveness and inter-ethnic enmity. At their extremes, these phenomena often lead to the restriction of the rights of individuals and nations, wars and other manifestations of violence.

It is contrary to Orthodox ethics to divide nations into the best and the worst and to belittle any ethnic or civic nation. Even more contrary to Orthodoxy are the teachings which put the nation in the place of God or reduce faith to one of the aspects of national self-awareness.

Opposing these sinful phenomena, the Orthodox Church carries out the mission of reconciliation between hostile nations and their representatives. Thus, in inter-ethnic conflicts, she does not identify herself with any side, except for cases when one of the sides commits evident aggression or injustice.

III. *Church and state*

III. 1. The Church, as a divine-human organism, has not only a mysterious nature not submissive to the elements of the world, but also a historical component which comes in touch with the outside world,

including the state. The state, which exists for the purpose of ordering worldly life, also comes into contact with the Church. Relationships between the state and the followers of genuine religion have continuously changed in the course of history. (...)

God blesses the state as an essential element of life in the world distorted by sin, in which both the individual and society need to be protected from the dangerous manifestations of sin. At the same time, the need for the state arose not because God willed it for the primitive Adam, but because of the fall and because of the actions to restrict the dominion of sin over the world conformed to his will. (...)

III. 3. In church-state relations, the difference in their natures should be taken into account. The Church has been founded by God Himself, our Lord Jesus Christ, while the God-instituted nature of state power is revealed in historical process only indirectly. The goal of the Church is the eternal salvation of people, while the goal of state is their well-being on earth. (...)

The principle of the secular state cannot be understood as implying that religion should be radically forced out of all the spheres of the people's life, that religious associations should be debarred from decision-making on socially significant problems and deprived of the right to evaluate the actions of the authorities. This principle presupposes only a certain division of domains between church and state and their non-interference in each other's affairs.

The Church should not assume the prerogatives of the state, such as resistance to sin by force, use of temporal authoritative powers and assumption of the governmental functions which presuppose coercion or restriction. At the same time, the Church may request or urge the government to exercise power in particular cases, yet the decision rests with the state.

The state should not interfere in the life of the Church or her government, doctrine, liturgical life, counseling, etc., or the work of canonical church institutions in general, except for those aspects where the Church is supposed to operate as a legal entity obliged to enter into certain relations with the state, its legislation and governmental

agencies. The Church expects that the state will respect her canonical norms and other internal statutes. (...)

III. 5. Given their different natures, Church and State use different means for attaining their goals. The state relies basically on material power, including coercion, and on respective secular ideological systems, whereas the Church has at her disposal religious and moral means to give spiritual guidance to the flock and to attract new children. (...)

Legal sovereignty in the territory of a state belongs to its authorities. Therefore, it is they who determine the legal status of a Local Church or her part, either giving her an opportunity for the unhampered fulfillment of church mission or restricting this opportunity. Thus, state power makes judgment on itself and eventually foretells its fate. The Church remains loyal to the state, but God's commandment to fulfill the task of salvation in any situation and under any circumstances is above this loyalty.

If the authority forces Orthodox believers to apostatize from Christ and His Church and to commit sinful and spiritually harmful actions, the Church should refuse to obey the state. The Christian, following the will of his conscience, can refuse to fulfill the commands of state forcing him into a grave sin. If the Church and her holy authorities find it impossible to obey state laws and orders, after a due consideration of the problem, they may take the following action: enter into direct dialogue with the authority on the problem, call upon the people to use the democratic mechanisms to change the legislation or review the authority's decision, apply to international bodies and the world public opinion and appeal to her faithful for peaceful civil disobedience. (...)

III.8. ... there are areas in which the clergy and canonical church structures cannot support the state or cooperate with it. They are as follows:

- Political struggle, election agitation, campaigns in support of particular political parties and public and political leaders
- Waging civil war or aggressive external war

- Direct participation in intelligence and any other activity that demands secrecy by law even in making one's confession or reporting to the church authorities. (...)

VIII. *War and peace*

VIII. 1. War is a physical manifestation of the latent illness of humanity, which is fratricidal hatred (Gen. 4:3–12). Wars have accompanied human history since the fall and, according to the Gospel, will continue to accompany it. (...)

Killing, without which wars cannot happen, was regarded as a grave crime before God as far back as the dawn of the holy history. "You shall not kill," the Mosaic Law reads (Exod. 20:13). In the Old Testament, just as in all ancient religions, blood is sacred, since blood is life (Lev. 17:11–14). "Blood defiles the land," says Holy Scriptures. But the same biblical text warns those who resort to violence: "The land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it" (Num. 35:33).

VIII. 2. Bringing to people the good news of reconciliation (Rom. 10:15), but being in "this world" lying in evil (1 John 5:19) and filled with violence, Christians involuntarily come to face the vital need to take part in various battles. While recognizing war as evil, the Church does not prohibit her children from participating in hostilities if at stake is the security of their neighbours and the restoration of trampled justice. Then war is considered to be necessary though undesirable. In all times, Orthodoxy has had profound respect for soldiers who gave their lives to protect the life and security of their neighbours. The Holy Church has canonized many soldiers, taking into account their Christian virtues and applying to them Christ's word: "Greater love hath no man but this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). (...)

VIII. 3. "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52). These words of the Savior justify the idea of just war. From the Christian perspective, the conception of moral justice in

international relations should be based on the following basic principles: love of one's neighbours, people and Fatherland; understanding of the needs of other nations; conviction that it is impossible to serve one's country by immoral means. These three principles defined the ethical limits of war established by Christendom in the Middle Ages when, adjusting to reality, people tried to curb the elements of military violence. Already at that time, people believed that war should be waged according to certain rules and that a fighting man should not lose his morality, forgetting that his enemy is a human being too. (...)

VIII. 5. (...) The Russian Orthodox Church seeks to carry out her peace service both on national and international scale, trying to help resolve various contradictions and bring nations, ethnic groups, governments and political forces to harmony. To this end, she makes appeals to the powers that be and other influential sections of society and takes efforts to organize negotiations between hostile parties and to give aid to those who suffer. The Church also opposes the propaganda of war and violence, as well as various manifestations of hatred capable of provoking fratricidal clashes.

The Definition of Religious Nationalism (Ethno-Phyletism) at the 1872 Local Synod of Constantinople

At the pan-Orthodox Synod of Constantinople in 1872 (see “Statements of Pan-Orthodox Synods, pan-Orthodox meetings and Local Synods of Orthodox Churches”), a special commission was set up to investigate the phenomenon of racism in Church life. The commission elaborated theological criteria for the definition and subsequent condemnation of ecclesial nationalism (“ethno-phyletism”).

Extracts from the report of the special commission¹

The question of what basis racism — that is discriminating on the basis of different racial origins and language and the claiming or exercising of exclusive rights by persons or groups of persons exclusively of one country or group — can have in secular states lies beyond the scope of our inquiry. But in the Christian Church, which is a spiritual communion, predestined by its Leader and Founder to contain all nations in one brotherhood in Christ, racism is alien and quite unthinkable. Indeed, if it is taken to mean the formation of special racial churches, each accepting all the members of its particular race, excluding all aliens and governed exclusively by pastors of its own race, as its adherents demand, racism is unheard of and unprecedented.

All the Christian churches founded in the early years of the faith were local and contained the Christians of a specific town or a specific locality, without racial distinction. They were thus usually named after the town or the country, not after the ethnic origin of their people.

¹ Text published by Metropolitan Maximus of Sardes, *The Ecumenical Patriarchate in the Orthodox Church*, Thessaloniki, 1976.

The Jerusalem Church consisted of Jews and proselytes from various nations. The Churches of Antioch, Alexandria, Ephesus, Rome and all the others were composed of Jews but mainly of Gentiles. Each of these churches formed within itself an integral and indivisible whole. Each recognized as its Apostles the Apostles of Christ, who were all Jews. Each had a bishop installed by these Apostles without any racial discrimination: this is evident in the account of the founding of the first Churches of God. (...)

The same system of establishing churches by locality prevails even after the Apostolic period, in the provincial or diocesan churches, which were marked out on the basis of the political organization then prevailing, or of other historical reasons. The congregation of the faithful of each of these churches consisted of Christians of every race and tongue. (...)

Paradoxically, the Church of Greece, the Church of Russia, Serbia, Moldavia and so on, or less properly Russian Church, Greek Church etc., mean autocephalous or semi-independent churches within autonomous or semi-independent dominions, with fixed boundaries identical with those of the secular dominions, outside which they have no ecclesiastical jurisdiction. They were composed not on ethnic grounds, but because of a particular situation and do not consist entirely of one race or tongue. Nor has the Orthodox Church ever known racial churches of the same faith and independent of one another to coexist within the same parish, town or country. (...)

If we examine those canons on which the Church's government is constructed, we find nowhere in them any trace of racism. (...) Similarly, the canons of the local churches, when considering the formation, union or division of ecclesiastical groupings, put forward political reasons or ecclesiastical needs, never racial claims. (...) From all this, it is quite clear that racism finds no recognition in the government and sacred legislation of the Church.

But the racial principle also undermines the sacred governmental system of the Church. (...)

In a racially organized church, the church of the local diocese has no area proper to itself, but the ethnic jurisdictions of the supreme ecclesiastical authorities are extended or restricted depending

on the ebb and flow of peoples constantly being moved or migrating in groups or individually. (...) If the racial principal is followed, no diocesan or patriarchal church, no provincial or metropolitan church, no episcopal church, not even a simple parish, whether it be the church of a village, small town or a suburb, can exist with its own proper place or area, containing within it all those of one faith. Is not Christ thus divided, as He was once among the Corinthians, by those who say, "I am for Paul, I am for Apollo, I am for Cephas" (1 Cor. 1:12)? (...)

[On the proposed need to establish racially based churches, ed.] No Ecumenical Council would find it right or in the interests of Christianity as a whole to admit such an ecclesiastical reform to serve the ephemeral idiosyncrasies of human passions and base concerns, because, apart from certainly overthrowing the legislative achievements of so many senior Ecumenical Councils, it implies other destructive results, both manifest and potential:

First of all, it introduces a Judaic exclusiveness, whereby the idea of the race is seen *a sine qua non* of a Christian, particularly in the hierarchical structure. Every non-Greek, for instance, will thus be legally excluded from what will be called the Greek Church and hierarchy, every non-Bulgarian from the Bulgarian Church, and so on. As a Jew, St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, could only have been a pastor in one nation, the Jewish. Similarly, SS. Cyril and Methodius, being of Greek origin, would not have been accepted among the Slavs. What a loss this would have entailed for the Church! (...)

Thus, the sacred and divine are rendered entirely human, secular interest is placed above spiritual and religious concerns, with each of the racial churches looking after its own. The doctrine of faith in "one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church" receives a mortal blow. If all this occurs, as indeed it has, racism is in open dispute and contradiction with the spirit and teaching of Christ.

The 1986 Chambésy statement on “the contribution of the Orthodox Church to the realization of the Christian ideals of peace, justice, freedom, fraternity and love between the nations as well as to the elimination of racial and other forms of discrimination”

Following the decision, at the First Pan-Orthodox Conference in Rhodes in 1961, to work towards a council that would address the major issues of Orthodox Church life (the Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church), a number of pan-Orthodox consultations and conferences have been held in between to discuss the themes to be addressed at the Council: the Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission (1971) and the first (1976), second (1982) and third Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conferences in Chambésy. These meetings, in which all local Orthodox Churches participate, are defined as follows: ‘Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conferences are extraordinary meetings of the Orthodox Church which are summoned according to the Pan-Orthodox established customs of the canonically appointed representatives of the local Autocephalous and Autonomous Orthodox Churches, aiming to cover the collective preparation of the Holy and Great Council.’² The following text is a translation of the document (in the working languages Greek, Russian and French) unanimously adopted at the Third Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference in Chambésy, October 28–November 6, 1986.

The contribution of the Orthodox Church to the realization of the Christian ideals of peace, justice, freedom, fraternity and love between the nations as well as to the elimination of racial and other forms of discrimination.³

² Article 1 of the *Regulations of the operation of the Pan-Orthodox Conferences*, as recorded and unanimously ratified by the Third Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference in 1986.

³ The translation from the official French text has been approved by the Secre-

Conscious of the burning issues that concern the whole of today's humanity, the Orthodox Church has from the very beginning inscribed "the contribution of the Orthodox Church to the realization of the Christian ideals of peace, justice, freedom, fraternity and love between the nations as well as to the elimination of racial discrimination" on the agenda of the Holy and Great Council. Needless to say, this concern is not limited to the Orthodox Church. Peace is a matter of concern for all Christians and for all religions, and it reflects, in diverse shapes and forms, the preoccupations of humanity as a whole.

What, then, shall be the common basis upon which the Orthodox, living in differing contexts, shall accomplish the Christian ideals of peace, justice, freedom, fraternity and love between the nations? More specifically, which is the position of the Orthodox Church regarding these ideals, and what concrete actions can it undertake in order to contribute towards their accomplishment? On these matters, the III Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference, after thorough and systematic study, submits the following text to the Holy and Great Council, expressing satisfaction over what has been achieved, yet in full awareness of the human insufficiencies that have been recognized in this field.

A. The value of the human person as the foundation of peace

1. First and foremost it must be emphasized that the biblical notion of peace does not coincide with the neutral and negative concept that defines peace as the mere absence of war. The biblical notion of peace corresponds with the restoration of all things to the original wholeness they enjoyed prior to the Fall, when man still lived and inhaled the life-giving breath of creation in the image and likeness of God. In other words, peace is understood as the restoration of the relationship and peace between God and mankind.

2. Throughout history, Orthodoxy has systematically, permanently and zealously served the dignity of the human person, whose ontological essence has obtained the rank of an absolute and universal value. For the Orthodox Church, man, the crown and fulfillment of divine creation, created in the image and likeness of his Creator, always

tariat of the Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church.

constituted the kernel of its service in the world and the history of salvation. The Orthodox Church considers the essence of its mission to be to restore man to his original dignity and beauty “in the image and likeness of his Creator.” Even the internal disputes of a purely theological nature that led to the formulation of the trinitarian doctrine of the Church fundamentally aimed to preserve the authenticity and the fullness of the Christian teaching regarding man and his salvation.

3. All Fathers of the Orthodox Church who devoted their attention to the mystery of divine providence took the sanctity and divine origins of the human person as their source of inspiration. In this context, St. Gregory the Theologian points out that the Creator “placed man on the earth as a sort of second world, a microcosm within a macrocosm, a new angel, a mingled worshipper, fully initiated into the visible creation, but only partially into the intellectual; king of all upon earth ... a living creature, living in this world but aspiring to another one; and, to complete the mystery, deified in his inclination to God.”⁴ In the incarnation of the Logos of God and the deification of man, creation finds both origin and fulfillment. “Christ, remodeling the old man”⁵ “so doing deified man as a whole, which is the premise of the fulfillment of our hope.”⁶ For in the same manner in which mankind as a whole was already present in Adam, the whole human race is similarly comprised in the new Adam. With regards to this, St. Gregory the Theologian remarks that “for us humanity is one, namely the entire human race.”⁷ This teaching of Christianity on the sanctity of humanity is the everlasting source of all Christian endeavors for safeguarding the value and dignity of the human person.

4. On the basis of the above-mentioned, it is imperative to promote inter-Christian cooperation in all directions aiming to safeguard the dignity of the human person and, naturally, of the great asset of peace, in order for the peaceful efforts of all Christians without exception to acquire greater significance and force.

⁴ Greg. Naz., Or. 45,7. PG 36,632.

⁵ Hipp., Haer., 10,34. PG 16,3454.

⁶ Eus., d.e. 4,14. PG 22,289.

⁷ Greg. Naz., or. 31,15. PG 36,149.

5. The common acknowledgement of the prominent value of the human person may serve as presupposition for wider collaboration in this field. The experience of the Orthodox Churches with this regard may prove beneficial as well. All this represents a vocation, to be worked on by all with peacefulness and creativity. The Local Orthodox Churches, in close collaboration with the — peace-loving — faithful of other world religions, consider it their obligation to work for peace on earth and brotherly relations between the nations. The Orthodox Churches are called to contribute to inter-religious consultation and cooperation and, in this manner, to the eradication of all forms of fanaticism. In this manner, they can contribute to the reconciliation of nations and the triumph of the values of peace and freedom in the world, serving modern man regardless of race and religion. Naturally, such collaboration excludes any forms of syncretism or attempts of religions to impose themselves upon others.

6. We express the conviction that, partaking in the work of God, we can jointly progress in this ministry with all of goodwill who dedicate themselves to the pursuit of true peace for the good of humankind, at the local, national and international level. Indeed, this ministry constitutes a commandment of God (Matt. 5:9).

B. The value of human freedom

1. The divine gift of freedom, through which man becomes self-aware and able to choose between good and evil (Gen. 2:16–17) constitutes the accomplishment of the human person, understood both as the individual bearer of the image of a personal God as well as the communion of human persons that reflects, through the unity of mankind, life within the Holy Trinity and the communion of the divine Persons. Freedom, therefore, is a divine gift that enables man to progress infinitely towards spiritual perfection, but which at the same time implies the danger of disobedience, the risk of independence from God and, therefore, of falling. Such is the cause of the terrifying role played by Evil, present within man and in the world, in issues of peace and freedom. The consequences of this evil are the scourges and vices that have become the prerogative of our times:

secularization, violence, slackening of moral standards, negative phenomena among some of today's youth, racism, armament and wars. A multitude of factors cause the evils from which society suffers: oppression of the masses, social inequality, constraints on the human right of freedom of conscience (particularly the right of religious freedom, a freedom that, in certain well-known cases, is curtailed to a degree where all forms of religious life are reduced to naught), economic misery, injustice in the distribution of consumables or even their absolute deficit, the deterioration of the natural resources, the famine of millions of underfed people, expulsions, the acute problem of refugees, mass migration, the destruction of the environment, the problems of developing societies in a world that is unequally industrialized and increasingly dominated by technology, hopes placed in futurology — all these phenomena perpetuate the infinite anguish that dominates the life of humanity today. At the same time, precisely in the midst of its tribulations humanity becomes aware that it bears within itself the seed of the ontological unity of mankind — of the one human race that is akin to its Creator in the first Adam and that, at the same time, is sustained in unity with God the Father through the intervention of the second Adam.

2. In the face of a situation where the very concept of the human person is under threat, the vocation of the Orthodox Church today is to stress, through its predication, theology, worship and pastoral work, the eminence of man as a person, in which way it would avoid discussing the issue of man in rationalist terms. The Orthodox Church is called to succeed in this task, given the fact that the essence of its anthropology is the very freedom the Creator has bestowed upon man, a freedom that is preserved to the degree in which man chooses to be free — not independent — from his Creator but freely submitted to Him and to the plan God has designed for him.

C. The mission of Orthodoxy in today's world

1. Orthodoxy must and can contribute to the reestablishment of the organic relationship between today's international dialogue and the ideals of peace, freedom, fraternity, love and social jus-

tice between the nations, which are Christian ideals *par excellence*. Orthodoxy has the duty to proclaim the Christian faith concerning man and the world, a mission it has been fulfilling throughout its historic development in order to achieve the renewal of the spiritual and cultural identity of the world. The Christian faith, according to which mankind and the fullness of creation all have their origin in God—in constant relationship with the sacred, independent and intrinsic value of the human person—is at the very basis, be it in a latent way, of today’s dialogue on peace, social justice and human rights. The principle of the universal value of these ideals, which constitutes the kernel of today’s international dialogue, would be inconceivable without the aid of the Christian doctrine of the ontological unity of the human race.

2. The contraction of the unity of humankind to the first pair of divine creation constitutes the very source of the benefits represented by freedom, equality, fraternity and social justice. By the Christian teaching on the “recapitulation of all things” in Christ (Eph. 1:10), the sacredness and eminent magnitude of the human person was established, thereby abolishing all intrinsic causes of fragmentation, alienation, racial discrimination and hatred. The recapitulation of all humanity and the world in Christ has resulted in their organic reunification in one body, for which reason it is written, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). We believe, incidentally, that this unity is by no means static or monolithic. On the contrary, it shows great dynamism and diversity, finding its source in the communion of persons, to the example of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity.

D. Peace and Justice

1. Humanity struggles for the hatred and mistrust that poison international relations to give way to friendship and mutual understanding, for the arms race to give way to complete disarmament, for war as a means of international conflict resolution to be once and for all removed from the life of mankind.

2. In accordance with what has been stated above, the Orthodox Church works for the realization of the Christian ideals of peace, freedom, equality, fraternity, social justice and love between the nations. Christ's revelation is qualified as a "Gospel of peace" (Eph. 6:15), for Christ, "making peace by the blood of His Cross" (Col. 1:20) "came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near" (Eph. 2:17). He became "our peace" (Eph. 2:14). This peace, "which passes all understanding" (Phil. 4:7), as Christ Himself told His disciples at the Last Supper, is wider and more fundamental than the peace promised by the world: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you" (John 14:27). Christ's peace is the seasoned fruit of the recapitulation of all things in Him: of the sanctity and magnificence of the human person as the image of God; of the manifestation of the organic unity of humankind and the world in Christ; of the universality of the ideals of peace, freedom, equality, and social justice in the body of Christ; finally, of the fruitfulness of Christian love between persons and nations. Genuine peace is the fruit of the triumph of all these Christian ideals on earth. In its daily prayers the Orthodox Church incessantly invokes God to grant this peace from above, for He is almighty and answers the prayers of those who call upon Him with faith.

3. The above demonstrates clearly why the Church, as the "Body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:27), has been defined as the "world's vision of peace,"⁸ understood as the real and universal peace proclaimed by Christ. "We (the Church)," Clement of Alexandria claims, "are a people of peace,"⁹ for we are the "soldiers of peace"¹⁰ of Christ. Elsewhere, Clement affirms that peace and justice are synonyms of each other.¹¹ St. Basil adds to this that "I cannot persuade myself that without love to others, and without, as far as rests with me, peaceableness towards all, I can be called a worthy servant of Jesus Christ."¹² This is such a natural attitude for the Christian that one could state that "noth-

⁸ Or., Or. 9:2; PG 13:349.

⁹ Paed. 2:2, PG 8:428.

¹⁰ Prot. 11, PG 8:236.

¹¹ Str. 4:25, PG 8:1369-72.

¹² Ep. 203:2, PG 32:737.

ing is so characteristically Christian as being a peacemaker.”¹³ The peace of Christ is a mystical power that takes its sources at the reconciliation of man with the Heavenly Father, “in accordance with the Providential Purpose of Jesus who works all things in all and makes peace, unutterable and foreordained from eternity, and reconciles us to Himself, and, in Himself, to the Father.”¹⁴

4. At the same time, it must be stressed that the spiritual gift of peace also depends upon human collaboration. The Holy Spirit grants spiritual offerings when the human heart is lifted up towards God, when man sets out on the quest for God’s justice with a contrite heart. The divine gift of peace becomes a reality in those situations where Christians work with diligence for the faith, love and hope that are in Christ our Lord (cf. 1 Tim. 1:3).

5. When we speak about the peace of Christ as the true peace, we mean a peace that has been achieved in the Church. Sin is a spiritual disease, which reveals itself in the visible symptoms of anger, discord and war and their tragic effects. The Church not only attempts to heal the visible symptoms of this disease, but also the sin that lies at its cause.

6. At the same time, the Orthodox Church sees as its obligation to encourage all endeavors that aim to offer a genuine service towards peace (cf. Rom. 14:19) and open the way to justice, fraternity, true freedom and mutual love among all children of the one Heavenly Father as well as with all the nations that make up the one family of humankind. It shows compassion for all Christians who, in different parts of the world, are bereaved of the grace of peace and suffer persecution for their Christian faith.

E. Peace as a shield against war

1. Orthodoxy condemns war in general, which it considers a consequence of evil and sin in the world; by condescension, it has permitted wars that were waged for the reestablishment of oppressed justice and freedom.

¹³ Ep. 114, PG 32:528.

¹⁴ Dion. Ar. D.n. 11:2:4, PG 3:953.

2. For this reason, the Church proclaims without hesitation that it is opposed to all forms of armament, whether conventional, nuclear or in space, whatever its origin, for the consequence of war, nuclear war in particular, is the destruction of creation and the eradication of life from the face of the earth. The obligation of Orthodoxy to oppose armament is all the greater given the knowledge we have today of the destructive force of nuclear weapons. The consequences of an eventual nuclear war would be terrifying indeed, not only for causing the death of innumerable scores of human beings but for making the lives of the survivors unbearable as well. Even if life were to continue on earth, irremediable diseases would appear and genetic mutations engendered with disastrous effects for future generations. In the opinion of expert scientists, another horrifying effect of nuclear war would be the so-called nuclear winter: the climate of our earth would be upset to a degree that all life would disappear. As a consequence, nuclear warfare is unacceptable from all points of view, natural as well as ethical. It is a crime against humanity and a mortal sin before God, for it destroys His work. The Orthodox Churches, other Christians and humanity as a whole are, therefore, obliged to prevent this peril. At the same time, we express the certitude that the peaceful and constructive exploration and utilization of space is not against the will of God.

3. We observe that the growing danger of a nuclear catastrophe and a feeling of defenselessness in the face of this peril are presently causing among some Christians the conviction that this universal threat is a sign of the second *parousia* of our Lord. Even though He Himself revealed the signs that will precede the last day, our Lord Jesus Christ nevertheless safeguards us against the scandal of such thoughts about the end of the world saying that “of that day or that hour no one knows” (Mark 13:32). Our efforts for preventing war and promoting the victory of peace in no way diminish the faith of Christians that both man and the entire universe are in the hands of God, who created the world with wisdom, who provides all and governs all. God leads history towards the future with a steady hand, while in the Church, Christians already anticipate the eschatological reality of the Kingdom of God, hoping for a new earth and a new heavens. For this reason,

though concerned about the spread of evil in the world and struggling to constrain it, Christians do not succumb to despair, seeing all things in the perspective of eternity in the expectancy of the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come.

F. Racial discrimination and other forms of discrimination

1. The Lord, the King of peace (cf. Heb. 7:2–3), disapproves of violence and injustice (cf. Ps. 10:5) and condemns inhuman treatment of man by his neighbor (cf. Mark 25:41–46 and James 2:15–16). In His Kingdom, which begins here on earth and which is spiritual in essence, there is no place for hatred between the nations or for whatever forms of enmity or intolerance (cf. Isa. 11:6 and Rom. 12:10).

2. In this context, special mention needs to be made regarding the Orthodox position on racial discrimination. This position is clear indeed: the Orthodox Church believes that God “out of one man created every nation to live on all the face of the earth” (Acts 17:26) and that, in Christ, “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one” (Gal. 3:28). In agreement with its faith, the Orthodox Church refuses all forms of racial discrimination, since they presuppose an unequal appreciation of human races and a hierarchy of rights. Nevertheless, while asserting the urgent need for the total abolition of racial discrimination and for the creation of full opportunities for development for all inhabitants of the earth, the Orthodox Church does not wish to limit itself to the mere abolishment of color-based discrimination and forms of discrimination that occur only in specific world regions, but expands its support to the struggle against all forms of discrimination that threaten various minorities.

3. Whether religious, linguistic or ethnic, minorities must be respected for what they are. Human freedom is related to the freedom of the community to which man belongs. Each community must grow and develop according to its own qualities. With this regard, pluralism should govern the life of all countries. The unity of nations, countries or states is to be understood as the right of human communities to their uniqueness.

4. Orthodoxy condemns in an irrevocable manner the inhuman system of racial discrimination and the sacrilegious affirmation whereby such systems claim to be in agreement with Christian ideals. When asked “who is my neighbor?” Christ answered with the parable of the Good Samaritan. Thus, He taught us to demolish all barriers of enmity and prejudice. Orthodoxy confesses that each human being—independently of color, religion, race, nationality or language—is a bearer of the image of God, is our brother or sister, an equal member of the human family.

G. Fraternity and solidarity between the nations

1. This conclusion naturally helps us understand the specific contribution of Orthodoxy towards solidarity and fraternity between the nations. Indeed, the Orthodox Churches are in a situation where, both through the education of the faithful (and, more generally, the people as a whole) and through the totality of their spiritual work, they can contribute towards an improvement of the general climate and mindsets. Reference is made here to various spiritual possibilities, distinct from those at the disposal of International Organizations or States. These possibilities spring from the very nature of the Church; they may have more substantial and durable results in the field of peace and fraternity and must, therefore, be developed to the fullest. A wide horizon opens up before the Orthodox Churches; to a divided world, they can propose the essential element of their ecclesiological and social doctrine: the ideal of liturgical communion and eucharistic communion in particular.

2. In this perspective, we should understand the enormous responsibility the Church has in combating the extreme famine and poverty that are striking scores of people, even entire nations in an unacceptable manner today, in particular in the Third World. This terrifying phenomenon of our days, where economically developed countries live under the rule of opulence and squandering while at the same time engaging in a sterile arms race, reveals a deep crisis of identity of the modern world. Two reasons may be given for this:

2a. Famine not only threatens the divine gift of life of entire developing nations on earth, but equally invalidates the magnificence and sacred nature of the human person.

2b. The — often criminal — manner in which economically developed countries manage and distribute material goods not only insults the image of God in every human person, but also God Himself, who identified Himself with those humans who suffer famine and poverty, saying “each time you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me” (Matt. 25:40).

3. In the face of the terrifying fact of our times, which is the state of starvation in which entire nations find themselves, resignation or indifference of individual Christians or the Church as a whole would be equal to a betrayal of Christ and a lack of active faith; for, if the concern for our own food is often a material issue, concern for the food of our neighbor is a matter of spiritual significance (James 2:14–18). The Orthodox Churches, therefore, are under the supreme obligation to proclaim their solidarity with their brothers in distress and to organize swift and efficient assistance to their needs. The local Orthodox Churches have already developed experience in this field through the actions and initiatives undertaken until now. This experience may constitute the basis of their collaboration in this field — and equally with other Christian Churches and Confessions, with the World Council of Churches and with other international organizations dedicating themselves to the struggle against this terrible scourge. Disarmament would not only neutralize the danger of nuclear destruction, but would in addition allow the considerable savings to be assigned to the assistance of those suffering from famine and destitution.

4. Let us not be mistaken: the famine that strikes humanity in the face today and the abyss of inequality are a condemnation of our age, in our own view and in the eyes of the righteous God. For His will, which concerns nothing but the salvation of concrete human beings — here and now, obliges us today to serve man and to face man’s concrete problems. Separated from its diaconal mission, faith in Christ is meaningless. To be a Christians means: to follow Christ, to be ready to serve Him in the person of the weak, the hungry and the oppressed, to serve all those who are in need. All efforts to con-

template Christ as a real presence, but without reference to those in need are nothing but theories void of meaning.

H. The prophetic mission of Orthodoxy: a witness of love in service

1. In the circumstances of today's world, the contribution of the Orthodox Church towards peace, freedom, justice and fraternity between the nations should be above all other things a testimony of love. This witness should be made at all times, making use with the utmost efficacy of the means at the disposal of each Church in its specific conditions. Being witnesses of love also means that the Orthodox Churches can intervene in situations they judge contrary to the Gospel and their tradition. Here we observe the necessity of a prophetic witness of Orthodoxy, its obligation to witness "the hope that is in us" in each case where the progress of peace, freedom, justice, fraternity and respect for the human person as the image of God are jeopardized. It goes without saying that in the fulfillment of this prophetic mission, the Orthodox Churches are to preserve the spiritual peace of the communities they are called to guide on the path of the Gospel. We believe that this will be achieved by the power of love, a power that will galvanize the determination of the Orthodox Churches to bring their witness — a witness of faith and hope, in collaboration with their brothers from other Churches and Christian confessions, — to a world that may be needing it more than ever.

2. By the very fact of having access to the meaning of salvation, we Orthodox Christians have the obligation to struggle for the relief of illnesses, grief and fear. Since we have experienced peace, we can not remain indifferent in the face of its absence from today's society. Since we have benefited from God's justice, we struggle for greater justice in the world and for the eradication of all forms of oppression. Since every day we experience divine clemency, we combat all forms of fanaticism and intolerance between men and nations. Since we incessantly proclaim the incarnation of God and the divinization of man, we defend human rights for all men and all nations. Since by the mercy of Christ's salutary exploits we experience the divine gift of freedom, we can declare its universal value for all men and all nations

in a more comprehensive manner. Since, having been nourished by the Body and Blood of the Lord in the Holy Eucharist we experience the need to share God's gifts with our neighbours, we have a better understanding of famine and deprivation and struggle for their abolishment. Since we await a new heaven and a new earth where absolute justice will reign, we struggle here and now for the rebirth and renewal of man and society.

3. Our witness and its fruitful contribution to an age of aridity, needing God more than anything else, may be the best means by which the Churches can contribute to peace and to the ideals that come with it and make it abundant. The Orthodox Churches launch an appeal to the entire world, calling for the collaboration of all for the establishment of love and peace between men and nations.

Church, Nation and State in the Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church: Views from Different Perspectives

Since the adoption of the “Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church” in 2000, studies have been published by authors both in the Russian Federation and abroad. This process has been facilitated by the publication of the text of the Doctrine in English, German and French, available on the Internet (www.mospat.ru/chapters/e_conception/). The current case study offers a selection from studies by Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholic observers.

Church and State in the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church (excerpts)¹⁵

Bishop Hilarion of Vienna and Austria¹⁶

The most important act of the Bishops’ Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, held in Moscow in August 2000, was the proclamation of the Bases of the Social Concept. Neither the Russian Church nor the other Local Orthodox Churches had ever known a similar document before — a statement addressing all the problems facing the Church in the modern world. (...)

¹⁵ Translation from the original French text published at the web page of the Representation of the Russian Orthodox Church to the European Institutions.

¹⁶ At the time, Bishop Hilarion (Alfeyev) of Vienna and Austria was the representative of the Russian Orthodox Church to the European Institutions. He was part of the team of authors of the Bases of the Social Concept. Now Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk heads the External Affairs Department of the Moscow Patriarchate.

The document affirms that the Church is categorically opposed to all forms of nationalism and chauvinism, yet at the same time upholds patriotism as the love for one's motherland. As for matters of war and peace, the Church considers all wars as the consequence of human sin. There exists, nevertheless, a distinction between defensive and offensive wars. The Church does not forbid its faithful to fulfill their service and to take part in military action; pacifism is not proclaimed a fundamental principle. (...)

The Russian Orthodox Church is often accused nowadays of wishing to take the position of a state church, to become an official religion. Numerous statements by Patriarch Alexis, the Holy Synod and Hierarchs of the Russian Church clearly demonstrate the absence of grounds for such accusations. The Church is very well aware of the danger that incorporation in state mechanisms would cause for its freedom. The Russian Church wishes to maintain the freedom that cost it so dear. (...)

*On forms of state governance*¹⁷

Any change in the form of government to that more religiously rooted, introduced without spiritualizing society itself, will inevitably degenerate into falsehood and hypocrisy and make this form weak and valueless in the eyes of the people. However, one cannot altogether exclude the possibility of such a spiritual revival of society as to make natural a religiously higher form of government. But under slavery one should follow St. Paul's advice: "if you gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity" (1 Cor. 7:21). At the same time, the Church should give more attention not to the system of the outer organization of state, but to the inner condition of her members' hearts. Therefore, the Church does not believe it possible for her to become an initiator of any change in the form of government. Along the same line, the 1994 Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church stressed the soundness of the attitude whereby "the Church does not give preference to any social system or any of the existing political doctrines."

¹⁷ Title by the editors.

The Russian Orthodox Church and social doctrine: a commentary on fundamentals of the social conception of the Russian Orthodox Church (excerpts)¹⁸

Charles C. West¹⁹

To begin with, let me say how grateful the world Christian community should be for the appearance of such a document as this. It is not the first expression of Orthodox, or even Russian Orthodox social thought in the century just past. Before the Revolution of 1917 and after, thinkers such as Serge Bulgakov, Peter B. Struve, Nicholas Berdyaev and many others tried to give new direction to the faith and life of the Church as they interacted with Marxism and Anarchism on the left and with secular humanism in western capitalist forms on the right. Orthodox participation in the ecumenical movement from the beginning — Berdyaev has been especially important here — has influenced social thought in East and West. But here for the first time, since the Byzantine Empire Walter Sawatsky says, we have an Orthodox Church statement, with the authority of the bishops behind it, giving guidance to the faithful and to the world. It takes its place as an authoritative Orthodox voice alongside the Papal encyclicals from 1890 on, and statements from Assemblies and Conferences of the World Council of Churches, and world confessional bodies, in the ecumenical dialogue. We can only be grateful to God that this voice is now in the conversation.

How, then, do we understand this voice and respond to it? This writer cannot pretend to be an expert on Orthodox Christianity or the life of the Orthodox Church. I must leave others to analyze the social, ecclesial, and theological interplay that led to the formulations in this document. I take it as it is, as the voice of the Russian Orthodox Church. I listen to it as a Reformed Christian with ecu-

¹⁸ Published in *Religion in Eastern Europe*, Volume XXII, Number 2, April 2002.

¹⁹ Charles C. West is former Professor of Ethics and Dean of Princeton Theological Seminary. He is associate editor of *Religion in Eastern Europe* and Chairman of the organization Christians Associated for Relations with Eastern Europe (CAREE), an ecumenical association related to the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

menical experience, engaged in the same search for a faithful witness to God's judging and redeeming work in the 21st century world. From this perspective, outside the ecclesiology yet inside the faith, the questions below are raised.

To begin with, and underlying all the other questions: what is distinctively Orthodox in the theology and ethics of this document? More specifically, out of the history, the piety and the faith of the Russian Orthodox Church, what has emerged to cast our common search for a Christian ethic in a new perspective? (...)

Let me introduce with a quotation from a Russian Orthodox scholar who taught at Oxford, Nicolas Zernov, describing what he called, in some contrast even to Byzantium: "the originality of the Russian approach to Christianity." "The Russians were extremely ritualistic, but singularly unclerical; they assigned importance to holiness but had little notion of ecclesiastical subordination. They were conservative yet allowed considerable freedom of interpretation; they were strictly Orthodox, but understood the term rather as stressing devotion to the beauty and glory of worship than in the sense of correct doctrine."²⁰

I quote this, because it expresses so much of my own experience with Russian Orthodox believers, monastic, lay and clerical. The heart of Orthodox Christianity, I have been told many times, is in the liturgy, where the drama of salvation is enacted and celebrated, where that drama becomes the reality that embraces and sanctifies the world. The life and worship of the Church is doxological, not critical. Theology is a part of that doxology, and ethics grows more out of inspired holiness than out of analysis of Divine judgment and grace in the relativities of a sinful yet promising world.

The style of the Bishops' Statement is certainly different from this. It is an authoritative document, "reflecting the official position of the Moscow Patriarchate on relations with state and secular society"²¹ and designed to direct the clergy and instruct the faithful, in a way analogous to the Roman Catholic Papal encyclicals. Its method borrows much from western analysis, both Christian and secular. Yet there is a difference in spirit. It expresses itself, I suggest, in two ways.

²⁰ *The Russian Religious Renaissance of the Twentieth Century*, New York 1963, p. 37.

²¹ Introduction

First, there is a direct simplicity to much of the argument that contrasts strongly with similar statements from Christian churches elsewhere, in the West or in other continents. It moves from biblical foundations to current moral positions, with some historical references between, but without the painstaking analysis of the natural and the supernatural that characterizes much Roman Catholic thought, the dialectic of sin and grace, in Protestant reflection, or the tension of Gospel with non-Christian culture which is central to Christian social ethics in Africa and Asia. In a sense, this is doxological ethics, of a kind found elsewhere only in Evangelical and Pentecostal Protestantism. (Perhaps Baptists and Orthodox in Russia are not so far apart after all!) It bears with it all the spontaneous discipleship, and all the dangers of exclusive — dare I say sectarian? — legalism that have divided Christians in other parts of the world. Every part of this statement will be challenged and questioned — its biblical interpretations, its ecclesiology, and its treatment of personal and social ethics. What will be the response of the hierarchy, and of the dissenters, when this critical reflection happens? Will it produce schism, as has happened on far less substantive grounds before? Or is this the first step toward a deeper, fuller, understanding of the social witness of the Church, to be corrected and developed by the discipleship of the faithful? The Russian Orthodox Church enters a new stage in its life when it officially enters the field of social ethics. The liturgy after the liturgy will not be so easily defined as the liturgy itself.

Second, there is in this document an understanding of the Church and its relation to culture that is, indeed, not only Orthodox, but Russian. On the one hand, “the Church is a divine-human organism” (I.2) as the body of Christ, combining Christ’s divine and human natures, and sharing in Christ’s mission of service, sacrifice and salvation for the world. The Church is “not yet perfect in her divine-humanity, for on earth she has to struggle with sin and her humanity” (*ibid.*), but it is the people of God called to ministry and mission in various ways “not only through direct preaching, but also through good works aimed to improve the spiritual-moral and the material condition of the world around her” (I.4). This is a universal mission, transcending and transforming the life of nation and cultures, as the concluding sec-

tions of the document, on science, culture, education and international relations clearly demonstrate. An Orthodox doctrine of the Church has been brought into encounter with 21st century society in a way that enriches not only Christian social ethics, but also the ecumenical dialogue about ecclesiology, which cannot be separated from it.

On the other hand, there is in this statement a theology of culture and nation that is, I suggest, peculiarly influenced by Russian history and experience. “The Church unites in herself the universal with the national” it declares, and therefore, “Orthodox Christians, aware of being citizens of the heavenly homeland, should not forget about their earthly homeland” (II.2). The document draws on the Old Testament drama of the chosen people as a model to be incorporated into the life of the Church Universal, with relation to every people. Nation, understood as an ethnic community wherever it lives, or a territorial unit, in either case defined by a special cultural tradition, it should be an object of love in response to God’s love. The Christian patriot “is called to preserve and develop national culture and people’s self-awareness.” Furthermore, “When a nation, civil or ethnic, represents fully or predominantly, a monoconfessional Orthodox community, it can in a certain sense be regarded as the one community of faith — an Orthodox nation” (II.3).

There is a problem with this. It too easily sanctifies religious nationalism. To be sure, the statement itself warns against this, but provides no theological safeguards against it. In an unfortunate transfer of images, the union of nation with the chosen people in ancient Israel becomes the model for a “symphonic relation” (II.4) between church, culture and state in the whole of Christendom in the Byzantine Empire, and then for an idealized vision of one nation, Russia before Peter the Great. The bishops realize that the ideal was never truly realized, even in Byzantium, but it remains the dream and the standard. But they miss the message to Christendom of the continuing existence of God’s chosen people, the Jews, in their midst over the centuries: that no culture, however informed by the Gospel, is without self-centered corruption, and that no nation is sanctified even by a Christian culture. Otherwise, all the demons that the bishops would exorcise — aggressive nationalism, xenophobia, national

exclusiveness and inter-ethnic conflicts — will flourish as they have until now, under the aura of Christianity. The Church's mission is to inspire the culture — or the cultures — of a nation — or a community of nations — and to bring them into the presence of Christ at the same time so that they may be faithful expressions of the judgment and grace that transform them. (...)

In conclusion, let me take three comments a step farther.

First, the question of the relation of human sin to human power, and the relation of this to the witness of the Church. The Bishops' Statement recognizes in places the corruption that power brings to even the most moral persons and cultures, but it does not build this awareness into its social ethic. Indeed, the role and problem of power is almost absent from its analysis. Therefore, the role of repentance and justification by grace alone also does not play a role. Nor does the moral complexity of action in a sinful world, whether in politics, in business, in personal life or the life of the Church, come into focus. It is almost as if Communism, with its drastic attack on Russian culture and religion, had no roots in Russian history, but had been some external catastrophe manufactured by the sins and failings of others. Nicholas Berdyaev was profounder in his time.²²

Constitutional State, Church and Nation (excerpts)²³

Rudolf Uertz²⁴

With its Social Doctrine of August 2000, the Russian Orthodox Church has enriched both Christian Social Ethics and Political

²² Cf. among others *The Origin of Russian Communism, The Russian Idea, The End of an Era*.

²³ Translation from the original German text published on the web page of the Representation of the Russian Orthodox Church to the European Institutions.

²⁴ Rudolf Uertz teaches at the Institute for History and Social Sciences of the Catholic University of Eichstatt in Germany. The current text was presented as a research project of the Foundation Pro Oriente on the Social Doctrine of the Russian Orthodox Church, conducted in cooperation with the Institute for Religion and Peace, the Institute for Social Ethics of the University of Vienna and the Austrian Catholic Social Academy in Vienna, September 10–11, 2003.

Theory. Alongside Catholic and Evangelical social ethics, the Orthodox Social Doctrine represents a third, independent type of reasoning. (...)

When comparing the Social Doctrine of the Russian Orthodox Church with Roman Catholic social ethics, the question arises: which social ethics? Those of before or after the Second Vatican Council?

The answer is close at hand: despite the fundamental theological, historical and cultural differences between the Western and Eastern Churches, there exists considerable agreement between the Social Doctrine of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic state doctrine as it existed between 1881 and 1958. This can be summarized as follows:

Both the Russian Orthodox idea of symphony and the coordination theory derive from the same principle: respectively a certain form of collaboration or a certain division of tasks between Church and state.

This division of tasks stems from a time when Christianity — in this case Orthodoxy, in other Catholicism — was a state religion or claimed similar preferential treatment from the state. Both doctrines indisputably base themselves on the organic theory of society and state. The organic theory is not Christian by origin but derives from Platonic-Aristotelian philosophy, from where it found entry into the Gospel and the Church Tradition of the Greek and Latin Fathers.

The organic theory is emphatically conservative, given that its analogy of body and members leads to a disavowal of the legal, sociological and political status of citizens and does not allow to adequately describe their double position as sovereigns and subjects of democratic states based on the rule of law. Historically, nearly all conservative theories would use the organic theory of society as a means of defense against liberal views on society. (...)

Similar analogies between Orthodox and Catholic state doctrine also exist in the field of human rights, despite the fact that on the Catholic side, in the past natural law was not defined in a personal manner. Comparative analysis of both theories would demonstrate that the views and criticisms in the Doctrine of the Russian Orthodox Church can be found word for word in papal documents published between 1791 and 1958. (...)

Finally, there also is a similarity between the basic principles of the Orthodox Doctrine and the Catholic social doctrine of the above-mentioned era. Both theories do not have a consistent understanding and conceptualization of the worldly nature of society and state and of the social, economic, technical and political dimensions in which lay persons have responsibilities. (...)

I am neither willing nor able to make any forecasts regarding the further development of Orthodox social ethics. I would, however, mention these points to conclude:

Russian Orthodox thought is very well capable of developing a concept of personal and individual rights. This is shown by the remarkable concepts and ideas designed by a study group of Russian-Orthodox philosophers and theologians in the 1930s. Their views on human rights, democracy and the separation or distinction of Church and state are wider and more precise than similar concepts of liberal Catholicism of that period. One could say that these thinkers, however, belong to cultural Orthodoxy. In the Orthodox Church, such views (still) remain a peculiarity.

Certain individual Orthodox theologians also do not consider that personal human rights and Orthodox theology are incompatible from the point of view of theological principle. In this perspective, Orthodox theology should try to clarify, more than it has done so far, which differences with contemporary state order are indeed biblical and theological and which are merely historic and cultural. If the human person, as the Orthodox affirm as well, is at the core of Christian Faith, traditionalist organic thought on society is to be considered obsolete.

CHAPTER FOUR

Reference Texts from Authors from the Patristic Period

This chapter contains short quotes from authors from the 2nd to the 10th centuries. Most are saints of the Orthodox Church; others, such as Origen, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria, are not included in the calendar of saints but are still regarded as important witnesses of the patristic era.

NATION AND NATIONALISM

Disregard for the World

As long as this body remains common with the rest, its corporal condition must also be common, and it is not granted the members of the human race to be separated from one another unless there is withdrawal from this life. Meanwhile, we, good and evil, are contained within our house. Whatever comes within the house we endure with equal fate, until, when our temporal earthly period has been fulfilled, we are distributed among the homes of eternal death or immortality. So then we are not comparable and equal with you, because, while we are still in this world and in this flesh, we incur equally with you the annoyances of the world and of the flesh. For since all that punishes is in the sense of pain, it is manifest that he is not a participant in your punishment whom you see does not suffer pain with you.

— St. Cyprian of Carthage, *To Demetrian*,¹ Chapter 19.

¹ In this treatise, written approximately during the plague that ravaged Carthage in 252 AD, St. Cyprian answers the accusation of the pagans that the Christians

If, as the Apostle Paul says (1 Cor. 7:31), heaven, earth and anything else in the universe passes away, how can we praise the fertility of the earth and water? Although you may consider the place where you live or one similar to be surpassing, the [divine] word regards them as nothing.

— St. Gregory of Nyssa, *First Homily Concerning the Forty Martyrs* (part one).²

It is a very serious consideration, that now at this time any are forbidden to leave the world; a time when the end of the world is drawing nigh.

— St. Gregory the Great, *Epistle 65*.³

The Value of Earthly Homelands

It is not virtue either to be the enemy of the bad or the defender of the good, because virtue cannot be subject to uncertain chances.

What are the interests of our country, but the inconveniences of another state or nation? That is: to extend the boundaries which are violently taken from others, to increase the power of the state, to im-

are responsible for the epidemic by stating that it is, on the contrary, the crimes and persecutions of the latter that have brought it about. He underscores the attitude that Christians should take during persecution.

²The feast of the Forty Martyrs of Sebastea (March 9) is one of the principal and most ancient feasts of the Orthodox Church. The following homily by St. Gregory of Nyssa (335–94) shows that already in the 4th century, it was a major feast. The 40 Martyrs were soldiers of several nationalities of the twelfth Roman ‘Thunder-Struck’ Legion serving in Armenia. When in 320 AD, Emperor Licinius commanded all Christians in the East to repudiate their faith, the soldiers refused. They were then stripped naked, driven into a frozen pond and held there until the following day. The following morning, the few still alive were killed and all the bodies burnt in a furnace. Some ashes were, however, retrieved, and St. Gregory pronounced this sermon near Ibora, the place where the relics were held at the time. See also Case Study 7: “Commemoration of warrior saints in the liturgical services of the Orthodox Church.”

³This letter is generally dated AD 592–3. It complains of a law issued in the previous year, prohibiting civil servants and soldiers to become monks. The epistle, which follows, to the emperor’s physician on the same subject, shows how much St. Gregory had it at heart. Some five years later it appears from a letter to divers metropolitans, dated December, AD 597 (8.5), that an amicable agreement had meanwhile been reached, both the Emperor and the Pope having made some concessions.

prove the revenues, — all which things are not virtues, but the overthrowing of virtues: for, in the first place, the union of human society is taken away, innocence is taken away, the abstaining from the property of another is taken away; lastly, justice itself is taken away, which is unable to bear the tearing asunder of the human race, and wherever arms have glittered, must be banished and exterminated from thence.

How can a man be just who injures, hates, despoils and puts to death? Yet they who strive to be serviceable to their country do all these things: for they are ignorant of what this being serviceable is, who think nothing useful, nothing advantageous, but that which can be held by the hand; and this alone cannot be held, because it may be snatched away.

— Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes*,⁴ Book 6, Chapter 6.

The Identity of the Christian Empire

And they [the Jewish teachers, ed.] said once more, “if we accept that He [the anointed One] has already come, as you claim on the basis of the prophets and other arguments, then how is it that the Roman Empire is still in power?” The Philosopher answered, “It is no longer in power, for it has passed, like all empires at its likeness, for our Empire is not of Rome, but of Christ.”

— *Life of Sts. Cyril and Methodius*,⁵ Chapter 10.

The New People

I exhort you to have but one faith, one preaching and one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ; and His blood, which was shed for us, is one; one loaf also is broken to all (the communi-

⁴ Lactantius was the tutor of the son of St. Constantine the Great. He lived approximately from 260 to 339 AD.

⁵ In 858, in Chersonese on the Crimea, St. Methodius (“the Philosopher”) enters into debate with the Judaic teachers of the Khazar people. The discussion gives a precious testimony to the “ethnic self-understanding” of the Byzantine Empire.

cants), and one cup is distributed among them all: there is but one altar for the whole Church, and one bishop, with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow-servants. Since, also, there is but one unbegotten Being, God, even the Father; and one only-begotten Son, God, the Word and man; and one Comforter, the Spirit of truth; and also one preaching, and one faith, and one baptism; and one Church which the holy Apostles established from one end of the earth to the other by the blood of Christ, and by their own sweat and toil; it befits you also, therefore, as “a peculiar people, and a holy nation,” to perform all things with harmony in Christ.

— St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Philadelphians*,⁶ Chapter 4.

This saying of Cicero is true: “But they who say that regard is to be had to citizens, but that it is not to be had to foreigners, these destroy the common society of the human race.”

— Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes*, Book 6, Chapter 6.

The Roman emperors worshipped idols, but all the present, coming from this or that people or tribe, rule in the name of Christ.

— *Life of Sts. Cyril and Methodius*, Chapter 10.

The True Homeland of the Christians

I see, most excellent Diognetus, that you are anxious to understand the religion of the Christians, and that your enquiries respecting them are distinctly and carefully made, as to what God they trust and how they worship Him, that they all disregard the world and despise death, and as to the nature of the affection which they entertain one to another.

⁶ St. Ignatios of Antioch (December 20), also known as the *Theophore*, or God-Bearer, is one of the earliest martyrs of the Christian Church. The second or third Bishop of Antioch, St. Ignatius was sentenced to death around 107 AD and escorted to Rome to be thrown to the beasts. On the way, he wrote seven letters: to the churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Philadelphia, Smyrna and to St. Polycarp of Smyrna. The letter to the Philadelphians was written from Lystra in Asia Minor.

Christians are not distinguished from the rest of mankind either in locality or in speech or in customs, for they dwell not somewhere in cities of their own, neither do they use some different language, nor practice an extraordinary kind of life, nor again do they possess any invention discovered by any intelligence or study of ingenious men, nor are they masters of any human teaching as some are. But while they dwell in cities of Greeks and barbarians as the lot of each is cast, and follow the native customs in dress and food and the other arrangements of life, yet the constitution of their own citizenship, which they set forth, is marvelous, and confessedly contradicts expectation. They dwell in their own countries, but only as sojourners; they bear their share in all things as citizens, and they endure all hardships as strangers. Every foreign country is a fatherland to them, and every fatherland is foreign. Their existence is on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven.

In a word, what the soul is in a body, the Christians are in the world. The soul is spread through all the members of the body, and Christians through the diverse cities of the world. The soul has its abode in the body, and yet it is not of the body. So Christians have their abode in the world, and yet they are not of the world. The soul, which is invisible, is guarded in the body, which is visible: so Christians are recognized as being in the world, and yet their religion remains invisible. The flesh hates the soul and wages war with it, though it receives no wrong, because it is forbidden to indulge in pleasures; so the world hates Christians, though it receives no wrong from them, because they set themselves against its pleasures. The soul loves the flesh which hates it, and the members: so Christians love those that hate them. The soul is enclosed in the body, and yet itself holds the body together; so Christians are kept in the world as in a prison, and yet they themselves hold the world together. The soul, though itself immortal, dwells in a mortal tabernacle; so Christians sojourn amidst perishable things, while they look for the imperishability which is in heaven. The soul when hardly treated in the matter of meats and drinks is improved; and so Christians, when punished, increase more and more daily. So great is the office for which God has

appointed them, and which it is not lawful for them to decline.

— *The Epistle to Diognetus*,⁷ Chapters 1, 5 and 6.

The citizens of the heavenly city honor their [the martyrs'] success, which brings joy to the entire assembly of heaven.

— St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Second Homily concerning the Forty Martyrs*.

If you are a Christian, no earthly city is yours. Of our City “the Builder and Maker is God.” Though we may gain possession of the whole world, we are but strangers and sojourners in it all. We are enrolled in heaven: our citizenship is there! Let us not, after the manner of children, despise things that are great, and admire those which are little! Not our city’s greatness, but virtue of soul is our ornament and defense. If you suppose dignity to belong to a city, think how many persons must partake in this dignity, who are whoremongers, effeminate, depraved and full of ten thousand evil things, and at last despise such honor! But that City above is not of this kind; for it is impossible that he can be a partaker of it, who has not exhibited every virtue.

— St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 17, On the Commissioners*.⁸

Since God is spiritual light, and Christ is called in the Scriptures Sun of Righteousness and Dayspring, the East is the direction that must be assigned to His worship. (...) Moreover, Scripture also says, “And God planted a garden east of Eden,” and there He put the man He had formed. And when he had transgressed His command, He expelled him and made him to dwell at a distance from the delights of

⁷ Written by an anonymous author in the late second–early third century (although tradition long attributed it to St. Justin Martyr), the epistle to Diognetus is one of the oldest witnesses of the self-understanding of the early Church. Diognetus, a pagan, has enquired about the religion and customs of the Christians, and is particularly instructive concerning their understanding of the place of Christians in their homelands and the world.

⁸ The commissioners: Hellebichus, Commander of the Troops, and Caesarius, Master of the Offices, two Roman officials sent by Emperor Theodosius for the inquisition of the offenders, on account of the overturning of the (pagan) statues.

Paradises, which clearly is the West. So, then, we worship God, seeking and striving after our old fatherland.

— St. John of Damascus, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* IV, 12.

PEACE

The Divine Nature of Peace

Let us praise with reverent hymns of peace the Divine Peace, which is the Source of all mutual attraction. For this quality it is that unites all things together and begets and produces the harmonies and agreements of all things. And hence it is that all things long for it, and that it draws their manifold separate parts into the unity of the whole and unites the battling elements of the world into concordant fellowship. (...)

Let us, then, describe that Peace — inasmuch as it transcends all things — as ‘unspeakable,’ ‘unknowable’; and, so far as it is possible for man, let us examine those cases where it is amenable to our intuitions and language through being manifested in created things. The first thing to say is this: God is the fount of true peace and of all peace, both in general and in particular, and that He joins all things together in a unity without confusion.

— Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite,⁹ *On the Divine Names*, Chapter 11, 1–2.

Christ Brings Peace

When the Spirit of prophecy speaks as predicting things that are to come to pass, He speaks in this way: “For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks:

⁹ Attributed by Tradition to the first-century Saint Dionysios the Areopagite (cf. Acts 17:34), most scholars today ascribe the “Divine Names” to an unknown author of the late fifth or early sixth century.

nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” And that it did come to pass, we can convince you. For from Jerusalem there went out into the world, men, twelve in number, and these illiterate, of no talent in speaking, but by the power of God, they proclaimed to every race of men that they were sent by Christ to teach to all the word of God. And we who formerly used to murder one another do not only now refrain from making war upon our enemies, but also, that we may not lie nor deceive our examiners, willingly die confessing Christ. For that saying, “The tongue has sworn but the mind is unsworn,” might be imitated by us in this matter. But if the soldiers enrolled by you, and who have taken the military oath, prefer their allegiance to their own life, and parents, and country, and all kindred, though you can offer them nothing incorruptible, it were verily ridiculous if we, who earnestly long for incorruption, should not endure all things, in order to obtain what we desire from Him who is able to grant it.

— St. Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, Chapter 39.

We who were filled with war, and mutual slaughter, and every wickedness, have each throughout the whole earth changed our weapons of war — our swords into ploughshares, and our spears into implements of tillage — and we cultivate piety, righteousness, philanthropy, faith, and hope, which we have from the Father Himself through Him who was crucified; and sitting each under his vine, i.e., each man possessing his own married wife. For you are aware that the prophetic word says, “And his wife shall be like a fruitful vine.” Now it is evident that no one can terrify or subdue us who have believed in Jesus over all the world.

— St. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue*, Chapter 110.

This is the proclamation of righteousness: to those that obey, glad tidings; to those that disobey, judgment. The loud trumpet, when sounded, collects the soldiers, and proclaims war. And shall not Christ, breathing a strain of peace to the ends of the earth, gather

together His own soldiers, the soldiers of peace? Well, by His blood, and by the word, He has gathered the bloodless host of peace, and assigned to them the Kingdom of Heaven. The trumpet of Christ is His Gospel. He hath blown it, and we have heard. "Let us array ourselves in the armor of peace, putting on the breastplate of righteousness, and taking the shield of faith, and binding our brows with the helmet, of salvation; and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," let us sharpen. So the Apostle in the spirit of peace commands. These are our invulnerable weapons: armed with these, let us face the evil one; "the fiery darts of the evil one" let us quench with the sword-points dipped in water, baptized by the Word, returning grateful thanks for the benefits we have received, and honoring God through the Divine Word.

— Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortations to the Heathens*, 11.

If a loud trumpet summons soldiers to war, shall not Christ with a strain of peace issued to the ends of the earth gather up His soldiers of peace? By His own blood and by His word, He has assembled an army that sheds no blood in order to give them the Kingdom of Heaven. The trumpet of Christ is His Gospel. He has sounded it, and we have heard it. Let us then put on the armor of peace.

— Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* XI, 116.

In peace, not in war, we are trained.

— Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 1,12.

If you enroll as one of God's people, heaven is your country and God your lawgiver. And what are His laws? You shall not kill; you shall love your neighbor as yourself. To him that strikes you on the one cheek, turn to him the other also.

— Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus*, 10.

Christ, in disarming Peter, unbelted every soldier.

— Tertullian, *On Idolatry*, 19.

It is well known that Jesus was born in the reign of Augustus, who, one might say, brought the mass of mankind under a single sovereignty. The existence of many kingdoms would have hindered the spread of Jesus' teachings over the whole world...because everywhere men would have been forced to serve in the army and go to war on behalf of their country...How could this peaceful teaching, which prohibits a man from avenging himself even against his enemies, have gained sway if the whole world situation at the time of Jesus had not been made more peaceful.

— Origen, *Against Celsus*,¹⁰ 2:30.

Abel, peaceable and just, while he was sacrificing to God innocently, taught others also, when they offer a gift at the altar, to come with fear of God, with simple heart, with the law of justice, with the peace of concord. Worthily did he, since he was such in God's sacrifice, himself later become a sacrifice to God, so that being the first to manifest martyrdom he initiated the Lord's passion by his blood, who had both the justice and peace of the Lord. Finally, such are crowned by the Lord. Such on the day of judgment will be vindicated with the Lord. But the discordant and the dissident and he who has not peace with his brethren, according as the blessed Apostle and the Holy Scripture testify, not even if he be slain for his name, shall be able to escape the crime of fraternal dissension, because, as it is written: Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and a murderer does not arrive at the kingdom of heaven nor does he live with God. He cannot be with Christ, who preferred to be an imitator of Judas rather than of Christ. What a sin that is which cannot be washed away by the baptism of blood; what a crime that is which cannot be expiated by martyrdom!

— St. Cyprian of Carthage, *On the Lord's Prayer*, Chapter 24.

¹⁰ Celsus was a 2nd century Greek philosopher and opponent of Christianity. He is known for his literary work, *The True Word*, the earliest known comprehensive attack on Christianity, parts of which have been preserved by Origen in his response to Celsus.

After the name of Christ was heard in the world, not only were wars not increased, but they were even in great measure diminished by the restraining of furious passions. If all without exception, who feel that they are men not in form of body but in power of reason, would listen even briefly to His salutary and peaceful rules, and would not, in the pride and arrogance of enlightenment, trust to their own senses rather than to His admonitions, the whole world, having turned the use of steel into more peaceful occupations, would now be living in the most placid tranquility, and would unite in blessed harmony, maintaining inviolate the sanctity of treaties.

— Arnobius,¹¹ *Against the Gentiles*, Book 1, Chapter 6.

Christ is not only preached through His own disciples, but also wrought so persuasively on men's understanding that, laying aside their savage habits and forsaking the worship of their ancestral gods, they learnt to know Him and through Him to worship the Father. While they were still idolaters, the Greeks and Barbarians were always at war with each other, and were even cruel to their own kith and kin. Nobody could travel by land or sea at all unless he was armed with swords, because of their irreconcilable quarrels with each other. Indeed, the whole course of their life was carried on with weapons. But since they came over to the school of Christ, as men moved with real compunction they have laid aside their murderous cruelty and are war-minded no more. On the contrary, all is peace among them and nothing remains save desire for friendship.

Who, then, is He Who has done these things and has united in peace those who hated each other, save the beloved Son of the Father, the common Savior of all, Jesus Christ, Who by his own love underwent all things for our salvation? Even from the beginning, moreover, this peace that He was to administer was foretold, for Scripture says, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into

¹¹ Arnobius of Sicca (260–303), one of the Apologetic Fathers, lived in Numidia between the 3rd and 4th centuries. His text, *Against the Gentiles*, refutes the accusations of the pagans that the Christians are the cause of all misfortunes on earth.

sickles, and nation shall not take sword against nation, neither shall they learn any more to wage war.” Nor is this by any means incredible.

The barbarians of the present day are naturally savage in their habits, and as long as they sacrifice to their idols, they rage furiously against each other and cannot bear to be a single hour without weapons. But when they hear the teaching of Christ, they turn from fighting to farming, and instead of arming themselves with swords extend their hands in prayer. In a word, instead of fighting each other, they take up arms against the devil and the demons, and overcome them by their self-command and integrity of soul.

— St. Athanasius the Great, *On the Incarnation*, Chapters 8, 51 and 52.

There is no need to tell how the loving-kindness of Christ comes bathed in Peace. Therefore, we must learn to cease from strife, whether against ourselves or against one another, or against the angels, and instead to labor together even with the angels for the accomplishment of God’s Will, in accordance with the Providential Purpose of Jesus Who works all things in all and makes Peace, unutterable and foreordained from Eternity, and reconciles us to Himself, and, in Himself, to the Father. Concerning these supernatural gifts enough has been said with confirmation drawn from the holy testimony of the Scriptures.

— Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *On the Divine Names*, Chapter 11,5.

Interior Peace

Whoever loves true prayer and yet becomes angry or resentful is his own enemy. He is like a man who wants so see clearly and yet inflicts damage on his own eyes.

— Evagrius the Solitary, *Treatise on Prayer*, 64.

For what advantage is it, that the world enjoys profound peace, if you are at war with yourself? This then is the peace we should keep. If we have it, nothing from without will be able to harm us. And to this end the public peace contributes no little. Whence it is said, “That we may

lead a quiet and peaceable life.” But if anyone is disturbed when there is quiet, he is a miserable creature. Do you see that He speaks of this peace that I call the third [inner] kind? Therefore, when He has said “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life,” He does not stop there, but adds “in all godliness and honesty.” But we cannot live in godliness and honesty, unless that peace be established. For when curious reasonings disturb our faith, what peace is there? Or when spirits of uncleanness, what peace is there?

— St. John Chrysostom, Homily 7 on 1 Tim. 2:2–4.

PEACEMAKING

You have many things to ponder. Ponder paradise, where Cain, who destroyed his brother through jealousy, does not return. Ponder the kingdom of heaven to which the Lord admits only those of one heart and mind. Ponder the fact that only those can be called the sons of God who are peace-makers, who, united by divine birth and law, correspond to the likeness of God the Father and Christ. Ponder that we are under God’s eyes, that we are running the course of our conversation, and life with God Himself looking on and judging, that then finally we can arrive at the point of succeeding in seeing Him, if we delight Him as He now observes us by our actions, if we show ourselves worthy of His grace and indulgence, if we, who are to please Him forever in heaven, please Him first in this world.

— St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Jealousy and Envy*, Chapter 18.

Nothing is so characteristically Christian as being a peacemaker.

— St. Basil the Great, Letter 114.

I cannot persuade myself that without love to others, and without, as far as rests with me, peaceableness towards all, I can be called a worthy servant of Jesus Christ.

— St. Basil the Great, Letter 203,2.

As the barbarians were rushing within the two divisions of Gaul, Julian Caesar,¹² bringing an army together at the city of the Vaugiones,¹³ began to distribute a reward to the soldiers. As was the custom in such a case, they were called forward, one by one, until it came to the turn of Martin. Then, indeed, judging it a suitable opportunity for seeking his discharge — for he did not think it would be proper for him, if he were not to continue in the service, to receive a reward — he said to Caesar, “Hitherto I have served you as a soldier: allow me now to become a soldier to God. Let the man who is to serve you [on the battlefield] receive your reward; I am the soldier of Christ: it is not lawful for me to fight.”

— Sulpitius Severus, *Life of St. Martin of Tours*, Chapter 4.

God, in prohibiting killing, discountenances not only brigandage, which is contrary to human law, but also that which men regard as legal. Thus participation in war will not be legitimate to a just man; his ‘military service’ is justice itself.

— Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes*, Book 6, Chapter 20.

NONVIOLENCE AND MARTYRDOM

Nonviolence and Non-revenge as Norm of Christian Life

We, a numerous band of men as we are, have learned from His teaching and His laws that evil ought not to be requited with evil, that it is better to suffer wrong than to inflict it, that we should rather shed our own blood than stain our hands and our conscience with that of another. An ungrateful world is now for a long period enjoying a benefit from Christ, inasmuch as by His means the rage of savage ferocity has been softened, and has begun to withhold hostile hands from the blood of a fellow-creature.

— Arnobius, *Against the Gentiles*, Book 1, Chapter 6.

¹² Commonly known as Julian the Apostate.

¹³ Modern Worms.

Some ask whether, in case of a shipwreck, a wise man ought to take away a plank from an ignorant sailor. Although it seems better for the common good that a wise man rather than a fool should escape from shipwreck, yet I do not think that a Christian, a just and a wise man, ought to save his own life by the death of another; just as when he meets with an armed robber he cannot return his blows, lest in defending his life he should stain his love toward his neighbor. The verdict on this is plain and clear in the books of the Gospel. "Put up your sword, for every one that takes the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52). What robber is more hateful than the persecutor who came to kill Christ? But Christ would not be defended from the wounds of the persecutor, for He willed to heal all by His wounds.

— St. Ambrose of Milan, *Duties of the Clergy* 3,4,27.

Why are you disturbed? I will never willingly desert you, though if force is used, I cannot meet it. I shall be able to grieve, to weep, to groan; against weapons, soldiers, Goths, my tears are my weapons, for these are a priest's defense. I ought not, I cannot resist in any other way; but to fly and forsake the Church is not my way, lest anyone should suppose I did so from fear of some heavier punishment. You yourselves know that I am accustomed to showing respect to our emperors, but not to yield to them, to offer myself freely to punishment, and not to fear what is prepared for me.

— St. Ambrosius of Milan, *Sermon against Auxentius, on the giving up of the basilicas*.¹⁴

Where the Savior is named, there every demon is driven out. Again, who has ever so rid men of their natural passions that fornicators become chaste and murderers no longer wield the sword and those who formerly were craven cowards boldly play the man? In a word, what

¹⁴ A protégé of the Empress Justinia, the Arian Bishop Auxentius issued an imperial decree in 385 ordering that the basilicas of Milan be handed over to the Arians. St. Ambrosius of Milan led the people in protest over this decree. Challenging his opponents to a discussion in the church, he said that their weapons did not frighten him.

persuaded the barbarians and heathen folk in every place to drop their madness and give heed to peace, save the faith of Christ and the sign of the cross? What other things have given men such certain faith in immortality as have the cross of Christ and the resurrection of His body?

— St. Athanasius the Great, *On the Incarnation*, Chapter 8, 50.

Just as maniacs, who never enjoy tranquility, so also he who is resentful and retains an enemy will never have the enjoyment of any peace; incessantly raging and daily increasing the tempest of his thoughts calling to mind his words and acts, and detesting the very name of him who has aggrieved him. Do you but mention his enemy, he becomes furious at once, and sustains much inward anguish; and should he chance to get only a glimpse of him, he fears and trembles, as if encountering the worst evils. Indeed, if he perceives any of his relations, if but his garment or dwelling or street, he is tormented by the sight of them. For as in the case of those who are beloved, their faces, their garments, their sandals, their houses, or streets, animate us, the instant we behold them, so also should we observe a servant, or friend, or house, or street, or anything else belonging to those we hate and regard as our enemies, we are stung by all these things, and the torments we endure from the sight of each one of them are frequent and continual. What is the need then of sustaining such a siege, such distress and such punishment? For if hell did not threaten the resentful, yet for the very torment resulting from the thing itself we ought to forgive the offences of those who have aggrieved us. But when deathless punishments remain behind, what can be more senseless than the man who both here and there brings punishment upon himself, while he thinks to be revenged upon his enemy!

— St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies Addressed to the People of Antioch, Concerning the Statues*, XX.

You detach yourself from the cross to which you have crucified yourself alongside the Savior if you go and attack your brother.

— St. Theodore Studite, *Small Catechism*.

No arms are to be brought into the house of God

In the past the emperors were faithless persecutors; presently their piety reaches up to heaven. When passing the threshold of the church, they lay off their crowns and sign their foreheads with the Cross of Christ. Outside are the weapons, inside the Mysteries; outside the shields, while in here the sacred acts are performed.

— St. John Chrysostom, *Homily on Pentecost*, CPG 4343.

Although we are always surrounded by the lawful imperial weaponry, and it is not fitting for us to be without weapon-bearers and guards; when, however, entering the churches of God, we shall leave our weapons outside and take off the very diadem, emblem of our imperial dignity.

— Edict of Emperor Theodosius II the Younger at the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus, 431.

When passing through the royal doors,¹⁵ the Emperor [Michael] did not take off his crown as is the custom of emperors, but he kept the crown up until the very holy doors of the Altar.

— Leo Grammaticus, *Life of the Emperor Michael IV*.

Martyrdom without Self-defense

They [the Christians] love all men, and they are persecuted by all. They are ignored, and yet they are condemned. They are put to death, and yet they are endued with life. They are in beggary, and yet they make many rich. They are in want of all things, and yet they abound in all things. They are dishonored, and yet they are glorified in their dishonor. Evil is spoken against them, and yet they are vindicated. They are reviled, and they bless. They are insulted, and they respect. Doing good they are punished as evil-doers; being punished they re-

¹⁵ Meaning the doors separating the *narthex* from the nave of the church; the doors in the iconostasis were traditionally designated as the holy doors.

joice, as if they were thereby quickened by life. War is waged against them as aliens by the Jews, and persecution is carried on against them by the Greeks, and yet those that hate them cannot tell the reason of their hostility.

— *The Epistle to Diognetus*, Chapters 5 and 6.

We [Christians] started yesterday and already we have filled the world and everything that belongs to you — the cities, apartment houses, fortresses, towns, market places, the camps themselves, your tribes, town councils, the imperial palace, the Senate, the Forum. The only thing we have left to you are the temples. We can count your armies; there is a greater number of Christians in one province! What kind of war would we, who willingly submit to the sword, not be ready or eager for despite our inferior numbers if it were not for the fact that according to our doctrine, it is more permissible to be killed than to kill.

— Tertullian, *Apology*, 37:4.

Hence [from the days of Cain and Abel] finally begin the first hatreds of the new brotherhood; hence the abominable parricides, when the unjust Cain is jealous of the just Abel, when the evil persecutes the good out of jealousy and envy... He was unjustly oppressed who had been the first to show justice; he endured hatred who did not know how to hate; he was slain impiously who while dying did not fight back. What other than the stimulus of jealousy provoked Saul the king also to hate David, to desire to kill that innocent, merciful man, patient with a gentle mildness, by often repeated persecutions? Because, when Goliath had been killed and so great an enemy had been slain by divine assistance and condescension, the admiring people burst forth into approbation unto praise of David, Saul through envy conceived the furies of hatred and persecution.

— St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Jealousy and Envy*, Chapter 5.

Not one of us fights back when he is apprehended, nor do our people avenge themselves against your unjust violence though numerous

and plentiful. Our certainty of the vengeance which is to come makes us patient. The harmless give way to the harmful; the innocent acquiesce in the punishments and tortures certain and confident that whatever we suffer will not remain unavenged, and that the greater is the injury of the persecution, the more just and serious will be the vengeance for the persecution. Long ago divine Scripture laid down and said, "Vengeance is mine, I shall repay, says the Lord," and let the Holy Spirit again warn us saying, "Say not: I will avenge myself on my enemy, but wait in the Lord so that He may aid you." Thus it is clear and manifest that not through us but for us do all these things happen which come down from the anger of God.

— St. Cyprian of Carthage, *To Demetrian*, Chapter 17.

Our enemies do good when they are hostile and thereby cause no dishonor. The devil assists Job instead of harming him (Job 1 ff.); the king of the Assyrians helps Daniel (Dan. 3:1 ff.); the three youths in the furnace profess God's grace (Dan. 3:24); Isaiah praises the Hebrews when he was sawed in half (cf. Heb. 11:37); Zachariah blessed his murderers while standing between the temple and altar of incense (Matt. 23:35–7); John proclaimed God's help when Herod beheaded him (Matt. 14:1 ff.); the Apostles blessed those who bound and persecuted them; all the martyrs loved their persecutors and could not hold fast unless these athletes maintained their courage.

— St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Second Letter Concerning the Forty Martyrs*.

LOVE OF ENEMIES

Reconciliation as a Sacramental Norm

From the sacrament of the cross you receive both food and drink; let the wood, which availed at Mara in a figure for sweetening the taste, avail you in truth for soothing the softened breast, and you will not labor for the remedy for increasing the health. Cure yourself at the source from which you had been wounded. Love those whom you

hated before; esteem those whom you envied with unjust disparagements. Imitate the good, if you can follow them; if you cannot follow them, surely rejoice with them and congratulate your betters ... Your debts will be forgiven you, when you yourself shall forgive. Your sacrifices will be accepted, when you shall come to God as a peacemaker.

— St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Jealousy and Envy*, Chapter 17.

As it is not to be imagined that the fornicator and the blasphemer can partake of the sacred Table, so it is impossible that he who has an enemy, and bears malice, can enjoy the holy Communion. (...) I forewarn, and testify, and proclaim this with a voice that all may hear! "Let no one who hath an enemy draw near the sacred Table, or receive the Lord's Body! Let no one who draws near have an enemy! Do you have an enemy? Draw not near! Do you wish to draw near? Be reconciled, and then draw near, and touch the Holy Thing!"

— St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies Addressed to the People of Antioch, Concerning the Statues*, XX.

We are commanded to have only one enemy, the devil. With him never be reconciled! But with a brother, never be at enmity in your heart.

— St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies Addressed to the People of Antioch, Concerning the Statues*, XX.

It is a fearful thing to hate whom God has loved. To look upon another — his weaknesses, his sins, his faults, his defects — is to look upon one who is suffering. He is suffering from negative passions, from the same sinful human corruption from which you yourself suffer. This is very important: do not look upon him with the judgmental eyes of comparison, noting the sins you assume you would never commit. Rather, see him as a fellow sufferer, a fellow human being who is in need of the very healing of which you are in need. Help him, love him, pray for him, do unto him as you would have him do unto you.

— St. Tikhon of Zadonsk (1724–1783).

Prayer for enemies; Prayer against enemies

Praying against one's personal enemies is a transgression of the law [of the Gospel].

— St. John Chrysostom, *Homily against Publishing the Errors of the Brethren*.

Prayer for our enemies is the very highest summit of self-control.

— St. John Chrysostom, Homily 18 on the Gospel of St. Matthew.

Many, throwing themselves prostrate, and striking the ground with their forehead, and pouring forth hot tears, and groaning bitterly from the heart and stretching out their hands, and displaying much earnestness, employ this warmth and forwardness against their own salvation. For it is not on behalf of their own sins that they beseech God; nor are they asking forgiveness of the offenses committed by them; but they are exerting this earnestness against their enemies, doing just the same thing as if one, after whetting his sword, were not to use the weapon against his enemies, but to thrust it through his own throat. So these also use their prayers not for the remission of their own sins, but about revenge on their enemies; which is to thrust the sword against themselves.

— St. John Chrysostom, *Homily against Publishing the Errors of the Brethren*.

How great a punishment must they deserve, who, far from themselves forgiving, do even entreat God for vengeance on their enemies, and as it were diametrically transgress this law; and this while He is doing and arranging all things to hinder our being at variance one with another? For since love is the root of all that is good, He, removing from all sides whatever mars it, brings us together, and cements us to each other.

— St. John Chrysostom, Homily 19 on St. Matthew: *On the Lord's Prayer*.

When our hearts are reluctant, we often have to compel ourselves to pray for our enemies, to pour out prayer for those who are against us.

Would that our hearts were filled with love! How frequently we offer a prayer for our enemies, but do it because we are commanded to, not out of love for them. We ask the gift of life for them even while we are afraid that our prayer may be heard. The judge of our soul considers our hearts rather than our words. Those who do not pray for their enemies out of love are not asking anything for their benefit.

Jesus, our advocate, has composed a prayer for our case. And our advocate is also our judge. He has inserted a condition in the prayer that reads: Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Sometimes we say these words without carrying them out. Thus, our words bind us more tightly.

What are we to do then, my friends? We must bestow our love on our brothers and sisters. We must not allow any malice at all to remain in our hearts. May almighty God have regard for our love of our neighbor, so that He may pardon our iniquities! Remember what He taught us: Forgive, and you will be forgiven. People are in debt to us, and us to them. Let us forgive them their debts, so that what we owe may be forgiven.

— St. Gregory the Great, Homily.

WAR

The Evils of War

For a little consider that you are being transported to the loftiest peak of a high mountain, that from this height you are viewing the appearance of things that lie below you and, with your eyes directed in different directions, you yourself, free from earthly contacts, gaze upon the turmoils of the world. Presently you also will have pity on the world, and taking account of yourself and with more gratitude to God you will rejoice with greater joy that you have escaped from it. Observe the roads blocked by robbers, the seas beset by pirates, wars spread everywhere with the bloody horrors of camps.

— St. Cyprian of Carthage, *To Donatus*, Chapter 6.

How do we count the fruits of earthly blessings? If we ... add to our account those who have fared well in combat through inflicting defeats in battle and other recorded deeds, these examples do not suit our objective. A Christian is ashamed at anything contrary to the faith and rejoices at praise coming from persons who love Christ much like those in the shadow of a notable person exult in his victories. Let us be silent about this world's glories despite their numerous accounts.

— St. Gregory of Nyssa, *First Homily concerning the Forty Martyrs* (Part One).

KILLING AND BLOODSHED

"Just" Wars

Peace should be the object of your desire; war should be waged only as a necessity, and waged only that God may by it deliver men from the necessity and preserve them in peace. For peace is not sought in order to kindle war, but war is waged in order that peace may be obtained. Therefore, even in waging war, cherish the spirit of a peacemaker, that, by conquering those whom you attack, you may lead them back to the advantages of peace; for our Lord says, "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God." If, however, peace among men be so sweet as procuring temporal safety, how much sweeter is that peace with God that procures for men the eternal felicity of the angels! Let necessity, therefore, and not your will, slay the enemy who fights against you.

— St. Augustine, *Letter to General Boniface*, 189,6.

They then said, "Christ is our God who ordered us to pray for our offenders and to do good to them. He also said that no one of us can show greater love in life than he who gives his life for his friends (John 15:3). That is why we generously endure offenses caused us as private people. But in company we defend one another and give our lives in battle for our neighbors, so that you, having taken our fellows prisoners, could not imprison their souls together with their bodies by

forcing them into renouncing their faith and into godless deeds. Our Christ-loving soldiers protect our Holy Church with arms in their hands. They safeguard the sovereign in whose sacred person they respect the image of the rule of the Heavenly King. They safeguard their land because, with its fall, the home authority will inevitably fall too and the evangelical faith will be shaken. These are precious pledges for which soldiers should fight to the last. And if they give their lives in battlefield, the Church will include them in the community of the holy martyrs and call them intercessors before God.”

— *Life of St. Cyril and Methodius*.¹⁶

Law of Constantine concerning the confessors of the Christian religion.

With respect to those who had previously been granted any military distinction, of which they were afterwards deprived, for the cruel and unjust reason that they chose rather to acknowledge their allegiance to God than to retain the rank they held; we leave them perfect liberty of choice, either to occupy their former stations, should they be content again to engage in military service, or after an honorable discharge, to live in undisturbed tranquility.

— Eusebius of Caesarea,¹⁷ *Life of St. Constantine the Great*, Book 1, Chapter 24.

It is not military duty [*militia*] but malice of heart [*malitia*] that forestalls the doing of good.

— St. Ambrose of Milan, Homily 302,15.

¹⁶ Saints Cyril and Methodius, brothers born in the 9th century in Thessaloniki, Greece, became missionaries among the Slavic peoples, for which they received the titles ‘Apostles to the Slavs’ and ‘Equal to the Apostles.’ They are also credited with devising the Glagolitic alphabet, the first alphabet used to transcribe the Old Church Slavonic language.

¹⁷ Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea (265–340 AD), was a contemporary of St. Constantine the Great and witnessed many of the events described in the *Life of the Emperor*. Having witnessed the last persecutions of the Church, he welcomes the reign of St. Constantine as a gift of God and the beginning of a new era.

In other matters also which go to make up life, we shall find differences according to circumstances. For example, it is not right to kill, yet in war it is lawful and praiseworthy to destroy the enemy; accordingly not only are they who have distinguished themselves in the field held worthy of great honors, but monuments are put up proclaiming their achievements. So that the same act is at one time and under some circumstances unlawful, while under others, and at the right time, it is lawful and permissible.

— St. Athanasius the Great, Canonical Letter 48 (to Amun the Nitrian monk).

I have learnt to know one who proves that, even in a soldier's life, it is possible to preserve the perfection of love to God, and that we must mark a Christian not by the style of his dress, but by the disposition of his soul.

— St. Basil the Great, Letter 106 (to a soldier).

Do not think that it is impossible for anyone to please God while engaged in active military service. Among such persons was the holy David, to whom God gave so great a testimony; among them also were many righteous men of that time; among them was also that centurion who said to the Lord, "I am not worthy to have You come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and the slave does it." and concerning whom the Lord said, "Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith." Among them was that Cornelius to whom an angel said, "Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered," when he directed him to send to the blessed Apostle Peter, and to hear from him what he ought to do, to which Apostle he sent a devout soldier, requesting him to come to him. Among them were also the soldiers who, when they had come to be baptized by John, — the sacred forerunner of the Lord, and the friend of the Bridegroom, of whom the Lord says, "Among those born of women no one has arisen greater

than John the Baptist,” — and had inquired of him what they should do, received the answer, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.” Certainly, he did not prohibit them to serve as soldiers when He commanded them to be content with their pay for the service.

— St. Augustine, *Letter to General Boniface*, 189,6.

Christians cannot serve in the armed forces

The question is now whether a member of the faithful can become a soldier and whether a soldier can be admitted to the Faith even if he is a member of the rank and file who are not required to offer sacrifice or decide capital cases. There can be no compatibility between an oath made to God and one made to man, between the standard of Christ and that of the devil, between the camp of light and the camp of darkness. The soul cannot be beholden to two masters, God and Caesar. Moses, to be sure, carried a rod; Aaron wore a military belt and had a breast plate. If one wants to play around with the topic, Joshua [the name of Jesus in Hebrew], son of Nun, led an army and the Jewish nation went to war. But how will a Christian do so? Indeed, how will he serve in the army even during peacetime without the sword that Jesus Christ has taken away? Even if soldiers came to John and got advice on how they ought to act, even if the centurion became a believer, the Lord, by taking away Peter’s sword, disarmed every soldier thereafter. We are not allowed to wear any uniform that symbolizes a sinful act.

— Tertullian, *On Idolatry*, 19:1–3.

Before treating the matter of a military crown, I think we must first ask whether military service is appropriate for Christians at all. What is the point in talking about incidental matters when the assumptions that they rest on are wrong from the start? Do we think that one can rightfully superimpose a human oath on one made to God? And that a man can answer to a second lord once he has acknowledged Christ?

And that he can abjure father, mother and all his neighbors when the Law prescribes that they be honored and loved next to God and that the Gospel holds them in the same high esteem, valuing only Christ above them? Is it right to make a profession to the sword when the Lord has proclaimed that the man who use it will perish by it?

Will a son of peace who should not even go to court take part in battle? Will a man who does not avenge wrongs done to himself have any part in chains, prisons, tortures and punishments? Will he perform guard duty for anyone other than Christ, or will he do so on the Lord's day when he is not doing it for Christ Himself? Will he stand guard at the temples that he has forsworn? Will he go to a banquet at places where the Apostle disapproves of it? At night, will he protect those (demons) that he has exorcised during the day, leaning and resting on the spear that pierces the side of Christ? Will he carry the standards that rival Christ's? Will he ask the commander for a password when he has already received one from God? (...)

Shall it be held lawful to make an occupation of the sword, when the Lord proclaims that he who uses the sword shall perish by the sword? And shall the son of peace take part in the battle when it does not become him even to sue at law? And shall he apply the chain, and the prison, and torture and the punishment [of execution], who is not the avenger even of his own wrongs?

— Tertullian, *On the Crown*, 11:1–5.

The Right to Kill

The world is drenched with mutual bloodshed. When individuals slay a man, it is a crime. When killing takes place on behalf of the state, it is called a virtue. Crimes go unpunished not because the perpetrators are said to be guiltless, but because their cruelty is so extensive.

— St. Cyprian of Carthage, *To Donatus*, Chapter 6.

As to killing others in order to defend one's own life, I do not approve of this, unless one happens to be a soldier or public functionary act-

ing, not for himself, but in defense of others or of the city in which he resides, if he act according to the commission lawfully given him, and in the manner becoming his office.

— St. Augustine, Letter 47.5.

Surely it is not in vain that we have such institutions as the power of the king, the death penalty of the judge, the hooks of the executioner, the weapons of the soldier, the stringency of the overlord and even the strictness of a good father. All these things have their own method, reason, motive and benefit. When they are feared, evil men are held in check, and the good enjoy greater peace among the wicked.

— St. Augustine, Letter 153,6,16.

The Sin of Bloodshed

So long as the nature we at present possess is preserved, the moral nature is not able to bear a punishment commensurate with the more numerous or more serious faults. For the robber, or ruler, or tyrant, who has unjustly put to death myriads on myriads, could not by one death make restitution for these deeds; and the man who holds no true opinion concerning God, but lives in all outrage and blasphemy, despises divine things, breaks the laws, commits outrage against boys and women alike, razes cities unjustly, burns houses with their inhabitants, and devastates a country, and at the same time destroys inhabitants of cities and peoples, and even an entire nation — how in a mortal body could he endure a penalty adequate to these crimes, since death prevents the deserved punishment, and the mortal nature does not suffice for any single one of his deeds? It is proved, therefore, that neither in the present life is there a judgment according to men's deserts, nor after death [but only after the Resurrection].

— St. Athenagoras the Athenian,¹⁸ *Treatise on the Resurrection of the Dead*, Chapter 19.

¹⁸ In this *Treatise*, written around 176–177 AD, the Apologetic Father Athenagoras of Athens claims that the resurrection is necessary, since neither the body nor the soul can separately bear the judgment over the sins committed during life.

Man is killed for the pleasure of man,¹⁹ and to be able to kill is a skill, is an employment, is an art. Crime is not only committed but is taught. What can be called more inhuman, what more repulsive? It is a training that one may be able to kill, and that he kills is a glory. What is this, I ask you, of what nature is it, where those offer themselves to wild beasts, whom no one has condemned, in the prime of life, of a rather beautiful appearance, in costly garments? While still alive, they adorn themselves for a voluntary death, wretched they even glory in their wicked deeds. They fight with beasts not because they are convicts, but because they are mad. Fathers look upon their own sons; a brother is in the arena and his sister near by, and, although the more elaborate preparation of the exhibition increases the price of the spectacle, oh shame, the mother also pays this price that she may be present at her own sorrows. And at such impious and terrible spectacles, they do not realize that with their eyes they are parricides.

— St. Cyprian of Carthage, *To Donatus*, Chapter 7.

Public spectacles are the greatest incitement to vices; for they not only contribute in no respect to a happy life, but even inflict the greatest injury. For he who reckons it a pleasure, that a man, though justly condemned, should be slain in his sight, pollutes his conscience as much as if he should become a spectator and a sharer of a homicide that is secretly committed. And yet they call these ‘sports’ in which human blood is shed. So far has the feeling of humanity departed from the men, that when they destroy the lives of men, they think that they are amusing themselves with sport, being more guilty than all those whose blood-shedding they esteem a pleasure. They are even angry with the combatants, unless one of the two is quickly slain; and as though they thirsted for human blood, they hate delays. They demand that other and fresh combatants should be given to them, that they may satisfy their eyes as soon as possible. Being imbued with

¹⁹ The context is gladiator games.

this practice, they have lost their humanity. Therefore, they do not spare even the innocent, but practice upon all that which they have learned in the slaughter of the wicked. It is not, therefore, befitting that those who strive to keep to the path of justice should be companions and sharers in this public homicide. For when God forbids us to kill, He not only prohibits us from open violence, which is not even allowed by the public laws, but He warns us against the commission of those things which are esteemed lawful among men. Thus, it will be neither lawful for a just man to engage in warfare, since his warfare is the doing of justice itself, nor to accuse anyone of a capital charge, because it makes no difference whether you put a man to death by word, or rather by the sword, since it is the act of putting to death itself which is prohibited. Therefore, with regard to this precept of God, there ought to be no exception at all but that it is always unlawful to put to death a man, whom God willed to be a sacred animal.

If, then, it is in no way permitted to commit homicide, it is not allowed us to be present at such events, lest any bloodshed should overspread the conscience, since that blood is offered for the gratification of the people.

— Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes*, Book 6, Chapter 20.

It is a higher glory still to prevent war itself with a word than to slay men with the sword, and to procure or maintain peace by peace, not by war. For those who fight, if they are good men, doubtless seek for peace; nevertheless, it is through blood. Your mission, however, is to prevent the shedding of blood. Yours, therefore, is the privilege of averting that calamity which others are under the necessity of producing.

— St. Augustine, *Letter to General Dacius*, 229,2.

CONFLICT AND PRIESTHOOD ARE INCOMPATIBLE

Celsus urges us “to help the king with all our might, and to labor with him in the maintenance of justice, to fight for him; and if he requires it, to fight under him, or lead an army along with him.” To this, our

answer is that we do, when occasion requires, give help to kings, and that, so to say, a divine help, “putting on the whole armor of God” (Eph. 6:11). And this we do in obedience to the injunction of the Apostle, “I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority” (1 Tim. 2:1–2). The more anyone excels in piety, the more effective help does he render to kings, even more than is given by soldiers, who go forth to fight and slay as many of the enemy as they can. And to those enemies of our faith who require us to bear arms for the commonwealth, and to slay men, we can reply, “Do not those who are priests at certain shrines, and those who attend on certain gods, as you account them, keep their hands free from blood, that they may with hands unstained and free from human blood offer the appointed sacrifices to your gods; and even when war is upon you, you never enlist the priests in the army. If that, then, is a laudable custom, how much more so, that while others are engaged in battle, these too should engage as the priests and ministers of God, keeping their hands pure, and wrestling in prayers to God on behalf of those who are fighting in a righteous cause, and for the king who reigns righteously, that whatever is opposed to those who act righteously may be destroyed!” And as we by our prayers vanquish all demons who stir up war, and lead to the violation of oaths, and disturb the peace, we in this way are much more helpful to the kings than those who go into the field to fight for them. And we do take our part in public affairs, when along with righteous prayers we join self-denying exercises and meditations, which teach us to despise pleasures, and not to be led away by them. And none fight better for the king than we do. We do not indeed fight under him, although he require it; but we fight on his behalf, forming a special army — an army of piety — by offering our prayers to God.

— Origen, *Against Celsus*, Book 8, Chapter 73.

Someone who has defiled himself with murder — be it involuntarily — is considered impure through his impure deeds, and the canon

considers such a person unworthy of the grace of priesthood.

— St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Canonical Epistle to St. Letoius of Melitene*.

You have seen then the deacon who gives to the priest water to wash²⁰ and to the presbyters who stand round God's altar. He gave it not at all because of bodily defilement; it is not that; for we did not enter the Church at first with defiled bodies. But the washing of hands is a symbol that you ought to be pure from all sinful and unlawful deeds; for since the hands are a symbol of action, by washing them, it is evident, we represent the purity and blamelessness of our conduct. Did you not hear the blessed David opening this very mystery, and saying, I will wash my hands in innocence, and so will compass your Altar, O Lord? The washing, therefore, of hands is a symbol of immunity from sin.

Then the deacon cries aloud, "Receive one another; and let us kiss one another." Think not that this kiss is of the same character with those given in public by common friends. It is not such: but this kiss blends souls one with another, and courts complete forgiveness for them. The kiss, therefore, is the sign that our souls are mingled together, and banish all remembrance of wrongs. For this cause, Christ said, "If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother hath something against you, leave there your gift upon the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." The kiss, therefore, is reconciliation, and for this reason holy: as the blessed Paul somewhere cried, saying, "Greet one another with a holy kiss"; and Peter, "with a kiss of charity."

Then, after the spiritual sacrifice, the bloodless service, is completed, over that sacrifice of propitiation we entreat God for the common peace of the Churches, for the welfare of the world; for kings; for

²⁰ In this commentary on the Divine Liturgy, St. Cyril gives a brief summary of the 'Great Intercession,' in which, according to the common text of the Liturgy of St. James, there is a petition "for the peace and welfare of the whole world, and of the holy Churches of God." From Chrysostom's language, we must infer that the prayer formed part of the 'Great Intercession' in his Liturgy.

soldiers and allies; for the sick; for the afflicted; and, in a word, for all who stand in need of succor, we all pray and offer this sacrifice.

— St. Cyril of Alexandria, Lecture 23 “On the Mysteries,” Chapter 5, *On the Sacred Liturgy and Communion*.

STATE-CHURCH RELATIONS

The Political Habits of the World

Viewing the treacherous highways, the manifold battles scattered over the whole earth, the exhibition either bloody or vile, the infamies of lust offered for sale in brothels or enclosed within domestic walls, whose daring is greater in proportion to the secrecy of the sin, the forum perhaps may seem to you to be devoid of all this, that it is free of harassing outrages and is unpolluted by contacts with evil. Turn your sight in that direction. There you will find more things to abhor; from these you will the more turn aside your eyes. Although the laws are engraved on twelve tables, and the statutes are published on bronze set up in public, there is sin in the midst of the laws themselves, there is wickedness in the midst of the statutes, and innocence is not preserved where it is defended. The madness of those who oppose each other rages, and among the togas peace is disrupted and the forum roars madly with lawsuits. There the spear and the sword and the executioner are close at hand, the claw that tears, the rack that stretches, the fire that burns, for the one body of man more tortures than it has limbs. Who in such cases gives assistance? One's patron? But he is in collusion and deceives. The judge? But he sells his sentence. He who sits to punish crimes commits them, and in order that the defendant may perish in innocence, the judge becomes guilty. Everywhere transgressions flourish, and in every direction, by the multiform nature of sinning, the pernicious poison acts through wicked minds. One counterfeits a will, another by a capital fraud gives false testimony; on the one hand, children are cheated of their inheritance; on the other, strangers are endowed with property; an

enemy makes a charge, a calumniator attacks, a witness defames. On both sides, the venal impudence of the hired voice proceeds to the falsification of charges, while in the meantime the guilty perish not with the innocent. There is no fear of the laws, of the inquisitor, no dread of the judge; what can be bought is not feared. Now it is a crime for an innocent man to be among the guilty; whoever does not imitate the evil gives offence. The laws have come to terms with sins, and what done in public begins to be allowed. What shame of events can there be here, what integrity, when those to condemn the wicked are absent, and only those to be condemned meet with you.

— St. Cyprian of Carthage, *To Donatus*, Chapter 10.

THE NEW REALITIES BROUGHT ABOUT BY CHRISTIANITY

If Celsus would have us to lead armies in defense of our country, let him know that we do this too, and that not for the purpose of being seen by men, or of vainglory. For ‘in secret,’ and in our own hearts, there are prayers which ascend as from priests on behalf of our fellow-citizens. And Christians are benefactors of their country more than others. For they train up citizens, and inculcate piety to the Supreme Being; and they promote those whose lives in the smallest cities have been good and worthy, to a divine and heavenly city, to whom it may be said, “You have been faithful in the smallest city, come into a great one.”

— Origen, *Against Celsus*, Book 8, Chapter 74.

If all without exception, who feel that they are men not in form of body but in power of reason, would lend an ear for a little to his salutary and peaceful rules, and would not, in the pride and arrogance of enlightenment, trust to their own senses rather than to his admonitions, the whole world, having turned the use of steel into more peaceful occupations, would now be living in the most placid tranquility, and would unite in blessed harmony, maintaining inviolate the sanctity of treaties.

— Arnobius, *Against the Gentiles*, Book 1, Chapter 6.

Constantine took with him also the priests of God, feeling well assured that now, if ever, he stood in need of the efficacy of prayer, and thinking it right that they should constantly be near and about his person, as most trusty guardians of the soul. Thus, the nations of the world being everywhere guided in their course as it were by the skill of a single pilot, and acquiescing in the administration of him who governed as the servant of God, the peace of the Roman Empire continued undisturbed, and all classes of his subjects enjoyed a life of tranquility and repose. At the same time, the emperor, who was convinced that the prayers of godly men contributed powerfully to the maintenance of the public welfare, felt himself constrained zealously to seek such prayers and not only himself implored the help and favor of God, but charged the prelates of the churches to offer supplications on his behalf.

— Eusebius of Caesarea, *Life of St. Constantine the Great*, Book 2, Chapter 4; Book 4, Chapter 14.

Christ not only preached through His own disciples, but also wrought so persuasively on men's understanding that they learnt to know Him and through Him to worship the Father. While they were yet idolaters, the Greeks and barbarians were always at war with each other, and were even cruel to their own kith and kin. Nobody could travel by land or sea at all unless he was armed with swords, because of their irreconcilable quarrels with each other. Indeed, the whole course of their life was carried on with the weapons. But since they came over to the school of Christ, they have laid aside their murderous cruelty and are war-minded no more. On the contrary, all is peace among them and nothing remains save desire for friendship.

— St. Athanasius the Great, *On the Incarnation*, Chapter 8, 51.

Church Defiance against Unjust State Decisions

By reason of their greatness, such men are soldiers of Christ armed with the Holy Spirit, champions of faith and towers of the divine city.

Such persons who are in the flesh defeat the flesh and have contempt for death; they disdain all fear of tyrants and appear nobler.

— St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Second Homily Concerning the Forty Martyrs*.

I see that you are unusually disturbed, and that you are closely watching me. I wonder what the reason is? Is it that you saw or heard that I had received an imperial order at the hands of the tribunes to the effect that I was to depart [from Milan], whither I would, and that all who wished might follow me? Were you afraid that I should desert the Church and forsake you in fear for my own safety? But you could note the message I sent, that the wish to desert the Church had never entered my mind; for I feared the Lord of the universe more than an earthly emperor; and if force were to drag me from the Church, my body indeed could be driven out, but not my mind. I was ready, if he were to do what royal power is wont to do, to undergo the fate a priest has to bear.

— St. Ambrose of Milan, *Sermon against Auxentius on the giving up of the basilicas*.

My most serene Lord the Emperor enjoins that it shall be lawful for no one to become a monk who has been engaged in any public employment, or who has been marked in the hand, or enrolled among the soldiers, unless perchance his military service has been completed. This law, as those say who are acquainted with old laws, Julian was the first to promulgate, of whom we all know how opposed he was to God. Now it seems to me exceedingly hard that he should debar his soldiers from the service of Him who both gave him all and granted him to rule not only over soldiers but even over priests.

— St. Gregory the Great, *Epistle 66 to Theodore, Physician*.

I received the law of my lords, in which the piety of my lords has ordained that it shall not be lawful for anyone who is engaged in any public administration to enter into an ecclesiastical office. And this I greatly commended, knowing by most evident proof that one who is in haste to desert a secular condition and enter on an ecclesiastical

office is not wishing to relinquish secular affairs, but to change them. But, at its being said in the same law that it should not be lawful for him to become a monk, I was altogether surprised. It is added in the same law that no one who has been marked on the hand²¹ may become a monk. This ordinance, I confess to my lords, has alarmed me greatly, since by it the way to heaven is closed against many, and what has been lawful until now is made unlawful. For there are many who are able to live a religious life even in a secular condition: but there are very many who cannot in any wise be saved with God unless they give up all things. But what am I, in speaking thus to my lords, but dust and a worm? Yet still, feeling that this ordinance is against God, who is the Author of all, I cannot keep silence to my lords. For power over all men has been given from heaven to the piety of my lords to this end, that they who aspire to what is good may be helped, and that the way to heaven may be more widely open, so that an earthly kingdom may wait upon the heavenly kingdom. And behold, it is said in plain words that one who has once been marked to serve as an earthly soldier may not, unless he has either completed his service or been rejected for weakness of body, serve as the soldier of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To this, behold, Christ will answer, saying: From a notary I made you a Count of the bodyguard; from Count of the bodyguard I made you a Caesar; from a Caesar I made you Emperor; and not only so, but also a father of emperors. I have committed my priests into your hand; and now you withdraw your soldiers from my service? Answer your servant, most pious Lord, I beseech you; what will you answer to your Lord when He comes and speaks thus?

It is a very serious consideration, that now at this time any are forbidden to leave the world, a time when the end of the world is drawing nigh.

I indeed, being subject to your command, have caused this law to be transmitted through various parts of the world; and, inasmuch as the law itself is by no means agreeable to Almighty God, behold, I

²¹ i.e. branding that marked slaves and soldiers

have by this my representation declared this to my most serene lords. On both sides, then, I have discharged my duty, having yielded obedience to the Emperor, and not kept silence as to what I feel on behalf of God.

— St. Gregory the Great, Epistle 65, to Emperor Mauricius Augustus.

RESPECT FOR EARTHLY AUTHORITIES

Let governors be obedient to Caesar; soldiers to those that command them; deacons to the presbyters, as to high-priests; the presbyters, and deacons, and the rest of the clergy, together with all the people, and the soldiers, and the governors, and Caesar himself, to the bishop; the bishop to Christ, even as Christ to the Father. And thus unity is preserved throughout.

— St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Philadelphians*, Chapter 4.

Having cast themselves on the ground, they [the Christian soldiers] prayed not only for me, but also for the whole army as it stood, that they might be delivered from the present thirst and famine ... Founding upon this, then, let us pardon such as are Christians, lest they pray for and obtain such a weapon against ourselves. And I counsel that no such person be accused on the ground of his being a Christian. But if anyone be found laying to the charge of a Christian that he is a Christian, I desire that it be made manifest that he who is accused as a Christian, and acknowledges that he is one, is accused of nothing else than only this, that he is a Christian; but that he who arraigns him be burned alive. And I further desire that he who is entrusted with the government of the province shall not compel the Christian, who confesses and certifies such a matter, to retract; neither shall he commit him. And I desire that these things be confirmed by a decree of the Senate. And I command this my edict to be published in the Forum of Trajan, in order that it may be read. The prefect Vitrasius Pollio will see that it be transmitted to all the provinces round about, and that no one who wishes to make use

of or to possess it be hindered from obtaining a copy from the document I now publish.

— Marcus Aurelius as quoted by Justin Martyr in his *First Apology*, Chapter 68.²²

We pray without ceasing for all emperors, for their prolonged life, for protection of the imperial palace, for brave armies, a loyal Senate, an upright citizenry, a peaceful world and for everything that the emperor desires as a man and as a Caesar ...

— Tertullian, *Apology*, 30:4.

Thus the forty soldiers under the Roman emperor's authority served as Christians by obeying their faith and religion [and for that reason refusing the order to make a sacrifice to the gods].

— St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Second Letter Concerning the Forty Martyrs*.

If in order to put an end to public wars, and tumults, and battles, the priest is exhorted to offer prayers for kings and governors, much more ought private individuals to do it.

— St. John Chrysostom, Homily 7 on 1 Tim. 2:2–4.

CHURCH NEUTRALITY

Celsus urges us to “take office in the government of the country, if that is required for the maintenance of the laws and the support of religion.” But we recognize, in each state, the existence of another national organization founded by the Word of God, and we exhort those who are mighty in word and of blameless life to rule over Churches. Those who are ambitious of ruling we reject; but we constrain those who, through excess of modesty, are not easily induced to take a public charge in the Church of God. And those who rule over us well are under the constraining influence of the great King, whom we believe to be the Son of God, God the Word. And if those who govern in

²² Justin Martyr attributes the letter to Marcus Aurelius; the event described is verified in other historical records, though they do not give credit to the role of prayer by Christians.

the Church, and are called rulers of the divine nation — that is, the Church — rule well, they rule in accordance with the divine commands, and never suffer themselves to be led astray by worldly policy. And it is not for the purpose of escaping public duties that Christians decline public offices, but that they may reserve themselves for a diviner and more necessary service in the Church of God — for the salvation of men. And this service is at once necessary and right. They take charge of all — of those that are within, that they may day by day lead better lives, and of those that are without, that they may come to abound in holy words and in deeds of piety; and that, while thus worshipping God truly, and training up as many as they can in the same way, they may be filled with the word of God and the law of God, and thus be united with the Supreme God through his Son the Word, Wisdom, Truth, and Righteousness, who unites to God all who are resolved to conform their lives in all things to the law of God.

— Origen, *Against Celsus*, Book 8, Chapter 75.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

The Real Enemy

The enemy is always prepared to attack. And since his missiles, which steal upon us secretly, are more frequent and his casting of them more concealed and clandestine, and to the extent that this is not perceived, this attack is the more effectual and more frequent to our injury, let us also be alert to understand and repel these. Among these is the devil of jealousy and envy. If anyone should look deeply into this, he will discover that nothing should be avoided more by a Christian, nothing provided for more cautiously than that one be not caught by envy and malice, that one, being entangled in the blind snares of a deceitful enemy, when brother by envy turns to hatred of brother, not himself unwittingly perish by his own sword. That we may be able to gather this more fully and perceive it more clearly, let us recur to its source and origin. Let us see from what jealousy begins, both when

and how. For more easily will so pernicious an evil be avoided, if both the origin and magnitude of the same is known.

— St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Jealousy and Envy*, Chapter 3.

For what more fitly or more fully befits our care and solicitude than to prepare the people divinely committed to us and the army established in the heavenly camp with constant exhortations against the weapons and darts of the devil? For he cannot be a soldier fit for war who has not first been trained in the field, nor will he who seeks to obtain the contestant's crown be crowned in the stadium, unless he first gives thought to the practice and skill of his powers. He is an old adversary and an ancient enemy with whom we wage battle. Almost six thousand years are now being fulfilled since the devil first attacked man. All kinds of tempting and arts and plots for his overthrow has he learned by the very practice of a long time. If he finds a soldier of Christ unprepared, if untrained, if he does not find him vigilant with a solicitous and whole heart, he besets him in ignorance: he deceives the incautious, he entraps the inexperienced. But if anyone guards the precepts of the Lord, and bravely adhering to Christ stands against the devil, he must be conquered, since Christ whom we confess is invincible.

— St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, Chapter 2.

How great is that loveliness which belongs to the angels and supernatural beings! Demons are distressed at the sight, and they readily acknowledge this fact. By reason of their greatness, such men are soldiers of Christ armed with the Holy Spirit, champions of faith and towers of the divine city. They resist every infliction of torture, fear, threats and foolish, shameful ridicule; they appear to offer their bodies to such outrages, but these are merely shadows. Such persons who are in the flesh defeat the flesh and have contempt for death; they disdain all fear of tyrants and appear nobler. How lovely are those trained in such bodily victories! How wonderful is their training when applied to combat against the devil! They are not armed

with swords, shields, helmets or leg protection; rather, they are armed with the full armor of God which the divine Apostle [Paul], the leader of the Church, illustrates: a shield, breastplate, helmet and sword (Eph. 6:11 ff.). These weapons are used against the enemy's forces, but divine grace supports them against the devil's troop which has the power to inflict death. This troop takes its stand in the tribunal, the place of decisive contest, where blood is shed; here [the devil's band] makes its threats and fights against those who patiently resist it.

— St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Second Homily concerning the Forty Martyrs*.

The Savior has taught men what they could never learn among the idols. It is also no small exposure of the weakness and nothingness of demons and idols, for it was because they knew their own weakness that the demons were always setting men to fight each other, fearing lest, if they ceased from mutual strife, they would turn to attack the demons themselves. For in truth the disciples of Christ, instead of fighting each other, stand arrayed against demons by their habits and virtuous actions, and chase them away and mock at their captain the devil. Even in youth they are chaste, they endure in times of testing and persevere in toils. When they are insulted, they are patient, when robbed they make light of it, and, marvelous to relate, they make light even of death itself, and become martyrs of Christ.

— St. Athanasius the Great, *On the Incarnation*, Chapter 8, 52.

Inner War

Unless those carnal wars [of the Old Testament] were regarded as a symbol of spiritual wars, I do not think that the Jewish historical books would ever have been passed down by the Apostles to be read by Christ's followers in their churches... Thus, the Apostle [Paul], being aware that physical wars are no longer to be waged by us but that our struggles are to be only battles of the soul against spiritual adversaries, gives orders to the soldiers of Christ like a military com-

mander when he says, “Put on the armor of God so as to be able to hold your ground against the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:11).

— Origen, *Homily on Joshua*, 15:1.

The evil is much lighter, and the danger less, when the limbs are wounded by a sword. The cure is easy where the wound is manifest, and when a remedy comes to its assistance what is seen is quickly brought to health. The wounds of jealousy are concealed and hidden, nor do they admit the remedy of a healing cure, which have concealed themselves with blind pain within the lurking places of the conscience. Whoever of you are envious and malignant, you are seen as you are, crafty, pernicious, and hostile to those whom you hate. You are the enemy of no one’s well-being more than of your own. Whoever he is whom you persecute with jealousy, will be able to escape and avoid you. You cannot escape yourself. Wherever you are, your adversary is with you; the enemy is always in your heart; destruction is shut up within; you are tied and bound with an inescapable chain of links; you are captive with jealousy as your master; and no solaces come to your relief. It is a persevering evil to persecute a man who belongs to the grace of God; it is a calamity without a remedy to hate one who is happy.

— St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Jealousy and Envy*, Chapter 9.

The peace that removes the enticements of the passion and calms the perturbations of the spirit is loftier than that which puts down the invasion of barbarians. For it is a greater thing to resist the enemy inside you than the one far off.

— St. Ambrose of Milan, *On Jacob* 2,6,29.

To conquer enemies does not render kings so illustrious as to conquer wrath and anger. For, in the former case, the success is due to arms and soldiers; but here the trophy is simply your own, and you have no one to divide the glory of your moral wisdom. You have overcome barbarian war, overcome also imperial wrath!

— St. John Chrysostom, Homily 6, *On the attempts to quiet the wrath of the Emperor*.

There are three very grievous kinds of war. The one is public, when our soldiers are attacked by foreign armies: The second is, when even in time of peace, we are at war with one another: The third is, when the individual is at war with himself, which is the worst of all. From the third, we cannot escape without danger. For when the body is at variance with the soul, and raises up evil desires, and arms against it sensual pleasures, or the bad passions of anger, and envy; we cannot attain the promised blessings, until this war is brought to an end; whoever does not still this tumult, must fall pierced by wounds that will bring that death that is in hell. We have daily need therefore of care and great anxiety, that this war may not be stirred up within us, or that, if stirred up, it may not last, but be quelled and laid asleep.

— St. John Chrysostom, Homily 7 on 1 Tim. 2:2–4.

Our battle rages every day, every hour. If you have upbraided, or passed judgment on, or vexed your brother, your peace is lost. If you have been boastful, or have exalted yourself above your fellow, you have lost grace. If you did not drive away forthwith the wanton thought that came to you, your soul will lose the love for God and boldness in prayer. If you are fond of power, or money, you will never know the love of God. If you have followed your own will, then you are vanquished by the enemy and despondency will come upon your soul. If you detest your brother, it means that you have fallen away from God, and an evil spirit has taken possession of you. But if you will do good unto your brother, you will gain quiet for your conscience. If you subdue your own will, your enemies will be driven off and you will receive peace in your soul. If you forgive your brother the affronts he puts upon you and love your enemies, then you will receive forgiveness for your sins, and the Lord will give you to know the love of the Holy Spirit. And when you have entirely humbled yourself, you will find perfect rest in God.

— St. Silouan the Athonite, Archimandrite Sophrony, *Saint Silouan the Athonite*, Tolleshunt Knights, 1991.

The Good Fight

I do not ordain these things as an apostle for ‘who am I’ that I should pretend to be equal in honor to them? But as your fellow-soldier, I hold the position of one who simply admonishes you.

— St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Philadelphians*, Chapter 4.

If the soldiers enrolled by you,²³ and who have taken the military oath, prefer their allegiance to their own life, and parents, and country, and all kindred, though you can offer them nothing incorruptible, it were verily ridiculous if we, who earnestly long for incorruption, should not endure all things, in order to obtain what we desire from Him who is able to grant it.

— St. Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, Chapter 39.

You have desired, my very dear Fortunatus, that I bring together from the sacred Scripture exhortations with which I might animate the soldiers of Christ for the spiritual and heavenly struggle. I have felt obliged to obey your so compelling wish, so that, insofar as our mediocrity is able, prepared with the aid of divine inspiration, certain arms, as it were, and defenses might be brought forth from the Lord’s precepts for the brethren who are about to fight. For it is a minor matter that we arouse the people of God with the trumpet call of our voice, unless we confirm by divine reading the faith of believers and their courage dedicated and devoted to God.

Those words alone must be set down which God speaks, by which Christ exhorts his servants to martyrdom. The divine precepts themselves must be supplied as arms for those who fight. Let those be the incitements of the military trumpet; let those be the clarion call for those who fight. By those let the ears be made erect; by these let the minds be made ready; by these also let the powers of mind and body be strengthened for the endurance of every suffering. Let us

²³ From a letter addressed to Emperor Titus Ælius Adrianus Antoninus Pius Augustus Cæsar.

only, who with the Lord's permission gave the first baptism to believers, prepare each one for another baptism also, urging and teaching that this baptism is greater in grace, more sublime in power, more precious in honor, a baptism in which the angels baptize, a baptism in which God and His Christ exult, a baptism after which no one sins again, a baptism which brings to completion the increases of our faith, a baptism which immediately joins us with God as we withdraw from the world. In the baptism of water is received the remission of sins; in that of blood the crown of virtues. This thing is to be embraced and longed for and sought after with all entreaties of our prayers, so that we who were servants of God may also be His friends.

— St. Cyprian of Carthage, *Exhortation to Martyrdom*,²⁴ Chapters 1 and 4.

Do you, whom already the heavenly warfare has designated for the spiritual camp, only stay uncorrupted and chastened in religious virtues? See that you observe either constant prayer or reading. Speak now with God; let God now speak with you. Let Him instruct in His precepts; let Him dispose you in them. Whom He shall make rich, no one will make poor. There can be no want, when once the celestial food has filled the breast.

— St. Cyprian of Carthage, *To Donatus*, Chapter 15.

These adversaries, who want us to renounce our faith in the Lord or to suffer death, are resisted by strong men who remain faithful unto death. Although they threaten them with fire, cast them into pits and inflict other torments, they have one voice and holy confession, which Christ hears. Resistance against this torment of the enemy's appalling insults troubles His heart and is like a stone in David's hand slung at the enemy's helmet (1 Sam. 17:49 ff.). We behead the enemy when as noble soldiers we cast, as it were, our confession in Christ. But the [martyrs'] account continues and leaves these matters behind

²⁴The *Exhortation to Martyrdom* is probably the last work of St. Cyprian of Carthage, bishop from 249 to 258. It was written during the persecutions of Valerian in 257–258.

while jumping over any obstacle. It boldly advances to matters that are unutterable and mentions them as if they were visible because a bold confession in Christ is encouragement and praise from above. The citizens of the heavenly city honor their success, which brings joy to the entire assembly of heaven. This is the marvel which the angels behold among men and which these spectators of our lives saw in that conflict between the devil and men. How different is this marvel compared to that first struggle when the serpent vanquished Adam! One person did not sustain this evil attack which sought to do harm through a sound pretext; rather, everyone was affected by this assault and fell. However, all these conflicts of the enemy were reduced to nothing and were ineffective. [Satan] offered hope but they spurned it; he terrorized them but they scorned it; he threatened them with fear but they overcame it. Their one fear was to be separated from Christ, for to be with Christ was their only value since everything else seemed like laughter, shadows, nonsense and fanciful dreams.

Now is the time. These are the days of struggle. We are at the threshold of the Paschal feast and the mystery of the holy Forty Days. These days are a time of propitiation and closely resemble the saints' crowns.

— St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Second Homily concerning the Forty Martyrs*.

The adversary looks with evil intent upon [the martyrs'] good deeds and struggles. He sees sound bodies adorned with restraint, the armed chorus leading them in battle array to God, a beautiful sight to behold. Their spirits are exultant; they are quick footed, powerful, trained, and in every circumstance, they triumph by reason of the soul's virtue, which is visible through their physical splendor. He (the adversary) jealously follows them as he wanders throughout the world. Not only does he see one sincere man, but the divine assembly of all those who are true, just and reverent. He first attempts to persuade the army's leader to worship idols. If he fails by not slaying those who worship Christ's name, the barbarians are not victorious.

— St. Gregory of Nyssa, *First Homily concerning the Forty Martyrs*.

Acts of the Martyrdom of Early Christian Soldiers¹

Among the most evocative documents on the problems facing Christian soldiers in the Roman Empire are the Acts of military martyrs, dating in part to the third and early fourth century. Some were compiled by the communities from which the martyrs came or by later generations, but some were actually copied from court records and are considered authentic by scholars.¹

Below we give two examples, both from Mauritania in Northern Africa. The first are the Acts of the recruit Maximilian, tried the 12th of March, 295. The second text, from 298, describes the trial of the centurion Marcellus, who at a religious festival in honor of the emperor threw down his belt, symbol of military life, and his vine switch, symbol of the centurion's authority.

The Acts of Maximilian

On the twelfth day of March at Tebessa, in the consulship of Tuscus and Anullinus, Fabius Victor was summoned to the forum together with Maximilian; Pompeianus was permitted to act as their advocate.

The advocate spoke, "Fabius Victor, agent in charge of the recruiting tax, is present here for his hearing along with Valerian Quintianus, imperial representative, and Victor's son Maximilian, an excellent recruit. Seeing that Maximilian has good recommendations, I request that he be measured."

The proconsul Dion said, "What is your name?"

¹ Both texts from John Helgeland et al., *Christians and the Military: The Early Experience*, Philadelphia, 1985, pp. 58–61.

Maximilian replied, “But why do you wish to know my name? I cannot serve because I am a Christian.”

The proconsul Dion said, “Get him ready.”

While he was being made ready, Maximilian replied, “I cannot serve. I cannot commit a sin. I am a Christian.”

“Let him be measured,” said the proconsul Dion.

After he was measured, one of the staff said, “He is five foot ten.”

Dion said to his staff, “Let him be given the military seal.”

Still resisting, Maximilian replied, “I will not do it! I cannot serve!”

“Serve, or you will die,” said Dion.

“I shall not serve,” said Maximilian. “You may cut off my head, I will not serve this world, but only my God.”

The proconsul Dion said, “Who turned your head?”

Dion said to Victor, the boy’s father, “Speak to your son.”

Victor said, “He is aware and can take his own counsel on what is best for him” (cf. John 9:23).

Dion said to Maximilian, “Agree to serve and receive the military seal.”

“I will not accept the seal,” he replied. “I already have the seal of Christ who is my God.”

Dion said, “I shall send you to your Christ directly.”

“If only you would,” he replied. “This would be my glory.”

Dion addressed his staff, “Let him be given the seal.”

Maximilian resisted and said, “I will not accept the seal of this world; and if you give it to me, I shall break it, for it is worthless. I am a Christian, I cannot wear a piece of lead around my neck after I have received the saving sign of Jesus Christ my Lord, the Son of the living God. You do not know him; yet he suffered for our salvation; God delivered Him up for our sins (cf. Acts 2:22–4; Rom. 8:32). He is the one whom all we Christians serve: we follow Him as the prince of life and the author of salvation.”

“You must serve,” said Dion, “and accept the seal—otherwise you will die miserably.”

“I shall not perish,” said Maximilian. “My name is already before the Lord. I may not serve.”

Dion said, “Have regard for your youth: serve. This is what a young man should do.”

“My service is for my Lord,” Maximilian replied. “I cannot serve the world (cf. Matt. 6:24, Luke 16:13). I have already told you: I am a Christian.”

The proconsul Dion said, “In the sacred bodyguard of our Lords Diocletian and Maximian, Constantinus and Maximus, there are soldiers who are Christians, and they serve.”

Maximilian replied, “They know what is best for them. But I am a Christian and I cannot do wrong.”

“What wrong do they commit,” said Dion, “who serve in the army?”

Maximilian replied, “Why, you know what they do.”

The proconsul Dion said, “Serve. If you despise the military service, you will perish miserably.”

Maximilian said, “I shall not perish, and if I depart from this world, my soul lives with Christ my Lord.”

“Strike out his name!” said Dion. And when his name had been struck out, Dion said, “Because you have refused military service out of disloyalty, you will receive a suitable sentence as an example to the others.” Then he read the following decision from a tablet: “Whereas Maximilian has disloyally refused the military oath, he is sentenced to die by the sword.”

“Thank God,” said Maximilian.

The Acts of Marcellus

Just before the first day of August, in the consulship of Faustus and Gallus in the camp of the *legio VII Gemina*, Marcellus of the city of Hasta Regia was brought in, and Fortunatus said, “Why did you decide to take off your belt and throw it down with your sword and your staff?”

“I have already told you,” Marcellus replied. “Before the standards of the legion when you were addressing the holiday of your empire, I answered publicly and in a loud voice confessed that I was a Christian, and that I could not fight by any other oath, but solely for the Lord Christ Jesus, Son of God almighty.”

“I cannot conceal your rash act,” said Fortunatus, “and hence I shall report this to the sacred ears of our lords Diocletian and

Maximian, the most invincible Augusti, and to the most noble Caesars, Constantine and Licinius. But you shall be handed over to the court of the praetorian prefect, the lord Aurelius Agricola, under the guard of the soldier Caecilius Arva."

On October 30 in the consulship of Faustus and Gallus at Tingis, when Marcellus of the city of Hasta Regia was brought in, one of the court secretaries announced, "Here before the court is Marcellus, whom the governor Fortunatus has handed over to your jurisdiction. He is submitted to your Excellency. There is also a letter here from Fortunatus, which I shall read with your permission."

Agricola said, "Read it."

The court clerk said, "It has already been read."

Agricola said, "Did you say the things reported in the governor's official proceedings?"

"I did," replied Marcellus.

Agricola said, "Did you serve as a centurion of the first cohort?"

"I did," replied Saint Marcellus.

"What madness came over you," said Agricola, "that you should renounce your military oath and say such things?"

Saint Marcellus replied, "There is no madness in him who fears God."

Agricola said, "Did you say all that is contained in the governor's proceedings?"

"I did," replied Saint Marcellus.

Agricola said, "Did you throw down your weapons?"

"I did," replied Saint Marcellus, "for it is not proper for a Christian, who fears Christ the Lord, to fight for the troubles of this world."

"Since this is the case," said Agricola, "Marcellus' deeds must be punished in accordance with military procedure." Then he spoke as follows, "Whereas Marcellus has publicly rejected and defiled the oath of the centurion's rank in which he served, and has, according to the governor's court reports, uttered certain words full of madness, we hereby decree that he be executed by the sword."

Christian Soldiers in the Roman Army before Constantine the Great²

It will be useful to consider what the sources tell us about Christian practice in regard to military service in the period before Constantine. On this score, the evidence is neither as extensive nor as explicit as what we have seen thus far, but it provides at least a glimpse into the day-to-day handling of the problem. It also bears witness to the fact that there was division on this issue among the Christians in practice as well as in theory. Except for the few references to soldiers — converts in the New Testament we have no evidence for Christians serving in the army prior to the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161–180 AD). As we have seen, however, it was at this time that both Celsus' complaint about the Christians' unwillingness to serve that the story about the role of Christian troops in the *Legio XII fulminata* appeared in our sources. Toward the end of the century, we have Tertullian's remark that Christians filled the camps of the empire (*Apology* 37:4), and if this claim is surely an exaggeration, it at least indicates that Christians in the army did not go unnoticed. The apologist's comments at the beginning of *On the Crown* (1:1) further suggest that not all Christian soldiers felt compelled to refuse the military crown, and Tertullian's stern advice about service in the army would have had little point if the number of Christians enrolled during his time were insignificant.

About fifty years later, Cyprian of Carthage (*Letter* 39:3) records that a confessor in the time of Decius' persecution (250–51 AD) had two military uncles who had suffered martyrdom, and Eusebius

²Louis J. Swift, *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service*, Wilmington, 1983, Part I, chapter 8.

(*Ecclesiastical History* 6:41.16–22) tells us that several Christian soldiers at Alexandria were executed during an outbreak of violence against the Church around 249 AD. The numerical growth of the Christians in the army during the second half of the third century is attested by the fact that Diocletian made them the first object of his persecution in 303 AD (cf. Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 8.1.7; 8.4.2–3; Lactantius, *On the Death of the Persecutors* 11.3). In fact, Lactantius gives us an interesting account of an event that preceded the action, which reveals some of the problems that were arising during these years.

“When Diocletian was in the East, he made it a practice of sacrificing sheep and examining their livers for signs of the future because fear led him to be a diviner of such things. On one occasion, in the course of the sacrifice, certain members of the faithful who were present signed their foreheads with the immortal sign [of the Cross]. At this, the demons took flight, and the ritual was thrown into disorder. The diviners were upset they did not see the usual signs in the entrails, and they kept repeating the sacrifice, as if they had gotten unfavorable omens. Again and again, the slain animals gave no sign until finally Tagis, the chief diviner, either because he suspected something or had seen something, claimed that the victims were providing no answer because non-believers were present at the rites. At that point, the emperor became enraged and ordered not only those present at the rites but everybody in the palace to offer sacrifice. Anyone who refused was to be scourged, and the emperor had letters sent out to his commanders ordering troops even in the lower ranks to be compelled to sacrifice under pain of dismissal for refusing” (*Death of the Pers.* 10.1–4).

Thus, it is apparent that Christians were to be found not only among the troops most closely associated with the emperor but sufficiently scattered throughout the legions to warrant the emperor’s sending instructions to his commanders concerning them. What is more, a few years later in Armenia at the eastern end of the empire, we are told in rather matter-of-fact terms that Christians went to war against Maximin Dia when he attempted to impose pagan practices on them (Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 9.8.2. and 4).

Inscriptional evidence for the presence of Christians in the army during the pre-Constantine era is meager in the extreme. Although

hundreds of epitaphs on soldier's tombs have been identified as Christian, only nine or ten of these (the majority of which are from Rome) can be dated in the period before Constantine. Included in these latter is one to a Bishop of Laodicea in Phrygia which records with pride his service in Pisidia prior to being elevated to the episcopacy. Apparently his military career did not create any scandal. In his case, as well as in similar ones, the real significance of the epitaphs is that the communities in which these men were buried did not forbid such references on the tombs, nor, apparently, did they reject the military profession as incompatible with Christianity.

CHAPTER FIVE

War, Peace and Nationalism in Orthodox Liturgical Texts and Prayers

From the Eucharistic Canon (Anaphora) of the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

The priest prays:

Again we pray to You: remember, O Lord, the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, which is from one end of the world to the other, and give peace to Her whom You have purchased with the precious Blood of Your Christ, and establish this holy house, even unto the consummation of time.

Remember, O Lord, those who have offered these Gifts to You and those for whom, and through whom, and the ends whereunto they are offered. Remember, O Lord, those who bear fruit and do good works in your holy churches, and who remember the needy; requite them with Your rich and heavenly gifts; give them things heavenly for things earthly, things eternal for things temporal, things incorruptible for things corruptible. Remember, O Lord, those in the deserts, the mountains, and in the caverns and pits of the earth. Remember, O Lord, all those who continue in virginity and devotion, and in asceticism and a sober way of life.

Remember, O Lord, the Emperor, all civil authorities, and the armed forces; grant them peaceful times, that we also in their tranquility may lead a calm and quiet life in all piety and sobriety. In Your goodness guard those that are good, and make good those that are evil, by Your loving kindness.

Remember, O Lord, the people present, those that for good cause are absent, and have mercy on them and on us, according to the multitude

of Your mercies. Fill their garners with every good thing; guard their marriage bond in peace and in oneness of mind; rear the infants; train the young; support the aged; encourage the fainthearted; gather together the scattered, and lead back those who wander astray, and join them to Your Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. Free those who are vexed by unclean spirits; travel with those that journey by land, by sea, and by air; protect the widows; defend the orphans; deliver the captives; heal the sick. And those that are under trial, in the mines, in exile, in bitter bondage, in every tribulation, necessity, and danger, remember, O God.

And all those that are in need of Your great goodness of heart, and those also who love us, and those who hate us, and those who have commanded us the unworthy to pray for them, remember, O Lord our God, and all Your people, and upon all pour out Your rich mercy, granting to all their petitions which are unto salvation. And those whom we through ignorance or forgetfulness or the multitude of names have not remembered, remember them Yourself, O God, who knows the age and name of each, and knows every man even from his mother's womb. For You are the Helper of the helpless, the Hope of the hopeless, the Savior of the storm-tossed, the Haven of the voyager, the Physician of the sick. Be Yourself all things to all men, O You who knows every man, his petitions, each house and its need.

Deliver, O Lord, this city and every city (or this village, or this abode), and country from famine, pestilence, earthquake, flood, fire, the sword, foreign invasion, and civil war.

And the priest exclaims:

Among the first, remember, O Lord, our lord, our Bishop (Name), whom grant unto Your holy churches in peace, safety, honor, health, and length of days, rightly dividing the word of Your truth.

The singers sing: And all mankind.

The Service of Great Compline:

All having received pardon from the Superior, we go back to our cells, where we say the following prayer (in practice this prayer is said in the Church by the Reader):

To those who hate us and wrong us, Lord, give pardon. To those who do good, do good. To our brethren and kinsfolk grant their requests that are for salvation and eternal life. Visit those in sickness and give them healing. Pilot those at sea. Journey with those who journey. Fight beside our Sovereign. Grant forgiveness of sins to those who serve us and have mercy on us. On those who have asked for our prayers, unworthy though we are, have mercy according to your great mercy. Remember, Lord, our fathers and brethren who have fallen asleep before us and give them rest where the light of Your face shines. Remember, Lord, our brethren in captivity, and rescue them from every peril. Remember, Lord, those who make offerings and care for beauty in Your holy churches and give them their requests which are for salvation and eternal life. Remember too, Lord, us Your humble and unworthy servants, and guide us in the path of Your commandments; at the prayers of Your most pure Mother, our Lady, Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, and all Your Saints; for You are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.

The Services for the Departed (Funeral and Memorial Services):

Eulogitaria for the dead, tone 5

Blessed are you, O Lord, teach me Your statutes.

I am an image of Your ineffable glory, though I bear the marks of offences; take pity on your creature, Master, and with compassion cleanse me; and give me the longed-for fatherland, making me once again a citizen of Paradise.

From the Service of the Holy Cross:

Hail, life-giving Cross! Fair Paradise of the Church, Tree of incorruption that blossoms for us with the enjoyment of eternal glory. Through You the hosts of demons are driven back, the companies of the Angels rejoice with one accord and the congregations of the faithful keep and the glory of priests. Grant us also now to draw near to the Passion of Christ and to his Resurrection.

— Third Sunday of Great Lent. Adoration of the Precious and life-giving Cross. Great Vespers, at “Lord, I have cried,” tone 5.

Come, faithful; let us fall down in worship before the life-creating tree. Christ, the king of glory, stretched out His hands on it and exalted us to paradise from where He had been driven by the devil's instigation. Come, faithful, let us fall down in worship before the tree. By it, we are empowered to crush the heads of invisible enemies. Come, all generations of nations. Let us honor the cross of the lord with songs. Rejoice, perfect redemption of fallen Adam. All Christians venerate You in fear and love, for by Your power the sons of Ishmael are subjected with might. We Christians kiss You with fear and glorify the God who was crucified on you, singing: have mercy on us, gracious Lord and Lover of mankind!

— Third Sunday of Great Lent. Adoration of the Precious and life-giving Cross. Matins, at the veneration of the Cross.

As we all venerate the Cross, let us cry:

Rejoice, tree of life!

Rejoice, holy scepter of Christ!

Rejoice, heavenly glory of man!

Rejoice, majesty of faith!

Rejoice, invincible weapon!

Rejoice, vanquisher of enemies!

Rejoice, shining radiance that saves the world!

Rejoice, great glory of martyrs!

Rejoice, power of saints!

Rejoice, light of the angels!

Rejoice, Precious cross!

— Fourth week of Great Lent, Monday at vespers (by Theodore Studite).

Your Cross, O Savior, has been given to Christians as an invincible power; the hosts of the enemy are put to flight through it, and Your Church, O Christ, rightly confessing the true faith, is seen overshadowed with peace. We kiss it, and raise our fervent cry to You: Make us also worthy of the inheritance of Your saints!

— Fourth week of Great Lent, Tuesday at Vespers.

25 December. Nativity of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ:

When Augustus reigned alone on the earth, the many kingdoms of mankind came to an end; and when You became man from the pure Virgin, the many gods of idolatry were destroyed; the cities of the world passed under one single rule; and the nations came to believe in one single Godhead; the peoples were enrolled by decree of Caesar; we the faithful were enrolled in the name of the Godhead, when You became man, O our God. Great is Your mercy, Lord; glory to You!

— Sticheira at Great Vespers, by Cassia.

Saturday of the fifth week of Great Lent. Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God:

O Champion General, I Your City¹ now inscribe to You
Triumphant anthems as the tokens of my gratitude,
Being rescued from the terrors, O Mother of God.
Inasmuch as You have power unassailable,
From all kinds of perils free me so that unto You
I may cry aloud: Rejoice, O unwedded Bride.

Prayer for the Pacification of Animosity:

This prayer has been taken from the English translation of the Slavonic *Book of Needs* but may be found in the *Books of Needs* of most Local Orthodox Churches.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Singers: Lord have mercy.

Priest: We thank You, O Master, Lover of Mankind, King of the ages and Bestower of good things, Who destroyed the dividing wall of enmity, and granted peace to the human race, and Who now has granted peace to Your servants. Instill in them the fear of You and confirm in them love one for the other. Extinguish every dispute and banish all temptation to disagreement. For You are our peace and to You we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

— *Book of Needs*, South Canaan, PA, 1987.

¹ i.e. Constantinople; see Case Study 7

Service for the increase of love and the uprooting of hatred and all animosity:

This order is contained in the Slavonic *Book of Needs* and gives a number of prayers, petitions and readings to be inserted in the Divine Liturgy. English published in the *Great Book of Needs*, Volume IV, South Canaan, PA, 1999.

At the proskomedia:

O Lord Jesus Christ, our God, Who gave a new commandment to Your disciples, that they should love one another; Accept this offering for the remission of all the sins of your right-believing servants. And by Your Holy Spirit renew love for Your goodness and for our neighbor, which has waxed cold in us. Establish this with strength in our hearts, that fulfilling Your commandments, we seek not on earth our own ends, but that which is to Your glory, the building up of our neighbor, and for salvation.

At the beginning of the Divine Liturgy, at the Great Litany, after the petition "For the travelers by land, by sea and by air..." the following are added:

That we may be cleansed of our sins and transgressions which have dried up in us love for Him and for our neighbor, and that it may be established by the power, action and grace of His Most-holy Spirit, and rooted in all our hearts, earnestly let us pray to the Lord.

That there may be planted and rooted in us by the grace of His Most-holy Spirit the new commandment of His New Testament: that we love one another, and not merely satisfy ourselves, but rather always strive for His glory and the building-up of our neighbor, let us pray to the Lord.

That there may be uprooted in us hatred, envy and jealousy and all other passions which destroy brotherly love, and that there may be planted unfeigned love, fervently let us pray to the Lord.

That there may be kindled in us the fervent love of God and our neighbor by the grace of His Most-holy Spirit, and thus burn out to the very roots the passions of all our souls and bodies, let us pray to the Lord.

That there be uprooted in us the passions of self-love, and rooted instead the virtue of brotherly love by the power of His Most-holy Spirit, with broken and contrite hearts let us pray to the Lord.

That we may not love the world and that which is in the world, but rather have true love for God and his glory, and that we may love that which is profitable and for the salvation of our neighbor, so that we may ever gaze on the good things prepared in heaven, and that we may seek these with all our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

That we may truly love, not just our friends and brothers, but also our enemies, and do that which is good to those who hate us, with the power, action and grace of His Most-holy Spirit moving us, let us pray to the Lord.

That we may examine ourselves, condemn ourselves, and ever looking upon our own transgressions, humble ourselves before God and before everyone, never judging our brother, but loving him as our very self, by the power, action and grace of His Most-holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

That we may imitate the burning love of the Christians in ancient times for God and neighbor, and that we may be their heirs and successors, not only in image, but in true action, by the power, action and grace of His Most-holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

That He may keep us immovable in the True Faith, in peace and the unity of burning love, increasing in all virtues, and preserve us unharmed from all soul-corrupting passions, by the power, action and grace of His Most-holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

After the Entrance:

These are sung to established order together with the appointed *troparia* (*apolitykia*) and *kontakia*.

Troparion (apolytikion), tone 4:

You have bound the Apostles in the bonds of love, O Christ, and have firmly bound us, Your faithful servants, to Yourself, that we may fulfill Your commandments and have unfeigned love for one another, through the prayers of the Mother of God, O only lover of mankind.

Kontakion, tone 5:

Kindle our hearts with the flames of love for You, O Christ God, that being inflamed by this, in heart, mind and soul, we may love You with all our strength, and our neighbor as ourselves, and that keeping Your commandments, we may glorify You the Giver of all good.

Prokeimenon, tone 7:

I will love You, O Lord, my strength; the Lord is my foundation (Ps. 17:1).

Verse: God is my Helper, and I will hope in Him (Ps. 17:1)

A reading from the First Catholic Epistle of John (*Pericopes* 72 & 73 — 1 John 3:10–24).

Beloved, whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. For this is the message that You have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love his brother abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love of God, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and He knows everything. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do what pleases Him. And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as He has commanded us.

Whoever keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in them. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Alleluia, tone 8:

O love the Lord, all you His saints (Ps. 30:23)

Verse: For the Lord requires truth; and unto them that act proudly, He will repay abundantly. (Ps. 30:23)

A reading from the Holy Gospel According to St. John (*Pericope 46 — John 13:31–35*)

The Lord said unto His disciples, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him at once. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek Me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, “Where I am going you cannot come.” A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

After the Gospel, at the Augmented Litany the following petitions are added, each followed by a triple “Lord, have mercy”:

O Lord our God, as You are good, look down upon the ground of our heart in which love has dried up, cruelly overgrown with the thorns of hatred, self-love, and innumerable transgressions. And as You are the source of all good, fervently we entreat you: having released a drop of the grace of Your Most-holy Spirit, richly bedew it that it may bear fruit, and make it increase, out of burning love for You, the root of all virtues — the fear of You — as also vigilant solicitude for the salvation of our neighbor, and the uprooting of all passions, evils of various forms, and hypocrisy, and as the Lover of mankind quickly hearken and have mercy.

O Master Who gave a new commandment to Your disciples that they should love one another, renew this by the grace of Your Most-holy Spirit acting in our souls and hearts, that we will never become

selfish, but always endeavor to please You and strive for the salvation of our neighbor and pay close attention to that which is beneficial, we pray You, the merciful Giver of all that is good, hearken and mercifully have mercy.

You gave the first and greatest commandment, that we should love You, our God and Creator, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength, and a second, like it, that we should love our neighbor as ourselves, and that on both of these hangs the Law and the Prophets. Having taught us to fulfill these commandments in deed, convince all of us by the grace of Your Most-holy Spirit, that pleasing You, our Savior, through the salvation of our neighbor, we may receive Your promised blessings, for, fervently falling down before You, our Master and Savior, we beseech You, quickly hearken and mercifully have mercy.

That we may be perfected in your love, O our God, constrain us, by the grace of your Spirit, O Master, to have sincere love for our neighbor. For, to suppose we have love for you, but hate our brother, is to lie and to walk in darkness. Therefore, O Merciful One, that there be kindled in our souls and hearts love for You and our brother, we pray You, as You are merciful, quickly hearken, and as You are compassionate, have mercy.

O All-compassionate Lord, by the grace of Your Most-holy Spirit, establish in us Your love, that we may truly love, not only our brothers and friends, but, according to Your divine command, our enemies as well, and do good to those who hate us, striving sincerely for their salvation, we pray You, o Wellspring of Good and Abyss of Love for Mankind, quickly hearken, and, as You are tender-hearted, have mercy.

Communion hymn:

The Lord said, A new commandment I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Petitions inserted in the litanies by the Serbian Orthodox Church during the war in former Yugoslavia

During the war in Bosnia, and later Yugoslavia, the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church has directed that the following petitions be inserted into appropriate litanies at Vespers, Matins and the Divine Liturgy:

Into the Great Litany:

For God's mercy upon us, His unworthy servants, that we may all be protected from hatred and evil actions, that we may have instilled in us unselfish love by which all shall know that we are disciples of Christ and God's people, as were our holy ancestors, so that we may always know to decide for the truth and righteousness of the Heavenly Kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.

For all those who commit injustice against their neighbors, whether by causing sorrow to orphans or spilling innocent blood or by returning hatred for hatred, that God will grant them repentance, enlighten their minds and hearts and illumine their souls with the light of love even towards their enemies, let us pray to the Lord.

At the Augmented Litany:

O Lord, how many are our foes that battle against us and say, "There is no help for them from God or man." O Lord, stretch forth Your hands that we may remain Your people in both faith and works. If we must suffer, let it be in the ways of Your justice and Your truth — let it not be because of our injustice or hatred against anyone. Let us all fervently say: Lord have mercy (three times).

Again let us pray to God, the Savior of all men, also for our enemies — that our Lord who loves mankind will turn them away from attacks on our Orthodox people, that they not destroy our churches and cemeteries, that they not kill our children or persecute our people, but that they too may turn to the way of repentance, justice and salvation. Let us all fervently say: Lord have mercy (three times).

Petitions inserted in the litanies by the Orthodox Church of America during the war on Iraq

At the augmented litany:

Again we pray, O Lord, that You will save us and bless us, granting wisdom and discernment to those who govern us and protecting the men and women in military service, and that You will be merciful and strong to save all those who suffer in the grievous affliction of this war and bring to all healing, hope and consolation; we earnestly pray, O Lord, hearken and have mercy.

Again we pray, O Almighty and All-Merciful God Who, through Your Only-Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, has commanded us to love our enemies, to do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that assail us: hear our fervent prayer and soften the hearts of our adversaries, bring consolation and hope to a long-suffering people, and direct us in the path of loving service that Your holy Name may be glorified; hear our fervent prayer, O Lord, and mercifully have mercy on us.

Again we pray, O Lord, that You would hear the voice of us sinners and protect the innocent men, women, and children of Iraq and the Middle East from tribulation, wrath and danger, and grant safety to the men and women in military service, support the chaplains in their pastoral ministry, and shelter all of us from violence and terror, we beseech You, O Lord, hear us and have mercy.

Again we pray, O Lord God, the God of our salvation, the God Who alone works wonders, that You will look down upon us in these troubled times and in Your love for mankind guide the leaders of the nations, bringing all to an honorable, just and lasting reconciliation, blessing our land and every nation with peace; hear us, we beseech You, O Lord, and show us Your great mercy.

Prayers for peace by St. Silouan the Athonite²

O merciful Lord, grant us Your peace,
As You gave peace to the holy Apostles,
“My peace I give unto You.”³
Lord, grant that we also may delight in Your peace.
The holy Apostles received Your peace,
And spread it over the whole world,
And in saving people they did not lose their peace,
Nor did it grow less in them.

O Lord, grant Your peace to Your people.
O Lord, bestow Your Holy Spirit on Your servants,
That their hearts may be kindled by Your love,
And their feet set upon the path of truth and goodness.
O Lord, I would that Your peace be among all Your people
Whom You have loved to the utmost,
And gave Your only-begotten Son
That the world may be saved.
O Lord, grant them Your grace that in peace and love
They may come to know and love You,
And say like the Apostles on Mount Tabor,
“Master, it is good for us to be with You.”⁴

Prayers by the Lake by St. Nicholas of Ochrid

St Nicholas (Velimirovic) of Ochrid (1880–1956) was canonized by the Serbian Orthodox Church on May 19, 2003. He is best known for *The Prologue from Ochrid*, a four-volume work on the lives of the saints. Little by little, his writings are being translated into English.

²The following prayers, like prayers by many other saints (St. Gregory the Theologian, St. Symeon the New Theologian) are not in use in the common services of the Orthodox Church.

³John 14:27.

⁴Mark 9:5; Luke 9:33.

I.

You have filled Yourself with peace, O Glory of the realms on high, and the anger of all lands cannot shake Your peace.

Among mortals there is little peace; therefore, anger has gained in strength.

Anger makes its nest in the breast of arrogance and murder lies in the breast of anger.

All sins tend to murder, and none stands so close to murder as anger.

One-eyed earthly laws do not punish anger, because they do not see that anger kills. But Your discerning law, O Glory of the realms on high, calls anger murder.

I have striven, in sunlight and moonlight, to penetrate the mystery of Your law and, once my striving began to wear away all my worldly hopes, I began to perceive how my anger towards neighbours was killing me.

The children of anger are slaves, while the children of peace are sons. Therefore your wisdom speaks to men and reiterates to them: Be sons! A son looks into the face of his father, and turns his own face towards that of his father. When he sees peace in his father's face, how can he distort his own face with anger, and yet not turn his gaze away from his father?

Anger brings infirmity into both the one who is angry and the one against whom the anger is vented. And infirmity is the precursor of death.

A wonder worker does not work miracles among children of anger, for the children of anger bring infirmity unto him.

O my neighbors, why do you feel stronger among those who love you, and weaker among those whom your presence angers? Is it not because the former add to your life by love, and the latter take from it through anger?

It is, therefore, my delight to be constantly with you, O Glory of the realms on high. For only in Your presence I neither kill them, nor they me.

Just as drop after drop of water wears away even the hardest stone, so anger wears away the life of two people.

Like a murderer waiting in ambush with a knife, so anger burns in a proud heart.

Truly, arrogance knows that it is guilty; therefore, it places anger at the gate, to act as its sentry.

Arrogance knows that it is sinful; therefore, it has found itself an advocate in another sin.

Fill my heart with humility, O Glory of the realms on high, with the humility of the angels before Your throne, for humility gives no abode or resting-place to anger.

Grant me the humility of a son, and I shall be ashamed to become angry with slaves or kill slaves. Arm me with your peace, that the anger of the children of anger will not be able to confound.

II.

The Father looks down from heaven and sees me all covered with wounds from the injustice of men, and says, "Take no revenge."

On whom should I take revenge, O Lord? On part of a flock on its way to slaughter?

Does a doctor take revenge on his patients for cursing him on their deathbeds?

On whom should I take revenge? On the snow for melting, or on the grass for withering? Does a gravedigger take revenge on those going down into the grave?

On whom shall I take revenge? On simpletons, for thinking that they can do evil to someone else in the world besides themselves? Does a teacher take revenge on illiterate children for not knowing how to read?

Eternity is my witness that all who are quick to take revenge are slow to read and comprehend its mysteries.

Time is my witness that all who have taken revenge have accumulated poison in themselves and have, with this poison, blotted themselves out of the Book of Life.

In what can you avengers boast before your adversaries, except my being able to repeat their evil? Are you not thereby saying, "We are no better than you?"

God is my witness that both you and your adversaries are equally reckless and equally incapable of good.

I have seen a cherry tree stripped of its bark and set fire to by children, yet it gave ripe fruit to those same children.

And I have seen cows, which men tormented with heavy burdens, patiently give milk to those same men.

Tears welled up in my eyes, and I asked, Why is nature more compassionate to men than man is to his fellow man?

Nature is my witness, O avengers, that only he is more powerful than those who do him evil who is powerless to copy their evil deeds.

There is no end to vengeance, and the descendants continue the work of their fathers and then go hence, leaving it unfinished.

Evil hastens along a wide road, and from each new duel it gains strength and territory, and increases its retinue.

A wise man gets off the road and leaves evil to hurry on.

A barking dog is more quickly silenced by a piece of bread than by many hurled stones.

He who taught men, "An eye for an eye," also taught them how they would all be left blind.

Ah, how wretched are all evildoers and all who take revenge! Truly, they are like a flock of sheep on the way to slaughter that, unaware of where they are heading, butt horns with each other and wreak a slaughter before the slaughter.

I do not seek vengeance, my Father; I do not seek vengeance, but rather that You grant me a sea of tears, so that I can bewail the wretchedness of those who are on their way to slaughter, not knowing where they are going.

III.

Men can do me no evil as long as I bear no wound.

I saw two caves, one of which gave off an echo, while the other was dumb. Many curious children visited the former, incessantly engaged in shouting matches with the cave. But visitors quickly left the other cave, because it gave them no echo in return.

If my soul is wounded, every worldly evil will resound within it. And people will laugh at me, and will bear more and more strongly on me with their shouting.

But evil-speaking people will not really harm me, if my tongue has forgotten how to form evil words.

Nor will external malice sadden me, if there is no malice in my heart to resound like a goatskin drum.

Nor shall I be able to respond to wrath with wrath if the lair of wrath within me has been vacated and there is nothing to be aroused.

Nor will human passions titillate me if the passions within me have been turned to ashes.

Nor will the untruthfulness of friends sadden me if I have chosen you for my friend.

Nor can the injustice of the world overwhelm me if injustice has been banished from my thoughts.

Nor will the deceitful spirits of worldly pleasure, honor and power delude me, if my soul is like a spotless bride, who receives only the Holy Spirit and yearns for Him alone.

Men cannot send anyone off to hell unless that person sends himself, nor can men hoist anyone up on their shoulders to the throne of God, unless that person elevates himself.

If my soul has no open windows, no mud can be thrown into it.

Let all nature rise up against me; it can do nothing to me except a single thing — to become as soon as possible the grave of my body.

Every worldly crop is covered with manure, so that it will sprout as soon as possible and grow better. If my soul were, alas, to abandon its virginity and receive the seed of this world into itself, then it would also have to accept the manure that the world casts on its fields.

But I call upon you day and night: “Come, dwell in my soul and close all the places where my enemies can enter. Make the cavern of my soul empty and dumb, so that no one from the world will desire to enter it.”

O my soul, my only care, be on guard and learn to distinguish between the voices that smite your ears. Once you hear the voice of your Lord, abandon your dumbness and echo it with all your strength.

O my soul, Thou cavern of eternity, never allow temporal thieves to enter into you and kindle their fire within you. Be dumb when they shout at you. Stay still when they bang on you, and patiently await your Master — for He will truly come.⁵

A Prayer for Enemies by St. Nicholas of Ochrid

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them. Enemies have driven me into Your embrace more than friends have. Friends have bound me to earth; enemies have loosed me from earth and have demolished all my aspirations in the world. Enemies have made me a stranger in worldly realms and an extraneous inhabitant of the world. Just as a hunted animal finds safer shelter than an unhunted animal does, so have I, persecuted by enemies, found the safest sanctuary, having ensconced myself beneath Your tabernacle, where neither friends nor enemies can slay my soul.

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them. They, rather than I, have confessed my sins before the world. They have punished me, whenever I have hesitated to punish myself. They have tormented me, whenever I have tried to flee torments. They have scolded me, whenever I have flattered myself. They have spat upon me, whenever I have filled myself with arrogance.

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them. Whenever I have made myself wise, they have called me foolish. Whenever I have made myself mighty, they have mocked me as though I were a dwarf. Whenever I have wanted to lead people, they have shoved me into the background. Whenever I have rushed to enrich myself, they have prevented me with an iron hand. Whenever I thought that I would sleep peacefully, they have wakened me from sleep. Whenever I have tried to build a home for a long and tranquil life, they have demolished it and driven me out. Truly, enemies have

⁵ Translation by Mother Maria Rule: *In Communion*, number 5, Apostles Fast 1996.

cut me loose from the world and have stretched out my hands to the hem of Your garment.

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them. Bless them and multiply them; multiply them and make them even more bitterly against me: so that my fleeing to You may have no return; so that all hope in men may be scattered like cobwebs; so that absolute serenity may begin to reign in my soul; so that my heart may become the grave of my two evil twins: arrogance and anger; so that I might amass all my treasure in heaven; ah, so that I may for once be freed from self-deception, which has entangled me in the dreadful web of illusory life. Enemies have taught me to know what hardly anyone knows, that a person has no enemies in the world except himself. One hates his enemies only when he fails to realize that they are not enemies, but cruel friends. It is truly difficult for me to say who has done me more good and who has done me more evil in the world: friends or enemies.

Therefore, bless, O Lord, both my friends and my enemies. A slave curses enemies, for he does not understand. But a son blesses them, for he understands. For a son knows that his enemies cannot touch his life. Therefore, he freely steps among them and prays to God for them. Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.

A Soldier's Prayer

The following prayer was reportedly found in the pocket of a Russian soldier killed during World War II.

Do you hear me, God?

Never before in my life have I spoken to You, but today I want to greet You.

You know that since I was a child, they said that You did not exist ... And I was foolish enough to believe them.

Never before have I realized the beauty of Your creation.

Today only I discovered this beauty, when suddenly an abyss opened.

Above me, a sky filled with stars. Amazed, I saw how they twinkled. How could I have been so cruelly deceived!

I don't know, Lord, whether You will stretch out Your hand to reach me, but for me, I will recognize You, and You will understand.

It's a miracle that in the depth of this terrifying hell, light illuminates me ... and that I have been able to see You.

I will not tell You anything else, except what a joy it is to know You.

At midnight, we have received the order to attack; but I am not afraid. You are watching us.

Listen, there is the signal. I have to go. Yet, it was so good to be with You.

What I still wanted to say, You know, this combat will be mean. Maybe, tonight I will knock on Your door. Even though I never was Your friend, will You let me enter, when I come?

But — am I crying? Look what's happening to me! My eyes have opened. Forgive me God.

I am going, and surely I will not come back.

But, o wonder, I am no longer afraid of death.

Order for the Blessing of Weapons

The blessing of weapons and military insignia is an ancient custom in many societies; the service below or equivalents can be found in the Books of Needs of most Orthodox Churches. The antiquity of the services can be seen from the words swords, sabers, etc.

In July 1995, the Orthodox Peace Fellowship addressed a letter to His Holiness Pavle, Patriarch of Serbia, requesting that "the Synod require that no use be made of a service for blessing weapons included in an edition of the Book of Needs published in Kosovo in 1993. In the context of the events in former Yugoslavia, the blessing of weapons can only be regarded as sanctioning the use of weapons in a fratricidal war."

The Bishop or priest comes out of the altar to the table with the weapons in front of the *Ambon*, incenses the weapons crosswise, beginning as it is common.

Reader: Heavenly King, Trisagion, Our Father, Lord have mercy (12 times). Glory; both now; Come let us worship... and Psalm 35. Glory; both now: Alleluia (three times).

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

The Bishop or priest reads this prayer over the weapons:

Lord our God, God of powers, powerful in strength, strong in battle, You once gave miraculous strength to Your child David granting him victory over his opponent the blasphemer Goliath. Mercifully accept our humble prayer. Send Your heavenly blessing over these weapons (naming each weapon). Give force and strength that they may protect Your holy Church, the poor and the widows, and Your holy inheritance on earth, and make it horrible and terrible to any enemy army, and grant victory to Your people for Your glory, for You are our strength and protection and we sing praise to Your glory, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Then the priest sprinkles blessed water on the weapons saying:

Let the blessing of Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, come down on and remain upon these weapons and those who carry them, for the protection of the truth of Christ. Amen.

After this the soldiers carrying the weapons are blessed, with the prayer:

Be brave and let your heart be stronger and win victory over your enemies, trusting in God, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

After this each soldier kisses the cross.

This is the way to bless sword and saber. If there is only one sword to be blessed, or only one saber, he says only once: this sword, or: this weapon. If there are many, he says, Bless these swords, or, Bless these weapons.

*Prayer for Peace in the Liturgy*¹

Extracts from the writings of Archimandrite Lev Gillet, most of whose books were published anonymously as “A Monk of the Eastern Church”:

The Great Litany by which the Divine Liturgy begins opens with a fervent request that peace be granted to us. This request is so important and so basic that it recurs three times in slightly different forms. These are not superfluous repetitions, for each of these petitions is filled with a deep and special meaning.

“In peace let us pray to the Lord!” This means first of all that we are called to assume a state of inner peace. Those who will take part in the Divine Liturgy should rid their minds of all confusion, all susceptibility to fleshly and earthly temptations, all obsession with “worldly cares,” all hostile feelings towards any other person, and all personal anxiety. They should come before God in a state of inner calmness, trusting attentiveness, and single-minded concentration on “the one thing needful” (Luke 10:42).

Then at once there is a second request: “For the peace from above and the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord!” The peace that we have already requested is something other than a state of mind or a psychological condition produced by our own effort. It is the peace that comes “from above.” We should humbly recognize that such peace is a gift from God, and we should open ourselves to this gift, stretching out our hands to receive it. On the other hand, we recognize that the divine peace and the ‘salvation’ of our souls are

¹ Fr. Lev Gillet, *Serve the Lord with Gladness*, Crestwood, NY, 1990.

intimately related. Peace is a sign of the presence and the work of the Savior within us.

Then comes a third request for peace: "For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy Churches of God and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord!" The peace that we request goes beyond our isolated persons and acquires a practical aspect. We pray for the peace of the universe, not only for mankind, but for every creature, for animals and plants, for the stars and all of nature. Thereby we enter into a cosmic piety, we find ourselves in harmony with everything God has called into being. We pray for every disciple of Christ, in order that through each one God might be worshipped "in Spirit and in Truth." We pray for an end to warfare and to struggles between races, nations and social classes.

We pray that all of humanity might be united in a common love.

Every temple of the Lord is a house of divine Presence and a house of prayer. Every temple is also a house of peace. May the soul of all those who enter into this holy temple to take part in the assembly of God, become itself a house of peace.

Commemoration of Warrior Saints in the Liturgical Services of the Orthodox Church²

The calendar of saints of the Orthodox Church includes a significant number of saints characterized as ‘soldiers,’ ‘warriors,’ ‘victory-bearers’ or with mention of their military rank (‘stratelates,’ ‘centurion,’ etc.). The exact number of these ‘warrior saints’ is difficult to establish, partly because military titles are not always indicated, but also due to variations between the calendars of saints of the various Local Churches.

How does the Church glorify these saints? Which sides of their lives and actions are underscored for the edification of the faithful and how do their services compare with what we know about their lives?

We will take a look at some of these questions on the basis of services of warrior saints currently in use in the Orthodox Church. The main focus are saints held in common by all Local Orthodox Churches, i.e. dating from the Roman and Byzantine periods of Christianity. Most local Churches venerate considerable numbers of local warrior saints from later periods as well, often with separate services in their memory.

The saints

The calendar of saints mentions approximately fifty warrior saints from the first to the fourteenth century. Nearly all of them died during the persecutions that preceded the reign of Constantine the Great. During the Byzantine era, very few saints received the title ‘warrior.’³

²Fr. Hildo Bos serves at St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. From 1995 to 2003, he served on the Board of *Syndesmos*, the World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth, the three last years as Acting President.

³Exceptions: the 133 martyred Soldiers of Georgia (November 17), the

Not all warrior saints are commemorated by means of a full liturgical service. Often their memorial remains limited to a mere mention among the saints of the day.

The services⁴

From the fifty saints mentioned above, some twenty are currently celebrated by an individual or collective service.⁵ Most can be found in the *Menaion*, the book with services for every day of the year. Others, such as the service of St. Theodore Tyro, are printed in the *Lenten Triodion* or elsewhere. The most frequent texts are *troparia*⁶ or *sticheira*,⁷ forms of liturgical poetry incorporated into the structure of vespers and matins.

While dating back to the very origins of Christian worship, vespers and matins started incorporating such liturgical poetry only in the seventh and eighth century AD, some three to four centu-

Righteous Michael the Soldier of Potouka, Bulgaria (November 22) and the forty-two martyrs of Ammoria (March 6). A specific case is also the seven Martyrs of the Maccabees (August 1), who died in 166 BC.

⁴Several books can be used to appreciate the context of the liturgical poetry quoted in this article. *The Festal Menaion*, translated by Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, London 1969, offers an overview of the structure and meaning of Orthodox liturgical cycle and services, including a section on “The Service Books of the Orthodox Church” and a glossary of liturgical terms. Another service book translated by the same team is *The Lenten Triodion*, London 1977. Analysis of the history and structure of Byzantine worship can be found in two books by Robert F. Taft: *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: the Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today*, Collegeville, 1986, and *The Byzantine Rite. A Short History*, Collegeville, 1993. For a more theological approach, see Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, London, 1966. Many liturgical texts can be found in the *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church*, translated by Isabel F. Hapgood, New York, 1956, and online at <http://www.anastasis.org.uk/> and <http://aggreen.net/liturgics/services.html>.

⁵‘Currently’ meaning that services in their memory may well have existed in the past but are not found in contemporary liturgical editions.

⁶Short texts in honor of the saint, either sung as the so-called ‘dismissal hymn’ (*apolytikion*) or read as part of the canon of matins.

⁷Sing. *Sticheiron*: verses of liturgical poetry that can be sung in the beginning, middle or end of vespers (subsequently called *sticheira* at “Lord, I cry;” *sticheira* at *liti*; *aposticha*) and at the end of matins (*lauds* or *aposticha*).

ries after the feats for which the saints were glorified. As a result, services in memory of warrior saints inevitably reflect Byzantine views on war and peace (although they may reflect more ancient strands of hymnography).

Moreover, the services in memory of warrior saints in the *Menaion* only reflect one aspect of the way that war, peace and nationalism are reflected in Byzantine worship. The prominent Jesuit liturgist Robert Taft stated that a comprehensive analysis of the way these issues are viewed in Byzantine worship would require study of many other factors. One could look at petitions (for peace, victory, the government, the armies) and at religious elements in victory celebrations. Many Church Fathers wrote homilies on the occasion of sieges, battles, victories, defeats or the anniversary commemorations of such events. Byzantine practice knew so-called litanies, stationary rogations to ward off attack, implore victory, or give thanks, often repeated annually on the respective anniversaries and sometimes involving icons and relics.

Since the time of Constantine the Great, the veneration of the Cross held a specific position in the Byzantine army, partly reflected in the services of September 14 and mid-Lent. Some liturgical texts reveal Byzantine views on war against the infidel. In *Books of Needs*, services and prayers are found on the occasion of war and peace; on the battlefields, army chaplains would accompany the troops conducting regular services and specific prayer before battle.⁸ All these issues are relevant, although many relate to a society that disappeared with the fall of Constantinople.

Still the services to warrior saints in the *Menaion* are a valuable source on the way warrior saints are viewed by the hymnographers of the Orthodox Church.

Sainthood and the military trade

Although we know that during the first centuries, some soldiers upon their conversion abandoned the army (as, indeed, the Church

⁸ Robert Taft, *War and Peace in the Byzantine Divine Liturgy* in Timothy Miller (ed.), *Peace and War in Byzantium*, Washington, DC, 1995, pp. 17–18.

compelled them to), little in the services suggests military trade to be seen as an impediment to sainthood. We do not find services to such saints as Marcellus, the centurion who in 298 threw down the signs of his military office, stating “it is not proper for a Christian to fight for the troubles of this world.” Neither do we find such hymns as composed in the fourth century by St. Ambrose of Milan and Aurelius Prudentius for the soldiers Victor, Nabor, Felix, Emeterius and Chelidonius who had done the same:

Let it be enough that we have spent our lives paying in full the bond we first gave to Caesar. Now is the time for giving to God what belongs to Him.

You captains of the banners, go. You tribunes take your leave. Remove the golden torques, the prize of bloody wounds. The glorious service of the angels now calls us away. Christ commands the white-robed cohorts there and reigning from the throne on high condemns to Hell those notorious deities and you yourselves who fashion silly monsters as your own specials gods.⁹

On the contrary, on first sight the impression might arise that military service is viewed throughout as a natural and recommendable activity. Some services merely mark the fact that the saint has, indeed, been serving in the armed forces, such as the Great Martyr Mercurius of Caesarea (November 24): “When fighting for the earthly king, O Mercurius, you were ordered to sacrifice to the demons.”¹⁰ Theodore Stratelates (June 8) is called a “temperate commander” and a “glorious warrior among the martyrs.”¹¹ Others go further, commending the boldness of the saints on the battlefield. “You were a true soldier,” the hymns sing in memory of the Great Martyrs Artemius of Antioch

⁹ Prudentius, *Crown of Martyrdom I*, quoted in Louis Swift, *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service*, Wilmington, 1983, p. 156. In itself this is not surprising, since the Latin hymns of Ambrose and other writers were largely ignored in the Greek-speaking East.

¹⁰ Vespers, 3rd sticheira at “Lord, I call.”

¹¹ Matins, exapostilarion.

(October 20)¹² and Demetrius of Thessalonica (October 26).¹³ The forty martyrs of Sebastea (February 4), who were frozen to death in the lake of Sebaste in 320, are hailed by John of Damascus as the “victorious company, brave in the good fight at the battlefield; who passed through fire and cold and broke the icy surface of the waters, who made the earth like heaven and illuminated all, who are now being warmed in the lap of Abraham.”¹⁴ According to his *Vita*, when serving Emperor Decius in his campaign against the barbarians around 250 AD, Mercurius of Caesarea received a sword from the Lord Himself. His service describes the saint “cutting through the multitudes of barbarians like an invincible warrior.”¹⁵ Other warrior saints, such as Demetrius of Thessalonica and Sabas Stratelates (April 24), are called ‘destroyer of foes,’¹⁶ ‘invincible for the enemies’¹⁷ and ‘conqueror of the tricks of the barbarians.’¹⁸ Another praise of bravery is found in the service to the seven Maccabean Martyrs (August 1), whose martyrdom in 166 BC for refusing to abandon the Mosaic Law inspired Judas Maccabeus in his revolt against Antiochius Epiphanus (the Maccabean war):

*Come, believers, let us contemplate the praiseworthy warfare of the Maccabees, and their bravery. For a tyrannical King, who had mastered all the nations, was mastered in his turn by an old man, seven youths and a woman. Therefore, at their prayers, O God, have mercy on us.*¹⁹

(By Joseph the Hymnographer) *As a triumphant army, a truly noble and stouthearted regiment, they resisted with godly mind the devices of the wicked men.*²⁰

¹² Matins, ikos of the kontakion.

¹³ Matins, kathisma (sessional hymn) after the first reading from the Psalter.

¹⁴ Matins, 3rd sticheira at lauds.

¹⁵ Vespers, 1st sticheira at “Lord, I cry.”

¹⁶ Matins, kathisma (sessional hymn) after the first reading from the Psalter.

¹⁷ Matins, 3rd troparion of the 1st canticle of the canon.

¹⁸ Matins, kathisma (sessional hymn) after the 3rd canticle of the canon.

¹⁹ Matins, doxastichon (sticheiron preceded by “Glory to the Father ...”) at lauds

²⁰ Matins, ikos of the kontakion

In 306 AD, the proconsul of Thessalonica, Demetrius, was imprisoned for his refusal to persecute Christians and for his preaching of the faith. To tempt the Christians, Emperor Maximian provoked them to dare fight a Germanic gladiator, Lyaeus, in the city stadium. With the blessing of Demetrius one of them, Nestor, took on Lyaeus and hurled him from the platform on to the spears of the surrounding soldiers. The troparion (*apolytikion*) of the saint hails the saint for “destroying the pride of Lyaeus in the stadium by giving Nestor courage,” while in the matins of October 26, a canon by George Sikeliotes describes the saint “conquering Lyaeus’ malevolence by the image of the victory-bearing Cross.”²¹

Divine assistance on the battlefield

These examples demonstrate the deep conviction of many Byzantine hymnographers that the Lord, by the power of His Cross and through the prayers of His saints, granted protection to the Christian *Oikoumene*, including assistance in battle. In the troparion (*apolytikion*) of the Cross (September 14), the Lord is asked to “grant the Christ-loving emperor victory over His enemies” and to “protect the commonwealth (*oikoumene*) by His Cross.” “The Cross prevails!” was one of the battle cries of the Byzantine army. The *Dogmatikon sticheiron* of the first tone, with the words “We have as champion the Lord born from the Mother of God” and “take courage, take courage, people of God; for He will make war on the foe as the All-powerful” was used by the Russian army up until the fall of the empire in 1917. The most famous liturgical expression of this certitude in divine protection is found in the first stanza of the *Akathist Hymn* to the Mother of God, sung at Matins on the fifth Saturday of Great Lent:

*O Champion General, I your City (i.e. Constantinople) now inscribe to you
Triumphant anthems as the tokens of my gratitude,
Being rescued from the terrors, O Mother of God.
Inasmuch as you have power unassailable,*

²¹ Matins, 1st troparion of the 3rd canon at the 6th canticle of the canon

*From all kinds of perils free me so that unto you
I may cry aloud: Rejoice, O unwedded Bride.*

The tradition of the Church ascribes this hymn to Patriarch Sergius at the time of the siege of Constantinople by Avar and Slav hordes in 626 AD. The *Synaxarion* of the fifth Saturday of Great Lent describes the Patriarch “taking with him the sacred Icons of the Mother of God, together with the entire multitude compassing the city walls from above, thereby procuring their security... The Patriarch circled the city walls bringing with him the Icon of Christ not made by human hands, pieces of the precious and life-giving Cross as well as the precious garment of the Mother of God.”²² Other authors consider that the first stanza may have been inserted at a later stage, by Patriarch Germanus at the lifting of the Arab siege of Constantinople in 718 or by Patriarch Photius following the Russian raid of 860.²³

Similar confidence is expressed in the service to the patron saint of Thessalonica, Demetrius the Myrrh-Gusher. His service hails him as the protector of the city in times of assault:

*You have been given to us as a fortified wall that does not tremble at the siege engines of the foe, for you render ineffective the assaults of the barbarians and the symptoms of all diseases. You are an invincible rampart and unbreakable foundation, defender, builder and champion for your city, Demetrius. By your prayers, All-blessed one, save it now dreadfully endangered and wretchedly afflicted, as you implore Christ, who grants the world His great mercy.*²⁴

Moreover, the saint’s assistance is not only invoked in defense. One of the canons of his feast asks him to pray “that all the barbaric nations may be conquered by the Orthodox,” calling the saint the “co-

²² The tradition of carrying the robe, or veil of the Mother of God in times of siege is reflected in the feast of the Protection of the Mother of God (October 1). Slav tradition holds that the force of this protective veil drove off the Russian raid of Constantinople in the year 860.

²³ Cf. a description of these events in Dimitri Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, Crestwood, NY, 1982, pp. 77–9 and 240–2.

²⁴ Matins, 2nd sticheira at lauds.

fighter of warriors.”²⁵ Similarly, St. George is called the “co-fighter of the Orthodox,”²⁶ while St. John the Soldier is invoked to “crush the barbarians.”²⁷ Sabas Stratelates is commended for “being invincible and unyielding for the enemy through a force received from on high.”²⁸ The “Christ-loving army”²⁹ of Constantine the Great “crushed the forces of the evil adversary by the universal weapon of the Cross.”³⁰ By invoking the same Cross some decade before, St. Andreas Stratelates “destroyed the enemy.”³¹

Christ and Caesar

Still there is a line that the hymnographers are careful not to cross. Commending bravery on the battlefield and invoking divine help in times of war, the Byzantine hymns are careful not to glorify military heroism as a cause of sanctity.³² The military trade may be seen as a fitting preparation for the ‘good fight,’ but crowns of sanctity are to be found elsewhere. When praising holy warriors, the emphasis is either placed on the good deeds achieved in their position or their martyrdom for the faith.

An example of a soldier engaged in good deeds is Longinus the centurion (October 16) who, standing at the Cross, came to faith and chose to accept martyrdom. His service makes no reference to his military trade. A fourth-century saint, John the Soldier (July 30), serving in the imperial army of Julian the Apostate (361–363), saved persecuted Christians rather than killing them as he was ordered. His military

²⁵ Vespers, doxastichon at the liti.

²⁶ Troparion (apolytikion) of the saint.

²⁷ Matins, 7th troparion of the 8th canticle of the canon.

²⁸ Matins, 3rd troparion of the 1st canticle of the canon.

²⁹ Matins, doxastichon at lauds (by Methodius the Patriarch).

³⁰ Vespers, 4th sticheira at liti. The term ‘universal weapon’ or ‘full weapon’ echoes the canon of Great Thursday where the Red Sea “becomes pathway for the unarmed and a tomb for the fully armed [i.e. Pharaoh].”

³¹ Matins, 3rd troparion of the 4th canticle of the canon

³² In contrast to texts from later periods (particularly the Slav tradition), where numerous warriors and princes have been glorified as martyrs for their death in combat, such as the Great Prince George of Vladimir (February 4). As a rule, this remains limited to war against Muslim invaders.

service to one of the worst enemies of the Church is itself not condemned in his service; rather his ‘military insubordination’ is praised. “Having authority over the corruptible army of the criminal Emperor Julian, you were sent to kill the Christians,” the Church sings in his memory; “but you, O blessed one, protected them.”³³ Indeed, his position showed to be beneficial: “Through your military authority, you showed great mercy for the Christians... disregarding the instructions... and tortures imposed by the evil emperor.”³⁴ Similar was the case of the military commander Varus (Ouaros, October 19), with the difference that he did not peacefully retire from service like John but rather chose to follow a group of persecuted monks into martyrdom. “Seeing the unjust suffering of the battalion of holy passion-bearers,” the service says in a text attributed to Joseph the Hymnographer, “you showed commendable courage and joined them in their trials.”³⁵

Striking, also, is the case of Sebastian of Rome (December 18), a secret Christian who served as head of the imperial guard under the Emperors Diocletian and Maximian (284–305) during some of the fiercest persecutions the Church ever endured. Sebastian used his high position to assist imprisoned Christians, encouraging them not to betray Christ even in the face of death. His zeal converted not only the head of the prison but also many regular prisoners, creating a considerable Christian community within the prison walls. Denounced, Sebastian led his community on the way to martyrdom, as is sung during matins: “forward you led the honorable army, strengthened by the divine weapon of Faith...”³⁶

“Adore the emperor!”

Still such cases of ‘military insubordination’ of soldiers on duty are few. The vast majority of warrior saints are glorified for their refusal to adore the image of the emperor as a divinity, their subsequent ex-

³³ Matins, 4th troparion of the 3rd canticle of the canon.

³⁴ Vespers, 2nd sticheiron at the aposticha; doxastichon at “Lord, I cry”; Matins, 3rd troparion of the 1st canticle of the canon

³⁵ Matins, 2nd troparion of the 3rd canticle of the canon

³⁶ Matins, 1st troparion of the 3rd canticle of the canon

pulsion from the army and martyrdom. This also explains the small number of soldiers canonized after the adoption of Christianity as the religion of the empire. Bravery was still shown on the battlefield, but soldiers were no longer killed for being Christians.

Here we encounter another aspect of the glorification of warrior saints. Glorious in battle as they may have been, when asked to choose between God and the emperor, between the earthly empire and the heavenly Kingdom, experienced warriors and generals take down their military insignia and accept martyrdom. They share the inflexibility of the Hebrews in the face of idolatry, as sung beautifully in the service to the seven Maccabean martyrs. Service to God goes above serving the emperor and any other earthly bond.

In the service to St. Joasaph, Prince of India (November 19),³⁷ the saint, when requested by his pagan father to sacrifice to the idols out of respect for his grey hairs, answers, “Even if it were to honor my father, it would not be fitting to dishonor the True God.”³⁸ When “fighting for the earthly king” and “ordered to sacrifice to the demons,”³⁹ Mercurius, commander of the imperial army, threw down his military belt and cloak at the feet of the emperor and was tortured to death. Similar feats are glorified in the services to St. Eustratius (December 13), commander of Satalios near Sebastea under Diocletian (“taking off the belt of the earthly military, you gave yourself up to the true King”⁴⁰) and Sabas Stratelates (“having abandoned the belt and honors of your earthly rank, you confessed Christ God as King”⁴¹). Andreas Stratelates (August 19), martyred between 284 and 305 AD together with his army of 2,593 men, “abandoned the distinction of his earthly rank and inherited the heavenly Kingdom.”⁴²

Sometimes, what is stressed is the willingness to give up everything for Christ. In the service to the forty martyrs of Sebastea, St. John of

³⁷ The story of the life of this prince, who renounced the throne to become an ascetic, is considered by some scholars as a Christian adaptation by St. John of Damascus of the life of Buddha.

³⁸ Matins, kathisma (sessional hymn) after the second reading from the Psalter.

³⁹ Vespers, 3rd sticheira at “Lord, I call.”

⁴⁰ Matins troparion of the 1st canticle of the canon.

⁴¹ Troparion (apolytikion).

⁴² Troparion (apolytikion).

Damascus enumerates with a touch of compassion all that the saints left behind: “disdaining their military trade, lives, youthfulness and fortune, the glorious forty martyrs inherited Christ instead.”⁴³ Two high-ranking Roman soldiers in Syria, Sergius and Bacchus (October 7), refusing to sacrifice to the idols under Maximian (284–305), were stripped from their insignia and paraded through the streets in humiliating clothing. Exiled to the frontiers of Syria, they were tortured and beheaded. “Having been stripped of kindred, fatherland and honor for the sake of Christ,” we read, “you rejoiced.”⁴⁴

A special case is that of Gordius (January 3), a centurion who left the army when persecutions began in the early fourth century. “When all defiled themselves with marrow and blood [i.e. sacrificed to the idols],” St. Basil the Great writes in his homily on the day of the saint, “this courageous man threw down his military belts and left the city. Holding in contempt all power, all glory and wealth, kinship, friends or slaves . . . he withdrew in the most inaccessible desert, preferring to live with the animals rather than with idolaters.” These words are reflected in his service, where we read that “having heard the words of Christ, in rejoicing he left the corruptible army and was mobilized by the heavenly King.”⁴⁵ Also, the saint is hailed, “having left behind all earthly considerations and retired in the desert, O martyr, you obtained the heavenly life!”⁴⁶ In 320, Gordius returned from the desert to Caesarea, where he openly declared himself a Christian and was beheaded.

Some texts go further yet. They not only praise the choice for the heavenly over the earthly King but also underscore the inferior value of earthly armies. “You renounced the corruptible army that brings corruption (i.e. death), and loved the army of life to the end,”⁴⁷ is sung in memory of St. Theodore Tyro ‘the recruit’ (February 17; 1st Saturday of Great Lent), starved to death in 206 for refusing to sacrifice to the idols. The Great Martyr George the

⁴³ Matins, 1st troparion of the 3rd canticle of the canon.

⁴⁴ Matins, 3rd troparion of the 1st canticle of the canon.

⁴⁵ Matins, 1st troparion of the 4th canticle of the canon.

⁴⁶ Matins, 3rd troparion of the 3rd canticle of the canon.

⁴⁷ Matins of 17 February, 3rd troparion of the 6th canticle of the canon.

Victory-Bearer (April 23) “despised military service on earth, desiring to achieve heavenly glory.”⁴⁸ “No longer so you shed blood,” we read in the ikos of the kontakion of St. Theodore Stratelates, “but rather grant streams of healing.”

Most often, this rejection of the earthly military is not seen as an absolute disapproval but rather in the light of the antinomy ‘earthly-heavenly’ central to monastic thought. It is important to point out that almost all services in the Menaion were composed in the monastic centers of Palestine and Constantinople. “As a true soldier,” Artemius of Antioch is praised, “you loathed temporary wealth and dignity.”⁴⁹ Sergius and Bacchus “neglected earthly power,”⁵⁰ and the forty martyrs “abandoned the military trade of this world” to “unite with the Lord on high.”⁵¹ We find the very same terms in the services to Joasaph,⁵² Sabas Stratelates⁵³ and John the Soldier.⁵⁴ If participation in battle is in itself not considered an evil, there can be no doubt as to where the priorities lie when the choice is to be made between God and Caesar, between earthly and heavenly homeland.

One of the striking features of the services to the warrior saints is the absence of references to their earthly homeland as a religious value. There are numerous invocations of the saints asking their protection against the barbarians or incursions of the infidel. The conviction that the order of the empire is sustained by divine protection is certainly deep. The forty-two martyrs of Amoria (March 6), Byzantine prisoners of war killed in 845 for not accepting Islam, are called “pillars and succor of the Christian authority.”⁵⁵ “By the weapon of the life-giving Cross,” Constantine equal-to-the Apostles (May 21), “crushed all nations under the feet of the Romans.”⁵⁶ The terms we encounter are those of empire, authority and Christian rather than ethnic identity

⁴⁸ Matins, kathisma (sessional hymn) after the second reading of the Psalter.

⁴⁹ Matins, ikos of the kontakion.

⁵⁰ Vespers, 1st sticheira at “Lord, I cry.”

⁵¹ Matins, kontakion.

⁵² Matins, ikos of the kontakion.

⁵³ Matins, 2nd troparion of the 1st canticle of the canon.

⁵⁴ Vespers, 2nd sticheira at “Lord, I cry.”

⁵⁵ Matins, kontakion.

⁵⁶ Vespers, 1st sticheira of the aposticha.

or earthly homeland. Addressing the Mother of God, Constantinople is rather called ‘your city’ than ‘our city.’ Thessalonica is hailed, not for producing such a saint as Demetrius but for “possessing as a treasure in its bosom the (relics of the) all-renowned Demetrius.”⁵⁷ This is in noticeable contrast to services from the post-Byzantine era to saints from the various national traditions, where terms such as “lover of the fatherland,”⁵⁸ “force of our Orthodox nation,”⁵⁹ “protector of the fatherland”⁶⁰ or even “luminary of the state”⁶¹ abound. St. Mardarius (December 13), martyred together with St. Eustratius, called out before his torturers: “Christ is my homeland, my glory and my name!”⁶² When leaving the world, Joasaph of India declared: “My homeland is the heavenly Jerusalem,”⁶³ while the Maccabean martyrs say through John of Damascus, “Another world awaits us, higher and more lasting than the one we see. Our native land is Jerusalem, the mighty and indestructible. Our festival is life with the Angels!”⁶⁴

Soldiers of Christ

This becomes particularly clear when we look at the frequent use of the biblical imagery *Soldiers of Christ*⁶⁵ and the *armor of Faith*⁶⁶ for the warrior saints, as we saw in the fourth-century Latin hymns mentioned above. In her hymn to St. Eustratius of Sebastea, the hymnographer Cassia says he was “enrolled by God in the heavenly host,”⁶⁷ just as Gordius mentioned above. Mercurius of Caesarea is

⁵⁷ Vespers, 1st sticheira at liti, by George Sikeliotes.

⁵⁸ Matins of St. Sabas of Serbia (January 12), 6th troparion of the 9th canticle of the canon.

⁵⁹ Matins of St. Michael of Tver (November 22), 2nd troparion of the 1st canticle of the canon.

⁶⁰ Vespers of the icon of the Mother of God of Kazan (May 21), 3rd sticheira at “Lord, I cry.”

⁶¹ Vespers of St. Daniel of Moscow (March 4), troparion (apolytikion).

⁶² Matins, 1st and 5th troparia of the 6th canticle of the canon.

⁶³ Matins, kontakion.

⁶⁴ Vespers, doxastichon at “Lord, I cry.”

⁶⁵ Phil. 2:25; Philem. 1–2; 2 Tim. 2:3–6.

⁶⁶ 1 Thess. 5:8; 2 Cor. 6:4–7; Eph. 6:10–18; 1 Tim. 1:18.

⁶⁷ Matins, doxastichon at lauds.

called “a fierce warrior of Christ the King,”⁶⁸ just as Demetrius of Thessalonica,⁶⁹ Varus⁷⁰ and John the Soldier, who, “while fighting for the corruptible earthly king remained a faithful warrior of God.”⁷¹ Both Eustratius of Sebaste and Theodore Stratelates are called “commanders of the heavenly King.”⁷² St. Nazarius, Gervasius, Protasius and Celsius of Milan (October 14) are called “brave brothers in arms and heirs of the Kingdom on high, voluntarily giving themselves up to be sacrificed.”⁷³ The twenty thousand martyrs burned at Nicomedia in 302 (December 28) are glorified together with the commander Zenon (who rebuked the emperor for this massacre and was beheaded) as “the army of twenty thousand who were set ablaze with love for the Lord and martyred by fire.”⁷⁴

We find the “good fight” of 1 Tim. 1:18 applied to many saints, such as Eustratius and those with him who, “fighting the good fight, offered themselves to the eternal King.”⁷⁵ The same use can be found in the general troparion to the martyrs used in the orders of marriage and ordination: “O Holy martyrs, having fought the good fight and received your crowns; entreat the Lord to have mercy on our souls.”

The struggle of the warrior saints, consequently, is no longer one of flesh and blood (cf. Eph. 6:10). They join the heavenly hosts in the struggle against the demons whose service they have renounced. They now fight the “invisible enemy.”⁷⁶ “As a divine hero you have overcome the armies of the demons,”⁷⁷ is said of the Great Martyr George, while Theodore Stratelates “clothed his soul with the armor of faith, took up

⁶⁸ Matins, 2nd troparion of the 9th canticle of the canon.

⁶⁹ Matins, kathisma (sessional hymn) after the third reading from the Psalter.

⁷⁰ Matins, 3rd troparion of the 3rd canticle of the canon (by Joseph the Hymnographer).

⁷¹ Vespers, 1st sticheira at “Lord, I call.”

⁷² Matins, kathisma (sessional hymn) after the second reading from the Psalter; troparion (apolytikion).

⁷³ Vespers, 1st sticheira at “Lord, I cry.”

⁷⁴ Matins, kathisma (sessional hymn) after the 3rd canticle of the canon.

⁷⁵ Vespers, 4th sticheira and doxastichon at “Lord, I call.”

⁷⁶ Vespers of St. Eustratius and those with him (December 13), doxastichon at “Lord, I cry.”

⁷⁷ Great Vespers, 3rd sticheira at “Lord, I cry.”

the Word of God like a spear and conquered the enemy.”⁷⁸ John the Soldier, “wishing to please Christ the heavenly King, armed himself with Faith and proved to be a strong soldier through the power of His Cross.”⁷⁹ In this struggle, “faith is the armor and grace the shield,” we read in the services to the Great Martyr George.⁸⁰ And Andreas Stratelates and his men, by giving themselves up to be executed without resistance, “conquered the (invisible) enemy.”⁸¹

Conclusion: The Double Dimension of the Commemoration of Warrior Saints

From the quotes above, it is clear that, instead of making any definitive statements on war, peace and nationalism, the services to warrior saints of the Byzantine period reveal certain sensitivities, certain patterns that reflect a fundamental hierarchy of values. This hierarchy can be summarized as follows:

- The only mention of nations and nationalism is that of barbarian nations, sometimes specified, threatening the peace and order of the Christian commonwealth (*oikoumene*).
- The services express a deep conviction that the Christian empire exists according to the design of God and that it enjoys divine protection, particularly in times of war.
- Earthly homelands are protected by the prayers of the saints and sanctified by their relics, but not themselves seen as a source of sanctity.
- Enemies are taken on with violence, but martyrdom is accepted without self-defense.
- Heroism in war is acclaimed, but not as a sacred quality or a ground for holiness.
- Faithful service to the earthly king is commendable, but if orders go against the will of the Heavenly King, insubordination is to be preferred.

⁷⁸ Matins, kontakion; troparion (apolytikion).

⁷⁹ Vespers, 2nd sticheira at “Lord, I cry.”

⁸⁰ Small vespers, 3rd sticheira at “Lord, I cry.”

⁸¹ Matins, 3rd troparion of the 4th canticle of the canon.

- Even without causes for insubordination, the army of Christ is to be preferred to that of Caesar.
- Similarly, the heavenly homeland is to be preferred to the earthly.

Besides admirable poetry and impressive feats of martyrdom, the services to the ‘warrior saints’ of the Roman and Byzantine era demonstrate the complex paradox of a Christian empire and the double service of Christ and Caesar. While hailing feats ‘in the world,’ preference is expressed for all that is ‘not of this world.’

In this way, the liturgical services reflect the role of Orthodox monasticism in Byzantium, witnessing the Kingdom of God in counter-balance against possible absolutist temptations of the Empire. As Fr. John Meyendorff describes, “The Church always maintained the distinction between the priesthood and the empire, between the liturgical, sacramental, and eucharistic anticipation of the Kingdom on the one hand and the empirical life of still-fallen humanity on the other. This polarity between the ‘already now’ and the ‘not yet’ was also constantly proclaimed in the large and thriving Byzantine monastic movement, whose withdrawal from society and non-conformity to the standards imposed by the empire served constantly as a prophetic reminder that there cannot be total ‘harmony’ before the *parousia*,⁸² that the Roman Empire is not yet the Kingdom of God, that in order to share in Christ’s victory over the world, Christians must themselves challenge the laws and the logics of fallen humanity.”⁸³

What happens when this balance is disturbed and the Church, including its hymnographic creativity, is submitted to the state, can be seen in a very peculiar service (August 30 in the Russian Menaion) celebrating the 1709 peace treaty between Russia and Sweden following Peter the Great’s victory at Poltava. By the time the service was composed, Peter had abolished the Patriarchate and named himself head of the Holy Synod. The service hails Peter for enlightening the people of Russia in the art of maritime warfare and “adorning the

⁸² Gr. the second coming (presence) of Christ, cf. 1 Cor. 15:23.

⁸³ John Meyendorff, *The Christian Gospel and Social Responsibility*, in J. Meyendorff, *Rome, Constantinople, Moscow—Historical and Theological Studies*, Crestwood, NY, 1996, p. 177.

Baltic Sea with Russian ships.”⁸⁴ In the troparion (apolytikion) of the feast, modeled after the troparion of Pentecost, we read:

Blessed are you, Christ our God, who revealed us, who were ignorant in warfare, to be most wise, by giving us the strength and power of your grace. Having chosen a man according to your heart, our pious emperor Peter, You strengthened our troops with courage and through them gave peace to Russia: Lover of mankind, glory to you!

Such prayers are far removed from the ethos of the hymnography of the Byzantine period as we find it in the services quoted above. They stand in shrill contrast, for instance, to the hymns of Theodore Studite, the defender of icons who stood up against successive Byzantine emperors in order to protect the Church from state intervention. In the service of the first Monday of Great Lent, we find the following sticheira in memory of another army, the host of martyrs:

*Blessed is the army of the heavenly King! Though on earth they endured great sufferings, they achieved the rank of angels. They did not care for the flesh and became equals to the bodiless hosts. By their prayers, O Lord, save our souls.*⁸⁵

In the service of vespers on the same day, finally, we find another text by St. Theodore that underscores the fundamental combat to which martyrs, ascetics and all Christians are called:

Come, o faithful! With great fervor, having the mighty weapon of the fast as a shield, let us turn away all charms of the enemy. Let us not be scorched by the sweetness of our passions, nor fear the fires of temptations, for Christ the lover of mankind will crown us with honor for patience. Let us fall down, praying with boldness, and crying out, asking peace for our souls and great mercy.

⁸⁴ Matins, sticheira on “both now . . .” at lauds.

⁸⁵ Matins, 2nd sticheira at the aposticha.

CHAPTER SIX

Reference Texts *from Modern Authors*

PEACE

The Spirit of Peace

Acquire the spirit of peace, and thousands around you will be saved.

— St. Seraphim of Sarov, Valentina Zander, *St. Seraphim of Sarov*, Crestwood, NY, 1999.

Try yourself: one day ask God for brotherly love, and the next day live without love, and you will see the difference. The spiritual fruits of love are manifest — peace and joy in the soul, with all men dear to you. And you will shed abundant tears for your fellow-man and for every thing that has breath, and all creation.

— St. Silouan the Athonite, Archimandrite Sophrony,¹ *St. Silouan the Athonite*, Tolleshunt Knights 1991.

Jesus Christ declares that His mission is to cast fire upon the earth. This fire has come, and it is burning. It is the fire of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of grace and truth, of peace and joy, of justice and all embracing love. This Spirit has come. And where He breathes, there is freedom. “For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Cor. 3:17).

¹ Editor of the ‘Writings’ of St. Silouan the Athonite and author of several treatises on spiritual life, Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov) is considered by many as a saint.

The organization Syndesmos exists to be a 'bond' which binds together many men and movements in the single unity of the one divine Spirit, in the single burning flame of the one divine Fire. As a World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth, Syndesmos takes its name from the apostolic words: "Be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

The world is not in peace. Neither is it in unity. The spirit of this world, which burns from the black ghettos of Chicago to the streets of Paris, from the Holy Land in the Middle East to the jungles of Africa, this spirit is not the Spirit of unity and peace. It is not a bond that can pacify and unite. It is a barrier, which can only divide and destroy.

But the firm belief of Syndesmos, and its only reason for existence, is that there is a Spirit, not as this world gives, which is a power, a unity and a peace. There is a Spirit, which can burn in men and movements and can empower them to go beyond every spirit of this world. This is the Spirit, which Christ gives, the fire that He has cast upon the earth. And Syndesmos desires, as its only consuming desire, to be alive and burning with this spiritual fire.

— Albert Laham, "Introductory Message," *Jesus Christ in a Changing World — Report of the VII Syndesmos General Assembly*, Rattvik 1968.

Peacemaking

If the kings and rulers of the nations knew the love of God, they would never make war. War happens to us for our sins, not because of our love. The Lord created us in His love, and bade us live in love, and glorify Him. (...)

If those in high places kept the commandments of the Lord, and we obeyed them in humility, there would be great peace and gladness on earth, whereas now the whole universe suffers because of the ambition for power and absence of submission among the proud.

— St. Silouan the Athonite, Archimandrite Sophrony, *St. Silouan the Athonite*, Tolleshunt Knights, 1991.

Whether we are Christians, Moslems or Jews, we are children of God and our efforts as peacemakers will be blessed and rewarded by the one God whom we share as common Creator.

— Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, “Remarks at the Conference on New Leadership and the Promise of Peace,” October 15, 2000.

If we live as people of God, there will be room for all nations in the Balkans and in the world. If we liken ourselves to Cain who killed his brother Abel, then the entire earth will be too small even for two people. The Lord Jesus Christ teaches us to be always children of God and love one another. We should remember the words of St. Paul: “If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men.”

— Patriarch Pavle of the Serbian Orthodox Church [during the wars that followed the disintegration of Yugoslavia].

Nonviolence and Martyrdom

Staretz Silouan spent many years in prayer for the world and — we do not know how — God apprised him that so long as such love and prayer continues in the world, God will preserve the world, but when love for enemies vanishes off the face of the earth, then the world will perish in the flames of universal discord.

The way of the Staretz is the way of the saints as appointed by Christ Himself, but the world as a whole has not accepted it. To fight against evil manifest alike on the physical plane, people have recourse to physical force. Even Christians often adopt this course. In the Middle Ages, the Western Church found dogmatic justification for physical fighting against evil, and even to this day has not recanted. Then it was the “Holy Inquisition.” Now it takes other forms which nevertheless in their spiritual reality remain the same. The history of the Orthodox Church, past and present, right up to our own day reveals frequent instances of leaning towards the idea of physical combat against evil, though fortunately confined to individual prelates or ecclesiastical groups. The Orthodox Church herself has not only declined to bless or to impose these measures but has always

followed in the steps of the crucified Christ, Who took upon Himself the burden of the sins of the world.

— Archimandrite Sophrony, *St. Silouan the Athonite*, Tolleshunt Knights, 1991.

Prayer for enemies

The Lord bade us to love our enemies, and the man who loves his enemies is like to the Lord. But we can only love our enemies by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and so as soon as anyone affronts you, pray to God for him, and then you will preserve peace in your soul, and the grace of God. (...)

Peace in our souls is impossible unless we beg the Lord with all our hearts to give us love for all men. The Lord knew that if we did not love our enemies, we should have no peace of soul, and so He gave us the commandment, “Love your enemies.” Unless we love our enemies, we shall only now and then be easy, as it were, in our souls; but if we love our enemies, peace will dwell in us day and night. (...)

Though a man pray much, and fast, but has no love for his enemies, he can know no peace of soul. And I should not even be able to speak of this, had not the Holy Spirit taught me love.

— St. Silouan the Athonite, Archimandrite Sophrony, *Saint Silouan the Athonite*, Tolleshunt Knights, 1991.

Killing and Bloodshed

The rivers of blood of our brothers, shed mercilessly at your orders, cry out to heaven and press us to speak to you a bitter word of truth. (...) Celebrate your anniversary in power by liberating the prisoners, by stopping bloodshed, violence, destruction, the restriction of faith; turn not to destruction, but to the establishment of order and lawfulness, grant the people the desired and well-deserved rest from civil war. Or else all just blood that you have shed shall be required from you (Luke 11:51), and from the sword you shall perish, who have taken up the sword (Matt. 26:52).

— St. Tikhon of Moscow, “Letter to the Council of People’s Commissars,

October 13/26, 1918,” L. Regelson, *The Tragedy of the Russian Church (1917–1945)*, Paris, 1976 (in Russian).

Bloodshed always calls for new blood. And vengeance — for new revenge. Building on enmity means building on a volcano. There will be an explosion, and once more there will be an empire of destruction and death...

— St. Tikhon of Moscow, “Appeal to the flock of the Russian Orthodox Church to abstain from violence against the persecutors of the Church, July 8/21, 1919,”² L. Regelson, *The Tragedy of the Russian Church (1917–1945)*, Paris, 1976 (in Russian).

Not only the Jews crucified Christ. By their acts, Christians, or those who call themselves Christians, have in the long course of history crucified Christ, they have crucified Him by their anti-Semitism as well, they have crucified Him by their hate and their acts of violence, by their service to the powerful of this world, by their changes and deformations of the truth of Christ in the name of their own interests. (...) It is better when Christ is directly and openly denied, than when His name is used as a cover to act in the interests of one’s own kingdom. When people curse and persecute Jews for having crucified Christ, they clearly stand on the point of view of blood feuds, which was characteristic of ancient peoples, including the Jewish people. But blood feuds are absolutely unacceptable for the Christian consciousness; it fully contradicts the Christian understanding of human personality, of personal dignity and personal responsibility. Moreover, the Christian consciousness accepts no form of vengeance, either personal or hereditary. Feelings of vengeance are sinful and we should repent for them. Heredity, blood, vengeance — all this is completely alien to pure Christianity and is introduced into it from outside, from ancient paganism.

— Nicholas Berdyaev, *Christianity and Anti-Semitism (The Religious Destiny of Judaism)*, New York, 1954.

² This letter refers to pogroms in the parts of Russia re-conquered by the White armies during the civil war.

Spiritual Warfare

The greatest and most perfect thing a man may desire to attain is to come near to God and dwell in union with Him. (...)

In order to succeed in this, you must constantly oppose all evil in yourself and urge yourself towards good. In other words, you must ceaselessly fight against yourself and against everything that panders to your own wills, that incites and supports them. So prepare yourself for this struggle and this warfare and know that the crown — attainment of your desired aim — is given to one except to the valiant among warriors and wrestlers.

But if this is the hardest of all wars — since, in fighting against ourselves, it is in ourselves that we meet opposition — victory in it is the most glorious of all; and, what is the main thing, it is most pleasing to God. (...)

Finally, after learning what constitutes Christian perfection and that to achieve it you must wage a constant cruel war with yourself, if you really desire to be victorious in this unseen warfare and be rewarded with a crown, you must plant in your heart the following four dispositions and spiritual activities, as it were arming yourself with invisible weapons, the most trustworthy and unconquerable of all, namely: a) never rely on yourself in anything; b) always bear in your heart a perfect and all-daring trust in God alone; c) strive without ceasing; and d) remain constantly in prayer.

— *Unseen Warfare*, as edited by St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain and revised by St. Theophan the Recluse.

For the first time, doubt took hold of my heart. The territory of France, its expanse in space and time is restricted, limited. Is there another stronghold, another soil, unchanging and fixed forever, a space impenetrable by enemy invasions? Has it not been said: “Do not fear enemies who can kill only the body, but rather fear those who, with the body, kill your soul?” Therefore, our only expanse free of enemy invasions, our only vital space, infinite in its richness

and forces, we find in God. And thus our combat will be transposed to another terrain, it will become unlimited in new resources, forgotten for centuries but always present in our spiritual sub-soil. And then it will no longer be a material war which we will have lost, it will not even be the human war we have not yet lost, but which we may lose (for though man may well be a hero, he always remains limited in his forces); it will be an interior combat where God will fight on our side, against ourselves in a purifying and salutatory combat.

— Vladimir Lossky, *Seven Days on the Roads of France (June 1940)*³, Paris, 1998 (in French).

If, after all, we were losing this war, after having begged God to grant us victory in name of His Justice, what would there remain to be said? One out of two things: either our cause was not the just cause, or God is unjust. (...) Yes, He is unjust, if you please, because He is greater than justice, because His justice is not our justice, because His ways are not our ways. Because in face of His justice, which one day will immerse the foundations of the universe, our poor justice is nothing else than injustice. (...) We should have prayed for victory bearing in mind this formidable justice, in the face of which we are always unjust, with tears and great contrition: we should have invoked not Justice, which is beyond our measure, which we could not have endured, but infinite mercy, which has made the Son of God descend from heavens.

— Vladimir Lossky, *Seven Days on the Roads of France (June 1940)*, Paris, 1998 (in French).

³This book, published in 1988, contains the notes taken by one of the leading Orthodox theologians of the 20th century, Vladimir Lossky, during his attempts to join the retreating French army in June 1940. The present paragraph denounces the ‘heresy’ of those who tried, during those first days of the war, to reduce the war to “an industrial enterprise, a matter of capital.”

ORTHODOXY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Religious and National Identity

From a dogmatic and mystical point of view, the issue of Church and national identity is merely part of the great question of the way the Church relates with human history and cultural creativity. However strange this may seem, after two thousand years of Christian history this question, despite its gravity and topicality, has not yet found a conciliar answer within the Church. It has not found it, because it has not been raised in the Church. It has not been raised, because it has not been envisaged. (...)

The Eastern Orthodox non-humanistic world-view experiences the tragedy of the “refusal of the world” with incomparably greater strength [than Western Christianity]. Orthodox consciousness and the mysticism of Orthodox piety are deeply and essentially ascetic. The spirit of Palestinian, apostolic, eschatological Christianity, torn away from the concerns of history and resurrected in the spirit of monastic asceticism, still dominates in the heart of Orthodoxy. The century-long national-political interconnectedness of Orthodox churches with Byzantine-style states did not shatter this intimate non-historicity of Orthodoxy. (...)

This radical asceticism of Orthodoxy seems to have little in common with its factual visible history as a confession which is linked primarily, with almost pagan naivety to the life of specific nations, states and cultures. This cannot be explained by some positive inspiration of Orthodox mysticism and Orthodox ascetic piety on the tasks of human earthly history, but rather by a certain weakness and defenselessness of asceticism as such in all its forms. Christian asceticism knows an element of refusal of violent defense against evil. (...)

The Church should consider the values of national life according to the elementary analogy of the primacy of the spirit over the flesh. For Christianity, all is in second place to the mysteries of Divine Revelation and the aims of the Kingdom of God. All other values are

secondary and subject to spiritual and godly life, which is guarded by the Church. Lesser, relative values stand in opposition of the one greater and absolute value. The value of national origin is indisputable as well as the value of the self-affirmation of every individual personality, but they are relative values, easily changing into sinful egoism. They find their justification in their submission to the rule of absolute measures, the measures of the Church. From this point of view, relative values are unstable. In the judgment of the Church, they may change into negative entities. Personal, natural egoism as well as national self-affirmation may form a relative good change, as a result of an orientation away from Christianity, into evil paganism.

What do we see in the reality of today? The patriarchal times, when the national life of peoples would flourish and prosper under the good influence of the Church, have gone forever. The 19th and particularly the 20th century have proved to be centuries of a new and stormy flourishing of national enthusiasms, but in a secular, lay and often simply an anti-Christian spirit. The recent self-affirming pathos of all small nations, not only in Europe but on all continents, is nothing but pagan nationalism. Nineteenth-century nationalism, although pagan in essence, in the great European nations still was only neutral in regard to the Church; it was anti-clerical and anti-Church only as a result of practical and tactical clashes with the organized forces of the Church. (...) In the 20th century, we witness a rather unexpected solidification of this anti-Christian lay spirit in some sort of religious paganism, with its own sort of mysticism, diametrically opposed to Christianity. Such is German racism with its resurrection of the religion of Thor, Odin and Wodan, and Italian Fascism with its hysteric and artificial idolatry of the state and the physical Rome. (...)

In the face of this primitive and spiritually war-waging nationalism in the spirit of racism and fascism, the Church already has no grounds whatsoever for noble concessions. She is obliged to wage a tense war, if even defensive, against this demonic and perverse nationalism. (...)

The organizational task of the Orthodox churches is the gathering of the individual autocephalous churches, spread over tiny

national areas, *de facto* submitted and sometimes enslaved by the state, into organized conciliar unions, capable of lifting up individual churches somewhat above the level of their nations. Fragmented as it is, Orthodoxy, particularly in our 'communist' and 'fascist' time, which loses no time being kind to any, let alone religious freedom, must hastily acquire some extra-territorial strength in its great ecclesial 'monarchies' and ecumenical councils, as prescribed by the canons. The present moment demands for the Orthodox East to re-enter into the conciliar practice, mutual contact and extra-territorial unification, as a start by means of permanent inter-conciliar synods. This need is prescribed by the tasks of the Church as regards national life and the new dangers in this field, which appear out of the forces of pagan nationalism.

— Anton Kartashov, *The Church and National Identity*, Paris, 1934 (in Russian).

While economic logic pushes in the direction of globalization, interdependence and regional integration, political logic moves, in numerous regions, towards national fragmentation. This process is not accompanied by the decline of nationalisms. We are obliged to note that the global market and the universal *Homo economicus* do not dissolve distinctive ethnic identities, either intra-national or supra-natural.

The paradox of globalization, accompanying the development of a society of consumption and planet-wide entertainment, is that in producing homogenization and uniformization it exacerbates the need for distinction and recognition. The more individuals—and peoples—look alike, the more they will seek to underline their differences. The smaller the real differences are, the more their significance is underlined. To deny a similarity with the other may serve as a means for resurrecting a lost distinctive feature.

Citizenship is less and less a space for free encounters between persons. Men and women are often reduced to the roles assigned to them by the forces of the market or by those of neo-tribalism: from the one side, individuals defined by their needs and consumer ca-

pacities, from the other, the subjection of the individual to the interests — often pretended — of a community which is structured, in its head, by opposition to others.

Between relativist consumerism, including the religious level, and the re-appearance of ethnic or communitarian fanaticism, Orthodoxy is called to make its way to the future.

— Tarek Mitri,⁴ “Reflections on the Orthodox Identity in Today’s World,” Speech at the X Congress of the Orthodox Fellowship in Western Europe, Paray-le-Monial, 1999.

Movements for the reaffirmation of religious identity have undergone a considerable change between 1975 and 1990. In fifteen years, they have succeeded in transforming the confused reaction of their adherents to the ‘crisis of modernity’ into plans for rebuilding the world, and in those plans, their holy scriptures provide the basis for tomorrow’s society. These movements have arisen in a world that has lost the assurance born in scientific and technological progress since the 1950s. Just as the barriers of poverty, disease and inhuman working conditions seemed to be yielding, the population explosion, the spread of AIDS, pollution and the energy crises burst upon the scene — and all of these scourges lent themselves to presentation in apocalyptic terms. During the same period, the great atheist messianic ideology of the twentieth century, communism, which had left its mark on most of the social utopias, went into its death throes, and finally succumbed in the autumn of 1989 when its most potent symbol, the Berlin Wall, was destroyed.

The Christian, Jewish and Muslim movements we have been observing are to be viewed in this dual perspective. Their first task was to fix labels on to the confusion and disorder in the world as perceived by their adherents, breathing fresh life into the vocabulary and the categories of religious thought as applied to the contempo-

⁴Tarek Mitri is Professor of Sociology at Balamand Orthodox University in Lebanon and Head of the Office on Inter-Religious Relations of the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

rary world. Next they conceived plans for changing the social order so as to bring it into line with the commands and values of the Old Testament, the Koran or the Gospels; for as they saw it, nothing else could ensure the advent of a world of justice and truth.

These movements have a great deal in common beyond mere historical simultaneity. They are at one in rejecting a secularism that they trace back to the philosophy of the Enlightenment. They regard the vainglorious emancipation of reason from faith as the prime cause of all the ills of the twentieth century, the beginning of a process leading straight to Nazi and Stalinist totalitarianism.

This radical challenge to the foundations of secular modernism is uttered by its own children, who have had access to today's education. They see no contradiction between their mastery of science and technology and their acceptance of faith not bounded by the tenets of reason. In fact, people like Herman Branner consciously symbolize the fact that a 'God fearing Jew' can also be a 'great scientist.' And the self-image favored by Islamist militants is that of a girl student, muffled in a veil with only a slit for the eyes, bent over a microscope and doing research in biology.

All these movements agree that the modern secular city is now completely lacking in legitimacy. But while Christians, Muslims and Jews all consider that only a fundamental transformation in the organization of society can restore the holy scriptures as the prime source of inspiration for the city of the future, they have differing ideas of what that city will be like. Each of these religious cultures has developed specific truths, which, insofar as they provide the basis for a strong reapportionment of identity, are mutually exclusive.

— Gilles Kepel, *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Modern World*, University Park, PA, 1994.

Love for Earthly Homelands

Have love for the earthly homeland. (...) It has raised, distinguished, honored and equipped you with everything. But have special love for

the heavenly homeland (...). That homeland is incomparably more precious than this one, because it is holy, righteous and incorruptible. The priceless blood of the Son of God has earned that homeland for you. But in order to be members of that homeland, you should respect and love its laws, just as you are obliged to respect and really respect the laws of the earthly homeland.

— St. John of Kronstadt, *My Life in Christ*, Jordanville, 1997.

You have exchanged the notion of the motherland for a vacuous internationalism, although you know very well that when it comes to defending the motherland, the proletarians of all nations will be its faithful sons, not its traitors.

— St. Tikhon of Moscow, “Letter to the Council of People’s Commissars, October 13/26, 1918,” L. Regelson, *The Tragedy of the Russian Church (1917–1945)*, Paris, 1976 (in Russian).

Ethnophyletism

Ethnophyletism is a phenomenon that arose at the end of the 19th and the 20th centuries, a product of the Enlightenment and the French revolution. It was the new political theory on the basis of which the nation-states of Europe were created, in particular those of the Balkan peninsula. This theory is, alas, still being applied in the Balkans today, with its familiar disastrous consequences on the lives of the people of the region and on peace.

The idea of ‘the nation’ in the historical sources, in the lives of ordinary people and in the formation of states before the 18th century, i.e. before the French revolution, did not have the ethnophyletic meaning attributed to it today. In antiquity and until the 18th–19th centuries, ‘the nation’ was defined by religion and culture, not by race. This was the politico-religious theory of the Persians, of the Ancient Greeks, of the pagan Romans and also of the Christian Romans (Byzantines), as well as of the Jews (as it still is to this day), and of the Muslims. When the latter, Arabs first and then later the Ottomans, conquered Roman (‘Byzantine’) countries and territories,

they applied an administration ‘by nations’ (*millet*), i.e. by religious communities, not by race. The religious leaders of the communities within the Muslim states were also *ethnarchs* of these communities. So the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople was also the *ethnarch* of the Orthodox Christian ‘nation’ within the Ottoman Empire, irrespective of race or language, as were the other patriarchs, metropolitans and other bishops locally. The Sultan/Caliph was the *ethnarch* of the Muslims, irrespective of the particular race, and so on.⁵ The ideas of the French Revolution (1789) and of the Enlightenment created, as has been said, a new political theory, which ignored religion or culture as elements shaping communities and administrative units. States were now formed according to this dominant theory, on the basis of *ethnophyletic* criteria — either those already in existence or, mainly, those invented by means of politics or propaganda — with all the sad consequences we know today (ethnic cleansing and so on). Of course, for Christ and His Church, “there is neither Jew nor Greek ... for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

— Metropolitan Panteleimon (Rodopoulos) of Tyroloi and Serention, “*The Phenomenon of Ethnophyletism in Recent Years*.”⁶

In the midst of the confusion of the last two centuries, it was inevitable that the traditional Orthodox values would be severely tested. The new nations in the Balkans, whose cultural identity the Orthodox Church had maintained for centuries of Turkish yoke, had gained their political independence in an atmosphere of secularized Romanticism, which was itself a fruit of the French Revolution. The *nation* itself, not the Christian eschatological and christological ideas, came to be seen as the supreme goal of social action. The Church was frequently un-

⁵ Cf. Sir Stephen Runciman, *The Orthodox Churches and the Secular State*, p. 26 ff. Auckland Oxford 1971. On the meaning of ‘Nation’ in the sacred canons, see Canon 34 of the Apostles, which is repeated in Canon 9 of the Synod in Antioch. See also the interpretation of Zonaras on this. ‘Nation’ in the sacred canons means a metropolitan province as geographical boundaries.

⁶ Paper read at the International Congress of Canon Law, Budapest, September 2–7, 2001.

able either to cope with the situation or to discern the spiritual issues at stake. The hierarchs, whose traditional role as 'ethnarchs' placed them originally at the forefront of the liberation struggle, soon accepted the comfortable position of obedient civil servants in states led by secularized politicians. Mistaking the new situation for a return to Byzantine theocracy, they identified the interests of the Church with that of secular nationalism. The Church condemned this identification in an official statement (1872), labeling it as the heresy of 'phyletism.' But the temptation of religious nationalism remains one of the most basic weaknesses of contemporary Orthodoxy. In fact, it represents a capitulation before a subtle form of secularism, which Byzantium with its universal idea of the empire always avoided.

— Fr. John Meyendorff, "The Christian Gospel and Social Responsibility," J. Meyendorff, *Rome, Constantinople, Moscow: Historical and Theological Studies*, Crestwood, NY, 1996.

When we speak of nationalism in Church circles, we are faced with a symbiosis that in first sight seems self-contradictory. But if we look more carefully, we will see that today in our ecclesial practice nationalism — including anti-Semitism — is not an accidental phenomenon.

The reason for this is a process of secularization in Church circles and their association with various partisan ideologies. Nationalism is, therefore, typical to some clergy and parishioners in the same way as conservatism or liberalism is to others, and it is often closely related to fundamentalism and national messianism.

The Orthodox Church has contributed to the survival of the national identity of many nations. This was particularly evident during the Ottoman occupation of the Balkans. But from the 19th century to the present day — when nationalism assumed a pseudo-religious character for many Europeans — the national question became a problem for peace in Europe, as well as in the Church. In the Church, it was always linked with the substitution of theology by ideology.

At the end of the 20th century, nationalism in any society is one of the colors of the ideological spectrum, but in Church circles, it

is a sign of secularization and apostasy from the principles of the Gospel.

— Final Document of the Syndesmos Consultation on Nationalism & Culture in the Orthodox Church, St. Petersburg, Russia, 1994 (excerpt).

Ethnophyletism and Orthodox Unity

Nationalism is a form of collective individualism. In times such as ours, when this collective individualism is strong, we, Christians, should weaken it and incite, instead, feelings of humanity, of *ecumenicity*, of catholicity. What a pity it is that we, the Orthodox, cannot succeed in convoking an ecumenical council. Our Church, permeated by paganism and phyletism, has failed yet to create its own “Lambeth Conference.”⁷ Moreover, we will not create such a conference given our fragmentation. We have not even succeeded in convoking a pan-Orthodox synod.

— Dr. Panayiotis Bratsiotis, Proceedings of the pan-Orthodox consultation on religious education in Dassel (Germany), June 1936 (in Russian; see Case Study 8).

As well as being a perversion of normal patriotic sentiment, racism is a real obstacle to cooperation between the Orthodox churches in the world and the worst enemy of the unity of the churches of the Orthodox East.

The predominance in the locally formed churches of the national character must be seen as responsible for (...) the dividing of peoples and churches. In principle, such a division does not contradict the spirit of Christianity. But the principle of division by race, which came to prevail widely, assumed its worst possible form among some of these groups: that of pure racism or chauvinism, the worst enemy of peace, which destroys unity between the local Orthodox churches.⁸ (...)

⁷ Worldwide conferences of the Bishops of the Anglican communion.

⁸ Schmemmann writes that “Admitting the positive value of nationalism in Christianity, we must not fall into the trap of idealizing history, fixing our eyes

In reality, the Church organization is based not on autocephaly, but chiefly on the principle that one bishop stands for one church in one place. This, the local principle, makes quite plain by the unity and concord of the local church the unity of the new People of God, in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, but a new creation in Christ.

— Metropolitan Maximus of Sardes, *The Ecumenical Patriarchate in the Orthodox Church*, Thessaloniki, 1976.

Orthodox often speak and think in terms of Orthodox countries and of an Orthodox ‘diaspora,’ implying a ‘normal’ situation in the first case and a sort of transitional, peripheral existence in the second. The situation is harmful for two reasons. First it shows an obvious lack of historical realism. Neither the new secular societies established in Eastern Europe, nor the Orthodox communities of the Middle East, nor even Greece, can be seen today as Orthodox Christian societies in the traditional and accepted sense of the word. Practically, the Church represents a minority in all these areas, and in some of them, this Orthodox minority has all the sociological

on the light, and shutting out what is dark. The progress and earthly life of the Church is not an idyll. On the contrary, it requires struggles and a vigilant ecclesial conscience ... The danger of nationalism lies in its subconsciously altering the hierarchy of values, so that the nation no longer serves Christian justice, truth or itself, and no longer evaluates its life in accordance with these qualities. Instead, Christianity itself and the Church begin to be assessed and evaluated by the extent to which they serve the state, the nation, etc.” (A. Schmemmann, “Tserkov’ i tserkovnoye ustroistvo”: *Messenger de l’Exarchat du Patriarche Russe en Europe Occidentale*, March 1949, XIV). H. Alivizatos was no less perceptive when he wrote: “National and nationalistic theories and an exaggerated emphasis upon nationalism in the Church have caused the individual autocephalous churches to commit unacceptable acts which destroy the ecclesiastical organism by simply making it share the nationalistic inclinations of their own people ... There is no doubt that exaggerated stress upon national churches has been detrimental to the integrity of Orthodoxy, and the various churches’ unrestricted involvement in national antagonisms has damaged the great basic principles of the Orthodox consciousness in the whole of ecclesiastical life and has deeply and seriously wounded the internal unity of Orthodoxy” (H. Alivizatos, *Peri tis enotitos en tis orthodoxo Ekklesia*, pp. 169–170).

characteristics of a foreign diaspora quite detached from its immediate milieu. (...)

The second aspect that must lead the Orthodox to abandon the opposition between the purportedly 'native' Orthodoxy and the diaspora is that this opposition represents a grave theological mistake. The word 'diaspora' refers to an Old Testament concept. In the Old Testament, God acted through the mediation of a 'chosen people,' Israel, to whom He granted the promised land of Canaan, where Solomon built a temple and where the Messiah was to establish His reign. The Chosen People were called to cultivate this land and possess it, and any exile from it was seen as cursed by divine wrath. But the actual coming of the Messiah, born in Bethlehem and crucified outside Jerusalem's walls, revealed to humanity a new 'promised land' in heaven, a new Jerusalem, expected to come "all prepared" (Rev. 21:2), and showed the whole world to be a mission field. "Believe me," said Jesus to the Samaritan woman, "the hour is coming when you shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father ... when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (John 4:21–24). Where is the 'diaspora' then?

The only acceptable answer to this question is that all Christians, whether they find themselves in Jerusalem or in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, are in diaspora, and that they reach the promised land only within the eschatological anticipation of the Eucharist and of prayer. Like the Jews of the diaspora, they are anywhere in the world, "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Pet. 2:11), having "no continuing city" and seeking the "one to come" (Heb. 13:14), but also knowing that in Christ, and only in Him, they are "no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God" (Eph. 2:19). This is why the technical term 'diaspora' is used in the New Testament only in the traditional Jewish Old Testament sense (John 7:35; James 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:1), and it never appears in Orthodox canon law.

Indeed, was it not St. Paul's major preoccupation to affirm that the new Churches established by him in the midst of the pagan world

were fully fledged Churches, recognizing their spiritual ancestry in the Mother Church of Jerusalem, but in no way inferior to her in terms of the power of the spirit and the presence of Christ wherever two or three gathered in His name (Matt. 18:20)? Orthodox canonical texts all aim at accommodating the fundamental structure of the Church to changing political and social circumstances, but never compromise the essential principle that the Church, as such, comes first. St. Paul, when the Corinthians wanted to split their community into several Eucharistic assemblies, indignantly asked the question: "Is Christ divided?" (1 Cor. 1:13). Similarly, the canons upheld the unity of the Church in every place; this was a way of maintaining Christians in their quality of 'sojourners and pilgrims' and of reminding them that their true 'dispersion' (*diaspora*) is a separation from the Kingdom of God, not from some earthly cultural home.

I fully understand, of course, that the word 'diaspora' is used colloquially, and does not carry with it any conscious betrayal of the fundamental Christian vocation to be citizens of God's Kingdom. Furthermore, I do not want at all to minimize the spiritual riches and vigor of such authentic Orthodox 'roots' as can be found in traditional Orthodox piety in Greece or in Russia and which stand in such obvious contrast to the shallowness found in so many Westernized communities of the 'diaspora.' I am only speaking of the unconscious spiritual mistake, so often made, which consists of envisaging the present and the future of Orthodoxy as inseparably bound either to vestiges of a Byzantine political system, or to its illegitimate child, the secularized ethnic identification between nation and Church, occurring in the nineteenth century in Eastern Europe and the Balkans.

— Fr. John Meyendorff, "Mission, Unity, Diaspora," J. Meyendorff, *Living Tradition*, Crestwood, NY, 1978.⁹

⁹ First published in the *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 17/1 (1972), pp. 41–50. Published with kind permission of the *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*.

Racism

We receive rumors about pogroms against Jews, the beating of a race without concern for age, guilt, sex or convictions. Angered by the circumstances of life, man searches scapegoats for his mishap, and in order to throw upon them his offences, pain and suffering hits out so hard, that under the strikes of his hand, blinded by the thirst of vengeance, many innocent victims fall.

— St. Tikhon of Moscow, “Appeal to the flock of the Russian Orthodox Church to abstain from violence against the persecutors of the Church, July 8/21, 1919,”¹⁰ L. Regelson, *The Tragedy of the Russian Church (1917–1945)*, Paris, 1976 (in Russian).

The fight against national extremism within the Church is both tragic and difficult. In this struggle, Church people should soar like the eagle of the Apostle John, be brave like the lion of the Apostle Mark, diligent like the oxen of the Apostle Luke and wise like the angel of the Apostle Matthew. There should be no fear to confess one’s faith as the only value, as the first value.

— Fr. John Shakhovskoy, “*Proceedings of the pan-Orthodox consultation on religious education in Dassel, Germany, June 1936*” (in Russian; see Case Study 8).

For us Christians, the ‘Jewish issue’ is by no means a question of whether the Jews are good or bad, but a question of whether we Christians are good or bad. From a Christian point of view, racist anti-Semitism is absolutely intolerable; it clashes in an unequivocal manner with the universality of Christianity. Modern racism means de-christening and de-humanization, a return to barbarism and paganism (...)

There have always been two races in the world; they exist today, and this division is more important than all other divisions. There are those who crucify and those who are crucified, those that op-

¹⁰This letter refers to pogroms in the parts of Russia re-conquered by the White armies during the civil war.

press and those who are oppressed, those who hate and those who are hated, those who inflict suffering and those who suffer, those who persecute and those who are persecuted. It needs no explanation on whose side Christians should be.

— Nicholas Berdyaev, *Christianity and Anti-Semitism (The Religious Destiny of Judaism)*, New York, 1954.

The Orthodox Church believes that God “out of one man created every nation to live on all the face of the earth” (Acts 17:26) and that, in Christ, “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one” (Gal. 3:28). In agreement with its faith, the Orthodox Church refuses all forms of racial discrimination, since they presuppose an unequal appreciation of human races and a hierarchy of rights.

— Statement of the Third Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Consultation in Chambéry (1986) on “The Contribution of the Orthodox Church to the realization of the Christian ideals of peace, justice, freedom, fraternity and love between the nations as well as to the elimination of racial and other forms of discrimination” (see Case Study 2).

Man was created in the image and likeness of God—and there can be no different standard of treatment for those human beings who happen to be in Asia, another for Africans, and yet another for Europeans. Culture may be relative—humanity is not.

— Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Address to the Conference of Peace and Tolerance in Istanbul, Turkey, February 8, 1994.

Conflict Between Ethnic and Religious Communities

The point of view idea that there is a latent conflict between Islam and Christianity in Kosovo, and that this conflict has become one of the causes of the war, is completely wrong. Those responsible for this crisis have not acted in the name of a given religion. On the contrary, they have been raised and educated under a regime that had a deep contempt for religion. On the other hand, everyone knows that the vast majority of the NATO member countries belong to the Christian

tradition. It is very dangerous to exploit religious ideas and words in armed conflict.

— Archbishop Anastasios of Albania, extract from an appeal, “We pray God that peace and justice may once more reign in the Balkans,” issued in Tirana in 1999.

Civilization identity will be increasingly important in the future, and the world will be shaped in large measures by the interaction among seven or eight major civilizations. These include Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and possibly African civilization. The most important conflicts of the future will occur along the cultural fault lines separating these civilizations from one another. (...)

The processes of economic modernization and social change throughout the world are separating people from long-standing local identities. They also weaken the nation state as a source of identity. In much of the world, religion has moved in to fill this gap, often in the form of movements that are labeled ‘fundamentalist.’ Such movements are found in Western Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism, as well as in Islam. In most countries and most religions, the people active in fundamentalist movements are young, college-educated, middle-class technicians, professionals and businesspersons. The “unsecularization of the world,” Georges Weigel has remarked, “is one of the dominant social facts of life in the late twentieth century.” The revival of religion, the “*révanche de Dieu*,” as Gilles Kepel labeled it, provides a basis for identity and commitment that transcends national boundaries and unites civilizations. (...)

Cultural characteristics and differences are less mutable and hence less easily compromised and resolved than political and economic ones. In the former Soviet Union, communists can become democrats, the rich can become poor and the poor rich, but Russians cannot become Estonians and Azeris cannot become Armenians. In class and ideological conflicts, the key question was “Which side are you on?” and people could and did choose sides and change sides. In

conflicts between civilizations, the question is “What are you?” That is a given that cannot be changed. And as we know, from Bosnia to the Caucasus to the Sudan, the wrong answer to that question can mean a bullet in the head. Even more than ethnicity, religion discriminates sharply and exclusively among people. A person can be half-French and half-Arab and simultaneously even a citizen of two countries. It is more difficult to be half-Catholic and half-Muslim. (...)

As people define their identity in ethnic and religious terms, they are likely to see an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ relation existing between themselves and people of different ethnicity and religion. The end of ideologically defined states in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union permits traditional ethnic identities and animosities to come to the fore. (...)

The fault lines between civilizations are replacing the political and ideological boundaries of the Cold War as the flash points for crisis and bloodshed. The Cold War began when the Iron Curtain divided Europe politically and ideologically.

The Cold War ended with the end of the Iron Curtain. As the ideological division of Europe has disappeared, the cultural division of Europe between Western Christianity, on the one hand, and Orthodox Christianity and Islam, on the other, has re-emerged. The most significant dividing line in Europe, as William Wallace has suggested, may well be the eastern boundary of Western Christianity in the year 1500. This line runs along what are now the boundaries between Finland and Russia and between the Baltic states and Russia, cuts through Belarus and Ukraine separating the more Catholic western Ukraine from Orthodox eastern Ukraine, swings westward separating Transylvania from the rest of Romania, and then goes through Yugoslavia almost exactly along the line now separating Croatia and Slovenia from the rest of Yugoslavia. In the Balkans, this line, of course, coincides with the historic boundaries of the Hapsburg and Ottoman empires. The peoples to the west and north of this line are Protestant or Catholic; they shared the common experiences of European history — feudalism, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, the French

Revolution, the Industrial Revolution; they are generally economically better off than the peoples to the east; and they may now look forward to increasing involvement in a common European economy and to the consolidation of democratic political systems. The peoples to the east and south of this line are Orthodox or Muslim; they historically belonged to the Ottoman or Tsarist empires and were only lightly touched by the shaping events in the rest of Europe; they are generally less advanced economically; they seem much less likely to develop stable democratic political systems. The Velvet Curtain of culture has replaced the Iron Curtain of ideology as the most significant dividing line in Europe. As the events in Yugoslavia show, it is not only a line of difference; it is also a line of bloody conflict. (...)

On the Eurasian continent, the proliferation of ethnic conflict, epitomized at the extreme in 'ethnic cleansing,' has not been totally random. It has been most frequent and most violent between groups belonging to different civilizations. In Eurasia, the great historic fault lines between civilizations are once more aflame. This is particularly true along the boundaries of the crescent-shaped Islamic bloc of nations from the bulge of Africa to central Asia. Violence also occurs between Muslims, on the one hand, and Orthodox Serbs in the Balkans, Jews in Israel, Hindus in India, Buddhists in Burma and Catholics in the Philippines. Islam has bloody borders.

— Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations,"¹¹ *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 72, No. 3, Summer 1993.

WAR

The Role of the Church in Wartime

In the summer of 1918, leaving Moscow, to which I was never to return, I went to bid farewell to Patriarch Tikhon. (...) I was heading

¹¹ A summary of the Huntington thesis, along with a summary of some of critical responses to it, can be found on the web at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Clash_of_Civilizations.

south, to join the Voluntary Army, hoping to encounter all those who were linked with the desire of liberating Russia. I asked the permission of the Patriarch to transmit in his name a blessing, in full secrecy of course, to one of these persons, but the Patriarch told me in the most delicate and at the same time firm way that he considered this impossible, since, remaining in Russia, he would want to avoid any suggestion, both on the surface and in essence, of involving the Church in politics.

— Gregory Trubetzkoy, "Memoirs," quoted in *"Chosen by God. The Way to the Cross of Patriarch Tikhon of Moscow and all Russia,"* Moscow, 1990 (in Russian).

Without doubt, from the Christian point of view, war is an evil and a sin, against which the Church is obliged to struggle. Here the Church, listening as a doctor with a stethoscope to the sick heart of the nation, should gather all the strength of its super-human impassivity and evangelic purity of consciousness, in order to show, when in moments of passionate nationalistic taking up of arms, by its non-earthly, prophetic judgment and its authoritative voice, both to its own people, to the enemy and to all mankind the way towards higher justice and towards better, nobler means to achieve it than the iron *ultima ratio*. This is the super-humanly difficult service the Church must render.

— Anton Kartashov, *The Church and National Identity*, Paris, 1934 (in Russian).

Any crime committed in the name of a religion is a crime against religion itself. Our Church insists that religion is like a 'secret balm,' which should not be used by just anyone or in order to spark armed conflict. This balm is a gift of God, given to soften hearts, to heal wounds and to help persons and peoples establish bonds of brotherhood among them.

— Archbishop Anastasios of Albania, extract from an appeal, "We pray God that peace and justice may once more reign in the Balkans," issued in Tirana in 1999.

'Just' or 'Holy' Wars

Do not fear dangers, as you ally yourself with truth, for it is better to die for her than to see her vanish. With your blood redeem the blessings that were purchased for you by your ancestors. Avoiding death for your faith or for the freedom of your homeland, you will die either as a criminal or a slave; die for your faith and for your homeland, and you will acquire life and a crown in heaven.

— A word spoken by Archimandrite Philaret (Drozdov), later Metropolitan of Moscow and since glorified as a saint, on May 20, 1813, at a meeting of the members of “Conversations among lover of the Russian word.”

God loves a peaceful world, and God blesses a righteous campaign. For as long as there are innocent people on earth, it is not possible to maintain peace without conflict.

— St. Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, from a speech made before Russian troops in 1843 during the Sebastopol campaign.

War, as well as peace, is one of the tools in the hands of God. War is a poison, which kills, but which at the same time can cure and heal.

It is better to have one great and mighty river than many small streams which easily freeze in frost and which are easily covered with dust and filth. A war which gathers an entire people for a great cause is better than a peace which knows as many tiny causes as it knows people, which divides brothers, neighbors, all human beings, and which hides in itself an evil and hidden war against all.

We have to wish those, whom we love, both a good life and a good death. To die in the struggle for a great common cause is a good death.

— St. Nicholas (Velimirovic) of Ochrid, “Thoughts about War and the Military Endeavor,” *St. George's Anthology*, Paris, 1928 (in Russian).

There was another heresy as well — spiritualist this time — which tried to juxtapose itself to the materialism of the ‘equipment war,’ to infuse it with an artificial soul. This was the ideology of a ‘holy war,’ or a ‘crusade.’ It has several nuances: the struggle for democracies,

for freedom, for human dignity, for Western culture, for Christian civilization, eventually for divine justice. I say 'heresy,' because these ideas, although often justified by themselves, were not founded upon a living experience. They did not issue from a deep and healthy spring ... These words also sounded false, as all that is abstract. They sounded false especially because they wanted to present concepts and values as absolute secondary and relative. For even Christian civilization, as a civilization, is nothing but a product, a realization, the exterior manifestation of an absolute reality, which is the faith of the Christian people.

Holy wars are not waged over cathedrals, theological *summae* or missals. These are but the clothing of the Church — the clothing of Christ that was divided by the soldiers at the feet of the Cross. As for the Church, which is the source of these secondary goods, she has no need of our material defense, of our childish sword. It is useless to renew the naive gesture of Peter who cut the ear of the slave in the garden of Gethsemane (...)

War is not waged over absolute values: this was the great error of all wars we call 'religious,' the main cause of their inhuman atrocities. It is not waged either over relative values which are tried to make absolute, over abstract concepts which are granted a religious character. Whether we oppose the idol of the 'pure race' by the other, more humane idols of rights, liberty, humanity — all the same these would be idols as well, hypostated and absolutized concepts; it would always remain a war of idols, not a human war (...)

The only just human war (insofar as any war may be called just) is a war over relative values which are known to be relative. It is a war in which man — a being called to an absolute destiny — sacrifices himself spontaneously, without hesitation, for a relative value, which he knows to be relative: the soil, the earth, the motherland. And this sacrifice acquires an absolute imperishable value for the human person.

— Vladimir Lossky, *Seven Days on the Roads of France* (June 1940), Paris, 1998 (in French).

The Spiritual Value of War

The Apostle Paul reveals to us that when the people of Israel — on their way towards the promised land, near Mount Sinai, under the burning fire, the cloud and the darkness, the storm and the mighty sound — received the Law from God and entered into covenant with Him, that then, for the establishment of this covenant, which we now name the Old, Christ Himself acted and “His voice shook then the earth” (Heb. 12:18–26). From this, we have to conclude that our Lord Jesus Christ, by His own orders through Moses, at that moment established the so-called “tent of the meeting,” meaning the Temple of God.

From this follows as well that Our Lord Jesus Christ also gave this commandment: “The people of Israel shall encamp each by his own standard, with the ensigns of their fathers’ houses; they shall encamp facing the tent of meeting on every side” (Num. 2:2). Further, in this order, the exact position of the armies around the tent is determined. In this way, the army was spread out like the shape of a cross, and the center of the cross was occupied by the “Tent of the meeting.”

Behold the first Church established on earth. Behold it amidst hosts and armies, established in this position by the Lord of the Church Himself.

— St. Philaret of Moscow, from a sermon delivered at the consecration of a military church.

You have taken from our soldiers everything for which they fought splendidly in the past. You have taught those, who not long ago were still brave and invincible, to abandon the defense of the motherland, to run from the battlefields.¹² You have extinguished in their hearts the conscience that “greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

¹²Reference to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk between the Bolsheviks and the German government (March 3, 1918), which abandoned large parts of Tsarist Russia and ended the Russian participation in World War I.

— St. Tikhon, Moscow, “Letter to the Council of People’s Commissars, October 13/26, 1918,” L. Regelson, *The Tragedy of the Russian Church (1917–1945)*, Paris, 1976 (in Russian).

There is something in war that constitutes our only chance, as it were, in mankind’s current situation. That does not mean that we should want it. But, once it has broken out, it should be made use of. (...) The war [against Nazism] demands of us, more than ever, that we mobilize absolutely all our spiritual powers and abilities. And we must understand what mobilization means ... In our time, Christ and the life-giving Spirit demand the whole person. The only difference from state mobilization is that the state enforces mobilization, while our faith waits for volunteers. And, in my view, the destiny of mankind depends on whether these volunteers exist and, if they do, how great their energy is, how ready they are for sacrifice.

In fact, war is the wing of death spread over the world, war is for thousands and thousands of people an open gate to eternity, war is collapse of philistine order, coziness and stability. War is a call, war is an insight.

Right now, at this moment, I know that hundreds of people are face to face with what is most serious, with Seriousness itself — with death; I know that thousands and thousands of people are waiting their turn (...)

And, finally, I know, I know with all my being, with all my faith, with all the spiritual force granted to the human soul, that at this moment God is visiting His world. And the world can receive that visit, open its heart — “ready is my heart, O God, ready is my heart”¹³ — and then in an instant our temporary and fallen life will unite with the depths of eternity, then our human cross will become the likeness of the God-man’s cross, then within our deathly affliction itself we will see the white garments of the angel who will announce to us: “He who was dead is no longer in the tomb.”

— St. Maria Skobtsova, “Insight in Wartime,” *Mother Maria Skobtsova, Essential Writings*, Orbis, New York, 2003.

¹³ Ps. 56 LXX.

CHURCH AND STATES

Cooperation with National and State Structures

Christianity and the Christian churches in many ways are obliged to repent, not only of their handling of the Jewish issue, but also on social matters, on war, on the constant compliance to the most negative state systems.

— Nicholas Berdyaev, *Christianity and Anti-Semitism*, New York, 1954.

Extract from the Constitution the of Greece:

1. The prevailing religion in Greece is that of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ. The Orthodox Church of Greece, acknowledging our Lord Jesus Christ as its head, is inseparably united in doctrine with the Great Church of Christ in Constantinople and with every other Church of Christ of the same doctrine, observing unwaveringly, as they do, the holy apostolic and synodal canons and sacred traditions. It is autocephalous and is administered by the Holy Synod of serving Bishops and the Permanent Holy Synod originating thereof and assembled as specified by the Statutory Charter of the Church in compliance with the provisions of the Patriarchal Tome of June 29, 1850, and the Synodal Act of September 4, 1928.

2. The ecclesiastical regime existing in certain districts of the State shall not be deemed contrary to the provisions of the preceding paragraph.

3. The text of the Holy Scripture shall be maintained unaltered. Official translation of the text into any other form of language, without prior sanction by the Autocephalous Church of Greece and the Great Church of Christ in Constantinople, is prohibited.

— Constitution of the Hellenic Democracy as amended in 2001 by the Parliament of the Hellenes, Part One, Basic Provisions. Section II. Relations of Church and State, Article 3.

Today, the Russian Orthodox Church is one of the principal institutions organizing and supporting the connection of our compatriots

with their motherland.

— Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad (now Patriarch Kirill), Address to the VIII World Russian People's Council, 2004.

Cooperation with the Russian Orthodox Church is an unalienable part of the efforts of our diplomatic corps in affirming the specific role of Russia on the international arena.

— Russian Minister Ivanov of Foreign Affairs, Address to the VIII World Russian People's Council, 2004.

Incompatibility of the Church with Absolute Statehood

Regarding Revelations 13:1: The beast in the given case clearly indicates the state, not just in the sense of the state's organization of legal order, which assists mankind on its ways (about which the Apostle speaks, when he says "there is no authority, except from God," Rom. 13:1), but totalitarian statehood attempting to become the sole determining and all-fulfilling principle of human life. Such a state that falsely exaggerates its own importance, constitutes by the very same not just a pagan principle but a demonic one, the earthly face of Satan or the multitude of his faces. Such a state as an earthly kingdom affronts the Kingdom of Christ, wages war against it, and by the force of things constitutes — consciously or unconsciously — an anti-Christian force, a tool of the "prince of this world," his kingdom, and the heads of such states become his masks.

Only in the Revelation of the New Testament, the antagonism and struggle between the Kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of the prince of this world reach their final incompatibility, and this is specifically expressed in the Revelation of St. John. Other texts of the New Testament, such as the letters of the Apostles Paul and Peter (Rom. 13:1–7; Tit. 3:1; 1 Tim. 2:12; 1 Pet. 2:13–17) search and find a certain measure of reconciliation with the state, its recognition as the rightful order of things, which guarantees external peace. The state, here, serves humanity as a means and is not an end in itself; it is submitted to the norms of morality. In this sense, indeed, it was possible

to say, “There is no authority, except from God.” (...) When considering the Christian state — for as far as it has ever existed and can possibly exist — or more precisely, the state of the Christians, new boundaries and tasks appear, namely: serving Christian morality. However, such a service presupposes a certain spiritual equilibrium, where the state does not go beyond its own, legal tasks. Still even this situation always remains unstable; when the state crosses these boundaries, it turns into the beast.

In general, absolute states on earth are the image of man deified, of anti-Christianity, they are the incarnation of the spirit of the prince of this world, from whom it is said, “and to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority” (13:2). Even though in the days when the Revelation was written, this apparently referred to the Roman Empire as the image of state absolutism, today this may be applied to all varieties of this principle, to Bolshevism and racism (without even mentioning Japanese pagan deification of the emperor and others). (...)

“And the whole earth followed the beast with wonder. Men worshipped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshipped the beast saying, ‘Who is like beast, And who can fight against it?’” (13:4). It is difficult to add anything to the simplicity of these words, which may be applied to the totality of world history. Today’s tsarism, both the Russian and the Germanic type, in their own way are new and almost unexpected parallels of Roman absolutism, as is its victorious self-affirmation, which leads entire peoples which are under its power to a state of madness.

— Fr. Sergei Bulgakov, *Commentary on the Apocalypse of St. John*,¹⁴ Paris, 1948.

¹⁴ Fr. Sergi Bulgakov, Dean of St. Sergius Theological Academy in Paris, wrote this commentary of the Apocalypse during the first half of the Second World War. Started as notes for his lectures, he finished a draft of the book version shortly before his death in 1944.

Orthodoxy, Culture and Nationalism at the Pan-Orthodox Consultation in 1936

Excerpts from the proceedings of the pan-Orthodox consultation on religious education in Dassel (Germany), June 1936.

On the eve of World War II, the 1936 Pan-Orthodox Consultation on religious education brought together leading Orthodox theologians. The aims of the Consultation was to prepare a world conference of Orthodox youth in 1938, focusing on the theme “Orthodoxy and Culture.” This is the first time this document is published.

The second day of the consultation, June 30 [1936], began with an address on national cultures in Orthodox countries.

Prof. Zenkovsky: “We will not be able to address in full the issue of educating youth in a national spirit. We shall discuss the matter in the following perspectives:

Which are the dangers of national sentiments for spiritual life (where in my personal view the greatest danger arises when national sentiments are experienced in a religious manner).

Given the fact that national sentiments are a spiritual phenomenon — even though expressed in an extreme, almost animal manner — the question arises, to which degree such sentiments can be transfigured in the spirit of the Church. Orthodox countries have long been suffering from the illness of phyletism, the identification of their Local Church with ecumenical, universal Orthodoxy. Instead of a christening of national cultures, we witness a nationalization of Orthodoxy. Therefore, the following questions arise:

Do such dangers exist in the work of our youth organizations?

How to combat distorted forms of national sentiments?

How to master the potentially spiritual component of nationalism?

Dr. Trembelas: “Although I am not qualified to speak on this issue, allow me to point out that according to Christian doctrine, Church and state are different institutions, who, though not in contradiction with one another, are nevertheless distinct. The task of the state is to ensure the happiness of the people, while the task of the Church is to lead the people to God, our Lord Jesus Christ. Good Christians have always been good citizens, but the opposite has not always been true. Church and state should not attempt to absorb one another: Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s. Yet, we belong first of all to the Church, only in second place to the state. During the Turkish yoke, our bishops were completely inflamed with national sentiments, becoming national leaders rather than bishops of the Church. We Greeks must acknowledge that we have become more Greek than Christian, while also the Bulgarians have become more Bulgarian than Christian, and so on. I must admit that in the region of Macedonia,¹ many times the Divine Liturgy has been celebrated with a handgun lying on the Holy Altar. Often, we, the Orthodox, maintain more friendly relations with Protestant churches, than with one another. Recently, however, we witness a weakening of this nationalist spirit that has been perverting our psychology.”

B. Zenkovsky: “The words of the previous speaker indeed indicate a great danger, even the more threatening given the fact that we do not notice it. A great task stands before us: to illuminate the *eros* of our national sentiment with the light of Christ.”

Dr. Trembelas: “In Greece, the relations between Church and state are extremely complex indeed. Church boundaries do not always coincide with those of the state. We know the example of a state in which five autonomous churches exist; there the Church is independent from the state.”

L. Zander: “Everything that is suppressed ignites with particular power. Among our Russian youth, which lives without a home-

¹ Reference to the northern Greek region of Macedonia, not to the state of FYROM established in 1991.

land, the nationalist *eros* is ablaze. But then it is hard to imagine that in Romania, for instance, Russian youth are forced to confess and pray in Romanian. The nation is like the body of the Church, while the Church is the heart of the nation; the nation mirrors the state of Church life in a given country.”

Rev. J. Shakhovskoy: “Naturally, nationalist feelings ignite with double fierceness when submitted to some kind of suppression. In order to unite all Orthodox and to overcome all parochial separatism, Orthodox should not only be gathering here in Dassel, but in Belgrade and Athens as well. Through wide manifestations of pan-Orthodox unity, both by clergy and laity, a beneficial effect on the believers can be achieved, as was proven by the visit of Bishop Nicholas and Bishop Irinej to Sofia.²

The fight against national extremism within the Church is both tragic and difficult. In this struggle, Church people should soar like the eagle of the Apostle John, be brave like the lion of the Apostle Mark, diligent like the oxen of the Apostle Luke and wise like the angel of the Apostle Matthew. There should be no fear to confess one’s faith as the only value, as the first value.”

Prof. Bratsiotis: “The nation is not the core of our Church. When St. Basil the Great speaks about the people of God, he speaks of the entire Christian world. If ethnicity were part of the essence of the Church, there would be a dogma on ethnicity. Yet, our Church knows no other dogmas than that we confess the One, Apostolic and Catholic Church. The idea of the nation as a body, and the Church as its soul, seems incorrect. The nation is not the body of the Church, but only part of that body. The Church as a whole is the body of our Christ.

“Nationalism is a form of collective individualism. In times such as ours, when this collective individualism is strong, we Christians should weaken it and incite, instead, feelings of humanity, of ecumenicity, of catholicity. What a pity it is that we, the Orthodox, cannot succeed in convoking an Ecumenical Council. Our Church, permeated by paganism and phyletism, has failed yet to create its own

² Visit of St. Nicholas (Velimirovich) of Ochrid to Sofia during the schism that isolated Bulgarian Orthodoxy between 1870 and 1945.

‘Lambeth Conference.’³ Moreover, we will not create such a conference given our fragmentation. We have not even succeeded in convoking a pan-Orthodox synod.”

Fr. Christo Dimitriev: “The greatest difficulties in educational work with youth arise where the educational endeavors of the Church meet those of the state. In many places, governments attempt to exploit the youth for the objectives of the state. Churches either encounter fierce competition and rivalry, or are only formally invited to collaborate. In many countries, our youth suffers from this phenomenon. How can we help them, how can we prevent non-Christian forces from penetrating into the life of Christian youth? For young people, the Church should become the herald of supreme ideals. We must win the youth, each person individually, we must help them decide to accept the Kingdom of God in their midst and to win the world for that Kingdom. The youth is in need of Christian leadership.”

V. Nercessian: “Ethnic wars have only appeared during the past century, which demonstrates that, at the time of the Ecumenical Councils, nationalism did not play the role it plays today. In exile we Russians work in the emigration either amidst Orthodox nations in the Balkans or on the verges of the former Empire, or amidst other faiths. We are bearers of our own national culture, in which we see a force that may bring about the right mindset for Russian children. Maybe, in our work, we place an exaggerated emphasis on the national element. In our fear of losing our identity, maybe we have gone too far in this respect.”

Participants: From the Russian *Diaspora*: Prof. B. Zenkovsky (Paris), A. Tchetverikova (Paris), L. Zander (Paris), V. Nercessian (Paris), Rev J. Shakhovskoy⁴ (Berlin), M. Kirschbaum (Tallinn) and Ms. Tennisberg (Tallinn).

From Bulgaria: Rev Christo Dimitriev, Mrs. Deneva and Mr. Furnadzhiev.

From Greece: Prof. Bratsiotis, Dr. Trembelas and Dr. Kotsonis.⁵

³The occasional conferences of the Bishops of the Anglican Communion meet at Lambeth Palace in London.

⁴Later Archbishop of San Francisco.

⁵The future Archbishop Hieronymos of Athens.

From various international bodies: Ms. Mills (Geneva), Dr. Davis (Geneva), P. Anderson (Paris), Dr. J. Müller (Germany) and Rev. Kochlin (Germany).

The Serbian Church and Milosevic

by Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko⁶

The Serbian Orthodox Church has consistently criticized and opposed the Milosevic government. The 'open letter' of Bishop Artemije of Ras-Prizren in Kosovo written on Orthodox Good Friday 1999 is no exception. It rather testifies to what has been the unwavering rule of the Serbian Church leadership toward the Milosevic government since the fall of Marxism.

Speaking of the 'crimes' of President Milosevic, Bishop Artemije relates in his letter how he and lay leaders of an 'embryonic' democratic movement in his country visited world leaders in the U.S., France and Russia five times between February 1998 and February 1999. He describes their written and verbal pleas to the highest-ranking officials, including U.S. Secretary of State Albright, to give democracy a chance in his country. He underlines their warnings of the disastrous consequences of all military solutions, including NATO intervention. And he laments with indescribable sorrow how their hopes have been buried in the rubble of the NATO attacks and the savagery that it inevitably produced.

Most of the bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church have been installed since the end of Marxist domination in former Yugoslavia. Many of them, including the present Patriarch, were staunch anti-Communists who were greatly persecuted in communist times. They were fervent followers and coworkers of the confessing priest Fr. Justin Popovich, already venerated by many as a saint, who spent his adult life imprisoned in a monastery.

⁶ Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko is Emeritus Dean of St. Vladimir's Seminary. An abbreviated version of this article appeared on the OpEd page of *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* on May 28, 1999.

To ensure that there would be no government interference in the election of the new patriarch in 1990, and even no possible charge of such interference, the Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church elected three candidates for the Church's primatial see. The names of these candidates were placed in a sacred vessel. After vigil, fasting and prayer, Bishop Pavle of Ras-Prizren in Kosovo, the compromise third candidate elected by the Synod was chosen by lot to be patriarch.

Pavle had served as bishop in Kosovo and Metohija for 34 years, until 1990. This diocese was established in 1219 by St. Sava, the prince-become-archbishop who founded Serbian Christianity. The Kosovo region of Serbia is the 'cradle' of Serbian Christianity and national self-identity. It includes the ancient patriarchal see of Pec, the place where the Serbian Patriarch has traditionally been enthroned. It is to Serbs what Jerusalem and Zion are to Jews, what Boston and New England are to many white Anglo-Saxon Protestant Americans. Known and loved for his humility, poverty and identification with all of the people of his diocese, Serbian and Albanian, Christian and non-Christian, Pavle was among the least likely candidates for the patriarchal office among the Serbian bishops. He was certainly among the least acceptable to the ex-communist nationalists like Milosevic who were ruling the country and inciting the crowds.

Patriarch Pavle came to the United States in the fall of 1992 to preside over the healing of a schism among the Serbian Orthodox churches in North America caused by the conditions of the communist era. The healing of such divisions was his highest priority upon taking office. St. Vladimir's Seminary honored him at that time by awarding the degree of Doctor of Divinity *honoris causa* to the new patriarch.

The patriarch spoke without notes at the ceremony. He naturally referred to the conflict then raging in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He said that he was convinced that peace could come to the former Yugoslavia only when people would relate to each other as they did in his former diocese of Kosovo, and proceeded to tell how an Albanian Muslim would come daily to his cathedral to pray before the relics of a Christian saint entombed there, believing it to be a holy place

where the one God was to be worshiped. God alone, the patriarch said, could bring peace to the former Yugoslavia with its deeply ingrained memories of brutality and blood. Without God, he insisted, every effort for justice and unanimity would inevitably fail.

After the ceremony, I remarked to a bishop in the patriarchal party that such words would surely not sit well with the former communists who were ruling, and ravaging, the former Yugoslavia in the name of nationalism. I suggested that such words might even lead to violent action against the patriarch himself. The bishop responded that such an eventuality was not impossible, and added that Pavle was not a “political person,” but a “holy man of God” and a “servant of all people.”

The patriarch’s peacemaking activities, with the members of the Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and with Roman Catholic and Muslim leaders, have been firm and consistent. His marching, with Orthodox bishops and priests, at the head of popular protests against the Milosevic regime, as with the university students on the Church’s national feast of St. Sava, also testifies to his Church’s official position in national affairs.

All the above testifies to a fact of greatest significance. Milosevic is not the Serbian people; and the Serbian people are not Milosevic. The Serbian Orthodox Church is no friend of the Milosevic regime; and Milosevic is no friend of the Serbian Church. Still less is the Serbian Church an instrument in Milosevic’s hands to be used at will for evil purposes. Many of the Serbian Church’s present bishops and priests were among her most dissident clergy and her most persecuted confessors in the days of communism. Their record with Milosevic, and those like him and with him, speaks for itself — at least to those with eyes to see, ears to hear, and minds willing to understand.

That American observers can be so ignorant about the Serbian Orthodox Church, and the Serbian people generally, in regard to Milosevic and his government, is comparable only to our American government’s ignorance of the realities of Balkan history (medieval, modern, Marxist and contemporary), and the mentalities of the Balkan peoples. One can only wonder with amazement and fear about why such inexcusable ignorance continues to endure, if

it is indeed ignorance, and not something infinitely more wicked and terrifying.

And one can only weep over the enormity of the sufferings that it brings to the countless peoples of all nations and religions through the criminal policies and actions that it produces and empowers.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Various Recent Official Statements

STATEMENTS ON INTERRELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND DIALOGUE

The Bosphorus Declaration, 1994

The Bosphorus Declaration was issued in February 1994 by religious leaders of different faiths gathered in Istanbul, Turkey. It is an authoritative statement on the understanding of some of the world's leading religions of the conflicts that have struck the former USSR and Yugoslavia.

1. The participants in the Conference of Peace and Tolerance wish to thank the Government of Turkey for the courteous hospitality it has extended to us, an opportunity to pursue deliberations on the vital issues of peace and tolerance. The Conference wishes to recognize the contributions of President Clinton, President Demirel, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and all the other religious and political leaders who have sent messages of support.

In this declaration, we wish specifically to refer to the Berne Declaration of November 26, 1992, which has given us a foundation on which to build. That declaration specifically states that “a crime committed in the name of religion is a crime against religion.” Since November 26, 1992, we have seen many crimes committed in the name of religion and we, the Conference participants, wish to speak out vigorously against them. As recent events have shown,

the crimes against humanity continue in Bosnia, in Armenia-Azerbaijan, Georgia and Tajikistan. The cruelties have continued unchecked and we demand an end to this brutality. We, the undersigned, reject any attempt to corrupt the basic tenets of our Faith by means of false interpretation and unchecked nationalism. We stand firmly against those who violate the sanctity of human life and pursue policies in defiance of moral values. We reject the concept that it is possible to justify one's actions in any armed conflict in the name of God.

We wish to remind emphatically all the faithful that the scriptures of all three monotheistic religions specifically speak of peace as a supreme value. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." "Allah summoned to the abode of peace." "His ways are the ways of peace."

2. We reiterate that the war in former Yugoslavia is not a religious war and that appeals and exploitations of religious symbols to further the cause of aggressive nationalism are a betrayal of the universality of religious faith. We emphasize the imperative of freedom of conscience and freedom of religion of every minority. We call for an end to the confiscation, desecration and destruction of houses of worship and of holy and sacred places of whatever religious tradition. We totally abhor and condemn ethnic cleansing and the rape and murder of women and children. We demand the removal of obstacles that prevent humanitarian assistance from reaching those who are suffering. We condemn the use of force in countries of the former Soviet Union. The conflict in Georgia, Armenia-Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan must be concluded immediately and solutions of the outstanding issues must be found by other means. We recognize that all who are suffering are victims, but single out specifically the most tragic and innocent victims who are the children.

3. We ask our religious communities to embrace children from the areas of conflict in God's love and to extend all possible assistance to the suffering children, to help them to find spiritual, psychological, and physical healing. We cannot emphasize enough that spiritual

nourishment is a paramount requirement; religious communities must be supported. We also recognize that all the countries suffering from conflict have had a long, dark period of Communism where there was little or no spiritual education. We urge all faiths to redouble their efforts for spiritual guidance for those who were deprived. We wish to recognize also that tension exists within faiths and urge the leadership of those faiths to bring about peaceful resolutions to the issues that divide them.

4. The conference participants, as all others who have followed these tragic conflicts, observe with horror the forced migrations of refugees. Millions have experienced or are threatened by forcible displacement. Therefore, we call upon all religious faiths to speak out clearly and consistently against these actions. We condemn those who uproot families from their homes, tear children from their parents, divide husband and wife in the name of false nationalism. We expect all religious leaders to stand fast in the protection of all those threatened by involuntary migration, whatever their religious beliefs or ethnic backgrounds. We demand that all refugees who have left their homes involuntarily be permitted to return with dignity and honor; that the religious communities strengthen their institutions to receive, assist, and protect refugees of whatever faith; that religious and lay relief agencies develop procedures to coordinate their efforts. As long as the conflicts continue, we urge all countries to extend temporary asylum to victims, while granting opportunity for refugee status to those who truly seek it; to increase resources for relief; and to work with all who are of good faith for the cessation or hostilities.

5. The participants in the Conference on Peace and Tolerance have agreed unanimously to condemn utterly war and armed conflict; to demand that no hostile acts be perpetrated upon any peaceful group or region in the name of a religious faith; to demand the initiation of constructive dialogues to solve outstanding issues between those of different faiths; and to demand the right to practice one's religion in freedom and with dignity.

6. We have deliberated carefully and are in agreement that the wanton killing must stop; that those who continue to perpetrate such heinous acts are criminals and that, although we have no weapons of war and no armies for combat, we have a greater strength — the strength of spiritual might. We totally condemn those who commit the brutalities, the killings, the rapes, mutilations, forcible displacement, and inhuman beatings.

7. We, the conference participants, have decided to establish an Appeal of Conscience Conflict Resolution Commission, to deal with ethnic conflicts. The Commission will be made up of representatives from all of the faiths and from all of the countries represented at this conference. The AC Conflict Resolution Commission will be responsible for informing Commission members and recommending ways and means to deal with the scourge of extreme nationalism and ethnic conflict.

Signed in Istanbul, February 8, 1994:

His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I
Rabbi Arthur Schneier, President, Appeal of Conscience Foundation
His Eminence Mehmet Nuri Yilmaz, President of the Office of
Religious Affairs of the Republic of Turkey
His Eminence Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, President of the Pontifical
Council on Peace and Justice

Bucharest Appeal for Peace and Understanding Among All People, 1994

Within the general context of the tense contemporary realities, such as those in Bosnia-Herzegovina, dominated by violence, chauvinistic nationalism, territorial revisionism, religious fundamentalism, intolerance and fratricidal wars, We, representatives of the two Orthodox families, Eastern and Oriental, Parthenios III, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and all Africa, Theoctist, Patriarch of Romania, and Shenouda III, Pope and Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church,

met in Bucharest, during the month of September, 1994, on the occasion of the session of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches.

We would like to assert together anew the traditional creed, ethos and vocation of Orthodoxy in respect for all people, as we are all together human beings, created and loved by the same God, bearing indiscriminately the same image of our Creator.

Throughout the past centuries and down to the present day, the Orthodox faithful confessed their faith in Christ, the Lord of peace, and prayed for the peace of the whole world and for goodwill among all people and all nations. They also tried to promote friendship and fraternal cooperation, in full mutual respect, with all the faithful belonging to other Christian Churches or religious faiths, especially of Islam.

On the basis of this centuries-old experience of faith and love, we call from the bottom of our hearts and souls, both our believers and those of the other Christian Churches, as well as the Muslims, to rediscover and follow the path of love, peace, tolerance, goodwill and mutual respect promoted and pursued by our common forerunners.

Moreover, our hope is that, by asserting together the spirit of peace and understanding promoted by our faiths, we could avert and avoid the attempts of some radical groups or political contemporary powers who, eager to dominate, influence and acquire supremacy, strive to reach their goal by using, often abusively, the religious faith and feeling, in order to divide, tear apart, sow and nurture hatred among people, countries and nations.

Let us pray that the God of peace and love be with us all and help us to live the truth that was revealed to us by our Lord Jesus Christ when He said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God" (Matt. 5:9).

Signed in Bucharest, September 1994

Parthenios III, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and all Africa
Theoctist, Patriarch of Romania

Shenouda III, Pope and Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church

Final Document of the Syndesmos-Orthodox Peace Fellowship Seminar On War and Peace in Europe, 1994

Syndesmos is an association of Orthodox Youth groups in various countries. The Orthodox Peace Fellowship is an international association of Orthodox Christians seeking to bear witness to the peace of Christ by applying the principles of the Gospel to situations of division and conflict, whether in the home, the parish, the community we live, the workplace, within our particular nations, and between nations.

We often hear the word 'Peace' in our Holy Liturgy. Church members are called to transfigure their lives in the Holy Liturgy so that they will be a witness to the angelic words: "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will to all people."

We remind ourselves that being a peacemaker is one of the Beatitudes and is connected to all the others. If we disconnect peacemaking from the other Beatitudes, we are not be called peacemakers, as we see in anthropocentric peace movements. To avoid the evils of this world, we suggest that we Orthodox should participate in catechetical formation courses about peace, rooted in the Holy Liturgy and the Tradition of the Fathers.

We appeal for strongly-bonded Orthodox cooperation in peace efforts. This includes efforts to overcome divisions that exist among Orthodox Churches. There are wounds in the body of the Church which are not the fault of others but of ourselves. We need to pray in repentance for these wounds to be healed. (...)

We support the efforts of the Serbian Orthodox Church in her struggle to find a peaceful solution for the war in former Yugoslavia as well as justice for her people. We also express dismay at the failure of the World Council of Churches and other ecumenical organizations to see the Serbian Orthodox Church in a way not blinded by prejudice and one-sided press reports. We pray and hope that God will bless all the peoples of former Yugoslavia with peace and mutual respect.

Being Orthodox means to be a soldier of Christ, that is someone engaged in the fight against evil. People are not the main instigators of conflict but, when they do not resist evil, become tools in the hands of Satan, who always rejoices whenever those who are made in the image of God shed each other's blood. The main weapon in our combat with Satan is repentance, which must begin with ourselves. As Hegumen Ephrem of the Monastery of Philotheou, Mount Athos, told our conference: "Everyone who does not truly repent and apply the commandments of God is an enemy of God. How can he make peace? How can he sacrifice himself out of love?"

Conflict is not only war but any action that causes innocent people to suffer. While economic sanctions are sometimes described as non-violent, in fact the resulting shortage of medicine and food causes many deaths, especially among the young and aged. This too is a form of war. Humanitarian assistance should not be affected by sanctions against any country.

Similarly, the distribution of humanitarian assistance should be practiced regardless of the beneficiaries' convictions or identity, but only the needs of the people.

We note that, in the European region, many conflicts are occurring in areas where Communism dominated, especially in former Yugoslavia and parts of the former USSR. The collapse of Communism left a void easily filled by new evils. It is not, however, the cause of war but rather its absence that has exposed old unhealed wounds.

We wish to express solidarity and concern over the fate of Orthodox minorities in the world, particularly in the Holy Land, considering its special place in the hearts of Christians everywhere. We appeal to Orthodox churches in Europe to try to understand the different issues concerning conflicts there, especially those of a religious nature.

— from the Final Document of the Syndesmos Seminar On War and Peace in Europe, from a seminar co-sponsored by Syndesmos and the Orthodox Peace Fellowship, Chania, Crete, October 1–9, 1994.

The Assisi Dialogue for Peace, 2002

On January 24, 2002, some 200 leaders of a large number of world religions gathered in Assisi, Italy, at the invitation of Pope John Paul II, to pray for peace and renew their commitment to working for peace. This was the largest meeting of world religious leaders in history. Besides Roman Catholics, the gathering included the main Christian confessions (Orthodox, Baptist, Lutheran, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Disciples of Christ, Mennonite, Quaker, Moravian, Salvation Army) as well as the World Council of Churches, but also Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Zoroastrians and native African religions.

The delegations of the local Orthodox Churches were headed by: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I (Ecumenical Patriarchate), Bishop George of Nilopolis (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa), Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch and all the East (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East), Archimandrite Nikolaos (Farmakis) (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem), Archbishop Innokentii of Korsun (Orthodox Patriarchate of Moscow), Metropolitan Jovan of Zagreb and Ljubljana (Orthodox Patriarchate of Serbia), Bishop Ioan of Harghita and Covasna (Orthodox Patriarchate of Romania), Metropolitan Ambrosius of Helsinki (Orthodox Church of Finland), Archpriest Ivan Petkin (Orthodox Patriarchate of Bulgaria), Bishop Vasilios of Trimithus (Orthodox Church of Cyprus), Archimandrite Jerzy (Pankowki) (Orthodox Church of Poland), Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana, Durres and All Albania (Orthodox Church of Albania).

The Assisi gathering unanimously adopted the following statement:

A Common Commitment to Peace: Gathered here in Assisi, we have reflected together on peace, a gift of God and a common good of all mankind. Although we belong to different religious traditions, we affirm that building peace requires loving one's neighbor in obedience to the Golden Rule: *Do to others what you would have them do to you.*

With this conviction, we will work tirelessly in the great enterprise of building peace. Therefore:

1. *We commit ourselves* to proclaiming our firm conviction that violence and terrorism are opposed to all true religious spirit and we condemn all recourse to violence and war in the name of God or religion. We undertake to do everything possible to eradicate the causes of terrorism.

2. *We commit ourselves* to educate people about respect and mutual esteem in order to achieve peaceful coexistence and solidarity among members of different ethnic groups, cultures and religions.

3. *We commit ourselves* to promote the culture of dialogue so that understanding and trust may develop among individuals and peoples as these are the conditions of authentic peace.

4. *We commit ourselves* to defend the right of all human beings to lead a dignified life, in accordance with their cultural identity, and to start their own family freely.

5. *We commit ourselves* to engage in dialogue with sincerity and patience, without considering what separates us as an insurmountable wall, on the contrary, recognizing that facing our differences can become an occasion for greater reciprocal understanding.

6. *We commit ourselves* to pardon each other's errors and prejudices of the past and present, and to support one another in the common struggle against egoism and abuses, hatred and violence, and in order to learn from the past that peace without justice is not true peace.

7. *We commit ourselves* to stand at the side of those who suffer poverty and abandonment, speaking out for those who have no voice and taking concrete action to overcome such situations, in the conviction that no one can be happy alone.

8. *We commit ourselves* to make our own the cry of those who do not surrender to violence and evil, and we wish to contribute with all our strength to give a real hope of justice and peace to the humanity of our time.

9. *We commit ourselves* to encourage all initiatives that promote friendship between peoples, in the conviction that, if a solid understanding between peoples is lacking, technological progress exposes the world to increasing dangers of destruction and death.

10. *We commit ourselves* to ask the leaders of nations to make every possible effort so to build, at both national and international level, a world of solidarity and peace founded on justice.

We, as persons of different religious traditions, will tirelessly proclaim that peace and justice are inseparable, and that peace in justice is the only path which humanity can take towards a future of hope. In a world with ever more open borders, shrinking distances and better relations as a result of a broad network of communications, we are convinced that security, freedom and peace will never be guaranteed by force but by mutual trust.

May God bless these our resolutions and grant justice and peace to the world.

Violence never again! War never again! Terrorism never again! In the Name of God, may every religion bring upon the earth Justice and Peace, Forgiveness and Life, Love!

— Final document of the Second Interreligious Peace Forum of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), 2004.

Interreligious Peace Forum in Moscow, 2004

It is for the second time that senior religious leaders from the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States hold their summit.¹ Many dramatic events took place in the four years which have passed since the first Interreligious Peace Forum [in 2000]. They have put the coexistence of the followers of traditional religions through a serious trial. The world is facing a real danger of global confrontation provoked by economic, political and social motives, which exacerbate religious and cultural differences. In this situation, a common peace position of the leaders of major religious traditions elaborated through the dialogue among religions is becoming an important factor, which deters the clash of civilizations.

¹ Since 2000, two meetings of religious leaders of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) have been held focusing on issues of peace and religion. The second Interreligious Peace Forum took place in Moscow on March 2 and 3, 2004.

There have been no religious wars in our region of the world; rather has a unique experience of harmonious coexistence of religions and cultures been accumulated. Interreligious relations in most Commonwealth countries are close to optimum. This is confirmed by the agreed response of the senior religious leaders to topical events, by many regular common undertakings and by the establishment of permanent interreligious structures.

It is gratifying to see that many positive changes have occurred in the relations between the State and religions during recent years, and our religious communities no longer confront the problem of elementary survival. However, new challenges replaced militant atheism, such as radical secularism, aggressive proselytism, interethnic enmity, and terrorism.

The participants of the Forum are concerned about enmity towards traditional religions and their followers instigated by certain mass media.

We testify that genuine believers would never embark on the path of terror. We are convinced that those, who deliberately have become terrorists, have renounced their faith. We state with grief that their consciousness, clouded by mad ideas, is closed to the arguments of reason, and the only language they understand is the language of force. Traditional religious organizations exert all possible efforts for staying the spread of terror and the blasphemous use of religious symbols by terrorists. Also, we offer our assistance and support to the governments of our countries in the struggle against this evil.

Religions have a considerable peace potential, particularly in the sphere of interethnic relations. Where tension remains or open conflict is going on, representatives of the religions that are traditional for the majority of people involved in these conflicts must undertake decisive and urgent common peace actions. Where blood is shed or a direct threat of using force exists, our cooperation should be particularly effective, being aimed at the soonest peaceful and just solution of the problems.

Human hearts become hardened from year to year as a consequence of a moral crisis and the oblivion of moral standards com-

manded by God. Temptations and vices of the new century, vigorously propagated as a certain standard of human life, exert destructive influence on human souls and turn people into consumers of goods and services.

Relations among major cultural and religious traditions are complicated by the attempts to standardize them and to impose on people a similar way of life, one type of social structure and one civilization model. All this provokes conflicts and provides breeding grounds to extremist moods. We are convinced that it will be possible to avoid fatal contradictions only when the right of modern civilization to be multi-structured is recognized.

All Commonwealth countries are in the process of religious revival at present. The larger part of their citizens consider themselves believers. Religion is regaining its proper place in the life of society and is actively involved in different spheres of its activity. Partnership of religious communities with the State and society is being built up in social work, education of young people, preservation and development of traditional culture and care for public morality.

The participants in the Forum are convinced that religion can and will play a uniting and conciliatory role in the Commonwealth space and promote cooperation and contacts among our countries and people. We believe that our common work will help overcome interethnic enmity and to avert the danger of terrorism, extremism, loss of freedom and independence from our fellow citizens.

We call upon Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists and all people to keep peace and accord among them and to work together for the good of our countries.

— Signed by the designated representatives of the following traditional religious communities of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS):

Armenian Apostolic Church

Buddhist Traditional Sangha in Russia

Central Muslim Spiritual Board in Russia

Congress of Jewish Religious Organizations and Associations in Russia

Council of Muftis in Russia

Federation of Jewish communities in the CIS

Georgian Orthodox Church

Muslim Coordination Center of the Northern Caucasus
Muslim Spiritual Board of the Caucasus region
Muslim Spiritual Board of the Republic Kazakhstan
Muslim Spiritual Board of the Republic Kyrgyzstan
Muslim Spiritual Board of the Republic Tajikistan, Muslim Spiritual Board
of the Republic Uzbekistan
The Russian Orthodox Church

PATRIARCH ALEXIS II OF RUSSIA ON ANTI-SEMITISM

The tragic events of the Second World War demonstrate once again how the dark blindness of sin may cause the most horrifying crimes against humanity. I am profoundly convinced that in a society where spiritual and moral ideals are alive, there is no place for ethnic enmity or humiliation on grounds of race or ethnicity. Anti-Semitism, like all actions aimed at kindling ethnic strife, is to be resolutely opposed and rejected by society.

With joy, we observe that our compatriots who saved the lives of Jews in the Nazi-occupied territories have been deemed worthy of a distinguished reward—the title of *Just*.² It is said in the Gospel: Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13). The feats of the Just show us an example of the active love for our neighbors commanded to us by our Lord Jesus Christ. May their example inspire new generations of citizens in Russia and around the world.

— Alexis II, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, to the Shoah Memorial Gathering in Moscow, 19 April 2004

STATEMENTS ON THE WAR IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA, 1994

With sad hearts we see how, knowingly or unknowingly, human beings are destroying the laws given us by God, as one robs the other of justice and peace contrary to Christ's commandment: "In everything

² Reference to the *Just of the Nations*, title granted by the Yad Vashem Memorial in Jerusalem to non-Jews who saved Jews during the war.

do to others what you would have them do to you” (Matt. 7:12). We, who live in the Balkans and carry out the Church’s ministry in this region of the world, find ourselves daily confronted with unutterable suffering, and not only among the Serbian people whose spiritual head we are but also among other fraternal peoples, be they of other Christian confessions or of the Muslim religion.

In the messages we have addressed to world public opinion and to our own Yugoslavian public, the Holy Synod of bishops and I personally have consistently condemned violence, of whatever kind and by whomever it is used, regardless of religion or nation. The true Christian sees that, in these wars, little heed is paid to the voices of the religious leaders, so that God’s creatures continue to suffer, and most of all innocent people, children, women and those who are frail, old or sick. (...)

We do not in any way wish to say that there are no wrong-doers on the Serbian side, just as there are on the side of the other belligerents in this senseless war in which there is and can be no winner, but only misery and humiliation before God and before the world.

— Patriarch Pavle of Serbia, signed in Belgrade on January 20, 1994; extracts from a statement sent to the participants at the meeting of the World Council of Churches Central Committee.

“The Lord will give strength to His people! The Lord will bless His people with peace!” (Ps. 28:11).

We are here to give a brotherly kiss of peace to all and send a call for the unconditional ceasing of the insanity of the war and for the establishment of peace and continuation of negotiations. Before God and the people, we testify, in our name and in that of our people, to which God has sent and appointed us for the ministry, that we are with all our heart for peace and reconciliation. So, as nobody else desires more bread than the hungry ones, so nobody else desires more peace than those who bleed in the years-long war. (...)

We request also the leaders of our nation to do everything to establish peace with our up-to-yesterday neighbors, now adversaries who suffer equally with us. It is dangerous and illusory to lay the

blame upon one another. We must direct our best forces that the conflicts and war be stopped, peace and mutual negotiations be re-established as the only way worthy of men to solve the ensuing problems, according to divine and human justice, for the benefit of Serbs, Croats and Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We all, as well as the people of good will in the world and the international factors, should employ all our authority and all ethically justified means that the horrors, which threaten the existence of us all, be stopped. (...)

Raising our voice against further dissemination of evil and hatred among warring peoples of the same tongue, common past and future, we raise also our voice against all divisions and schisms in the Serbian Orthodox nation. Making efforts to establish just peace with our neighbors we should first reconcile with each other. The men of God who for centuries have given an infallible direction for our actions both in peace and war, both in liberty and slavery, expect from us who now represent the Serbian nation and its Church to be worthy of the Orthodox faith and our name; to know how to say and by our own person show what our Orthodox people should always be: light to the world and salt to the earth; Christ's sheep among wolves; humans even among non-humans. That the doctrine of the Gospel always be the measure by which we shall measure all our actions, and then the actions of other people: "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them" (Matt. 7:12) and the words of the Apostle: "Do not return evil for evil or reviling for reviling"; "For it is better to suffer for doing right, if that should be God's will, than for doing wrong" (1 Pet. 3:9, 17). (...)

Once again, we witness before God, before Orthodox and Christian nations, as well as all people of good will: we as pastors and spiritual leaders do not identify ourselves with the authorities on either side of the Drina;³ but in the same way we cannot separate ourselves from our own our own nation, sinful but belonging to God,

³The Drina River forms most of the border between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

in the ecumenical family of nations, but remain with it on the cross on which it is crucified. (...)

Let us be humans, let us be the people of God, so that the Lord, the Man-lover and Peacemaker, the Savior of the world, might bless us and all the people with his peace!

— Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church, from a message issued by its extraordinary meeting in Banja Luka, November 1–4, 1994.

STATEMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN KOSOVO, MARCH 1999 AND MARCH 2004

Vienna Declaration on Kosovo Peace and Tolerance, 1999

We, the representatives of the Catholic, Islamic and Orthodox communities who have lived in Kosovo for centuries, wish to express our sincere thanks to the Appeal of Conscience Foundation for bringing us together for this unique and important opportunity to deliberate with one another concerning the fates of our peoples. We also wish to thank our generous Austrian hosts for bringing us together in this land of peace and tranquility, so that we could have thoughtful and fruitful discussions. We are grateful for the personal participation and support of the President of Austria, H.E. Dr. Thomas Klestil, Chancellor Viktor Klima, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Vice Chancellor Wolfgang Schossel, and the encouragement of President of the United States, Bill Clinton, the Secretary General of the United Nations, H.E. Kofi Annan, His Holiness Pope John Paul II, the President of the European Community, Chancellor the Federal Republic of Germany, Gerhard Schroder, the Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Azedin Laraki, His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, His Holiness Patriarch Alexis II of Moscow and All Russia, the World Council of Churches, and many others.

Our delegations have come to Vienna from a troubled region, one that has seen much bloodshed and injustice, and we, the emis-

saries of our faithful, wish to state unequivocally that the war that is now raging in our homeland, where our people are being killed and maimed, and where our homes and places of worship, and our schools and monuments are barbarously being destroyed, is not a war of religions. We state categorically that we are against the killing and destruction, and that we stand for dialogue and negotiation to bring about the peace that God demands of us.

We are proud of our homeland and are tied to it by bonds that reach deep into past generations. We want to bequeath that legacy of pride in Kosovo to future generations. We also know only too well our troubled and tragic history. A history that has all too often pitted differing ethnic and religious communities against each other. We know that past conflicts have left deep scars, have caused unspeakable suffering and have brought forth veritable rivers of blood and tears. We cannot ignore those deep wounds and must grieve for those who have suffered.

Without forgetting our sorrows, however, we want to emphasize to our faithful and to all others in Kosovo that history is recounting the past. No one can change the immutable past. But the future is within our power to influence and direct. In the name of our faithful, we can demand an end to the suffering that has plagued our peoples for so long and call on all to look forward, to change the present era of confrontation to one of cooperation. We, therefore, enjoin all who are wrongly fuelling the fires of the bloody conflict now raging in our homeland to stop the killing and destruction and join us in the search for peace through discussions and negotiations.

Although our faiths differ, we maintain that human life is of ultimate value. We all serve God and abide by the commandments He has given us to follow. Therefore, we firmly denounce the killing and all acts of violence. We urge our faithful to solve their disagreements peacefully with those of other religions or ethnic backgrounds, as we have done during our discussions here and in the publication of this declaration.

We pledge that we will bring this message of cooperation home to our faithful, that we will distribute it within our communities, and

that we will urge all to lay aside their weapons. Only then, when the weapons are silent and all religious and ethnic communities have the right to express their views through open and free discussions, can we achieve understanding, tolerance, and cooperation and find equitable solutions to our differences.

It is with this in mind that we, the representatives of the Catholic, Islamic, and Orthodox faiths in Kosovo, lay down these precepts.

1. Stop the killing and all acts of violence.
2. We call for a verbal cease-fire to end the polemics of hate and remind all of the words from Proverbs, "Life and death are in the power of the tongue."
3. In cooperation with the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, establish an ongoing interreligious "Conscience Contact Group" to continue the work begun by this Conference and to help advance the principle of "live and let live."
4. Allow all in Kosovo to live in peace, safety and freedom.
5. Ensure safe and unimpeded travel in all areas of Kosovo.
6. Permit all in Kosovo to live, worship and work in the knowledge that their basic human and religious rights will not be violated.
7. Preserve and protect houses of worship as well as religious and cultural monuments of all faiths.
8. Permit all ethnic and religious communions to retain their cultural and linguistic heritage and to allow those communities freely to provide education that will perpetuate that heritage.
9. Establish a viable system in Kosovo, one that reflects the wishes of those who live there without violating the rights of any minority.
10. We demand that all assistance from international humanitarian organizations to those in need in Kosovo be transmitted without hindrance and delay.

We, the undersigned, believe that it is our duty to God and to our faithful to state categorically that all must accept the way of non-violence and cooperation. Only then will there be an end to the killing and to the destruction of our homes and places of worship. We, therefore, demand of those who have resorted to misguided violent

means to achieve their goals, to lay aside their arms, to withdraw their engines of terrible destruction, and to seize the initiative we offer from our hearts — cooperation and peace — to bring about a better and more fruitful life for all in Kosovo today, and for all those who will follow.

Signed in Vienna, Austria, March 18, 1999

Rabbi Arthur Schneier, President, Appeal of Conscience Foundation
His Eminence Reverend Marko Sopi, Catholic Bishop of Kosovo
His Eminence Kyr Artemije, Bishop of Raska and Prizren, Kosovo,
member of the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church
Professor Qemail Morina, Vice Dean, Faculty of Islamic Studies,
Pristina, Kosovo
His Excellency Victor Klima, Federal Chancellor of Austria, Witness

PEACE APPEAL OF THE BISHOPS OF THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, 1999

Human experience, both old and new and most recently in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, shows that war and violence, particularly inter-ethnic, leaves in its wake only chaos and general misery, with long-lasting spiritual, moral and social consequences and unhealed wounds.

Aware of this, in the name of God, we demand and beseech that all conflict in Kosovo and Metohija immediately cease, and that the problems there be resolved exclusively by peaceful and political means. The way of nonviolence and cooperation is the only way blessed by God in agreement with human and divine moral law and experience. Deeply concerned about the threatened Serbian cradle of Kosovo and Metohija and for all those who live there, and especially by the terrible threats of the world's armed forces to bomb our Homeland, we would remind the responsible leaders of the international organizations that evil in Kosovo or anywhere else cannot be uprooted by even greater and more immoral evil: the bombing of one small but honorable

European people. We cannot believe that the international organizations have become so incapable of devising ways for negotiation and human agreement that they must resort to ways which are dark and demeaning to human and national honor, ways which employ great violence in order to prevent a lesser evil and violence.

We pray the Lord of peace, the living and true God, in whose hands are judgment and justice, to give to all in Kosovo and Metohija, and throughout our Homeland and throughout the world, peace, justice, security in freedom, and to the powerful of the world understanding and wisdom.

— The Holy Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church, meeting at the Patriarchate in Belgrade on March 23, 1999; the statement was in response to the threats over Kosovo and Metohija and the possible bombing of Serbia and Yugoslavia by NATO forces.

STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SYNOD OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ALBANIA, 1999

With all our heart, we share the pain of those who suffer injustice and violence as a result of the Kosovo crisis. This extremely difficult situation can not be resolved by rhetorical and naive declarations. But, while we pray every day “for those who hate us and for those who love us,” we humbly pray the God of truth and love to bring about a miracle and make peace and justice reign once more in our unstable region, as soon as is possible. We have already contributed, within the limits of our forces, to ease the sufferings of the Kosovars who have left their homes because of the conflict and have settled in Albania. And we will continue to work in this direction.

— Tirana, March 29, 1999.

A CRY OF WORLD ORTHODOX YOUTH REGARDING THE KOSOVO AND METOHIJA CRISIS, 1999

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God” (Matt. 5:9).

We, the representatives of over 120 Orthodox Youth movements from more than 40 countries worldwide, who have gathered in the XVI General Assembly of Syndesmos, the World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth, wholeheartedly sympathize with the pain of all those who have suffered injustice and violence in the crisis in Yugoslavia. We also condemn violence, ask for reconciliation and peaceful coexistence, and pray to the God of Truth and Love to perform His miracle so that a just, permanent and peaceful solution can be found for the troubled area of Kosovo and Metohija. We pray that the Lord will enlighten all those who wield power in the whole region, to act with wisdom and seek peace and sincerely to respond to human misery wherever it is found. Noting the close personal interest of His Holiness Pavle, Archbishop of Pec and Patriarch of Serbia, and His Beatitude Anastasios, Archbishop of Tirana and all Albania, we applaud the Orthodox Churches of Serbia and Albania for their efforts in peace-making and relieving human pain before and during the crisis.

The delegates further ask all sides involved to act quickly to make good the environmental damage in Yugoslavia and the surrounding countries, and to contribute to the work of reconstruction before the onset of winter, so that the destruction of the civilian infrastructure caused by violence will not result in the widespread loss of innocent human lives. We also pray that God will help both the Patriarchate of Serbia and the Autocephalous Church of Albania to continue to respond to the tragedy with compassion and forgiveness.

We finally express our deep sorrow and condemn the destruction of Holy monasteries and churches, as well as mosques and other religious and cultural monuments in the suffering region.

— Text written by the Albanian and Serbian delegates and unanimously adopted by the XVI Syndesmos General Assembly at Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Valamo, Finland, July 24, 1999.

SERBIAN ORTHODOX PEACE APPEAL, 2004

Yesterday's and last night's unrest, which took place throughout the

southern Serbian Province of Kosovo and Metohija, represent the continuation of organized Albanian terrorism against the Orthodox Serbian population, now in existence for several decades, against that, which is considered both Serbian and world cultural heritage, as well as against other non-Albanian inhabitants in this area. Terrorism and violence, which became especially manifest in the burning of the refectory of the Monastery of the Patriarchate of Pec in 1981, have continued and continually exist since 1999, culminating in that same year with the NATO bombing and the expulsion of several hundreds of thousands of Serbs and other non-Albanians, which would give increase in strength and intensity.

The results of that unheard-of violence are to be seen in several thousands of men, women and children that were kidnapped and murdered, villages and settlements with Serbian inhabitants that were burned, looted and endangered properties of the people, as well as of the Church, the destruction and damaging of more than 115 monasteries and churches. And all this has happened since this Province has been under the immediate protectorate of the International Community.

The climax of everything is just this recent, obviously planned in advance, unthinkable pogrom, which has been in process, over the rest of the Serbian people and their centuries lasting shrines. More than fifteen of the most significant churches and monuments of culture from the 14th to 19th centuries, starting with the monastery of the Holy Archangels and the Mother of God Church of Ljevish in Prizren, to the St. Nicholas Church (17th century) at Belo Polje, have been burnt down and destroyed within a day. Some ten people were killed, the remaining Serbian settlements throughout Kosovo and Metohija are being burnt and destroyed, Dechani Monastery is being shelled, the monasteries of the Patriarchate of Pec and Grachanica are endangered.

For every reasonable person, it is evident that here we are dealing with pre-planned total ethnic cleansing and destruction of all cultural and spiritual traces of the presence of Christian Serbian people on the territory of Kosovo and Metohija. Additionally, the representatives of the International Community, KFOR and UNMIK, by their actions

or non-actions, from 1999 until the present day, contribute, voluntarily or involuntarily, to the definitive extermination of Orthodox Christian peoples from their centuries-long hearths and homes, and to destruction of their culture and all-Christian shrines of Kosovo. Our country, contrary to Security Council Resolution 1244, has not been allowed to defend its own people and a part of its territory, while those who on behalf of defending human rights and freedoms, have taken over the protectorate and responsibility, or by their passivity actually contribute to the escalation of unheard-of terror in the heart of Europe.

For this reason, the Holy Synod of Bishops appeals to the authorities of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, as well as to the Government of Serbia, to do everything within their power in order to protect the people from extermination and from the ultimate expulsion of the Serbian people from Kosovo and Metohija.

We turn to the European Union, USA, Russia and the United Nations crying out that they urgently end this pogrom and terror, for the sake of God and for the sake of human dignity.

We also call upon on Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija and upon their leaders to stop this insanity, for their own sake as well as for the sake of their future. We remind them and also ourselves of the all-human experience, that violence, injustice and hatred have never brought any good to anyone.

Finally, we call upon all of our people that they in these extremely difficult times double their fasting and prayer for their salvation and redemption, for peace among us and all over the world. We should not allow ourselves, for the sake of any interest of this world, to commit anything that would be unworthy of the People of God, anything inhuman. During this turbulent time, one should avoid any form of senseless and foolish revenge, such as that which certain imprudent persons committed against mosques in Belgrade and that in Nish. We should defend ourselves from evil and evil-doers, but not in an inhuman way or that, God forbid, we commit an evil or brutal deed in the way of evil-doers. O Lord, help all, and also us and our enemies, as

peace, freedom and justice are necessary for all, both for us and for all peoples and nations.

— Statement of the Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church issued March 18, 2004 at the time of NATO attacks in Serbia and Kosovo.

MESSAGE OF THE AUTOCEPHALOUS ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ALBANIA IN THE WAKE OF THE EVENTS IN KOSOVO, 2004

The burning of churches and mosques does not promote justice and peace, and certainly neither progress. On the contrary, it is a return to times and practices which led the Balkans to stagnation, divisions and tragedies.

Indeed, those who involve religion in the violence are essentially violating the spirit of religion. No matter how much one is in the right, he must respect the sanctity and the purpose of sacred places of worship. These should become centers of reconciliation and peace and not breeding-grounds for maintaining animosities.

It is only with peaceful coexistence of the religious communities that genuine social progress can take place. This is the principle that we Christians and Muslims alike have adopted in Albania: to live together and to cooperate with each other in harmony.

The sobriety of religious tolerance and courage of love must overcome the blind hatred that can only lead to an escalation of conflicts. In the 21st century, worldwide and particularly in the Balkan region, we are called — independent of the national or religious community, in which we were born — to work hard to coexist peacefully, with mutual respect and solidarity.

With this conviction, the Orthodox Archdiocese of Tirana has made the following decision:

We offer \$600,000 for the restoration of a church and a mosque in Kosovo or the construction of a youth center there that will promote peaceful coexistence. This sum comes from the funds that, with great effort, we have raised for the construction of the Orthodox Cathedral

in Tirana. It will be dispatched appropriately, so that it be used equitably, according to the special significance of this initiative.

— Anastasios, Archbishop of Tirana, Durres and All Albania, Tirana, March 26, 2004.

APPEAL OF THE STANDING CONFERENCE OF THE CANONICAL ORTHODOX BISHOPS IN THE AMERICAS (SCOBIA) FOR THE RESTORATION OF PEACE AND ORDER IN KOSOVO, 2004

As Hierarchs of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, we deplore the terrible and senseless outbreak of violence and intolerance witnessed this past week in Kosovo.

We have heard the pleas of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church. We join them in praying for the victims who were murdered or forced to flee from their homes while 18,000 international peacekeepers watched this wanton violence against the minority Serbian population and the destruction of the centuries-old cultural and spiritual heritage of the region — including UNESCO-protected sites. More than 3,000 people have been left homeless, 28 persons killed, and many injured. Furthermore, 30 churches and monasteries were destroyed, bringing the number of churches destroyed in Kosovo over the past four years to approximately 145. In addition, numerous villages were torched and leveled to the ground.

Terrorizing civilian populations, like terrorist activity in other parts of the world, must be confronted openly and directly. Ethnic cleansing is wrong, no matter who is doing it. Such intolerance and hatred cannot and must not be rewarded.

We call on the United Nations and responsible Western governments to intervene swiftly and forcefully to restore a safe and secure environment in Kosovo, to protect the rights and property of minorities, and to preserve the remaining centuries-old religious sites throughout the region.

Having called upon our government to take appropriate measures, we call upon you also, our spiritual children, to let your voices be heard in the media and in the offices of your elected officials. We ask you, during this Lenten season, to intensify even more your prayers for peace in the world. Pray that our Lord will comfort and offer solace to the homeless and eternal rest to the victims of this violence.

We urge you to express in every God-pleasing way your support for our brothers and sisters in Kosovo.

With paternal blessings and love in Christ,

Archbishop Demetrios, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America,
SCOBA Chairman

Metropolitan Herman, Orthodox Church in America

Metropolitan Philip, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of
North America, SCOBA Vice Chairman

Metropolitan Nicolae, Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America
and Canada

Metropolitan Christopher, Serbian Orthodox Church in the USA
and Canada, SCOBA Secretary

Metropolitan Joseph, Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church

Metropolitan Nicholas of Amissos, American Carpatho-Russian
Orthodox Diocese in the USA

Metropolitan Constantine, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA

Bishop Ilia of Philomelion, Albanian Orthodox Diocese

March 24, 2004

STATEMENTS ON THE WAR AGAINST IRAQ, 2003

Ecumenical Patriarchate Urges Peaceful Resolution to Iraq Crisis

In these very critical days through which humanity proceeds, the Ecumenical Patriarchate repeats again its wish and prayer for peace and for the avoidance of war even in this last moment. It makes a plea to

whomever is able to contribute to this end to exhaust all of their means so that humanity will not mourn new victims and horrible holocausts.

With this opportunity, the Ecumenical Patriarchate reminds everyone that the basic prerequisite of peace is the respect for the sanctity of the human person and his freedom and dignity. From this respect are born all other prerequisites for the peaceful co-existence of all human beings on Earth in the love of one God and Father, who is not a God of war and battle but of reconciliation and peace.

May peace and good will be established permanently on Earth for the glory of God and the prosperity of all human beings, whom God loves equally.

— From the Chief Secretariat of the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, March 19, 2003.

Appeal for Peace of Patriarch Petros of Alexandria to President Bush

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill toward men” (Luke 2:14).

From the historic city founded by Alexander the Great and where Christianity was preached by St. Mark the Apostle and Evangelist; from the land of the Nile River and a country which is a model and example of harmony between Christians and Muslims, I wish to make an earnest call to Your Excellency to avoid any attacks on Iraq. If Iraq is attacked, the negative consequences of such an attack would not only be felt by the peaceful land of Egypt but the whole world as well.

As the Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church of Alexandria and All Africa, a Church that has existed for the last two thousand years, I call on Your Excellency to try and find a peaceful solution rather than that of war. The Middle East is a sensitive area that already is suffering greatly. Such a war would be seen as an attack against Islam. Such an impression, though false, would have unjust far-reaching and long lasting consequences upon religions, their faithful and their reputations. Religions, in essence, have nothing to do with politics, terrorism, and war.

From this holy place, I invite Your Excellency to offer up intense prayer to the Almighty God, who created us all, that peace may reign in the whole world. I also ask our Lord to enlighten all the leaders of all nations to work to build a world without violence, a world that loves life and grows in justice and solidarity.

May the New Year be a joyful, peaceful, graceful and blessed one for Your Excellency, the members of your beloved family, the people of the United States of America and the whole world.

With the love of our Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ,

— Petros VII, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, Alexandria, January 2, 2003.

Appeal of Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch to Help the Afflicted

This is a time of fear and sorrow for many. As Church leaders of the Middle East, we spoke in one voice. We, Orthodox Christians of the Patriarchate of Antioch, are concerned for the people of Iraq as the unjust war against their country intensifies. The voices of Churches, and millions of people of good will, opposing the immoral and illegal use of force was unheard. We have repeatedly stated that such a unilateral and pre-emptive action, where the logic of might prevails, is a defeat of international law and diplomacy, with grave consequences for the world. The war causes, in our region and well beyond, great pain and anger. It must stop. As people of faith, this is our cry today.

Many Iraqis are, and will be, displaced. Many are threatened in their lives and possessions. The present war continues their long-enduring suffering. We pray for all the Iraqis, our spiritual children, the Antiochian Orthodox, and their compatriots, Christians and Muslims. We urge our faithful and our friends to express solidarity and support generously the humanitarian efforts of our Church, in coordination with other Churches, towards the relief of the afflicted.

May the Lord of Peace bless you all.

— Ignatius IV, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, March 24, 2003.

“They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind”

Excerpts from a statement by Patriarch Alexis II of Moscow and All Russia and the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church.

For the last several months, the world has lived in a situation of growing tension around Iraq. The USA, with the support of Great Britain and some other countries, is planning to launch large-scale military actions against this country, trying to justify them by the danger of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. (...)

The war in Iraq will inevitably lead to the death and suffering of a tremendous number of innocent people, as always in such a case civilians like children, women, old people will be injured, there will be thousands of refugees. It is absolutely obvious that military operations in this oil production region can turn out to be a global ecological catastrophe. All this may blow up the situation in the Middle East, creating a threat to peace and stability in the whole world.

Today, the Russian Orthodox Church addresses an appeal to the governments of those countries on which the decision to begin or not to begin war depends to do all that is possible to avoid an armed conflict.

For the actions that are taken without considering the opinion of the international community, the opinion of a majority of people on the Earth, destroy the existing system of international law and inter-governmental institutions. The first blow on its foundations was already struck by the bombing of Yugoslavia, which was initiated without the sanction of the United Nations and which led to destruction and death of thousands of people in the very center of Europe. Now another action is being prepared, which can turn the existing world order into ashes. The violation of legal norms sows chaos and arbitrariness, for lawlessness always generates more lawlessness. “They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind” (Hosea 8:7), say Holy Scriptures.

Our Church supports the efforts of the governments, spiritual and public leaders in various countries who have come out against the military operations and rejects the attempts to justify this war.

We call upon the nations of the world to stop military preparations against Iraq, to prevent bloodshed of innocent people. We plead to the God “to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1:79) and to protect the biblical earth of Iraq against the fire of war.

— Moscow, March 17, 2003, Saint Daniel Monastery.

Statement by the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece on the War in Iraq

The Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, with a deep sense of its pastoral responsibility and an awareness of its obligations before God and its Christian *pleroma*,⁴ follows with concern and sadness, together with the People of God, the continuous threat of war, under which mankind lives.

This concern also covers the possibility of a wider outbreak of hostilities in the area, which will clearly have adverse consequences for our country.

The Church of Greece once again concludes that it is necessary that peace prevail in the life of all men. Peace is not an unseen good or an abstract condition, but the gift and fruit of the Holy Spirit. The Church continuously prays and labors that peace may prevail throughout the world. Of course, its prevailing is dependent upon the prevailing of freedom and justice. It is inconceivable that peace can prevail in the life of mankind when totalitarian regimes oppress human beings or when elementary rules of justice are violated.

The Church of Greece also wishes to express her sympathy and her support to all those who, regardless of nationality, race or religion, find themselves tested and tried by war.

She congratulates all those who labor for the cause of peace and who struggle against violence, regardless of its origin. Certainly, the Lord will bless their efforts, even when these do not evoke a response in the hearts of all.

⁴Greek: the fullness of the Christian people.

She prays that our Lord, the Prince of Peace, will enlighten the political Leaders of this world so that in a spirit of discretion and peace they will exhaust all their efforts to find peaceful solutions through the existing competent global organs.

— From the Press Office of the Holy Synod, Athens, February 4, 2003.

Archbishop Anastasios of Albania: Is Religion to Be Another Victim of this War?

Long is the list of victims from the war in Iraq: women and children, soldiers fallen or about to fall in battle, the international economy, international legitimacy, the UN, truth and justice, and many others — whether by direct or indirect means. Religion, too, is in danger of becoming one of these victims. Leaders of both sides have already used religious terms, by invoking God. In our time, religions continue to influence people, but do not determine the decisions of political and economic leaders. These decisions are made on the basis of different calculations and interests.

Religious consciousness, however, is called upon to resist war, so that religion retains its sacred role of peacemaking, reconciliation, forgiveness and the healing of wounds.

At the numerous interfaith conferences that have taken place over the last few years, representatives of different faiths have agreed that religion has to bring peace and support peace in the world; that violence and terrorism — individual, group or state-initiated — are against the true spirit of religion; and they have condemned, in particular, invoking God's will to justify violence and war.

At the same time, these participants have undertaken the responsibility to make the cries of those who are suffering from violence their own, and contribute their utmost in securing the freedom and dignity of every person and of all peoples.

The blowing winds of war must not sweep away the sacredness of religion, contaminating the hearts of people with bitterness and enmity for each other's religion. Much greater catastrophes than those

caused by weapons of mass destruction could be produced by the incitement of religious intolerance. The radioactivity of hatred, enriched by the ‘uranium’ of religious passion, will last long after hostilities have ceased, for decades, maybe even for centuries — as was the case of the Crusades and ‘holy wars’ in the past.

Those who believe in “the God of peace” (Rom. 15:33; Phil. 4:9; Hebr. 13:20, etc.), and particularly those who have committed themselves to serving Him, cannot help but repeat insistently the supplication “for peace in the whole world,” and strive to do whatever is possible to let justice and peace prevail on earth.

— Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana, Durres and All Albania, March 31, 2003.

Communiqué by the Heads of Churches in the Middle East

It saddens us profoundly to see the failure of efforts for peace in Iraq exerted by many parties throughout the world. In fact, governments, Christian and Muslim religious leaders, the World Council of Churches and regional councils of churches, and millions of people crying out in various cities throughout the world worked for a peaceful solution to prevail over the solution of war. Today we have witnessed the start of a military campaign against the people and the land of Iraq. Nobody knows how long it will last or what impact it will have not just upon the people of Iraq but also upon the entire Middle East. Furthermore, there is no predicting the impact that the unilateral American decision for war will have upon the United Nations and international organizations, their credibility and their effectiveness in solving conflicts through negotiated agreements. They will be severely weakened, their authority shaken, their very existence threatened.

Churches around the world condemned this war as immoral. They have said this firmly and with conviction ever since this crisis began to develop. More specifically, they have condemned this war for its disregard of principles of international law, its ambivalence to the most basic human values and rights, its potential for tragic hu-

man repercussions in Iraq and the Middle East region, as well as its threat of aggravating tensions between religions, giving substance to the false thesis that there is an inevitable clash of civilizations, cultures and religions.

What we feared and labored to avert has happened. Now, in our responsibility as heads of churches, caretakers of God's creation and as fellow humans, we have added responsibilities, and as such:

We will continue to exert our efforts with all parties concerned and all who may have an effective voice both internationally and regionally so as to limit the temporal and geographical expansion of the war, spare innocent civilians, and bring it to a halt as quickly as possible.

We call especially upon those governments that opposed this war and upon international organizations concerned with health, relief, development and human rights to hasten in helping those who have been hit by this war, helping them avert the dangers that threaten their lives, their possessions, and their right to live a dignified life.

We urge the Middle East Council of Churches and all humanitarian organizations to remain on a state of high alert in marshalling, intensifying and directing social and humanitarian services both now and for as long as required in order to help those stricken by this war, especially in Iraq.

We call on all the members of our churches and all citizens of our countries to strengthen their unity and solidarity with each other, resisting all foreign incursions and self-interested, extremist interference that seeks to undermine our national unity and fraternal coexistence.

We call upon our faithful, our fellow citizens, and all who love peace throughout the world, each in his or her own way, to lift up their hearts in ardent and sustained prayer to our God that He may open the eyes and clear the vision of political decision-makers to see clearly God's will and work for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace, not only for Iraq but also for the Middle East and the whole world.

Signed in Beirut, March 21, 2003.

Patriarch Ignatius Zakka I
Catholicos Aram I
Patriarch Ignatius IV Hazim
Archbishop Chrysothomos
Cardinal Nasrallah Butros Sfeir
Patriarch Nerses Pedros XIX
Patriarch Ignatious Butros VIII
Patriarch Gregorious III Lahham
Patriarch Michel Sabbah
Cardinal Istefhanos II Ghattas
Patriarch Raphael Bedawid
Archbishop Kirollos Selim Bustoros
Rev. Dr. Selim Sahiouny
Bishop Riah Abul Asal
Bishop Munir Hanna
Rev. Dr. Safwat al-Baiady
Rev. Dr. Ikram Lamii
Rev. Adib Awad
Rev. Mograditch Kerakozian

**Encyclical of the Holy Eparchial Synod of the Greek Orthodox
Archdiocese of America on the Commencement of War in Iraq
(extract)**

*Lord of the Powers, be with us. For in times of distress, we have no other
help but You.*

— Hymn of the Great Compline Service

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, as the Holy Eparchial Synod of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, we address you at a critical time in the life of our nation and our world, assuring you of our deep concern and fervent prayers during this difficult and uncertain period of conflict and war in Iraq. We call upon all of you, as people of faith and peace, to gather in prayer in your homes

and parishes so that we may be united in the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the source of our strength and solace.

Following the exhortation of the Apostle Paul, we “pray unceasingly” that the peace of God may abide everywhere on our planet Earth and that places of conflict may be transformed into places of life and freedom. We pray for the courageous men and women who serve in our armed forces and who face uncertain dangers and the threat of death. May God grant them and their families assurance and strength. We pray for the safety of all who peacefully inhabit areas of conflict, especially for the innocent children of our world, for their well-being, and for the realization of the beautiful potential of their lives as human beings created in the image and likeness of God. Further, we pray that the wisdom of God may abide in the hearts of the leaders of our nation as they make decisions that will undoubtedly affect millions of human beings. We painfully understand the enormous challenges and responsibilities they must face.

The Church affirms that war, terrorism, hatred, and intolerance are the tragic results of sin and evil in a suffering world, and that these place tremendous spiritual and physical burdens upon each and every person. Yet, in the weariness of conflict and struggle in the world, we take solace in the comforting words of our Lord Jesus Christ: “Come to Me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). Our Lord, “the Lord of the Powers,” is embracing each one of us in distressful times such as these, so that we might find serenity and help in Him.

Our journey through the season of the Great Fast, one that coincides with the ordeal of war, leads us to the foot of the Cross where we become once again witnesses of the Crucifixion of our Lord. In His bruised and battered face, we behold all of the sufferings of humankind, and our hearts are pierced anew with the violence and inhumanity of our world. However, we remain with every assurance that, as He prevailed over sin and death, His promises of enduring peace, heavenly joy, and eternal life will be fulfilled. We look to the Life-

Giving Cross, a “weapon of peace” and a standard of love, as a source of strength and inspiration. In the midst of violence, God’s power and presence is with us, just as it was when His Son offered His sinless life for our salvation. May each of you know that the conflicts of our lives and our world can be resolved when the spiritual peace and sacrificial love of the Cross exist among nations and within the lives of people. Further, may you be strengthened with hope and assurance that the sad conditions of this world will pass away and all things will be made new within the reality of the Kingdom of God, wherein “nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isa. 2:4).

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we call upon all Orthodox Christians to be steadfast in prayer and service during this Lenten season, offering our worship to God and our ministry to all those in need. Let us pray together for reconciliation among nations, for the establishment of justice, and for the restoration of peace. In faithful commitment to God and in love for others, let us bring solace and peace into the lives of our fellow human beings through acts of charity and words of kindness. May we be willing to offer sacrificially for the spiritual and physical needs of others. In the days before us, may His goodness and love for all humankind reassure, strengthen, and guide all of you, and may “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7).

With paternal love in Christ,

Demetrios, Archbishop of America and the members of the Holy Eparchial Synod of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America,
March 20, 2003

Statement of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America Calling on the Faithful to Intensify Their Prayer and Fasting in Light of the War on Iraq

We, the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, have come together from across the North American continent during the week

of Mid-Lent when Orthodox Christians venerate the Holy Cross of our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ. To us, the Cross is the symbol of Christ's victory over all human suffering and death and the promise of a new heaven and a new earth.

At this same time, we witness the violence of terror, the violence of dictatorial regimes, and the devastating violence of war. As bishops, we are aware that acts of violence are not the proper responses of mankind to the unique divine gift of life. From distant lands, the media project into our own homes and lives instantaneous images of terrible human suffering resulting from this armed conflict, playing and replaying these vivid images until we are led to the brink of insensitivity to the portrayed misery and death.

Civilians and combatants, children of God made in His image, are both casualties of man's inhumanity against man. This is the fruit of the Fall, the wages of sin, our fallen human nature in revolt.

We urge the faithful not to become insensitive to these sights and sounds of human suffering to which we are as eyewitnesses, but to rally around the Cross in even more vigorous prayer and intensified fasting, beseeching our Good God to have mercy on us all and to soften the hard and stubborn hearts to end this war so that terror and killing cease and peace can have its place.

As archpastors, we exhort our clergy and faithful to put their trust in God and to raise fervent prayers to the Prince of Peace to come quickly into the midst of this war and by His mighty arm establish peace. As we continue our Lenten journey, we know that the will of God is for us to remind our flock that beyond the Cross stands the radiant Lord risen in glory and to place our hope in Him who is the supreme and final Victor over terror and suffering, war and death, for He only is the Peace who bestows peace and justice upon all people — those of Iraq, of the Americas and the entire world.

With love in Christ,

Herman, Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada and the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America.

— Orthodox Church in America Chancery, Syosset, NY, March 31–April 3, 2003.

Appeal For Prayer by the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA)

We, the hierarchs of the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, are compelled by our spiritual obligation as peacemakers, to express the anguish in our hearts that, once again, due to the presence of sin and evil in the world, nations and people of faith have been unable to avoid a dreadful confrontation.

As heads of Orthodox Christian communities in North America, we are compelled to call our pious clergy and faithful to pray for peace and for respect of the sanctity of all human persons.

We ask our churches to open their doors during this season of the Great Lent for people to enter, light a candle, and pray for peace and reconciliation among nations.

We exhort our faithful to pray for all the people who live in areas of conflict, for the innocent women, children and elderly who live in places of high risk and harm, for those in flight, for refugees throughout the region who join others on a journey of profound uncertainty.

We pray for the security and well-being of our military personnel, for advisors and diplomats, and for families at home, who must live in fear for the safety of their loved ones.

We pray for our President and all civil authorities, for their discernment and divine guidance during this difficult time.

This tragic war, combined with the threat to security at home, has created enormous fear and anxiety throughout the world. Only the Prince of Peace, who said “My peace I give to you” (Luke 14:27), can allay this fear and anxiety.

Please know, dearly beloved, that our humanitarian aid agency, the International Orthodox Christian Charities, has already prepared itself to address the tremendous needs that will confront the world in the days ahead. This response will include the distribution of ‘sur-

vival packs' to persons fleeing Iraq, provisions of medical assistance to ill or disabled refugees in Jordan, and the distribution of humanitarian relief within Iraq. We urge you to help IOCC in this massive philanthropic effort.

May the peace and love of God be with all of you.

With paternal love and blessings,

Archbishop Demetrios, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America,
SCOB A Chairman

Metropolitan Herman, Orthodox Church in America

Metropolitan Philip, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of
North America, SCOB A Vice Chairman

Archbishop Nicolae, Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America
and Canada

Metropolitan Christopher, Serbian Orthodox Church in the USA
and Canada, SCOB A Secretary

Metropolitan Joseph, Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church

Metropolitan Nicholas of Amissos, American Carpatho-Russian
Orthodox Diocese in the USA

Metropolitan Constantine, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA

Bishop Ilia of Philomelion, Albanian Orthodox Diocese

April 4, 2003

A Plea for Peace from the Orthodox Peace Fellowship in North America, 2003

The "Plea for Peace" of the Orthodox Peace Fellowship in North America was signed by over 150 Orthodox hierarchs, clergy, theologians and lay persons in the aftermath of the attacks on Iraq. See Case Study 10 on the way the Appeal was received and responded to in the United States.

As Orthodox Christians, we seek the conversion of enemies to friends in Christ. Saddam Hussein is an enemy of the United States and of

the people of Iraq, but we declare that there are better ways to respond to terrorism than to respond in kind.

We do not argue against attacking Iraq because of any admiration for Saddam Hussein. He came to office by intrigue and murder, and remains in power by the same means; he is his own country's worst enemy. The Iraqi people deserve to be rid of him.

The United States is ready to overthrow him by any means, including an attack which would kill thousands of civilians and maim many more, justifying such an attack on the possibility that Hussein's regime is producing weapons of mass destruction and preparing to use them against America and Israel and their allies.

Because we seek the reconciliation of enemies, a conversion which grows from striving to be faithful to the Gospel, the Orthodox Church has never regarded any war as just or good, and fighting an elusive enemy by means which cause the death of innocent people can be regarded only as murder. Individual murderers are treated by psychiatrists and priests and isolated from society. But who heals the national psyche, the wounded soul of a nation, when it is untroubled by the slaughter of non-combatant civilians?

As Orthodox Christians, we find healing in Christ, Who made us responsible for His sacred gift of life. God created us in His image and likeness, and we best reflect Christ — Who neither killed anyone nor blessed anyone to kill — by loving, helping, and forgiving.

Friends help each other do good things, not evil things. We find echoes of holy friendship in the world's unfolding reaction to events in Iraq.

Many nations traditionally allied with America — along with many patriotic Americans — oppose an invasion of Iraq. They see how difficult a position the U.S. will assume by attacking Iraq, and seek instead a renewed program of weapons inspection.

Iraq's closest neighbors are far from supportive of the course the United States is pursuing, even though they are aware of Saddam's shameful, destructive regime. Not having rallied to America's side does not mean that they support Saddam.

An attack on Iraq will be seen by many as an attack on all Arabic and Islamic states. America, despite the rhetoric, is perceived as seeing itself under attack by Islam. America helped install and maintain the despotic Shah of Iran, but withdrew its support when Iran became an Islamic republic (itself undemocratic in many ways). Now America is seen as the largely uncritical supporter of Israel, against the interests of Palestinians, both Muslim and Christian. Bombing Iraq will confirm these perceptions among Muslims.

An attack by Saddam on any nation would be viewed as proper cause for a military response to Iraq by the attacked nation and its allies, as was the case with Kuwait. This may not be good, but it is true. Saddam now attacks only his own people, and they need help — but not the ‘help’ of being killed in an effort by other countries to bring about ‘regime change’ in Iraq.

‘Pre-emption’ (the notion that one nation may attack another because of what it *might* do) is philosophically, ethically, and pragmatically perilous. After all, an enemy may return the favor. Once ‘pre-emption’ is established as a valid principle for international relations, nations which invoke that principle will have no conceptual shelter.

If the world can be convinced that it is possible to work peacefully to make life more livable for all, we will all be better off. This is the reconciliation we hope for as Christians among individuals. Can it not happen among nations, between Iraq and its neighbors, and for all the good people of the world?

The Orthodox Peace Fellowship calls on the United States and the United Nations to follow diplomatic paths predicated on mercy, honesty, and justice, and to seek peacefully negotiated resolutions to the impasse in Iraq.

We implore Christ, Who is our peace, to bless every endeavor directed toward our complete reconciliation with each other, and with Him.

— The statement signers are too numerous to include here. They included: **Archbishop Peter of New York and New Jersey**, Orthodox Church in America, External Affairs; **Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos**, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America; **Bishop Job of Chicago and the Midwest**,

Orthodox Church in America; **Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada**, Orthodox Church in America; **Bishop Mercurius of Zaraisk**, Vicar of the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, Administrator of Parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate in the USA; **Bishop Basil of Sergievo**, Diocese of Sourozh, Russian Orthodox Church in Great Britain; **Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia**, Orthodox Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain; Fr. **John Behr**, Associate Professor of Patristics, St. Vladimir Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood, New York; **Alexander Belopopsky**, Programme Executive for Europe, World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland; **Hildo Bos**, Acting President, Syndesmos: the World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth; **Dr. Peter Bouteneff**, Assistant Professor of Dogmatic Theology, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, New York; **V. Rev. John Breck**, Professor of Bioethics and Patristic Exegesis, St. Sergius Theological Institute, Paris, France; **Prof. Sheila D. Campbell**, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, Canada; **Fr. John Chrysavgis**, Professor of Theology, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, Massachusetts; **Helen Breslich Erickson**, Lecturer in Liturgical Music, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood, New York; **John H. Erickson**, Dean, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood, New York; **Fr. Thomas FitzGerald**, Th.D., Professor of Church History and Historical Theology, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, Massachusetts; **Hieromonk Alexander Golitzin**, Associate Professor of Theology, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; **Fr. Alexander Golubov**, Academic Dean, St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary, South Canaan, Pennsylvania; Fr. **Stanley Harakas**, retired Professor of Orthodox Theology, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, Massachusetts; Fr. **Gregory Havrilak**, Associate General Secretary, Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, New York City; Fr. **Thomas Hopko**, Dean Emeritus, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood, New York; Fr. **David Hudson**, Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America & Canada; **Dr. Philip LeMasters**, Professor of Religion, McMurry University, Abilene, Texas; Fr. **Andrew Louth**, Professor of Patristic and Byzantine Studies, University of Durham, England; **Anne Glynn Mackoul**, Princeton, New Jersey; **Frederica Mathewes-Green**, author, Baltimore, Maryland; **Dr. Paul Meyendorff**, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood, New York; Fr. **Thomas Mueller**, Dean, Chicago Deanery, Orthodox Church in America; **Archpriest Michael J. Oleksa**, Dean, St. Innocent Cathedral, Anchorage, Alaska; Fr. **George C. Papademetriou**, Associate Professor of Theology, Hellenic College/Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, Massachusetts; **Dr. Albert Raboteau**, Professor of Religion, Princeton University, New Jersey; **Mother Raphaela**, Abbess, Holy Myrrhbearers Monastery, Otego, New York; Fr. **Paul Schroeder**, Chancellor, Greek Orthodox Diocese of San Francisco;

Very Rev. Archimandrite Nektarios Serfes, parish priest in Boise, Idaho, and president of the Decani Monastery Relief Fund USA; **Very Rev. Andrew Tregubov**; iconographer; rector of Holy Resurrection Church, Claremont, New Hampshire and Fr. **Luke Veronis**, adjunct professor at Holy Cross Theological Seminary and St. Vladimir's Theological Seminary.

Orthodox Americans, the Orthodox Peace Fellowship, and Iraq

By Michael G. Azar
St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary
Orthodoxy in America, December 2003

“Desires for international peace which do not comprehend a state of international justice... are nothing else but a participation in international crime.” — Alexander Tsirindanes

The recent conflict in Iraq elucidates that Orthodox Americans have struggled deeply with the issues raised in these words. In general, Orthodox acquiesce that international peace and international justice remain necessities at the very core of Christian teaching, but, in the recent historical context of the war in Iraq, Orthodox Americans have diverged over what path remains best to take when pursuing a state of international justice and international peace. These diverging patterns warrant some reflection.

Reason and Methodology

Issues of politics and faith have always been of great interest to me; thus, when I began a research project concerning Orthodoxy in America, I eventually concluded, with the direction of Professor John Erickson, that I would study the Orthodox Peace Fellowship (OPF), their statement against the recent Iraq war last spring, and the reaction of Orthodox Americans. In this manner, I desired to explore how Orthodox Americans have expressed their faith in politics and politics in their faith.

My research was shaped by the data I received and the data that were available to me. Most of my research was conducted over the Internet, where I found data about the OPF, their Iraq Appeal, and

responses from Orthodox Americans. This perhaps is the weakness in my research: all opinions that I studied were expressed through writing over the Internet and not in person. This obviously affects the appearance of a position taken in any statement.

The pattern of research that I followed has become the outline for the paper below: I explored the history of the OPF, issues of war and peace in the Orthodox tradition, and then I studied the OPF Iraq Appeal. Next, I researched three articles that were published in response to the statement together with responses to these articles from OPF members. Eventually, I decided to send a list of survey questions about the issues at hand to people I contacted personally and three discussion groups: the OPF's email list, the Indiana listserve, and www.orthodoxchristianity.net. I intended to include a fuller summary of the responses I received in this final paper, but I came to focus mainly on one response, for reasons discussed below.

The History of the Orthodox Peace Fellowship

"Our fellowship exists to give witness that peacemaking is something absolutely ordinary. It is an integral part of everyday life. It has to do with how we pray, for whom we pray, how we listen, how we speak, what we do with our anger and frustration, our willingness to forgive, and our attempts to serve as a bridge between those who hate each other." — Jim Forest, OPF Secretary

The Orthodox Peace Fellowship has been founded twice, first was during the Vietnam War, and in its present form in 1986. Its history goes back to Mariquita Platov, whose own personal history is a research project in itself. In 1962, while residing in Nyack, NY, she joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), which was founded during World War I as an association of people from various churches and religious traditions who had a shared commitment not to take part in war and instead committed themselves to nonviolent work to overcome the causes of war. One key member was Martin Luther King, Jr.

In 1968, she crossed paths with two recent graduates of St. Vladimir's Seminary: Fr. John Townsend and Fr. Stephen Plumlee, and with the support of FOR with whom they became increasingly

acquainted, the Orthodox Peace Fellowship was founded, modeled after FOR. Nevertheless, for many reasons, including the failure to obtain hierarchical approval and the uneasiness that the anti-war movement together with the notion of conscientious objection caused the St. Vladimir's faculty, the OPF waned in its infant years. As Jim Forest, the current secretary of the OPE, notes, "While all the details of the OPF's collapse in the first round are not clear, what is obvious is that, although Orthodox Christians in the U.S. were increasingly disturbed by the war in Vietnam, there wasn't yet enough of a consensus about how best to respond to the issue of war for an Orthodox peace group to take root, especially if conscientious objection to war was obligatory for its members."

In 1986, the OPF was reborn and a statement of purpose was formulated. Jim Forest took charge in 1989, and one of his concerns was the creation of an advisory board mainly composed of clergy from various jurisdictions: "This was undertaken," he comments, "both because we saw the need for guidance and also so that it would be clear that OPF is rooted in the universal Church—not simply one segment of the Church—and has the support of a number of highly respected people." The first hierarch to join the advisory board was Bishop (now Metropolitan) Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia.

The major tasks of OPF, as formulated in the past decade, include many elements: publications such as their journal *In Communion*; theological research; encouraging the formation of local, national, and regional OPF groups; practical assistance in areas of conflict; the organizing of OPF lectures and retreats; representing a consistent pro-life ethic; and speaking out on matters of controversy, concerning which Forest notes, "We do little of this but a recent example was the OPF Iraq Appeal, written when war with Iraq seemed increasingly likely. It was signed by many bishops, priests and lay people and was corroborated by independent statements issued by Orthodox Churches and individual hierarchs around the world. It continues to stir valuable discussion in the Orthodox community."

The remainder of the present paper will explore the valuable discussion that this appeal has since spurred.

War and Peace in Orthodoxy: A Brief Note

In the discussions among Orthodox Americans following the release of the OPF Iraq Appeal, frequent reference was made to the Orthodox Church and its historical stance toward war. In my research, I intended to include information about war and peace in the Orthodox Church, but I soon found this to be a task outside of my reach. Therefore, I have included only a few brief notes about the topic.

Whether or not the Orthodox Church has historically had a favorable stance toward war, be it temporal or eternal, remains a highly disputed question. Nevertheless, Orthodox authors do have one statement of acquiescence: The Orthodox Church has never had any tradition of a ‘Just War Theory’ as in the West. In addition, of all the historical sources to which people have appealed in order to support their positions, Canon XIII of the ‘canonical epistles’ of St. Basil the Great remains the most frequent: “Our fathers did not reckon killings in war as murders, but granted pardon, it seems to me, to those fighting in defense of virtue and piety. Perhaps, however, it is advisable that, since their hands are not clean, they should abstain from communion alone for a period of three years.”

In discourses covering war and peace in Orthodoxy, this quote from St. Basil has become the focus of more exegesis than the Bible itself.

With those brief points being made, I have provided two sources in the bibliography for further exploration into the issue: (1) “An Orthodox Peace Witness?” (2001) by John Erickson and (2) “Justifiable War as a ‘Lesser Good’ in Eastern Orthodox Moral Tradition” (2003) by Alexander Webster. One must keep in mind when reading these sources that John Erickson was a signer of the OPF Iraq Appeal and Alexander Webster was an outspoken critic.

OPF Iraq Appeal

The full text of the OPF’s Iraq Appeal is published elsewhere in this book.¹ Thus, it is unnecessary to include it at length here. However,

¹ See Chapter 9.

I will highlight four particular lines in the OPF statement that produced an important amount of critical response:

“As Orthodox Christians, we seek the conversion of enemies to friends in Christ. Saddam Hussein is an enemy of the United States and of the people of Iraq, but we declare that there are better ways to respond to terrorism than to respond in kind.”

“The United States is ready to overthrow him by any means...”

“... the Orthodox Church has never regarded any war as just or good...”

“...fighting an elusive enemy by any means which cause the death of innocent people can be regarded only as murder...”

These comments spurred more controversy than any other portion of the statement. In the months following the release of this statement, Orthodox Internet discussion sites witnessed ever-increasing criticism directed toward the statement, the OPF in general, and even Jim Forest himself. As one person [Fr. Alexander Webster] comments, “The OPF statement is egregiously simplistic, unsophisticated, uninformed, inaccurate, misleading, ideologically skewed, deeply offensive to men and women in the U.S. armed forces, not truly reflective of our own Orthodox moral tradition, irresponsible, and spiritually dangerous — irrespective of who happens to have signed it ... In short, I consider the OPF Statement on Iraq a new low in the OPF’s public moral witness, and I pledge to oppose it and the dubious ideology that it represents with all the moral means at my disposal.”

To say the least, the statement produced a strong reaction: In summary, the countless posts that Orthodox Americans made to the Internet sites include these basic critiques (respective to the numbering above):

The statement accuses U.S. intervention of being equivalent to terrorism.

The statement suggests that the U.S. will be willing to use unreasonable and unrestrained means against Saddam Hussein.

The statement untruthfully notes that the Orthodox Church has never taken a favorable stance toward war in the past.

The statement identifies U.S. soldiers as murderers.

Each of these criticisms frequented the published responses to the OPF Iraq Appeal as well.

Three Published Responses

Francis Schaeffer “Stripped of Spiritual Comfort”: In this article (first published in the April 6, 2003, issue of *The Washington Post*), Francis Schaeffer describes the state of tension in which he lives: he has a son who has been deployed to Iraq, but he no longer finds comfort in the Greek Orthodox Church of which he is a part. It saddens him that the OPF Iraq Appeal calls ‘all soldiers who kill in battle murderers, no matter what the cause . . . It also accuses “our country of using ‘any means’ to overthrow Saddam Hussein.” The authors are entitled to their own opinions, notes Schaffer, but what is disconcerting to him is the fact that so many of his bishops and priests had signed the statement. “They have dragged not only my Church but Jesus into their stand against our government and the war in Iraq,” and he continues,

It is cruel to try to hijack the authority of a Church to advance political views for or against this war. I would never sign a letter for a “Council for the Orthodox Pro-War Fellowship” just because my son is serving his country in the military. I’d assume that it would be preposterous for me to speak for my fellow Orthodox Christians on such matters of individual conscience, over which honest and honorable people can disagree.

Because of this lack of comfort that the Church has provided him with, Schaffer sympathizes with Roman Catholic families who have sons and daughters in the military, and those of the mainline Protestant tradition as well, because so many of their church leaders also have condemned the war and the commander in chief. “I don’t see my son as a murderer. I don’t see my country as evil. I see my country and my son’s cause as just. But maybe I’m wrong. If I’m wrong I don’t want to drag God down with me” — something he undoubtedly believes the OPF has done. Finally, he concludes, “My son

is gone to war. I am sad and frightened. I am also proud of my Marine for his selfless service. But I am being stripped of the comfort of my Church in the name of ‘peace’ by people who seem determined to make God as small as we are.”

Jim Forest wrote a response to this article in which he expressed his sympathy for the way Schaffer was feeling with a son at war, but he defended the OPF statement saying that the only person that the OPF Iraq Appeal called a murderer was Saddam Hussein. The only other reference to murderers was about those who kill innocent people. “It is one thing to say that killing innocent people is a grave sin — the sin of murder,” writes Forest, “and another to label those caught up in the war as murderers. We did not do so.” He says that the OPF’s basis for the use of ‘murderers’ was the principle of “hate the sin and love the sinner,” and he provides an example: If he and his wife had a daughter who had an abortion, they would lament the decision, perhaps even be angry at the Church for calling abortion murder, but in time they would need “the Church to be plain spoken about the sanctity of life and to do all in its power to inspire its members not to kill the innocent.” Nevertheless, this explanation did not suffice for the numerous Orthodox Americans who continued to be increasingly opposed to the OPF and their defense. As one person writes, “[Mr. Forest’s] explanation is most welcome, although ... we wonder if he really means it. But let’s assume at this point that he does, and merely fault the OPF for drafting careless language.” Many other responses were less kind.²

Fr. Johannes L. Jacobse “A Plea for Peace” *Flawed by Moral Equivalency*: “(The) OPF has tried to sway public policy before but held back on explaining their views in any systematic way,” writes Jacobse, “but a ‘Plea for Peace’ is more comprehensive. It reveals OPF draws deeply from the ideology of the secular peace movement — so much so that the two are often indistinguishable.” Jacobse first example of this is the OPF’s statement that there are better ways to respond to Saddam Hussein than to “respond in kind.”

Respond in kind? This is moral equivalency at work. The doctrine of moral equivalency holds that war is the greatest of all evils. Any

² Schaeffer later reversed his views regarding the Iraq War and apologized to the OPF for his criticism of its statement.

government engaged in warfare shares the same moral culpability for the conflict as its enemy. A just war is a moral impossibility ... "A Plea for Peace" asserts that American action in Iraq is morally equivalent to the terror of Saddam's regime. Reports of the brutality of Saddam's regime prove that OPF is wrong, but don't expect them to change. Peace activists rarely abandon the doctrine even when the judgment of history is against them.

He then moves to criticize the religious leaders who are "particularly susceptible to the ideology." He notes that clergymen were in the movement to appease Germany before World War II; liberal Protestant churches were apologists for the North Vietnamese, and Soviet Russia manipulated the World Council of Churches: "A Plea for Peace' continues in this tradition."

Quoting from the OPF Iraq Appeal, Jacobse asserts that moral equivalency shaped its conclusion that there was no difference between the American soldier and murder. "The facts prove otherwise," he continues, "American military action in Iraq was conducted to avoid the deaths of innocent people ... but facts don't matter here." He suggests that peace movements themselves contribute to the instability that creates war because "their moral equivocation blinds them to real evil in the world," and in fact they kill more innocent people than otherwise would die during wartime: "Their ideology has contributed to the death of millions. Iraqi civilians cheered the American soldiers because they brought real liberation from real terror. American soldiers emptied the Iraqi jails, not the peace activists. Let these Iraqi's be their judge, not OPF."

Jacobse states that the OPF's most serious error is their assertion that the Orthodox Church has never regarded any war as just or good: drawing on St. Basil's canon (see above), he asserts that their assertion that the Orthodox Church does not accept a just war is "a transparent attempt to join the ideology of the peace movement to the Orthodox moral tradition." Thus, he concludes suggesting that the Orthodox leaders who signed the OPF Iraq Appeal substituted ideology in the place of moral reason, thereby equating the two: "They should remove their signatures to clear the confusion they have created."

Jacobse's article contains many problems that warranted numerous responses from OPF members. His logic is flawed when he accuses the OPF of using "moral equivalency," because his response against such a phenomenon is to repeat the mistake. Rather than rectify the OPF's use of moral equivalency, he proceeds to equate the recent peace movement with terrorism. His statement that the ideology of the peace movement has contributed to the death of millions is simply unrealistic, and in presenting such an assertion, he paints peace activists as murders in much the same way that he accuses the OPF of painting American soldiers. In addition, one must note that Jacobse does not quote from the second half of St. Basil's canon, which asserts that soldiers' hands are not clean and suggests that they abstain from communion; rather, he simply quotes the first half in such a way that it appears St. Basil's canon merely states that soldiers did nothing wrong in war. Jacobse shapes the Orthodox tradition in the same way that he censures the OPF for doing.

Fr. Patrick Reardon, "Not So Quiet on the Eastern Front": Fr. Reardon's article [published in *Touchstone* magazine] is written in such a manner that it appears its purpose is to compete with the opinions expressed by the OPF statement in the marketplace of American religious thought. It shows that there were in fact Orthodox Americans who supported the war, in case Americans were prone to think all Orthodox opposed the Iraq war. He asserts that Schaeffer's article was a summary of how many Orthodox Americans felt when the OPF statement was released and also notes that the number of bishops that signed the OPF statement was relatively small. In the opening words of the article, Reardon states that no religious group was more deeply divided than the Orthodox, and he asserts that he will not take a position on the war but will merely examine the conflicting ways in which Orthodox understood the war — a promise, I believe, he does not keep in the article.

Traditionally, Reardon notes, the OPF has historically demonstrated an "ascetical dimension, disciplined in tone, modest in aim, and circumspect in language. Even on those occasions when it directly addressed political concerns, it refrained from intruding itself into the ambiguities and complexities of the political process. As far

as memory serves, the OPF never before essayed to garner signatures of support for a political statement. However, the OPF's pronouncement against the impending war in Iraq, particularly their choice of the term 'murder,' represented a distinct departure from these patterns, and he stresses that the unintentional killing of innocent civilians in war has never been regarded by the Orthodox Church 'only as murder.' He suggests that such an organization as the OPF that is committed to peace, when they make such statements, should 'avoid unwarranted descriptions that lead to further strife' — a task at which they failed."

Nonetheless, Reardon does offer one positive comment about the OPF Iraq Appeal: "Notwithstanding its exaggeration in language and ineptitude in logic, however, I do believe that the antiwar pronouncement of the Orthodox Peace Fellowship did achieve one positive and profitable result. It provided a needed target at which to aim the annoyance and frustration that some Orthodox Christians felt about the opposition of their church leaders to the Iraqi war."

Reardon then discusses the statistics of popular opinion, noting that most Americans supported the war, and while no formal survey has been done of the Orthodox reaction, he says most Orthodox probably opposed the war. This is for a few reasons: (1) many Orthodox are from the Middle East; (2) others come from areas with an uneasy relationship with the American military (i.e. the Balkans), and (3) the East has never glorified war as has the West, let alone having a definite Just War Theory. Despite these factors, however, Reardon explains that many Orthodox Americans supported the war for many of the same reasons as the rest of the American public: self-defense against an aggressor, the liberation of an oppressed people, the extension of a free government to another nation, and so on.

Reardon then takes a surprising turn in his article and begins to hypothetically defend the war in Iraq by asking the rhetorical question, so what if the war was about oil? "The economic well-being of the human race right now is inseparable from the steady flow of oil from the Persian Gulf, for the domestic, industrial, and commercial maintenance of the wealth that keeps people alive." His arguments and rhetoric that follow reflect something similar to what one

would find from non-Orthodox Americans that supported the Iraq war. In this manner, Reardon's article retreats from simple survey of Orthodox responses to the war and becomes a near pro-war (or at least anti-antiwar) statement.

Summarizing what troubled so many Orthodox Americans when the OPF statement was released, he states, "If the Lord of history had indeed laid such responsibility on this nation (to preserve world stability and the well-being of mankind), and if occasional recourse to arms was required to meet that responsibility, then a pacifist ethic could not be a central and major guiding theory of American life... During this past winter and spring, therefore, it seemed to those Orthodox Christians that their spiritual leaders, who had for decades been exhorting them to get out there and 'make America Orthodox,' were implicitly retreating from that exhortation."

Continuing, he gathers a "model from tradition" in order to show that the Orthodox Church has never approved of pacifism, and in doing so, he further departs from his original goal of surveying Orthodox Americans' feelings toward the war. He admits that there may have been supporters of pacifism within the Byzantine Empire, but they "enjoyed the freedom to do so because other Christians took up the sword to protect them." Finally, he concludes equating those who honorably sustained peace in the Byzantine Empire with the current American military.

The Survey and a Response

The survey questions that I released on the Internet discussion groups mentioned above produced many helpful responses. As I stated earlier, I originally planned to include many various quotes from those who wrote back while also providing a summary of the general opinions expressed. However, a week before I completed my research, I received a response from Fr. John, a military chaplain currently serving in Kuwait. His response was the most balanced, and he provided me with more information than I had expected. In addition, since he is an Orthodox military chaplain, I believe his comments are particularly pertinent. Thus, I have narrowed my study of responses to this one per-

son (though I must note that all the other responses have shaped my understanding of the issues at hand and the composition of this paper).

“It may surprise you,” begins Fr. John, “that I start with some kind words to say about the OPF and the positions they take, even the one on the Iraqi war.” Because the Scriptures and Tradition of the Orthodox Church uphold peaceful resistance to evil as the ideal, he believes that the OPF “articulates a vital part of the Holy Tradition and its teaching on warfare, which should have always been heard and carefully considered. All that I write is with that in mind.” Then, through the New Testament, the liturgy, and the history of the Orthodox Church, Fr. John explains that while the Church has never favored war, it has never had room for pacifism. Reflecting on the Just War Theory as known in the West, he notes that Eastern Christians have always been less systematic and scholastic in their approach to issues of morality; rather, they tend to follow the pastoral guidance provided by bishops. The following example elucidates this point:

Our bishops, especially when they speak together, set the ethical course for all of us. In the Orthodox Church in America, our Holy Synod made a pronouncement when the Iraqi war was only in its second day. His Beatitude Herman, on behalf of the Holy Synod, wrote an Archpastoral Message which pled eloquently for prayer and fasting for our soldiers, for our political leaders, for the war’s innocent victims, for a speedy end to the hostilities, and for a lasting and just peace in the Middle East. In the Orthodox tradition, they prayed for peace as the ideal, and regretted the present condition of war. But they did not imply that Orthodox soldiers participating in the Iraqi war are murderers, or call them to abandon their arms.

He then suggests that if our bishops condemn a future war, “it would be our duty to ‘obey God rather than man,’ and suffer the consequences.” Thus, he gives some moral weight to the OPF statement since it was signed or approved by many bishops. He also suggests, “Orthodox proponents of the Iraqi war should note the widespread

opposition to the war expressed by Orthodox hierarchs and synods overseas ... and consider if there is a moral side to the conflict that others see but they do not."

Fr. John explains how he grew up "embracing the Just War Theory," also noting that his service as a soldier and chaplain long precedes his being an Orthodox priest. Having studied the Orthodox tradition, however, he has learned three things: (1) the East's approach to war is not systematized; (2) the East has always given priority to peace over warfare, while the West has viewed war as a positive good in the past; (3) and the East has frequently deferred more to secular authorities in matters of war. Thus, he writes, "My embrace of Orthodoxy has influenced my views on warfare ... Orthodoxy's preference for peace has also sharply curtailed my comfort with casual combat. It has also made me respect those Orthodox individuals, and organizations like OPE, who also advocate for peace, even if I disagree with them at times." He also admits that his support for the war has waned since he was first deployed.

Discussing what should be the proper relationship between the government and the Church, he remarks that the ideal for Christians past was that the "Crown and the Miter acted in symphony, in cooperation to strengthen Christendom." But after Constantinople and the Tsars, the leaders of the Church have had to influence their societies from outside the political sphere. Now, living in a democratic society, he says, "the Church is faced with a new challenge; now they must be 'salt and light' to millions of miniature decision makers, instead of merely to the one who wears the crown." Because of such a situation, "the Church may have to exercise a greater prophetic role than before, and be prepared to criticize conflicts that they deem immoral. Moreover, the Church may have to exercise such a prophetic role through mass appeal since, in democracies, it is in the masses that ultimate political choice rests." This, he says, remains why Orthodox Americans have a plurality of viewpoints in the present situation: they have a plurality of decision-makers.

Concerning the question about the conservative/liberal split (see question 5 in Appendix 3), he remains uncertain if Orthodox will become more identified with the right or left: There are problems with

being identified with either. He notes the problems with liberals, such as abortion, and says conservatives, it seems, “never met a war they didn’t like ...” The right “has fairly little concern for the morality of the war’s purpose, or take serious account of the human costs involved.” Whatever may happen to Orthodoxy in this country, the one thing he does hope is that Orthodox Americans will never become “like was once said of the Church of England, ‘The Tories at prayer.’”

Further Investigations and Conclusions

As I stated at the beginning of my paper, I never intended for this project to be a comprehensive study of how Orthodox Americans reacted to the war. I did not intend to gather statistics or make any conclusions as to the characteristics of the Orthodox Americans who did or did not support the war. This precisely remains the thing that leaves this topic open to further investigation. As Fr. Reardon noted above, a formal survey complete with statistics that has been conducted with other religious groups has yet to be done among Orthodox Americans. Undoubtedly, the results of such a survey will prove fruitful.

In this project, nevertheless, I simply desired to gather opinions from Orthodox Americans about their views on the recent war, namely as evidenced by the OPF statement and subsequent responses, but I had other intentions as well. As is evident by my survey questions, I intended to briefly explore whether or not the divergent opinions toward Iraq were evidence of a conservative/liberal split among Orthodox Americans. Having studied recent Protestant American history and the harm that the conservative/liberal split began to cause to their churches in the early twentieth century, and the harm that it continues to cause, I desired to see if this split was evident within American Orthodoxy. The rhetoric of the conservative/liberal debate was prevalent in a few statements about the war. For example, some Orthodox Americans accused the OPF of using theological arguments derived from liberal ideologies, and antiwar

Orthodox Americans accused those who supported the war of laying down their faith in the face of conservative political ideologies. Nevertheless, I was grateful to discover that there is yet to be a conservative/liberal split among Orthodox Americans to the degree that is found among Protestant Americans (in many responses, people wondered why I even asked such a question). However, I continue to believe that this danger lies ahead as Orthodoxy becomes increasingly linked to the socio-political facet of American life. Fr. John's concluding remarks about this potential political split highlights the focus that Orthodox Americans must keep in the years to come:

These two political poles bracket the range of choices available to Orthodox Christians in democracies. To me, the most important thing is for all Orthodox to keep their focus on following Jesus Christ within His Church. We must not let our political ideologies become idols, which replace our highest allegiance. We must let the Gospel continuously critique us and whatever political philosophies we hold. We must listen to our hierarchs when they speak on the ethics of any war. When voting or publicly advocating for or against a war, we must strive to fulfill all three injunctions of the Prophet Micah, "Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God."

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Essays and Texts

ADDRESS TO THE CONFERENCE ON PEACE AND TOLERANCE

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

Address of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to the Conference on Peace and Tolerance, Istanbul, Turkey, February 8, 1994.

Although we will focus our remarks on problems in Central Asia and the Caucasus, let us keep in mind that no member of the human family has a monopoly on malice — we are all sinners and stand in desperate need of God's grace in our quest for a better world. But while some have pointed to a modern 'clash of civilizations' as inevitable, the representatives of many of those civilizations have gathered here today in a spirit of brotherhood and harmony. May our Heavenly Father grant us the strength to maintain that fraternal spirit in the years to come.

Since the beginning of recorded history, Eastern Europe has been a great crossroads of cultures and civilizations — a vast meeting ground for many different tribes, faiths, and peoples. Sometimes it seems as if our only constants have been conflict and conquest.

But paradoxically, conflict and conquest have also been the agents of peace. Over the millennia the greatest intervals of peace were brought by the empires that took over large portions of the re-

gion. From the Macedonian conquest, with its Hellenistic civilization, through the Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman, Hapsburg, Russian, and Soviet empires, peace in Eastern Europe has come, ironically, at the tip of a sword or the barrel of a gun.

Tolerance did not always come arm-in-arm with peace. For every example of tolerance, there are many more examples of intolerance. The peace imposed on Eastern Europe by the conquering empires was relative — and it was always given on the terms of the conqueror. We must understand it, not idealize it. Those empires were shattered with the arrival of western nationalism during the 19th century — and Eastern Europe and the world have not been the same since. Nationalism began as a positive force — it offered a new logic for the construction of democratic states. But nationalism turned out to be a double-edged sword; in the hands of tyrants, it has been destructive — indeed, the most destructive force in human history, killing 75 million human beings between 1914 and 1945 alone. We must ask ourselves boldly and honestly: Is it not time to rein in the excesses of nationalism?

We are not immune to the forces of history — but neither are we helpless before them. We cannot lament paradise lost, but must find hope in the kingdom at hand. We must answer the fratricide and fragmentation of nationalism with the brotherly love and integration of ecumenism. We must teach our people tolerance, which is ultimately based on respect for the sanctity and rights of individual human beings. Indeed, if there is one place where the spiritual and secular universes converge, it is in the individual, in the human person.

Among those of us who place our faith in spiritual institutions, this means that of all the precepts of our diverse religions, the first principle must be the divinity of each and every one of God's children. Among those who place their faith in temporal institutions, this means that of all political principles, primary emphasis must not go to collective but rather individual human rights.

Indeed, this is one of many areas in which we as people of faith have something to teach our secular colleagues. In recent years, we have heard some say that human rights are relative — an unfortu-

nate and potentially catastrophic idea. Man was created in the image and likeness of God — and there can be no different standard of treatment for those human beings who happen to be Asian, another for Africans, and yet another for Europeans. Culture may be relative — but humanity is not.

The Holy Orthodox Church has searched long for a language with which to address nationalism, amid the strife and havoc this new ideology created in the Orthodox lands of Eastern Europe for much of the 19th century. In 1872, a great Synod, held in our Patriarchal Cathedral at the Phanar, in the name of the Prince of Peace, issued an unqualified condemnation of the sin of phyletism, saying, “We renounce, censure, and condemn racism, that is, racial discrimination, ethnic feuds, hatreds, and dissensions within the Church of Christ . . .”

Today, more than a century later, extreme nationalism remains one of the central problems of our ecumenical Church. We must answer with deep and uncompromising ecumenism.

That is why the Mother Church has done everything in her power to support, morally and materially, the re-emerging Orthodox Churches in Russia and throughout Eastern Europe, especially since the collapse of Godless communism. Although these churches are self-governing, they are the daughters of the See of St. Andrew the Apostle. That is why we convened an unprecedented Pan-Orthodox Council or Synaxis of the heads of the world’s Patriarchal and Autocephalous Orthodox Churches in March of 1992 — an unusual display of Christian solidarity, and a return to the ecumenism of centuries past. During this truly historic gathering, the spiritual heads expressed deep sadness over “fratricidal confrontation and for all its victims” calling on all religious leaders to offer “particular attention, pastoral responsibility and wisdom from God, in order that the exploitation of religious sentiment for political and national reasons may be avoided.”

Integration must be our watchword — in Eastern Europe as in Western Europe. Today, we must follow the Helsinki Accord principle of the inviolability of borders. But tomorrow, our vision is not

only for Eastern Europeans — not only for all Europeans — but for all people — is of a world without borders.

There is no good reason why people and goods one day should not be able to move freely between Bitolja and Bucharest, between Trikala and Tirana, between Sofia and St. Petersburg, between Alma-Ata and Ankara. And there is no reason to continue the hatreds that have made Eastern Europe, and especially the Balkans, the world's caricature for ethnic conflict.

It was not always that way. Let us remember that less than two centuries ago, there were Greek businessmen in Odessa and Bucharest, and Albanian enterprises in Egypt. Serbian merchants conducted a lively trade with their Hapsburg counterparts. Thessaloniki had a thriving Jewish community. And so on.

We must put behind us the divisions and feuds brought about by excessive nationalism. We were once united by great empires — but the peace that comes at the tip of a sword is no longer acceptable. As St. Paul exhorts: "If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all" (Rom. 12:18). The modern way to bring about unity and peace is to extend the European Union — to open the borders to one another, and let people, capital ideas and products flow.

Much has already been achieved in the political world — the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the Partnership for Peace proposed by the American President Bill Clinton. But politicians alone cannot heal the rifts brought about by extreme nationalism. Religious leaders have a central and inspirational role to play — it is we who must help bring the spiritual principles of ecumenism, brotherhood, and tolerance to the fore.

Indeed, this is a way that we of the cloth can help our colleagues in government. Our deep and abiding spirituality stands in stark contrast to the secularism of modern politics. The failure of anthropocentric ideologies has left a void in many lives — the frantic pursuit of the future has sacrificed the stability of the past. As the Council of 1992 stated, these ideologies "have created in men of this century a spiritual void and an existential insecurity and have led many people to

seek salvation in new religious and para-religious movements, sects, or nearly idolatrous attachments to the material values of this world.”

The famous psychologist C. G. Jung once said that “among all my patients in the second half of life ... every one of them fell ill because he had lost what the living religions of every age have given their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook.” He knew this in 1959; in 1994, who does not know it? Communities of faith can balance secular humanism and nationalism with spiritual humanism and ecumenism — and we can temper the mindless pursuit of modernity with our own healthy respect for tradition.

But we can only do this if we are united in the spirit of the one God, “Creator of all things visible and invisible.” Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant, Jew and Muslim — although we cannot deny our differences, neither can we deny the need for alliance and teamwork to help lead our world away from the bloody abyss of extreme nationalism and intolerance. For it is precisely when we disagree that we have the greatest opportunity to demonstrate tolerance.

We, at the Ecumenical Patriarchate, will continue our efforts to be peacemakers and to light the lamp of the human spirit. We, as the Bride of the Resurrected Bridegroom, wish only to remain a Church — a Church, however, that is free and respected by all. We, like all of you who have gathered here in peace and tolerance, wish to be a religious and spiritual institution, teaching, edifying, serving pan-anthropic ideals, civilizing, and preaching love in every direction. We assure you, fellow travelers on the road to peace, that we will always work with you — not only in the spirit of peace and tolerance, but more so, in the spirit of divine love itself. The Ecumenical Patriarchate belongs to the living Church that was founded by the God of love, whose peace “surpasses all understanding” (Phil. 4:7). We “pursue what makes for peace” (Rom. 14:19). We believe that “God is love” (1 John 4:16), which is why we are not afraid to extend our hand in friendship and our heart in love, as we proclaim that “Perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18).

Beloved friends, there is more that unites us than that which divides us. Let this conference mark a turning point in our history. We have within our grasp the vision of the Psalmist: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" We pledge to you today that the Orthodox Christian Church will do everything in her power to fulfill that vision. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and goodwill towards men."

THE CONTRIBUTION OF RELIGION TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PEACE IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD (excerpts)

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

Excerpts from a lecture given by His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran, January 12, 2002.

Man, as we all know and acknowledge, is endowed by God with the ability of reasonable discourse (*logos*). Reasonable discourse is the means of our communication with our fellow-human beings, and our consultation with each other on this basis is called dialogue. Dialogue is characteristic of persons, and we can say that it constitutes one of the greatest gifts of God to man. If we were to picture ourselves forcefully deprived of the ability to engage in dialogue with our fellow-human beings, we would feel the atmosphere to be suffocating and our life to be unbearable.

Nonetheless, there are found people from time to time, who attempt to deprive others of the inalienable and divine privilege of dialogue. This tactic is damaging not only to those who are forced to keep silent, but also to those who oppress them, because they deprive themselves of all those good things, which they could possibly learn, if they would converse with their fellow-human beings.

It is known that the entirety of human knowledge, the secrets of the arts, religious faith, and human emotions, are expressed and passed on through reasonable discourse and dialogue. Hence, the free and self-sufficient person, who is fearless about himself, is usually open to dialogue and selects from whatever he hears what he deems to be right and useful, whilst he rejects what he determines to be erroneous and harmful. He never rejects dialogue as such, since it is the source of his spiritual cultivation. Even when we read a book or pray to God, we are in dialogue with the author and with God respectively. Again, when we observe with an investigating eye the

starry sky, or the immensity of the oceans, the flora of the mountains, the infinite multitude of living creatures, we are in dialogue with their creator, on the one hand glorifying him, and on the other hand being taught by him. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament proclaims the creation of his hands," David exclaims, whilst our predecessor St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, adds the comment, that God "is always in dialogue with us."

Let the above serve as an introductory encomium to dialogue. And let us now turn to the topic of how dialogue is used in practice.

It is a fact that within the soul of every human being various perceptions, viewpoints, desires, and aims are formed, which often conflict with the corresponding perceptions and aims of others. Confronted with this multiplicity of opinion and opposing aims, we find ourselves before two ways. The one way is that of the violent imposition of our viewpoints and aims, and the other the dialogue with those who disagree with us about finding a means of peaceful coexistence.

On matters of scientific or philosophical truth, dialogue is ongoing and acceptable since ancient times, and is conducted sometimes on a high level and sometimes on an inferior one, but almost always with a mutual effort to understand the ideas of the other and, if need be, to oppose them with proper arguments. Nevertheless, the recurring different interpretations among coreligionists of the content of their initial common faith, each of which makes exclusive claims of being faithful to the truth, are not always met with sobriety and proper argumentation, but with disputations and jealousy which oftentimes inhibits sober judgment. Although no one can deny to the faithful the right to be jealous of his faith, no one would also contest one's obligation to discuss or search with his coreligionists, at least, concerning the truth, so that they can all arrive at a common understanding of their faith. Indeed, it is not reasonable to accept that all opposing views are equally correct. And yet, in spite of the obvious propriety of these things, it often happens, unfortunately, that fanaticism seizes those holding opposing views concerning their re-

ligion, that they turn against each other, sometimes shedding blood, as it happened, for example, in Western Europe at the time of the so-called Holy Inquisition or the wars of the Reformation.

On the other hand, the phenomenon of fanaticism appears with greater intensity among the followers of different religions who oppose each other. In this case, dialogue is again more preferable than fanaticism, because it is only by means of it that heterodox can understand the points where their faiths fall in line and the points where they really differ. Many a time, however, ignorance, or (even worse) erroneous and distorted information of the followers of one religion concerning the content of the faith of another, predominates, especially among the uninformed masses, and as a consequence, the one party is drawn into thoughtless condemnation of the other and not rarely into fanatical activities and intolerance. Through dialogue, mutual understanding is achieved and also the gain of the necessary knowledge for accepting not the other's faith, but the other's person.

We all believe that religion is God's gift to humankind. The fact that we have many religions and many dogmatic groups within any one religion automatically raises the question whether all of them are equal revelations of God, or whether we need to exclude all the rest of them except one, or some, except certain others, and to accept only one or some? The answer of Christianity to this question, like that of Islam, is that, to begin with, the full revelation of God exists in it, and that many truths are included in the other religions and especially the monotheistic ones, and also exist in all human conscience as a seed of God. This is why Christianity calls these very truths 'seminal word' (*logos spermatikos*), i.e. word of truth sown by God into the souls of human beings.

Knowledge of the divine truth is a process in development, which is indeed endless. Each one of us journeys along this path ceaselessly and at any given moment is found at a certain point, which however is not firm. This is why one never accuses any companion in the journey who is found at another point along this path, either moving ahead or following behind. Not judging one's fellow traveler for the

condition in which he is found constitutes a basic teaching of the Gospel. In addition, offering help to a fellow traveler so that he may journey successfully towards God is generally a recognized duty of all responsible religions.

Each man, of course, is personally responsible for choosing his faith and relation to God, and for his choice of God's commandments, which he is to keep. We the religious leaders, however, ought to help each man to understand that the truth of the one God is perceived and appropriated in life differently by each particular person according to one's spiritual condition. Jesus Christ said to His disciples that He had many things yet to reveal to them, but they were not able to uphold them and, therefore, He would send the Holy Spirit to lead them to the whole truth. The truth exists and has been revealed, but penetration into the depth of this revealed truth is possible only to those who have a pure heart, the Saints. All the rest of us take from it only a part corresponding to our spiritual age and to our spiritual condition in general. In this connection also, the Apostle Paul writes to Christians that he fed them with spiritual milk, because they were not able to absorb solid food. And St. Gregory of Nyssa explains [in his work "On the Life of Moses"] that the teaching of truth is transformed along with the dispositions of those who receive it. Just, then, as the pupils at school advance from one grade to another and progress correspondingly with their comprehension of the lessons, so also all of us human beings advance towards understanding the truth and appropriating it in our lives. It is exactly for this reason that the Koran says that religion is not imposed. Religion is appropriated voluntarily, and its truths are absorbed gradually during a long evolutionary process, which is as much individual as it is corporate. It is, in other words, possible that religious viewpoints, which were dominant at a certain era, be advanced at another subsequently, not because God's revealed truth has changed, but because the appropriation and absorption of it by human beings becomes less affected by their particular wills.

Indeed, we are obliged to observe that many a time God tolerates conditions that are contrary to His first and perfect will, because He

sees that man is not willing or is not able to keep it. And so, He grants him an alternative second will, in order to prevent man from falling into total evil. This second, or possibly third and subsequent will of God is in each case preferable to the evil that follows after, but in no case can this replace his primary, proper and holy will. Consequently, if we see God in history allowing certain actions, which our present sensitivity finds puzzling, we ought to ask ourselves whether such actions were permitted by concession on account of the hardness of heart of the men of that time, who were not able to realize the usefulness and the magnitude of his initial high will. In such cases, which are far too many, we the contemporary religious leaders ought to seek first the highest will of God, which is in full harmony with His goodness and not to be carried away by historical precedents that express a concession to human weakness in other eras.

This way of looking at things removes from man the arrogance of his authority and preserves only God's authority, which is difficult to approach in the fullness of its revelation. It also leads to the rejection of arrogance, because it sees other human beings as brothers in travelling and in evolutionary progress, who are called to the truth of God and have the possibility to come to it in time, even if they may be at a distance from it at the present moment. As a result, this way of seeing things entails magnanimity, tolerance, hope, and opposes any violent means of imposition of religious convictions, which, in any case, do not lead to a sincere faith that is acceptable to God, as experience bears witness.

The realization on our part that we appropriate and experience the truth of God gradually and progressively and to the measure of the purity of our inner dispositions towards it, humbles our mindset and neutralizes our self-confidence as perfect spokesmen of the will of God. Furthermore, it prevents us from committing the terrible error of attributing to God decisions and objectives which are purely our own — an error that verges on idolatry. It was such an error that made an ancient poet say, that if the oxen were able to describe God, they would turn Him into an ox, and thereby satirize his fellow-

citizens about their low manner of perceiving God, the Most High. Unfortunately, however, there is no era that is deprived of men who have such misguided self-confidence, that they attribute to God even their criminal actions. It is this fact that made Jesus Christ predict the coming of the hour when anyone that kills His disciples (and by extension, any fellow human being) will think, mistakenly of course, that he offers service to God.

These erroneous views concerning God, which overlook the fact that God is long-suffering and merciful, led certain Western philosophers to speak about the death of God and many Western citizens to abandon religious faith. If we wanted to speak accurately, however, we would say that this case is not really about the death of God, but about the destruction of a false image of God, which presents Him, on account of an error committed by many among the religious leaders, as rigid, inhumane and even bloodthirsty.

If, on the other hand, we turn to the experience and teaching of the Saints, the men, that is, who came closer to God and came to know Him better, we would see that they all converge on the point that He is good and human-loving, long-suffering and merciful, and that He is eager to apply His righteousness, but awaits for the repentance and conversion of human beings. The religions, then, whose destiny is to announce to humanity the existence of the One God and His true character as long-suffering, as not rejoicing with the loss of any human beings, but as well pleased with their salvation and well being, are obliged to assess their spokesmen continuously, to ensure that they do not allege human malicious ideas and objectives as being the will of God. It is only when they reveal the person of God as full of goodness that they make attractive men's relation with Him and faith in Him and contribute to the peaceful coexistence and cooperation of peoples and cultures.

On the contrary, when they submit to human choices and especially to human objectives, and accept to be used as means towards their success, they are forced to change their teaching in accordance with the aims pursued, and thus to falsify the truth of God on ac-

count of human interests. Fortunately, however, there have always been and still are in all religions purer spirits and especially poetic ones, many of whom the people of Iran have presented, who grasped the magnificence of God's goodness and loving-kindness towards humanity and can be used as guides of their believers.

We are all obligated to turn to these higher spirits. It is our duty to seek the will of God, the good and perfect one. Whenever we disagree, dialogue is the God-given means towards common deliberation. Our target should always be truth and righteousness together with God's loving-kindness towards humanity and mercy. Whatever is merciless is not derived from the long-suffering and merciful God because the tree produces fruit that is proper to its nature, and the long-suffering and merciful God produces long-suffering and merciful actions. If we continue to disagree, in spite of the dialogue, we are obliged to tolerate each other in peace. Peace is the highest good, and the peaceful coexistence of human beings, one of the highest wills of God. If we act on this, we will contribute greatly to the peace of the contemporary world and we will certainly please God who is the King of Peace. And then, the religions will indeed play a positive and essential role in establishing peace in the world of today.

We pray from the depths of our heart that the God of all goodness, who is the source of all good things, may present His goodness in the hearts of us all, so that we all, free from our own personal wills and objectives, may hear God's voice and conform to His peaceful will. Then, we shall be peacemakers, shall be called children of God and peace will reign in our hearts, in our nations and in the entire contemporary world. May it be so.

"MAY PEACE AND JUSTICE ONCE MORE REIGN IN THE BALKANS"

Archbishop Anastasios of Albania

An interview with Archbishop Anastasios of Albania published in with the daily Zri i Popullit (The Voice of the People), Tirana, May 1999.

— *How has the Orthodox Church of Albania reacted to the Kosovo crisis?*

Since last year, to be exact March 13, 1999, we have issued an appeal... in order to make the international community aware of the Kosovo crisis, underlining that "the Orthodox Church of Albania denounces the violations of human rights in Kosovo as well as anywhere in the world and demands that these rights be respected as soon as possible... Violence calls for more violence. Thus, a vicious circle is created which has the innocent and the weak as its victims."

This is the point of view that we have maintained in our contacts with the representatives of foreign countries and during different international meetings on the issue. From the early autumn of 1998, when the number of Kosovo refugees had already reached 22,500 persons, our Church has taken the initiative of turning the attention of other European churches to this situation, in order to enable us to provide aid to these populations. In this way, we have been able to assist more than one-third of the refugees, offering packages of new clothing for children aged 4–14 and for women.

When the tragic conflict broke out, we immediately launched an appeal to all member churches of the World Council of Churches, to which the Orthodox Church of Albania belongs, requesting the release of further resources, and at the same time asked the support of friends all over the world. Their response has been generous.

— *Which humanitarian aid has the Orthodox Church of Albania exactly provided to Kosovars who had been expelled from their homes?*

The appeal which I mentioned received an immediate response, and within 24 hours, we collected a sum of 1,700,000 US dollars. With these funds, we have been able to provide emergency humanitarian aid, food, clothing, etc., starting from the first days of April: 40 metric tons in Kuks, 34 metric tons in Korce and Pogradec. With the support of the Tirana city authorities, we have distributed bread and thousands of liters of milk in the Tirana area, in all 13 metric tons of food products, on Easter day. Thanks to the city authorities of Gjirokaster, Saranda and Delvin we have been able to distribute milk for children in these cities. In all, we have distributed 220 metric tons of food in different camps, municipalities and other structures hosting the refugees. We have organized the delivery of 1,000 tents, 2,800 beds with mattresses and 8,000 blankets.

Our Church has opened a refugee camp in Ndroq. We have offered our youth camp site in Skrofotine, near Vlore, for use by the Kosovars. The students of our theological institute, as well as numerous members of the Orthodox Youth Movement of Albania, continue to assist refugees in the different camps. Our clinic in Tirana has provided large quantities of medications free of charge. The association of Orthodox women of Albania prepares and distributes packages for Kosovar families who are hosted in private apartments. At the present moment, we have visited more than 400 such families. We pay particular attention to young mothers from Kosovo who have given birth during this period. A group of people who work for our Church are taking care of them, having gathered products of first necessity for 63 young mothers. At the same time, we are developing a further aid program for the Kosovars estimated at 10 million US dollars. This program will be executed by the Orthodox Church of Albania in cooperation with the World Council of Churches and "Action of Churches Together" (ACT).

— *What is the official reaction of the Church of Albania to the expulsion and ethnic cleansing of Albanians in Kosovo?*

I have said before and I repeat that the autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania denounces the violations of human rights in Kosovo and in

any other region of the world, all the more so when the perpetrators of these violations go so far as to chase an entire people by force and to commit genocide. On March 29, 1999, the Holy Synod of the Church of Albania discussed the matter and issued the following statement: “With all our heart we share the pain of those who suffer injustice and violence as a result of the Kosovo crisis. This extremely difficult situation cannot be resolved by rhetorical and naive declarations. But, while we pray every day ‘for those who hate us and for those who love us,’ we humbly pray the God of truth and love to bring about a miracle and make peace and justice reign once more in our unstable region, as soon as is possible. We have already contributed, within the limits of our forces, to ease the sufferings of the Kosovars who have left their homes because of the conflict and have settled in Albania. And we will continue to work in this direction.”

Violence, attacks and campaigns of ethnic cleansing which cause victims among innocent civilians are unacceptable, whatever the country or the pretext.

— *Is the attitude of the Church of Greece identical to that of the Church of Albania?*

The Church of Albania is a direct participant in the great ordeal that the Kosovo crisis is. It is in the epicenter of the region where this tragedy has developed. The Church of Greece is geographically a bit further away, like most other Churches that follow the events in Kosovo as spectators, trusting information from different sources. These Churches do not have our experience in the matter. We try to help them understand the true dimension of the Kosovo drama, and we continuously inform and raise the awareness of those who work with us to ease the suffering of the refugees. In this way, we have received support from many dioceses and parishes all over the world as well as from different organizations and private persons.

As we have said, the Church of Albania has taken the initiative to contact several European and American Churches in order to save those who suffer, even if the majority of them traditionally belong to the

Muslim community. Generally speaking, Orthodox theology always underscores the absolute value of the human person, indiscriminate of his race. We support human rights in general, and in particular the right of free development for each person, each people, each community, independently of religion or faith. Our teaching always insists of the necessity for peaceful coexistence. The Church of Albania has respected and widely preached these basic principles during the past years.

— *Do you share the idea that there is a latent conflict between Islam and Christianity in Kosovo, and that this conflict has become one of the causes of the war?*

This point of view is completely wrong. Those responsible for this crisis have not acted in the name of a given religion. On the contrary, they have been raised and educated under a regime which had a deep contempt for religion. On the other hand, everyone knows that the vast majority of the NATO member countries belong the Christian tradition. It is very dangerous to exploit religious ideas and words in armed conflict. Any crime committed in the name of a religion is a crime against religion itself. Our Church insists that religion is like a 'secret balm' which should not be used by just anyone or in order to spark armed conflict. This balm is a gift of God, given to soften hearts, to heal wounds and to help persons and peoples establish bonds of brotherhood among them.

— *What message would you convey to the people of Kosovo?*

With all our heart we share the pains of all those who suffer injustice and violence as a result of the Kosovo tragedy, while being at the same time convinced that violence, hypocrisy and injustice shall be crushed and overcome by the power of God. During all this time, we have been and we remain at their side, offering our sincere love and our concrete support in order to pass through this terrible ordeal with as little suffering as possible. We wish and we pray that a righteous and durable peace may reign in Kosovo and that the refugees may return to their homes as soon as possible.

— *How would you describe the relations between the Albanian government and the Orthodox Church of Albania since the outbreak of the conflict in Kosovo?*

The relations between the Albanian government and the Orthodox Church are harmonious. The government—at least its Orthodox members—is well acquainted with the scope of the humanitarian work of the Orthodox Church in Albania. All those in public office know very well that the Orthodox Church is a major spiritual, cultural and social factor in Albanian society and at the same time an important representative of the country in the different international organizations to which it belongs.

— *How do you assess the relations among religions in Albania?*

After a lengthy period of official atheism, we have achieved something very important for our different religious communities in Albania: peaceful coexistence, harmony and a sincere respect for one another. We absolutely have to preserve and develop this coexistence and not let it be destroyed by any forms of religious fundamentalism. The peaceful coexistence of the religious communities of Albania is an eloquent example of tolerance and acceptance of religious pluralism in a modern society, an example for the entire Balkan region.

— *How can the people of the Balkans coexist in peace? Which contribution, in your view, can religion bring to this problem?*

One has to understand that in the long run, the Balkans need peaceful coexistence and the acceptance of ethnic and religious diversity. What we ask is that, instead of being used as factors of conflict, differing religious conviction be considered as elements allowing us to build a creative form of coexistence in our societies.

The only chance for the region to live in peace is to instill mutual respect among men, respect for the freedom of conscience of all without distinction of religion or faith, and respect for minority rights in every country. This asks for new initiative and creative thought. We have to widen our perspectives. First of all, all religious

communities must turn to the very depth of their doctrine and to the best pages of their respective traditions in order to find the principles of a sacred anthropology, which puts the emphasis on sincere respect for the whole human person. Subsequently, by the moral teaching of their leaders and by the behavior of all their members, our communities must try and develop these principles and make them prevail in society.

EXORCISING WAR

Metropolitan George of Mount Lebanon

Metropolitan George, of the Patriarchate of Antioch, lives in Beirut, Lebanon. The text is abridged from Sourozh, the magazine of the Russian Patriarchal Diocese of Sourozh, Great Britain. The translation from the French is by Elisabeth Koutassoff.

What is most tragic about violence is its absurdity. Whoever has known the collective experience of death during long years of suffering, knows irrationality in its purest form. When you spend the better part of your existence under fire, spend months on end without water, food, light or work, the notion of 'revolution,' of the 'just cause' arouses only uncontrollable laughter. The only goal to strive for is existence itself. Day and night one sees oneself whirling about in a play put on by madmen. The shadows of a city in shambles perform a dance of death. One's only memories are of a world that is no longer there. Any statement is ambiguous and disconcerting because all discourse is condemned to triviality. Hope disappears because time itself is empty, though occasionally nostalgia comes to supply the void. All boundaries between external evil and internal trials disappear. An aching body is the only impression left upon the soul. A bruised body understands the futility of things, knows the absence of God. Sin surfaces to form a hallucinatory presence. I sin; therefore, I am.

Yet if one feels, in common with the dead of one's own tribe, that one has been humiliated, the only protest is by way of arms. A weapon is a refusal, a 'no,' a protest against historical inequities as one waits for a justice that is yet to come. If the witness of the Cross is felt to have been in vain, then others will have to be crucified. Their death will be proof of one's own existence. Perhaps, relations between men loyal to different causes will no longer be adulterated by the lie of what one had thought to be conviviality. One is not suffocated either by receiving or by giving death, but it is hard, indeed, to bear a truth

that weighs down the shoulders because it has not been lived to its full potential in the gentle and peaceful light of the saints.

In the fragile shelters of Lebanon, God's peace alone was able to triumph over violence. And it brought with it an infinite forgiveness. One felt guilty when giving way to hatred. One knew from reading of God's mercy that the stranglers were perhaps poor ignorant people who might one day discover the beauty of God. One sensed in the dense morass of evil that no one was on the side of God, that each, in his way, was a murderer, and that henceforth we could live only in forgiveness.

God becomes an idol if one kills for His sake and when the individual believes himself to be God's agent in a collective murder. One thinks of oneself as the defender of a 'holy' nation. But moral and physical violence transform the holy nation into a sociological reality. What was once the sign of a Presence becomes merely the focus of absolute power. No other place has any meaning. The human community that once united these groups is annihilated by their mutual negation. Community is negated right from the start, and all those who try to bring it back risk death. In this situation, death is the only rational support one has.

Those who start a civil war in countries where people's mentality has not been secularized believe that they are engaging in a metaphysical struggle. Wherever social structures divide along confessional lines, as in Lebanon, any war is perceived as a religious war. And if it involves direct intervention by the West, it is called a Crusade. The trauma of the Crusades still affects the Islamic world. Even if the Islamic world knows intellectually that Western countries are far from motivated by religious considerations, it continues to perceive Europe and its cultural extension, the United States, as Christian countries.

Whether it is called a civilizing mission or a campaign of pacification, it always benefits the occupier. His conscience has need of words. A myth is always needed to justify violence. War, even modern war, is a struggle between gods. It does not matter if they are dressed up with new names. And this is all the more apparent in the

visceral war of a developing country. Within the different communities, mythologies concerning their past, their place and their vocation infuse their knowledge of facts and condition their responses.

Such a 'reading' of the facts also determines the 'reading' of the other, and its inevitable consequence is his physical or moral elimination. His disappearance includes that of his history, which must have been an error. And if present efforts prove to be insufficient to eliminate him from among the living, at least by falsifying his history, one can eliminate him from among the dead. He will no longer belong to the collective memory of the country, even if one might eventually tolerate his physical existence. It is essential, however, that he should have no place in the procession of the true gods, that is, in history.

In this situation, it is the wish for the other's death which underpins the ideology. There is no fundamental difference between an international and a civil war. The enemy's country, his religion or race are so many closed, impermeable societies destined to disappear. The death myth alone is changed. Both sides deny the identity of the other, and a new history must be created to accommodate the wish. History must be set aside to meet the demands of a truth which by its very nature is absolute. Truth is characteristic of a group, of its historical existence, and of the salvation it will bring once the hostilities are over.

In civil wars, there is a subtle violence which deeply corrupts those who use it. They become travesties of themselves, at home with the worst of lies, those of the heart, for it is the heart that conceives and proclaims the anathemas.

There is something worse still. It is to find justification for this lie in God, a God who deliberately chooses His lieutenants and makes them into murderers. We are then confronted with a doctrine which is unaware of that fathom of antiquity whereby gods and goddesses were subject to human passions. The death of the other becomes obligatory as soon as God is the all-mighty who drives out the devil and does not choose death as His portion, His inheritance. The only way for God to enter into dialogue with man is through renouncing

His omnipotence out of infinite compassion and total respect for the freedom of His creature. God then comes forth from His voluntary death in a resurrection which gives an independent reality to man ...

Was St. Bernard of Clairvaux so very different from a Muslim scholar when he said, addressing the people of England, that “the earth trembles because the God of Heaven is losing His land, the land in which He appeared among men. And now because of our sins, the enemy of the Cross is raising there his sacrilegious head and with his sword devastates that sacred, promised land”? St. Bernard probably never asked himself whether Palestine might not also be sacred land for the Muslims, since it was there that the Prophet was taken up to heaven. In all reflection of this kind, the sword validates the Word ...

A Kenotic Reading of the Scriptures: In the Church, a vision of inwardness where peace becomes our vocation is plausible only if war can be exorcised. How can it have come about that pure and pious men like the inquisitors had such a bad theology? This constitutes one of the tragedies of our past. Nothing can be accomplished until the biblical foundations of violence are shattered. For us, the error lies not in history but in theology. Violence is justified, fed by the belief that the God of the Bible led Israel from victory to victory and that He willed all nations to submit to it.

The Old Testament attributes to God the great power deployed against the Egyptians. It is the Lord who “will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast” (Exod. 12:12). It is also the Lord who “will drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites” and all the other people (Joshua 3:10). And as regards the city of Ai, God’s captain Joshua says, “And it shall be, when ye have taken the city, that ye shall set the city on fire: according to the commandment of the Lord shall ye do” (Josh. 8:8). It is God Himself who is portrayed as carrying out a ‘scorched earth’ policy. In this perspective, God Himself is placed at the service of Israel and its hegemony over the land of other people. It is not Israel which makes the divine thought its own, but the Lord Himself who reflects the thirst for an

all too human conquest on the part of a confederation of Semitic tribes ...

Alongside this bloodthirsty God, there arises the image of a merciful God whose voice speaks in prophets like Jeremiah and Hosea and in the Songs of the Servant in Isaiah. We are confronted here with two irreconcilably opposed faces of the Lord in the same Scripture.

In their day, the Fathers of the Church adopted the typological style of exegesis, because they saw that Christ is the only true image of God. Thus, many acts of war, many objects and persons were considered to be symbols (or 'types') of Christ or of the Cross. Clement of Rome, commenting on the story of Rahab and the spies, said that the scarlet rope which the prostitute was to attach to the window was a symbol of the blood shed by the Lord.

Such exegesis can obscure the historic meaning of the Scriptures. That is why I would like to suggest that we adopt a 'kenotic' reading of the Scriptures, borrowing the notion from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (2:6-8): "Though He was in the form of God, He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man." In this voluntary self-annihilation, Christ does not cease to be God, but His divinity is not manifest.

The dogma of the two natures of Christ governs also the status of the Scriptures, where the culture of the epoch, the opacity of its understanding, hide the truth beneath the words. The subjectivity of the author intervenes. But we ourselves need not, therefore, assume this subjectivity. For us following the tradition of Origen, Joshua the son of Nun, Yeshuah in Hebrew, is the model, the 'type,' of Jesus, Yeshuah of Nazareth, who conquers not Canaan but the world of sin, who does not inflict death but accepts it.

There is no possible transition from the god of Joshua to the Father of Jesus Christ. The power of ancient Israel cannot prepare the way for the power of God on the Cross. The Cross alone is the Locus of divine victory, and the source of the meaning of faith. Anything in the Scriptures that does not conform to the mystery of Love is a veil

over the Word. Love is the true Locus of the Word, because it alone is divine epiphany.

Christ lives in the Scriptures in a dialectic of veiling and manifestation. The Scriptures are understandable only to the extent that they can be referred to Him. That is why, in fact, He was on the side of the peoples of Canaan, the conquered peoples. God has never been on the side of the armies that have trampled on His Name. It was only when Jesus was made perfect in His suffering that God's true nature was revealed. And this clemency of God is transmitted to us by those 'makers of peace' who are the blind, the maimed, and all the handicapped of the earth. They, above all others, transmit the divine gift of non-resistance to evil.

The Cross as an Instrument of Worldly Triumph: Early Christianity before St. Augustine abhorred the use of violence. In his catholic period, Tertullian wrote that the Lord, by disarming Peter, had disarmed every soldier. Later, Origen, citing the way Peter was forbidden to kill, said that Christians should not defend themselves against their enemies, that we no longer take up the sword against another nation, that we no longer learn war. We find the same tone among the apologists. St. Basil imposed an ecclesiastical penance on military personnel who had taken part in war.

The first Christians hoped to overcome war by prayer, faith and the power of God. But the Empire, though it was becoming Christianized, could not simply abolish the army. The Empire was not yet the Kingdom of God. It had to defend itself against the barbarians. It perceived its victories and its continued existence as a defense of the Christian cause. The Cross was becoming the instrument of a purely worldly triumph. The Byzantine liturgy is full of this ideology. Yet, simultaneously that same liturgy was developing a spirituality of humility and meekness. Admittedly, no doctrine of the just war was elaborated in the East. However, it did accept the idea of a defensive war, waged against the Turks or against the 'Catholic' armies whenever they invaded an Orthodox country like Russia. Pacifism as a theory was no longer known in the Christian East.

With the disintegration of the Byzantine Empire, most of the Orthodox Churches outside the ancient patriarchates became autocephalous Churches whose geographical areas coincided with those of their respective nations. These 'national' Churches are even imbued with nationalistic feelings and have, therefore, more or less explicitly blessed the wars undertaken by their respective countries. So one is Russian, Greek, Serbian or Bulgarian because one is Orthodox. In this confusion of categories, the fact of war itself no longer troubles the conscience.

Justice and Peace are Inseparable: Justice and peace are inseparable. Injustice becomes entrenched in the very flesh, bringing with it despair and impatience, revolt and desire for destruction. It reveals the will to power that brings the tyrant and occupier into being and, hence, that lie which serves to cover up injustice in a state governed by the rule of law and thus institutionalizes the process: injustice, revolt, repression. Hatred, suspicion, fanaticism, racism and oppression then bring all social discourse to an end.

All power politics become politicized beyond any possible witnessing. If a free or at least tolerable existence is denied me, then my inner being itself is denied me. I can accept this treatment in the witness of creative silence or martyrdom. Then, socially annihilated, I am at least known to God and nourished by the hope of the Kingdom. The community of saints can be realized even in the midst of war and persecution.

Martyrdom puts its seal on a peace with God which is beyond all politics. No force can crush someone who contemplates the light of the face of him of whom it is written: "He shall not strive, nor cry out; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, nor quench a smoldering wick" (Matt. 12:19–20).

The kingdom of peace was announced by the coming of one whom the liturgy, following Isaiah, calls "the prince of peace" (Isa. 9:6). Paul speaks in an even more startling, more intimate manner when he says, "He is our peace," adding "having abolished in His flesh the enmity" (Eph. 2:14).

The Logic of Holiness: The reality of history is governed by either force or law, two areas equally foreign to the logic of holiness. Law is coercive and uses force. Law is politics. Peace seen as an absence of war belongs to the realm of political reflection and ethics, and is also an offshoot of a humanistic civilization. The politician seeks this kind of peace. And here and there he will achieve it. But he is enough of a realist to understand that the total disarmament of mankind is unthinkable, and that the war industry remains indispensable to the very fabric of the Great Powers.

We need not dwell on that source of evil, both individual and collective, which is fear. Until the end of history, men will be enslaved to their fear of death. Nonviolence understood merely as the absence of the use of force is not a victory over violence. And nonviolence as courage and transcendence of self is not a political attitude, but a witness. Although there is no common denominator linking the saint and the politician in the essential nature of their behavior, nonetheless the saint prays that political peace may be achieved on earth. Peace is the appropriate context for the development of man and a sign of his victory over greed. Belief in our moral obligation to seek peaceful solutions is a considerable step ahead.

However, peace at any price is often a sign of cowardice. Man does not improve simply because peace has been negotiated. Peace becomes a moral value only insofar as it expresses a genuine reconciliation between two peoples where before tension had reigned. We have then arrived at what the Byzantine liturgy calls "peace from above." And having prayed for it, the liturgy then speaks of "peace for the whole world." What emerges from this text, therefore, is that the universe can be pacified in depth only insofar as it is converted.

Peace as a call from God and as a reality to be brought to fulfillment in the Kingdom remains the divine realm to which the Lord invites us in the midst of the tribulations of our earthly existence. This vision demands unceasing effort against war among men.

AFTER THE KOSOVO CRISIS: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCHES

Bishop Irenej (Bulovic) of Backa (Serbia)

Report to the Inter-Christian Conference "Europe after the Kosovo Crisis: Implications for the Churches" in Oslo, November 15–16, 1999 (extracts).

[Regarding the war in Kosovo], I deeply pity those who gave orders, as well as those who took part in the aforementioned 'campaign.' However, it is not my goal — nor is it the aim of this Conference in general — to describe or politically justify, condemn or generally evaluate persons and events within the tragedy of Kosovo and Metohija, and the drama of Europe. Each and every one of us, on the basis of his spiritual predisposition, has a certain viewpoint on this complex problematic. Still, I have to propose several of the briefest of my observations in order to expose my standpoint in relation to the implications of the conflict in general, and in relation to the implications for the Churches in particular. This will enable me to explicate my own perspective on the relations between the Churches of Europe in the near future.

This tragic conflict, lamentably, is not an exception. It is but one of many similar ones, not only within the territory of the former Yugoslavia or the current Yugoslavia, but also in the wider region of Europe, not excluding its western part with its inter-ethnic strife and bloodshed and, finally, the world itself (Caucasus, Kashmir, etc.).

The Serbian-Albanian rivalry in Kosovo and Metohia is not a new phenomenon. It is, literally, a multi-centennial drama. How can we solve such a complex problem, securing a solution which would more or less be just and acceptable to both peoples which are tragically and, according to my opinion, needlessly confronted? By expelling the one and retaining the other?

It is clear that the expulsion of Albanians from Kosovo is not possible. Even if it were, there would not be a single theory, doctrine or

idea which could justify such a thing. Besides, we know: NATO justified — that is, tried to justify — its merciless Merciful Angel action by the preclusion of the exodus of Albanians and the alleged prevention of the humanitarian catastrophe. How this was conducted and, finally, how it was accomplished, — we know that as well: the Albanians were brought back (not only the old-time settlers of Kosovo and Metohija, but those also who wanted to enter Kosovo from Albania), and in the whole of Serbia and Yugoslavia, there was created a humanitarian catastrophe without precedence in the antecedent history of Europe, a hundred times more terrible than the presupposed one in Kosovo. None of that was enough, for now NATO is the passive bystander and, in some cases, accomplice in the expulsion of Serbs and other non-Albanians from their age-old homes: from the region which was, for centuries, the pivotal point of the Orthodox Church of Serbia and of the Serbian state (and never in history was it a part of the Albanian state), from the region which withstood five centuries of Ottoman domination, managing to prevent the uprooting either of Orthodoxy or the Serbian people ...

If the expulsion of Albanians from Kosovo is not a solution — and it certainly is not — is the expulsion of Serbs a better solution? Does the solution lie in the negation of the sovereignty of a European country? What is the difference between the right of intervention in the name of socialism (Brezhnev's doctrine) and the right of intervention in the name of human rights and 'Western values' (Solana's doctrine)? Which instance is the one which curbs human rights more, and which one does so less? Since when does a military organization act as arbiter of rights and morals? How can the same subject simultaneously posit itself as lawgiver, prosecutor, judge and executor? And, in the meanwhile, does such an instance take into account the civilizational physiognomy and spiritual hypostasy (Personhood) of the Serbian people? For they are a people, who in the word Kosovo recognize the most condensed statement of their identity, — a people which once had Kosovo taken away from them (in the ancient year of 1389) and were patient enough to repossess it once again in 1912 ...

Furthermore, during the cold war and the block-division of the European continent, Yugoslavia was the most open and 'westernmost' (of course, not geographically but politically) communist country. It was a country which, amongst its Warsaw pact neighbors, enjoyed an unenviable reputation of the 'Trojan horse' of the West. However, today a tremendous number of people in my country — and, after everything that took place, a great number of people in the countries of the former Soviet block — regard the West as a synonym for neo-colonial egotism and expansionism. Further still, the so-called 'new world order' is deemed as a synonym for the domination of the rich and mighty over those who — both materially and spiritually exhausted by the previous totalitarian experiment — instead of really being helped and raised, now, mostly, offer their cheap raw materials and cheap labor. The pitiless war of NATO against Yugoslavia (lacking any mandate of the Security Council, executed in contradiction to its own statutes) is an additional burden not only on the consciousness and conscience of the Serbian people, but on other Orthodox peoples as well. In Greece, 99 percent of the populace was against the military intervention. In Russia, over 94 percent (the yes-vote was granted only by 2 percent). Other countries also gave witness to massive protests.

As far as the Serbs are concerned, one could state the following: just as the Czechs and Slovaks saw the Warsaw Pact tanks of 1968. As the death-signs of socialism, without any hope for its resurrection, — so did the NATO missiles and bombs of 1999, for the Serbs, indicate the end of many illusions and myths. And it is hard to say what is more painful (to every, even to the modestly self-conscious Serb): be it the NATO propaganda, implemented during the air raids and immense sufferings, according to which NATO is not fighting the Serbian people but is only "freeing it from the regime" — or be it the current statements of some powerful leaders from the West according to which the Serbs will get aid, but only after they pass the 'corrective exam' and show themselves to be 'good boys,' obedient in everything, grateful for everything ... (Here too, I stress, we encour-

ter 'collateral damage': the sanctions, poverty and indigence endanger not only the Serbs, but also the non-Serbian residents of Yugoslavia, and they are not meager in number: Albanians in Belgrade and all over Serbia notwithstanding. The ecological and healthcare damage will endanger all of us in Europe for a long time).

These are just some indications on the general effects of the crisis, which is not only Serbo-Albanian, or just Yugoslav, but European and global too. And it did not commence last year in Kosovo but at a much earlier date. It will be resolved, or at least eased, when the necessary unification of today's world does not proceed by the sign of victory of one part (regardless which one it may be) of Europe over the other, one part of the world over the other (in which instance, by rule, the victor is also defeated if he has won only through the power of money and arms, and not by means of the strength of spirit and truth).

Allow me to make a summary of my observations. On the general level I see that Europe — sad as it is — remains divided. And I am not sure which curtain makes a sharper partition, — the former crude, 'steel' one, or the contemporary invisible and intangible one. It is my impression that the dream of a common European home from the Atlantic to the Urals is further out of reach than before the fall of the Berlin wall of shame, when the East of Europe lived in hope that the European West will bring to it freedom and well-being. I do not know how much hope there is today: either in the East or in the West of Europe. The utilitarian-consumerist spirit, it seems, has forced us to miss the chance given by the toppling of the Wall and by the shedding of the Curtain. On the one hand, the West succumbed to the temptation of short-sighted triumphalism, not understanding that the ideology of the East defeated itself, and that suicide might be the outcome of any civilization which reduces itself to 'body and blood.' On the other, the East succumbed to the temptation of mechanically copying the existent 'Western model.'

In a politically and culturally divided Europe, Eastern Europe — where the predominant populace are Orthodox Christians — begins to feel ill at ease when, for example, in the midst of the military action

of NATO against Yugoslavia, the minister of one Western European government declares that “Europe ends where the Orthodox world begins,” or when the epoch of Charlemagne is taken for the birthday of modern Europe, whilst the museum of European spirit does not envisage a place for ancient Greece or Byzantium (from which language or from which region, I just wonder, does the word Europe come from? ...).

Of course, I do not think that the political and civilizational processes in contemporary Europe depend on the confessional denomination of its residents. But, I do indicate the possibility of manipulation and one-sided pretensions to have the *pars* represent the *totum*. An even worse manipulation was present in the attempts to project the conflicts in the area of ex-Yugoslavia in terms of inter-confessional and inter-religious confrontation.

In the aforementioned context, Yugoslavia has drawn the most tragic lot: onetime East of the West and West of the East, today she finds herself in the ‘twilight zone’ (not in final darkness, I hope), nowhere and everywhere, everybody’s and nobody’s — with a sense for freedom and dignity, but isolated, impoverished, wounded, with a million refugees on her not so large territory ...

These remarks (which are doubtlessly subjective, but not isolated in their basic intent) have sense only if they serve as a basis for the exposition of my viewpoint on the effects of the aforementioned tragedy for the Churches of Europe. Particularly in relation to what we, as Christians, could do on the field of common witness of the Gospel of love and peace.

In the circumstances of the newest world disorder, doubtlessly not the first or the last, and deep divisions and antagonisms in Europe, the Churches can and must — in accordance with their prophetic mission and apostolic responsibility precisely in our time and our world — emphatically promote and practically realize the ideal of one Europe. One in being and in its goal, but multifarious and multifaceted in terms of the confessional, national, cultural and socio-political identity of its residents. Not one European resident and not one

European nation may become victims of anyone's or any sort of ostracism. They can not be easily 'thrown out' from Europe. In Europe, no one has a monopoly on European-hood. The European Union is a thing of the future. For the time being, in fact, we only have the union of Western Europe. The Orthodox Europeans, in quality and quantity, represent about half of Europe. Serbs are Europeans too. Doubtlessly, they are not better than others, but not much worse either. Yugoslavia, as well, is a European country. Not just geographically. If 'Byzantium after Byzantium' has no right to regard its brothers from Western Europe as barbarians, then, by the same token, Europe can not be viewed as some neo-Carolingian reality. In Europe and, in the final run, in the whole world, we need each other ... Communion and inter-penetration, unity in difference and authenticity in unity signify life and growth, while isolation, unification (as eradication of natural and appropriated differences) and self-sufficiency signify stagnation and, finally, death. The European East and West have grown out of the foundation of Eastern and Western Christianity. They can, indeed, be regarded as two lungs of one organism. This does not overlook or minimize the differences. However, the emphasis is placed on that which unites.

If we, as Christians, are able to draw a moral and message from the tragedy of Kosovo, Serbia and the Balkans, then it might read as follows: the communal European home cannot be assembled by means of economy and politics only. Although these means are the building material, without which there is no construction, they are not, however, the foundation. For us, there is no other foundation but the one which was, once and forever, posited in the Person of Christ. The foundation of faith and spirit, hope and love, given to us as a gift, will not endanger anyone: including non-Christians or, even, non-believers in Europe. But, without the elementary presuppositions of European spirit and European culture, originating in the Gospel, we can fabricate only a superficial (in fact, illusionary) unity, a unity of interests, not an organic unity. The latter can be witnessed and offered only by the Churches of Europe. If someone finds that this has

a utopian ring to it, no matter. The Gospel as a whole, to many people and on many occasions in history, has sounded as a folly and scandal. Kosovo and Serbia, and the whole of the Balkans, only within such a process — a process of the organic unification of Europe as a freely willing community of free and equal nations — may have a chance for peace and communal life, for forgiveness and reconciliation, for an experience they have known for centuries: the experience of living in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural ambience. By offering this model and actively working on its application — like the man-steward from the Gospel who brings forth the ‘new’ and the ‘old’ — the European Churches too have their chance or, to put it more adequately, a blessing to test their authenticity in serving and veracity in witness. The following words are addressed to us too: “Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another” (Mark 9:50).

Concrete initiatives in the service of gradually healing the wounds of all — Albanians, Serbs and others — and in the service of the process of reconciliation should, however, be undertaken without delay — possibly on the very spot — with respect to earlier ecumenical initiatives: or with respect to the Sarajevo initiative of His Holiness Patriarch Alexis of Moscow, or parallel initiatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church and other local Christian Churches from the time of strife and suffering in Croatia, and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As to the very essence of the problem which is usually identified with the phrase ‘Kosovo crisis,’ the leaders, officers and the faithful of European Churches may also productively and constructively influence, on one hand, the governments and politically relevant circles of their countries and, on the other, they may simultaneously effect international and European institutions. This would help us to promptly emerge out of the current terrible state of affairs, finding a truly just, practically applicable and salvific formula for everyone. Such a formula which could hold valid not only for the region of Kosovo and Metohija but, *mutatis mutandis*, for every other region where there is or could be instigated some similar crisis.

In their wishes and activities to help on the way of procuring a solution which brings peace, security, freedom and justice for all nations in Kosovo and Metohija, or somewhere else, the Churches, of course, will decide neither for the official standpoints of the governments of Yugoslavia and Serbia, nor for the standpoints of Albanian parties and organizations in Kosovo and Metohija, nor for the standpoints of the NATO alliance and European Union, but for an approach grounded on ageless and irreplaceable principles of Gospel anthropology and ethics. These principles take their point of departure from each human being as a supreme value: from such a being which is capable of love and worthy to be loved. We must not perceive our neighbor, particularly the one who suffers, either as Jew or Samaritan, or as Turk or Gypsy, or as Christian or Muslim, or as believer or non-believer. We should regard him as our brother or, in a more biblical spirit, as Christ Himself, the First and Greatest amongst 'merciful Samaritans': secretly present in every hungry, thirsty, naked, wounded, sick and endangered human being: Him who in his enemy embraces his neighbor, and in the heart of an officer of occupation (as the enemy of his people, foreigner by faith and language) is able to discern such faith which is not found in Israel, in his own people ... By being understood in their existential dependency from this anthropological-ethical vision, the international juridical norms (related to human, civic and national rights, and to the entire international interstate order) gain wider dimensions and more profound meaning. By the same token, there comes a reduced danger of their political instrumentalization or ideological misuse. And that, sadly, is still a common occurrence.

I am personally convinced that, in this matter, an all-Christian and all-European consensus (not a political, but an existential, essential consensus) is wholly possible. And that, aided by certain spiritual efforts, we are not far from it. It is, probably, of least importance whether we shall name it as pluralism or open society, or some other term.

In this context, I also share the opinion that the Churches must be resolutely against any politics of double standards, and that they

should avoid any media-projected or propaganda-construed simplified, black-and-white paradigm either about the 'Kosovo crisis' or about other problems on our continent or in the world in general. It is particularly harmful, it seems, when leaders of some Churches expose themselves either as exclusive followers and apologists, or as ferocious critics of just one of the pitted parties, instead of trying to help both in accepting the relativity not only of the notion of 'foreign,' but also of who owns 'truth' — particularly helping them to abandon confrontation and violence as a method for accomplishing any goal. Contrary to that, it is very curative when high representatives of Churches, in word and deed, demonstrate true solidarity with everyone, particularly with those who suffer — and when they show in practice that they are honest and unbiased, motivated solely by good will. I personally can hardly forget, for example, the dear image of one bishop (coming from a country which severely bombed Serbia) who, as I learned, dearly pitied the Albanian refugees from Kosovo and the victims from the fighting. But, he arrived in Belgrade to tell us, amidst the sirens for air strike danger and under candlelight, that he is with us all: in prayer and in the love of Christ. Of course, I have made the acquaintance of hundreds of other brother Christians and sister Christians from various Churches and confessions, from Europe and America, who in like manner by means of unselfish co-suffering love and prayer embraced everyone, the Albanians and Serbs, and others. As an example of a solid, ecumenically programmed and realized engagement in service of peace and reconciliation (an engagement which can procure important incentives for similar enterprises in the future) I cite, with gratitude, all those encounters and appeals — inter-confessional and inter-religious — which were initiated by the Conference of European Churches and the World Council of Churches, helped by the co-action of other ecumenical factors, during various crises and conflicts on the ground of ex-Yugoslavia.

Through reflection on the effects of the Kosovo drama, I have spontaneously reached its ecumenical effects. The Kosovo crisis could, in some way, evolve into a new, additional, element of the cri-

sis of the ecumenical movement. And it may be a great ecumenical challenge and a real ecumenical chance. Avoiding unsolicited verbosity, I shall try to clarify my thought. In the Serbian Orthodox Church (and, as far as I know, in other local Orthodox Churches), there are certain circles which experience and understand the West exclusively as an enemy of Orthodoxy. They hold that the source and inspirer of this (according to them, universal and irreconcilable) enmity are the Western Churches, in first place the Roman Catholic Church. In their contacts and articles, they promulgate various insinuations by means of which they are undermining the authority and credibility of bishops and theologians engaged in ecumenical dialogues or organizations, not being particular as to choice of words even in the case of the Ecumenical Patriarch. In certain ecclesiastical environments devoid of proper spiritual and theological culture, particularly amidst those monks and laymen who are characterized by *sancta simplicitas*, they are successful, lamentably so, in invoking temptations, hesitations, outrage and, sometimes, spiritually pathological emotions. Let us imagine, then, what are the effects on the simple and harmless folk when, in conditions of suffering or NATO bombardment, NATO and Western Christianity become depicted as two faces of the same coin. Such an image is then projected both to Orthodox Serbs and to other Orthodox nations, primarily to the Greeks and Russians, who in any case express spontaneous and universal solidarity for their brothers in faith. It is not easy to resist such a one-sided picture. It is only rare individuals who share an immediate acquaintance with the spiritual physiognomy of the average Roman Catholic or Protestant. Rumors of various activities of the Vatican state are received, unjust accusations from certain Western ecclesial persons are picked up too, historical 'long memories' are somewhere near at hand: in some compartment of consciousness or subconsciousness — and NATO missiles at the same time are disseminating dread and death... (In our Serbian case, and perhaps it is not the only one, we have the following curiosity: the same persons are at the same time both political Westernizers and extremist anti-ecumenists. They propagate the idea

that we must, at once, leave the World Council of Churches and other ecumenical bodies ...).

A similar process, only in reverse direction, exists, as far as I know, in some Western environments too. There we encounter, more or less, the following syllogism: the Serbs are evil — the Serbs are Orthodox — the Orthodox support the Serbs — all the Orthodox are bad: that is to say, the Serbs are like that because they are Orthodox. The creation of such a scheme (which I present in a very simplified if not caricature fashion) implicates the guilt of certain Western European media and individual politicians, like the aforementioned minister. In all these generalizations, schematizations and vulgarizations, there is, doubtlessly, a failure to testify to that manifold of persons, statements and gestures which manifest that the secularized post-Christian West and the Christian West cannot be viewed as one and the same thing and, on the other hand, that 'evil Serbs' know how to live in peace and love with all those who differ from them. Moreover, that many of them are willing to help the Albanians as much as their fellows in faith and fellows in blood. Of course, this goes hand in hand with the neglect of the fact that the 'West,' for a long time, is not a geographical but is a civilizational concept. There is disregard, also, of the fact that we Christians, like in apostolic times, find ourselves in Diaspora both in the East and in the West. Regardless of all the differences between us, still, according to the nature of things, the greatest spiritual propinquity and understanding are possible precisely amongst Christians.

The most appropriate reaction to all this is the acceptance of the ecumenical challenge and the offering of an authentic Gospel witness of compassionate love towards everyone. Perhaps, the most pertinent witness will be the offering of help. However, not humanitarian help (since interventions have become 'humanitarian'), but philanthropic and brotherly — everywhere in Serbia and Yugoslavia: from Kosovo, Metohija and Montenegro to Voivodina — and to everyone: from Albanians to Serbs, from Turks to Hungarians, from Gypsies to Romanians, and so forth. This help has been coming for a long time.

We are sincerely grateful both to Orthodox Churches — primarily to the Churches of Greece, Cyprus and Russia — and to the Churches of the West, that is, to their philanthropic services and institutions, for the great help offered so far.

But, objectively considered, this help cannot cover even the slightest portion of the currently existent needs. It is not only the expelled and refugees. With the newest wave of persons displaced from Kosovo and Metohija (around 300,000 of them, not only Serbs but others also, including a number of Albanians) the sum total of refugees and displaced persons in contemporary Yugoslavia reaches the number of one million souls. At the same time, our country is under sanctions, in isolation, without foreign investment or credit. NATO has largely destroyed agricultural compounds, infrastructure, and vitally important objects. The renewal of the demolished goods is being conducted by our own efforts, in accordance with the current possibilities. The Western world is not only withholding help for reconstructing anew what it has destroyed, but it is, furthermore, refusing to ease the regime of sanctions (what is there to say about sanctions: in my country, in Iraq, or anywhere else?) unless the Yugoslav state accepts its political dictate. The whole country, by means of the will of the mighty, has been turned into a huge ghetto and the majority of the populace is directly endangered. The winter is before us, let us add this next to all that has been listed so far.

In the light of everything that was said, I believe and hope that the Churches of Europe and Christians of Europe (regardless of their own or anyone else's interpretation of the nature of the Kosovo crisis and entire Yugoslav and Balkan drama) will be able, out of simple Christian compassion with neighbors in hardship, to demonstrate will and resolve to help even more, much more than was the case so far. For, "if a brother and sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled, without giving them things needed for the body, what does it profit?' (James 2:15–16). The effectiveness, unconditionality and sincerity of that help will be the proof of real inter-Christian solidarity and a denial of

the theory about the anti-Orthodox background of the ecumenical idea. Perhaps, what I have to say is not realistic, but I believe that a bridge in Novi Sad, on the Danube, reconstructed through the support and means of the Churches of Europe, would contribute incomparably more to the forging of spiritual bridges between Christians of Eastern and Western Europe than all the ecumenical manifestations of good will. If nothing else, that bridge would be permanently called: the Church bridge ... Other modalities of giving help are also possible: one Church could rebuild a destroyed hospital, some other could renew some school, the third could renovate a demolished monastery or ruined church somewhere in Kosovo, the fourth could remake an object in an Albanian residential area, or something of that kind.

To conclude: The word crisis, in fact, signifies judgment. The current tragic crisis in Kosovo and Metohija, in Serbia and in Europe is measuring out a test for our Christian conscience, our feeling of responsibility, our love. The outcome of the crisis will not depend only on statesmen and politicians. It will depend on Churches and Christians too. But, most of all, it will depend on Him who is present everywhere and permeates everything as the Treasury of goods and Giver of life. That is why we keep hoping, even when there is little hope, and rejoice in Him when we are sad.

AN ORTHODOX PEACE WITNESS?

John H. Erickson

St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood, NY

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In the mid-960s, a dispute arose between the Patriarch of Constantinople Polyeuktos and the emperor of the day, Nikephoros II Phokas. The emperor, possibly influenced by the Islamic concept of the holy war, the *jihad*, wished to have soldiers killed in battle honored as holy martyrs. The patriarch successfully opposed him by citing an ancient church canon from the 'canonical epistles' of St. Basil the Great: "Our fathers did not reckon killings in war as murders, but granted pardon, it seems to me, to those fighting in defense of virtue and piety. Perhaps, however, it is advisable that, since their hands are not clean, they should abstain from communion alone for a period of three years" (Canon XIII).

This episode is of some interest not only because of what it says about attitudes towards war — more of this at a later point — but also because of the patriarch's way of dealing with this imperial request. He cited an ancient canon. This was not out of legalism. The canon had not been applied for centuries, if ever, as the medieval Byzantine canonists pointed out. The penitential system which it presupposes had long since fallen into desuetude; its very wording suggests that it was more a counsel than a prescription; and in any case, the Byzantine canonical tradition had always allowed for some *oikonomia* — flexibility, accommodation — in the application of the canons. What is striking in this episode is the patriarch's creative reappropriation of an element from the Church's tradition, which by this point had been practically forgotten, at least by the emperor.

To reread one's tradition in the light of present realities: Is that not what all of our churches are doing, or at least what they should be

doing? From within the Lutheran tradition, Eric Gritsch urges such an approach when, after tracing the long history of abuses of Luther's "two-kingdoms ethic," he states, "The time has come to mine the Lutheran tradition for evidence that provides a Lutheran perspective on Christian unity and world peace."¹ We also see this approach at work in the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' 1983 Pastoral Letter on War and Peace, which attempts to reread the rich and variegated tradition of the Catholic Church, fully aware that "its development cannot be sketched in a straight line and it seldom gives a simple answer to complex questions" yet at the same time confident that this tradition does have something important to say at this "moment of supreme crisis" in human history.² At this "moment of supreme crisis," many other churches also have been rediscovering what their tradition has to contribute to the discussion and the pursuit of peace. The Mennonites, for example, have been rediscovering their 16th-century Anabaptist heritage, especially its pacifist strain. Paolo Siepierski certainly is correct when he notes that "an event does not exhaust itself in its occurrence or in the documents that record its occurrence . . . A past event has the ability to cause other events, in the present and the future." The task of the interpreter, therefore, is not only to explain what happened or what was said in the past but also to "direct the effective power" of the past toward present issues.³ This, in effect, is what Patriarch Polyeuktos was doing in his dispute with Emperor Nikephoros Phokas.

In this paper, I would like to pursue Patriarch Polyeuktos' rereading of the Orthodox tradition. What does this tradition have to say

¹"Christian Unity and Peacemaking: A Lutheran Perspective," paper presented at the NCCC/USA consultation "The Fragmentation of the Church and Its Unity in Peacemaking" (University of Notre Dame, June 13–17, 1995) 7.

²*The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference Office of Publishing Services, Publication No. 863, 1983) p. 3.

³"Reflections on a Kainotic History: Basil of Caesarea as a Paradigm for Ecumenical Dialogue," in *Faith to Creed: Ecumenical Perspectives on the Affirmation of the Apostolic Faith in the Fourth Century*, ed. S. Mark Heim (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991) 104–105.

about peace and peacemaking for us today? And, more broadly, what does it say about the Church's relationship to society and to civil authorities? Then, following a brief survey of historical and ethical issues, the paper will touch upon "the overarching ecclesial concern" that prompted the Faith and Order Commission of the National Conference of Churches to organize a special consultation on "The Fragmentation of the Church and Its Unity in Peacemaking": What is the relationship between peacemaking and Christian unity?

We must note, first of all, that Orthodoxy has had a long history of concern for the public order. It has refused to identify itself either as a *sect* set apart from the wider society or as a *denomination* happy to exist side by side with other denominations within the wider society — historically, at least, because in the United States, we Orthodox sometimes have shown tendencies in both directions. In most places, Orthodoxy, like Catholicism, has had a strong sense of being *church*, of being open to all, expected by all, in a sense expected of all, and with a high sense of responsibility towards all. To use James Joyce's expression, "Here comes everybody." On the one hand, this has meant considerable involvement of Orthodox Christians and Church leaders in public affairs. It also has meant considerable involvement of the civil authority in ecclesiastical affairs. Patriarch Polyeuktos and Emperor Nikephoros Phokas disagreed about canonizing fallen soldiers as martyrs for the faith, but that the issue should arise at all suggests the high level of inter-penetration of ecclesiastical and civil that existed in medieval Byzantium — the ideal of *symphonia*, of a single Christian commonwealth whose well-being depended on the close cooperation of the imperial authority and the priestly authority, not on their separation. And even after the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453, Orthodoxy has continued to take some measure of establishment for granted. This has been true where Orthodoxy has not been the dominant faith. In the Ottoman Empire, for example, the Patriarch was the *millet bashi*, the head of *Rum millet*, the 'Roman' (*i.e.*, the Orthodox Christian) nation, and ultimately responsible before the Sultan for most aspects of its daily life. This has been

true, *a fortiori*, where Orthodoxy has been the dominant faith. As a result, Orthodoxy has sometimes reacted with bewilderment when faced with situations of radical disestablishment like ours in North America. For example, in the last century, it appeared desirable to move the see of the Russian North American diocese from Alaska, the former Russian America, to the lower states, in order to minister more effectively to the Orthodox immigrants who were then arriving by the boatload, but for a long time, the Holy Governing Synod and the Foreign Office in St. Petersburg hesitated: After all, the establishment or suppression of episcopal sees was a matter for the civil authority; in Russia, it required an imperial *ukase*. Would not a change in the diocesan see be regarded by the United States as an infringement on its sovereignty?

Orthodoxy also has been closely identified with the nation, the people. It has shared the nation's sufferings—and these have been many, for in fact every segment of Orthodoxy has experienced long periods of domination and sporadic persecution at the hands of hostile powers. It also has shared the nation's triumphs. One result of this has been an ambivalent attitude towards peace and peacemaking. Innocent victims of suffering and martyrdom, both ancient and modern, have been accorded special veneration, but so have kingly warrior saints. For example, seven out of the nine Serbian saints of the Middle Ages were princes or kings, whose various activities included both patricidal and fratricidal civil wars as well as defensive and offensive foreign wars. And, at times, the martyr and the kingly warrior, redemptive suffering and national glory, are seen in one and the same figure: The greatest of Serbian national holidays commemorates not a victory but the great defeat at Kosovo in 1389; St. Lazar, the king who fought “for the cross and freedom,” was cruelly tortured and slain by the Turkish victors; his *vita* draws out every possible parallel between his passion and that of Christ.⁴

⁴See Alexander F.C. Webster, “Varieties of Christian Military Saints: From Martyrs Under Caesar to Warrior Princes,” *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 24 (1980) 3–35.

From what has been said so far, one might be tempted to conclude that Emperor Nikephoros Phokas won a posthumous victory over Patriarch Polyeuktos, that in matters relating to war and peace Orthodoxy has had “a neuralgic legacy” analogous to that of Lutheranism as described by Eric Gritsch, that the current suffering in Bosnia and so much of the ethnic strife throughout Eastern Europe is ascribable to the pathological state of Orthodoxy, that the Orthodox should be classed among the historic war churches, as it were, with little to contribute to a dialogue with the historic peace churches. This at least is the picture conveyed in many news accounts. Yet, there are other elements in the Orthodox tradition which suggest the need for a more nuanced assessment and which may in fact contribute to a discussion of peacemaking.

Let me begin by recounting a recent exchange of views within Orthodoxy in the United States. The inaugural issue of a stimulating but short-lived magazine entitled *American Orthodoxy* carried an article reviewing some responses of the National Council of Churches critical of the Gulf War and juxtaposing some official statements by Orthodox jurisdictions here in the United States.⁵ The thrust of the article was two-fold: that Orthodoxy accepted a just-war theory, albeit imprecisely, and that much of the official U.S. Orthodox response to the Gulf War betrayed this just-war approach by succumbing to the NCC’s anti-American, anti-just war rhetoric. A subsequent issue carried a response by Fr. Stanley Harakas, distinguished professor of ethics at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology.⁶ In it, he recounted the evolution of his own thought on the subject of the “just war.” Initially in his teaching and public speaking, he had followed

⁵ Lawrence Uzzell, “Rumors of War in the NCC,” *American Orthodoxy* 1 (Fall 1991) 7–9.

⁶ “No ‘Rumors of War’ in the Greek Fathers,” *American Orthodoxy* 2 (Winter 1992) 8–9. The author would like to express his deep gratitude to Fr. Harakas, who originally had been scheduled to speak at the NCC Faith and Order consultation on “The Fragmentation of the Church and Its Unity in Peacekeeping,” for generously sharing with him his thoughts as well as copies of his many articles on the subject of peace.

the position set forth in the lectures and handbooks of professors in the Athens theological faculty where he had studied, who basically supported a just war approach and rejected the principle of conscientious objection and especially of selective conscientious objection as showing an unbecoming lack of responsibility towards society and disobedience towards duly constituted civil authority.

Fr. Harakas began to question this position, however, when he discovered what he called the “stratification of pacifism” in the ancient canons which prohibit any form of military activity to the clergy while allowing it for the laity.⁷ Then, when asked to comment on the U.S. Catholic Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on War and Peace, he reviewed the Eastern patristic and canonical sources yet again and found, to his surprise, that he could not find any of the traditional components of the Western just war theory, whether *jus ad bellum* or *jus in bello*. Rather, he found an amazing consistency in the almost totally negative moral assessment of war coupled with an admission that war may be necessary under certain circumstances to protect the innocent and to limit even greater evils! In this framework, war may be an unavoidable alternative, but it nevertheless remains an evil. Virtually absent in the tradition is any mention of a ‘just war’ much less a ‘good’ war. The tradition also precludes the possibility of a crusade. For the Eastern Orthodox tradition ..., war can be seen only as a ‘necessary evil’ with all the difficulty and imprecision such a designation carries.⁸

The end-point in the evolution of his thought and the key to discussion of the whole subject, Fr. Harakas recounts, came with a conference devoted to “The Orthodox Concern with Peace.” His own paper, and indeed those of the other participants, documented what

⁷ Cf. his reflections in “The Morality of War,” in *Orthodox Synthesis: The Unity of Theological Thought*, ed. Joseph J. Allen (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1981) 67–94.

⁸ “No ‘Rumors of Wars’ ...” 8. Cf. Fr. Harakas’ essay “The NCCB Pastoral Letter: ‘The Challenge of Peace’ — An Eastern Orthodox Response,” in *Peace in a Nuclear Age: The Bishops’ Pastoral Letter in Perspective*, ed. Charles J. Reid, Jr. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1986) chapter 16.

he calls the “pro-peace” stance of the Fathers of the Eastern Church as well as the biblical sources of their thought. As he concluded:

The East did not seek to answer questions concerning the correct conditions for entering war and the correct conduct of war on the basis of the possibility of a ‘just war’ precisely because it did not hold to such a view. Its view of war, unlike that of the West, was that it is a necessary evil. The peace ideal continued to remain normative, and no theoretical efforts were made to make conduct of war into a positive norm.⁹

It is unnecessary to re-examine here all the evidence that Fr. Harakas adduces in his various articles on the subject. Some aspects of this, above all the biblical understanding of *shalom/eirene*, will be familiar to theologians of every Christian tradition. Rooted in the Bible, the Greek Fathers and the Byzantine tradition as a whole saw peace not simply as the absence of war but rather as a gift of God closely related to well-being and salvation, making it practically synonymous with the work of Christ. Several points should be underscored, however.

First, the crusade mentality, which from time to time has gripped the West, whether in the Middle Ages or since, is strikingly absent in the Christian East. In the West, possibly as one aspect of Christianity’s adaptation to Germanic heroic ideals, even churchmen looked for signs of God’s judgment on the battlefield. (Enculturation brings mixed blessings!) As one contemporary source observes, “One rode in blood up to the knees and even to the horses’ bridles, by the just and marvelous Judgment of God.”¹⁰ Here the evils of war are almost completely ignored. Instead war is presented as a good and noble means of achieving a good and noble purpose, even — as with the Prussian General Karl von Clausewitz in the 19th century — as a boon to cul-

⁹ “The Teaching on Peace in the Fathers,” in *Un Regard Orthodoxe sur la Paix* (Chambésy-Geneva: Editions du Centre Orthodoxe du Patriarcat Œcuménique, 1986) 32–47 at p. 43.

¹⁰ Raimundus de Agiles, quoted in H.J. Muller, *Freedom in the Western World* (New York, Evanston and London: Harper and Row, 1963) 48.

ture, science and progress. At the very least, as with World War II and other secular ‘crusades’ whether actual or metaphorical, it is a righteous struggle against Evil, in which the enemy inevitably is demonized, dehumanized, denied any share in the image of God. In the East, by contrast, as the secular historian George Ostrogorsky observes, “The crusading movement as the West conceived it was something entirely foreign... There was nothing new in a war against the infidel, but to the Byzantines, this was the outcome of hard political necessity.”¹¹ Eastern contemporaries were simply horrified, especially at the sight of churchmen wielding swords in battle. Killing in war may not be reckoned as murder, as the canon of St. Basil invoked by Patriarch Polyeuktos observes, yet it remains a sin, albeit an involuntary one, and therefore subject to ecclesiastical penance. While the letter of this canon was seldom enforced, a ‘pro-peace’ stance is evident in Byzantium not only in ecclesiastical sources but also in secular sources. Interesting in this regard are handbooks of military strategy. One of the first begins by observing that “war is a great evil, even the greatest of evils,” and — like others of the genre — it goes on to argue for avoidance of open battle, inasmuch as the object of warfare is the defeat of the enemy through disruption, not slaughter.¹² No hint here of the glory of battle or of the heroism which war stimulates!

At the same time, most forms of pacifism were also rejected. The Byzantine Church probably would have regarded as evidence of Manichean heresy the Anabaptist Schleithem Confession’s rejection of the sword of the magistrate along with the sword of war and its call for “separation from the abomination.” Does this represent a radical shift from the attitude of the pre-Constantinian Church, as a number of church historians have argued?¹³ I think not, though the

¹¹ *History of the Byzantine State* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1957) 90.

¹² Cited by Harakas, ‘*The Teaching on Peace...*’ 44.

¹³ See, for example, John Howard Yoder, “The Authority of Tradition,” in *The Priestly Kingdom: Social Ethics as Gospel* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984) 63–79; cf. also A. James Reimer, “Trinitarian Orthodoxy,

scope of this paper does not allow for full discussion of this question. The sources suggest rather that pre-Constantinian objection to military service on the part of Christians arose above all because of the compulsory pagan religious observances that formed part of a soldier's life. Otherwise, the maintenance of public order, the enforcement of justice and the protection of the body politic from external attack were accepted values in the pre-Constantinian Church.¹⁴ Here, of course, we must keep in mind how pervasive and persuasive was the notion of a *pax romana*. Centuries of official peace had blunted ancient militarism, with its adulation of the triumphant general and its culture of death. Both pagans and Christians in the Late Empire, like their Byzantine heirs, had come to look on the far-flung Roman legions, if not as peacemakers, then at least as peacekeepers, rather like today's UN forces in the world's various trouble-spots.

A final point must be mentioned. While the Christian East never developed a just-war theory, a concern for justice has never been absent from its understanding of peace and peacemaking. But it is not easy to balance the demands of peace and justice. The Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter on War and Peace identifies the problem with great precision:

In the kingdom of God, peace and justice will be fully realized. Justice is always the foundation of peace. In history, efforts to pursue both peace and justice are at times in tension, and the struggle for justice may threaten certain forms of peace.¹⁵

Constantinianism, and Theology from a Radical Protestant Perspective," in *Faith to Creed* ... 129–61 and the literature analyzed there.

¹⁴ On this point, see especially John Helgeland, Robert J. Daly and J. Patout Burns, *Christians and the Military: The Early Experience* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985); but see also the critical observations of David G. Hunter, 'The Christian Church and the Roman Army in the First Three Centuries,' in *The Church's Peace Witness*, ed. Marlin E. Miller and Barbara Nelson Gingerich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994) 161–81.

¹⁵ *The Challenge of Peace* ... 19.

On the whole, I would say that we Orthodox have tended to insist more on justice than peace. This is what the late Fr. John Meyendorff had to say in a 1982 editorial on “Peace and Disarmament”:

The major task of Christians... should not be empty, general talk about ‘peace,’ but also — and primarily — efforts in favor of human rights and the restoration of conditions which would make mutual confidence possible and war unthinkable. This is not empty moralism, but the only realistic approach to the problem of peace and disarmament. There will always be danger of war as long as justice will be forgotten and human freedom curtailed. Peace is inseparable from openness and confidence.¹⁶

Or, in the words of the modern Greek Orthodox thinker Alexander Tsirindanes, “Desires for international peace which do not comprehend a state of international justice... are nothing else but a participation in international crime.”¹⁷ It might be added that what holds true for international relations also holds true in domestic matters. In Byzantium, the emperor, of course, was an absolute monarch, but this did not absolve him from respect for justice and just laws. An emperor identified as a *tyrannos* might well lose his throne and his life. This, in fact, was the fate of Nikephoros Phokas. Characteristically, his slayer, General John Tzimisces, succeeded him; but equally characteristically, Patriarch Polyeuktos refused to proceed with the imperial coronation until Tzimisces had fulfilled a suitable penance.

¹⁶ Originally in *The Orthodox Church* (the newspaper of the Orthodox Church in America), reprinted in his *Witness to the World* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1987) 92. On the intimate connections between justice and peace and their significance for ecumenism, see the inter-Orthodox statement “Orthodox Perspectives on Justice and Peace,” in *Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation: Insights from Orthodoxy*, ed. Gennadios Limouris (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990) 16–27.

¹⁷ Cited in Harakas, “The Morality of War,” in *Orthodox Synthesis: The Unity of Theological Thought*, Joseph Allen, ed., St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 1981, pp. 67–94.

I promised to say a few words about the relationship between peacemaking and Christian unity, but I do so reluctantly. These days many Orthodox are suspicious or cynical whenever either ecumenism or peace is mentioned. This is true not only in the United States, where some seem bent on making Orthodoxy simply the Eastern Rite version of the Christian Coalition. Since the fall of Communism, many in Eastern Europe appear to be bent on rejecting anything and everything that they were once forced to praise. A personal story may illustrate this point. A few years ago, I was expressing my enthusiasm for ecumenism to a young Orthodox student from what is now the Czech Republic. He was frankly shocked and scandalized. As he explained, under the Communists, they had been obliged to be ecumenical, but now that they were free, they could be true Orthodox. The word 'peace' likewise has fallen into disrepute because of its abuse by calculating liars who would "make a desert and call it peace" (Tacitus, Agricola 30). Earlier I referred to Fr. Harakas' participation in a conference devoted to "The Orthodox Concern for Peace" and how decisive it was for the development of his own thought. This conference was one of a series devoted to preparation of the tenth agenda item for the long-awaited Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church: "The Contribution of the Local Orthodox Churches to the Adoption of the Christian Ideals of Peace, Freedom, Brotherhood, and Love Among the Peoples of the World and the Elimination of Racial Prejudice." The topic, needless to add, had been included on the agenda at the insistence of the churches from what was then the Communist bloc. Even at the time it provoked sarcastic comments; today, practically every word seems blasphemous.

How can our debased vocabulary be purified? Can anyone speaking of peace, brotherhood, freedom, love — or Christian unity — ever be believed again? Certainly, this will not happen if, in their social analysis and rhetoric, our theologians simply parrot evanescent secular solutions. Peace (like freedom and justice and love) must be approached from the perspective of the Gospel, as a serious matter of 'faith and order.' Its ultimate referent is God, whose gift of peace is our reconciliation with Him and with each other through the death

of His Son. We must not allow the issue of peace to be dismissed or marginalized, as though it were somehow irrelevant to genuine theological concerns. That would distort the Gospel itself. But neither should we allow a counterfeit peace, a caricature of God's peace, to become a substitute for the Gospel.

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH AND PEACE— SOME REFLECTIONS

Olivier Clément

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The spiritual and eschatological meaning that Scripture and Christ Himself give to the word ‘peace’ characterizes the Orthodox Church as it does all Christian communities, although she is perhaps more wary than others of secularizing reinterpretations. The Biblical *shalom*, which the Septuagint translates as *eirene* indicates the gift, the coming, the presence of God Himself, for God is the one and only source of peace. The Messianic title “Prince of peace” that we find in Proto-Isaiah¹⁸ applies in its fullness to Christ, the “king of peace.”¹⁹ In the New Testament, the “peace of Christ” is a synonym for that life stronger than death which is brought to us by the Resurrection. Peace, life and joy are thus almost synonymous. “Peace on earth,” the message of the angels, is in fact accomplished by Christ — and in Him — for He reunites God and humanity by triumphing over death and hell. He “makes peace by the blood of His cross.”²⁰ In rooting Himself in the Church, the Body of Christ, the place of an ever-continuing Pentecost, the Christian, to the extent of his ascesis, an ascesis of trust and humility, is able to experience — whatever the changes and chances of his life, despite “wars and rumors of war”²¹ — that deep peace which is the foreshadowing within him of the Kingdom. “May the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the Coming

¹⁸ Isa. 9:6.

¹⁹ Heb. 7:2.

²⁰ Col. 1:20.

²¹ Matt. 24:6.

of our Lord Jesus Christ,” writes St. Paul to the Thessalonians.²² Similarly, Peter points to the ‘gentleness’ and ‘peace’ of the “hidden man of the heart.”²³

Nevertheless, this peace is not a withdrawal into oneself. Man is called to share in the very life of the Trinity: “That they may be one, even as we are one,”²⁴ said Jesus to His Father whom He has made ours. Our personal peace is realized in the peace of communion. The Christian, wherever he finds himself, has to become a peacemaker of human and cosmic existence — “Strive for peace with all men, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord,” we are told in the Epistle to the Hebrews.²⁵ The eucharistic community, which in the first centuries was called *agape* in Greek, *caritas* in Latin, ought to become, perhaps above all, a seed of peace in the world. The key text here is the Beatitude about the peacemakers, those who work to make peace²⁶ — who “shall be called sons of God,” adopted in the Son, therefore literally ‘deified.’ Thus, the disciples of Jesus are “to be at peace with one another”²⁷ and with all men.²⁸

The first Christian communities are to be found in a ‘universal’ empire which is a vast area of peace. They pray, therefore, for its preservation, while refusing to divinize the power of Rome and of the emperor. But this refusal, which discloses the area of the free personal conscience between the Kingdom of God and that of Caesar, does not express itself through rebellion but through martyrdom, that is to say, through a nonviolent stance, which has remained characteristic of the Christian East to this day.

The following text from the First Letter to Timothy²⁹ has been almost entirely integrated into the eucharistic liturgies of St. Basil and

²² 1 Thess. 5:23.

²³ 1 Pet. 3:4.

²⁴ John 17:11.

²⁵ Heb. 12:14.

²⁶ Matt. 5:9.

²⁷ Mark 9:50.

²⁸ Rom. 12:18; 2 Cor. 13:11.

²⁹ Tim. 2:1–2.

of St. John Chrysostom, which are still used today in the Orthodox Church: "I exhort... that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." The Christians of the first centuries felt very strongly, as do many Eastern Christians today, that the Church covers the world through her presence and her prayer (Paul Evdokimov goes as far as to say that "in the mystery," it is the world which is in the Church and not the other way around); that she preserves peace, delays the *Parousia* in its aspect of destruction, hastens it in its aspect of transfiguration. "What the soul is in the body, such are Christians in the world," says the second-century *Letter to Diognetes*.³⁰ They sustain and support the world of which they are a fundamental element of its internal cohesion, life and peace. "I have no doubt at all that it is because of the intercession of Christians that the world continues to exist," writes Aristides in his *Apologia*.³¹ Such is the priestly role of the entire Christian people, plainly indicated by the Sermon on the Mount: "You are the salt of the earth,"³² which refers back to Leviticus: "With all your offerings you shall offer salt,"³³ and through to Revelation and the First Letter of Peter, which applies to the members of the Church the promise once made by the mouth of Moses to the chosen people: "You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."³⁴

The Fathers of the Church, of whom, as is well known, the Orthodox are always very much aware, emphasized that peace, as the anticipation of the Kingdom, had not only a spiritual but also a dynamic and communicable character. St. Clement of Rome in his Letter to the Corinthians³⁵ insists that "peace is the aim that has been

³⁰ Letter to Diognetes 6:1.

³¹ 4 Aristides, *Apologia* 15.

³² Matt. 5:13.

³³ Lev. 2:13.

³⁴ Exod. 19:6, cf. Rev. 1:6; 1 Pet. 2:9.

³⁵ St. Clement of Rome, Letter to the Corinthians, 19:2–3.

proposed to us from the beginning.” “A deep and joyful peace has been given to us for all men, with an insatiable longing to do good and an abundant outpouring of the Spirit.” St. Basil recalls that “Christ is our peace,” and hence “he who seeks peace seeks Christ . . . Without love for others, without an attitude of peace towards all men, no one can be called a true servant of Christ.”³⁶ “The love which Christ bears for mankind spreads his peace among them,” writes St. Dionysius the Areopagite.³⁷ Barnabas describes Christians as “children of love and of peace.”³⁸ The saying of Christ is quoted constantly: “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you; not as the world gives do I give to you,”³⁹ — that peace “which passes all understanding.”⁴⁰ The peace of Christ comes to birth in man’s heart, it flows forth, becomes responsible and creative love, acquires a social dimension. Christians are the peaceable race (*eirenikon genon*) remarks Clement of Alexandria.⁴¹ Christ calls them to be “soldiers of peace.”⁴² “Nothing is more characteristic of a Christian than to be a worker for peace,” writes St. Basil.⁴³ The fight for peace cannot be separated from the fight for justice. The great boldness of the Fathers in social matters is well known. For St. John Chrysostom, the “sacrament of the altar” is nothing if it does not extend itself in the “sacrament of the poor.”

In the period before Constantine, the Church expected Christians to adopt a position that was fundamentally pacific (but not pacifist in the systematic and ideological sense that the word has taken on). In the second century, at the height of the Roman Peace, an apologist like Justin could take the view that the Messianic age prophesied by Isaiah, when swords would be beaten into ploughshares, had arrived with Christianity, for Christians, he says “refuse to make war with their

³⁶ St. Basil, Letter 203, 2.

³⁷ Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Divine Names* 11:5.

³⁸ Letter of Barnabas, 21,9.

³⁹ John 14:27.

⁴⁰ Phil. 4:7.

⁴¹ *Pedagogus* 2:2.

⁴² *Exhortation to the Pagans*, 11.

⁴³ St. Basil, Letter 11.

enemies.”⁴⁴ The army is a professional army and ecclesiastical authors, for the most part, consider that the military profession is among those that Christians should not take up. Tertullian gives two reasons for this: because the cult of Rome and of the emperor is obligatory for legionaries and because the “sons of peace” cannot be soldiers, “Can a son of peace take part in a battle?”⁴⁵ In the third century, when Christianity was beginning to become a widespread religion and there were Christian soldiers, the Apostolic Tradition acknowledges that they maintain order and guard the frontiers, but forbids them to kill. If they do so, they must be excluded from the Church.⁴⁶ Origen mentions that although Christians can pray for the emperor in war-time—the situation had become dangerous for the Empire—“they may not themselves bear arms against any nation nor learn the art of war. For the fact is that Jesus has made us sons of peace.”⁴⁷ However, it should be noted that from the third century, the Church prays for the authorities engaged in defensive wars when it is a matter of preventing invasion, chaos and the shedding of innocent blood.

The psychological climate changes with the conversion of the emperors, the end of persecution, state support for the Church (without which the Ecumenical Councils could not have taken place) and the embedding of Christian values in imperial legislation. Christians are to be found in the highest positions, and the Church is called upon to take, as it were, direct responsibility for the course of events. However, an overriding requirement for peace continued to be a vital element in the Christian conscience. “God is not the God of war,” writes St. John Chrysostom. “To make war is to declare oneself against God as well as against one’s neighbor. To be at peace with all men is what God, who saves them, requires of us. ‘Blessed are those who work for peace, for they shall be called the sons of God.’ How are we to imi-

⁴⁴ 1st Apologia 39, 3.

⁴⁵ On the Crowns 11, 1–7.

⁴⁶ Apostolic Tradition, 16.

⁴⁷ Against Celsus 5, 33.

tate the Son of God? By seeking peace and pursuing it.”⁴⁸ The pacific stance of the early Church then falls back to liturgical prayer and to the role of exemplars and intercessors allotted to monks (still laymen in the East), and to the clergy. Fr. Michael Evdokimov has already very well presented the theme of peace as it appears in the Orthodox Liturgy. As for monks and clergy, not only must they refuse to serve in armies but they must also forgo the right of legitimate self-defense. The 5th canon of Gregory of Nyssa, which is still in force, states that should a priest “fall into the defilement of murder even involuntarily (i.e. in self-defense), he will be deprived of the grace of the priesthood, which he will have profaned by this sacrilegious crime.”

The prohibition⁴⁹ against clergy and monks serving in the army is paralleled by the canons forbidding them to take office in the administration or government of the State.⁵⁰ These two injunctions of nonviolence and of non-power are combined in the 7th canon of the Council of Chalcedon: “Those who have entered the clergy or who have become monks must no longer serve in the army or accept civil office.” Henceforth, it is the monks who take upon themselves the universal priesthood of working for peace among mankind and the whole of creation, which formerly fell to all Christians. From the mid-fourth century, Serapion of Thmuis, the friend of St. Antony, did not hesitate to apply to monks that saying of Christ: “You are the light of the world.” “Because of you,” he comments, “by your prayers, the universe is saved.”⁵¹

Or rather the peace-making service of the universal priesthood is ascribed both to the monks and to the emperor. The myth of Christian Empire meant a lot to the Orthodox Church, at least until the fall of the Russian Empire in 1917. The conversion of Constantine, linked to the apparition of a “sign in the sky,” has been thought of as an inau-

⁴⁸ 14th Homily on Philippians, 8.

⁴⁹ 83rd “Apostolic” canon.

⁵⁰ 3rd canon of the 4th Ecumenical Council; 10th Canon of the 7th Ecumenical Council.

⁵¹ Letter to Monks, 3.

guration of the *eschaton*. For Eusebius of Caesarea, the union of the Church and Empire “converted the whole human race to peace and friendship, since from now on, men mutually recognize one another as brethren and discover their natural unity [in the sense of one human nature gathered up in Christ].” This, for Eusebius, is a sign that the scriptural prophecies have been fulfilled.⁵² In the Byzantine view, Christian mankind, constantly extended through missions, ought to constitute a kind of ‘city’ (*politeuma*), headed by the emperor, which he had to keep in peace. His role was to be fulfilled symbolically and by reciprocal agreement rather than by domination. For example, the emperor sent Clovis, the King of the Franks, consular titles, which integrated him into the *politeuma* without calling into question his independence. In the Middle Ages, when the Slav and Caucasian nations asserted themselves — thanks in part to evangelization from Byzantium in their own languages — the Empire organized the *politeuma* as a kind of Christian ‘commonwealth.’ It is also true, unfortunately, that the confrontation of Bulgarians and Byzantines, and later of Serbs and Byzantines, for the imperial title led to exhausting wars.

After the fall of Constantinople, the Empire passed to Russia. In the nineteenth century, she made very great efforts — and often disinterested ones — for the protection and freedom of the Orthodox of the Balkans. Even so, the division of Christendom was a major obstacle to the reconstitution of a *politeuma*. After the defeat of Napoleon, Tsar Alexander I entered Paris and all he asked in compensation for the burning of Moscow was that the Easter Liturgy should be celebrated in the very square, now called ‘La Place de la Concorde,’ where King Louis XVI had been guillotined. And he tried to reconstitute the *politeuma* by the creation of a ‘Holy Alliance’ (which should not be confused with the *Realpolitik* of Metternich’s reactionary Quadruple Alliance). The idea was to bring lasting peace to Europe through an understanding — in all but words an ‘ecumenical’ understanding — between Orthodox Russia, Lutheran Prussia, Anglican England

⁵² Eulogy of Constantine, 2:2.

and Catholic Austria and France. The dream was of a Christian society of European nations capable of reconciling tradition and liberty. The rise of secular nationalism in Europe doomed the project to failure. However, it should not be forgotten that, in 1901, Tsar Nicolas II proposed and obtained the creation of the International Tribunal of The Hague, to which he would have wished to give a greater capacity to act to prevent future conflicts

This whole long history, as is well known, has not gone by without wars. The Orthodox Church has become intimately linked to every people among whom she has taken root, to whom she has given a script, whose language she has blessed by using it for her Liturgy, whose culture she has safeguarded, and whose Christian ways she has upheld during periods of foreign domination (e.g. of the Ottomans in Southeastern Europe and of the Mongols in Russia). She has thus been totally involved in movements of resistance and wars of liberation. To limit oneself to Greece (although analogous examples could be found in the history of Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria), the banner of insurrection during the terrible war of independence was raised by the Archbishop of Patras. Half the Athonites left the Holy Mountain, monks though they were, to fight the Ottomans (oppressors and, I shall return to the point, Muslims). One should not forget that, under Turkish domination (the '*Turkokratia*'), the bishops were regarded, in the Islamic conception of the occupying power, as religious and civil leaders, without distinction, of the *millet*, namely of the Christian 'people.' This explains the role assumed by Archbishop Makarios as virtual '*ethnarch*,' i.e. 'leader of the people,' during the liberation of Cyprus!

However the Orthodox Church has never elaborated a doctrine of the 'just war' as the Christian West did following St. Ambrose and St. Augustine. The latter, let us not forget, designated as Manichean heresy — and he was a past master in the field! — the affirmation that war is intrinsically evil and contrary to the Christian understanding of love. The Christian East, on the other hand, has always thought of war as an evil but a sometimes necessary evil for the defense of justice and freedom. The only normative ideal is that of peace, and hence

the Orthodox Church has never made rules on the subject of *ius belli* and of *ius in bello*. To kill in war is permitted by a kind of commiseration but, for the Fathers, it is still a sin which must be forgiven! In his 13th canon, St. Basil notes, "Our fathers have not, in fact, held the homicides committed in warfare to be murders, thus pardoning, it seems to me, those who have taken up the defense of justice and of religion. However, it would be good to advise them to abstain from communion for three years since their hands are not pure." Killing in war is relevant to a significant concept of Eastern canon law, that of 'involuntary sin.'

From this point of view, the only war permitted by the Church as a lesser evil is a defensive war, or a war of liberation. Byzantine treatises on tactics and strategy begin by affirming that war is an evil. Thus, an anonymous sixth century author writes, "I am well aware that war is a great evil, and even the greatest of evils. But because enemies shed our blood ..., because everyone has to defend his homeland and his fellow citizens ..., we have decided to write about strategy ..." ⁵³ However, the work is concerned only with defensive strategy. It recommends ruses, maneuvers and subterfuges to avoid battle and to lead to the enemy's withdrawal. The *Strategikon of Maurice*, another handbook on the art of war, ⁵⁴ advises against complete encirclement, which would drive a cornered enemy to fight to the end, and recommends always allowing him an outlet to take flight. For the aim is to get him to withdraw, not to slaughter him.

Byzantium, the Balkan countries, Russia at the time of the Mongols, have all been attacked by Islam, an Islam rougher, often far more opaque, than that of the Arabs. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to speak of 'crusades,' but rather of a difficult and painful defense of the Cross. This attitude is imprinted in the liturgical texts and they still have a strange actuality, I have been told, for Greek Cypriots. Certainly, there was a great temptation to identify

⁵³ *Griechische Kreigsschriftsteller*, Leipzig, 1855, vol. 2, p. 56.

⁵⁴ Edited, with an English translation, by the University of Pennsylvania (see Bibliography).

the Christian people with a particular historic nation. For example, on the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, on September 14, we sing, "Lifted up of Thine own will upon the Cross, O Christ God, do Thou bestow Your mercy upon the new commonwealth that bears Your Name. Make our faithful kings glad in your strength, giving them victory over their enemies: may Your Cross assist them in battle, weapon of peace and unconquerable ensign of victory."⁵⁵ In this context, where eschatology runs the risk of being borne off to the advantage of national Messianism, the ancient canon distancing the warrior from communion is quite forgotten. He who fights in defense of his land and his faith is henceforth regarded as a martyr. "God will account our blood as that of the martyrs," said one of the 'holy Princes' of Russia, to whom it went against the grain to take up arms, and yet who fought to save their people, and sometimes accepted humiliation and death at the court of the Tatar Khan by freely offering themselves as hostages. In 1380, the Khan marched on Moscow. Grand Prince Dimitry went to ask the advice of St. Sergius of Radonezh, the restorer of the monastic life and therewith of the moral and cultural life of Russia. "Your duty demands that you defend your people," said Sergius. "Be ready to offer your soul and to shed your blood. But go first of all before the Khan as his vassal and try to hold him back by submitting to him in all loyalty. Holy Scripture teaches us that if our enemies require our glory, if they want our gold or silver, we can let them have it. We only give up our lives and shed our blood for the faith and in the name of Christ. Listen, Prince, let them have your glory and your wealth, and God will not let you be defeated. Seeing your humility, He will come to your aid and will abase their indomitable pride." The Grand Prince made it clear that he had done all that he could to appease the Khan, but in vain. "So fight then, they will perish. God will come to your aid. May His grace be with you." And he gave Dimitry two of his monks to fight with him. The Russian victory at

⁵⁵ *Festal Menaion*, trans. M. Mary and Bp. Kallistos Ware, p. 148.

Kulikovo was decisive. What we have here is neither a theology of violence nor a theology of nonviolence, but the unmistakable savor of the Bible, which becomes evangelic when history becomes tragic.

The same conception of warfare is found in the strategy of Kutuzov in the face of Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812. The battle of Borodino was purely defensive. On its eve, everyone fell to their knees before a particularly venerated icon of the Virgin. Kutuzov then abandoned Moscow to the invader. And when Napoleon, overtaken by winter, withdrew, Kutuzov limited himself to harassing him, having no other aim than to drive him back to the frontier. Tolstoy, who was later to become nonviolent, has described these events magnificently in *War and Peace*.

Since the disappearance of the last Orthodox Empire, that of Russia in 1917, and of the last Catholic Empire, that of Austria in 1918 — the latter deliberately destroyed by anti-clerical France — the dream of a Christian *politeuma* has completely vanished. (It is true that a good number of the notions of John Paul II spring from an 'imperial' charisma, rather than from a 'pontifical' charisma, but that is another story.) This has accentuated the national character of the different Orthodox Churches. During the Second World War, they were at the side of their respective peoples. The Patriarch of Serbia was behind the 1941 plot to dismiss the Regent for having granted free passage to the German armies. He was sent to a concentration camp by the Nazis. In Russia, on news of the German attack, when Stalin floundered and an attitude of wait-and-see was growing in a good many quarters, it was the head of the Russian Church, the Metropolitan, and future Patriarch, Sergius, who called for national resistance. Subscriptions from the faithful enabled the Church to offer the State an armored column, which flew the flag of Holy Russia and bore the name of the victor of Kulikovo and friend of St. Sergius, Dimitry Donskoy. During the 900-day siege of Leningrad, the Church made a decisive contribution through prayer, exhortation and social assistance. But previously, unlike, for example, the Spanish Church, the Russian Church had refused to

participate in civil war. Patriarch Tikhon did not give his blessing to the White armies. He himself offered the State the wealth of the Church to combat the famine, and he simply exhorted the faithful to nonviolent resistance; while Lenin, having refused his offer, ordered the confiscation even of the things needed for public worship. This was the time when Staretz Alexis Metchev opposed the calls for an anti-Bolshevik crusade made by some émigré bishops, and declared that a powerful spiritual renewal was the only way in which Russia would be able to overcome anti-theism.

So, historically, the Orthodox Church has accepted warfare sorrowfully as a sometimes necessary evil, but without concealing that it is an evil which must be avoided or limited as much as possible. Her spiritual men and women have never ceased to pray for peace. St. Silouan, who died in 1938 on Mount Athos, carried the whole of mankind in his prayer; and he, a Russian, interceded especially for the persecutors of his Church; persecutions, to which the response was martyrdom — of tens of millions of martyrs, many of whom died praying for their tormentors.

Today, in a context which has become global and extremely precarious, there are two signs which appear to make specific the position of the Orthodox Church: one is her stance in the war in Lebanon, and the other is the text on Peace worked on by the Third Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference, which met at Chambésy near Geneva from October 28 to November 6, 1998.

In Lebanon, the Orthodox community, which is one of the most significant in terms of numbers, economic importance and cultural influence, was the only one to refuse to take up arms and form a militia. The Orthodox Youth Movement of the Patriarchate of Antioch, inspired, above all, by Metropolitan George Khodr, has always put into practice the nonviolence of the Gospel, going to the assistance of victims on all sides and developing a dialogue with Islam, which could be of great future importance.

The Third Pre-Conciliar Conference has drawn up a long text on “the contribution of the Orthodox Church to the achievement

of peace.”⁵⁶ This text offers a definition of peace which is that of Scripture and of the Fathers. The basis of peace can be none other than unconditional respect for the human person who, being in the image of God, is rooted beyond this world and, in Christ, becomes irreducible. At the same time, the human person is fulfilled in communion, for the Church as ‘mystery’ of the Risen Christ, makes the person a participant of the love of the Trinity. The Trinity would thus appear, in its radiance of unity and diversity, as the guiding image for a humanity which is unifying but does not want to become uniform. Christ’s Gospel is the Gospel of peace (Eph. 6:15). Christ has become “our peace” (Eph. 2:14). The peace “which passes all understanding” (Phil. 4:7), as Christ Himself said to his Apostles at the Holy Supper — peace which is broader and more essential than the peace which the world promises. On this point, the Conference quotes the text of Clement of Alexandria on the “peaceable race” to which we have already made reference. Peace is inseparable from justice, which is the social aspect of communion; and from freedom, where the mystery of the image of God is inscribed. The Conference, therefore, makes a vehement appeal, on the one hand, for respect for persons and for minorities and, on the other, for justice on the planetary scale.

However, it is only in the Church (and this is why the Church must be the Church) that evil, the root of all discord, can be healed radically by the Life-giving Cross, whose sanctity alone can radiate the strength to do so. Here we discover again the meaning of a peace-making priesthood of all the faithful as in the pre-Constantinian Church. The Church constitutes a force for peace quite different from that of international organizations or States. This ‘force for peace’ is infectious, it is ‘caught’ and spreads through the communion of Eucharistic communities, through prayer, service, and the active love of people who become capable, as St. Paul requires, of “making Eucharist in all things” (1 Thess. 5:8).

⁵⁶ See Case Study 2.

In this way, a creative spirituality is defined which involves all Christians — people of the Resurrection — in the struggle against death as it ravages society and culture in all its dimensions. As regards war in particular, the text reads:

Orthodoxy condemns war in general, which it considers a consequence of evil and sin in the world; by condescension it has permitted wars that were waged for the reestablishment of oppressed justice and freedom.

Today, however, the risk of the self-destruction of mankind and of the annihilation of all life on earth through a nuclear war can no longer be a matter of a lesser evil. At this point, politics becomes 'metapolitical' and addresses the problem of the meaning of existence itself. The text then condemns armaments of all kinds, especially nuclear and space weapons "wherever they come from." (It is not a question of unilateral disarmament as in pacifist movements.)

The consequences of an eventual nuclear war would be terrifying indeed, not only for causing the death of innumerable scores of human beings but for making the lives of the survivors unbearable as well. Even if life were to continue on earth, irremediable diseases would appear and genetic mutations engendered with disastrous effects for future generations. In the opinion of expert scientists, another horrifying effect of nuclear war would be the so-called nuclear winter: the climate of our earth would be upset to a degree that all life would disappear. As a consequence, nuclear warfare is unacceptable from all points of view, natural as well as ethical. It is a crime against humanity and a mortal sin before God, for it destroys His work.

Confronted by this threat, by the no-less-suicidal progressive destruction of the environment and by famine in so many regions of the Third World, while "the economically developed countries live in a regime of opulence and waste, committing themselves to a sterile policy of armaments," only a spiritual leap can open the paths of the future. The Conference summons Christians to adopt a new lifestyle

based on voluntary limitation, sharing, and sympathetic respect for Nature. The Conference text concludes:

By the very fact of having access to the meaning of salvation, we Orthodox Christians have the obligation to struggle for the relief of illnesses, grief and fear. Since we have experienced peace, we cannot remain indifferent in the face its absence from today's society. Since we have benefited from God's justice, we struggle for greater justice in the world and for the eradication of all forms of oppression ... Since, having been nourished by the Body and Blood of the Lord in the Holy Eucharist, we experience the need to share God's gifts with our neighbors, we have a better understanding of famine and deprivation and struggle for their abolishment. Since we await a new heaven and a new earth where absolute justice will reign, we struggle here and now for the rebirth and renewal of man and society.

FOLLOWING CHRIST IN A VIOLENT WORLD

Jim Forest

Jim Forest is secretary of the Orthodox Peace Fellowship. This paper was presented to the Orthodox Student Association of Finland in 2003.

Our Orthodox Christian belief is that Jesus was not simply a great rabbi whose brilliant teaching and short but praiseworthy life inspired a legend of resurrection and the creation of a new religion. We know Him as the Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, who became incarnate for our sake, entered history purposefully, rose from the dead and is constantly giving himself for the life of the world.

Consider the circumstances of His birth as a human being. Do we think it was an accident that He was born as the son of Mary in a certain Jewish village two thousand years ago? Not at all. He was born at a chosen moment in a chosen place.

What sort of place and moment? Not the star-lit dream Bethlehem of the modern Christmas card, but a humiliated, over-taxed land kept within the Roman Empire by brutal, bitterly-resented occupation troops — in many ways very like the Bethlehem we have today. Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior, was born, lived, crucified and resurrected in a land of extreme enmity — a land in many respects resembling countries that were suffering German occupation 60 years ago.

He whom we try to follow was not born in ideal times nor did he possess the traits of the usual sort of hero. Think of the primary characteristics of Christ's life recorded by the Gospel authors. He told stories in which the major themes are forgiveness and mercy. We healed many people who were chronically ill or were possessed by demons. On several occasions, he raised the dead. He also raised a voice of protest, condemning those who pile burdens on others they do would never carry themselves. Using a whip, He chased money changers from the Temple. He was not socially indifferent. He was

not simply doing good deeds while keeping silent about a corrupt and violent social order. It was not for His healing miracles or for the parables He told that the religious and political authorities of those times ordered His execution.

Yet, we must also reckon with the fact that, despite His opposition to oppression, He never became part of the Zealot movement of violent opposition to the Roman presence nor did He bless anyone to join such nationalist groups which were using violent methods to seek recovery of national independence.

We notice that Jesus neither assisted the Romans nor threatened their lives. We see in Him following a third way, a way which is neither violent nor passive but centers on conversion, for it is only through conversion that we can live in what He calls “the kingdom of God.”

One of the most remarkable things about the Jesus we meet in the Gospels is that He treats no one as an enemy. Consider His encounter with the Roman centurion who came seeking His help — an officer who was part of the occupation army. Jesus not only responded positively to the appeal for help made to Him but openly admired the centurion’s faith, describing it as being greater than those of His own countrymen. You can imagine how some of those who heard Jesus’s express respect for an enemy’s faith must have spat on the ground and muttered to themselves, “Traitor! These Romans are filth.” But we can also wonder whether, following his encounter with Jesus, if the centurion’s life afterward did not take a turn. It seems more than likely that he was one of the first Romans to place himself under the rule of Christ rather the Caesar.

Not once in the Gospels do we find a deadly weapon in Christ’s hand. His most violent action was to use a whip of chords to chase money changers out of the Temple because their activities were profaning a place of worship. It was a fierce action but one that endangered no one’s life but His own. We can imagine that it was after this event that those religious leaders who profited from the trade inside the Temple decided that this troublemaker from Galilee, the so-called Messiah, must die.

Again and again we see Christ healing people. Think about the last miracle before His crucifixion, the most surprising healing miracle recorded in the Gospel, even more surprising than bringing Lazarus back to life after four days in the tomb. Jesus healed the wound of one of the men who came to arrest Him in the garden of Gethsemane. It was an injury caused by the Apostle Peter who was only trying to defend his Lord. Consider what Jesus said to Peter at that frightful moment: "Put away your sword, for whoever lives by the sword will perish by the sword."

"Put away your sword!" These words of Jesus were taken to heart in the early Church. In the early centuries of the Church, we find many indications of Christians refusing to shed the blood of others, including converted soldiers involved in war. Even after the age of Constantine, the Church imposed severe penalties on those who killed even if they did so in war.

In a criticism of Christians written in 173 AD by the pagan scholar Celsus, Christians were sharply condemned for their refusal to serve in the army. "If all men were to do as you [Christians] do," wrote Celsus, "there would be nothing to prevent the Emperor from being left in utter solitude, and with the desertion of his forces, the Empire would fall into the hands of the most lawless barbarians."

One of the responses to this criticism that comes down to us was written by the North African Christian apologist, Origen: "Christians have been taught not to defend themselves against their enemies and because they have kept the laws that command gentleness and love of man, they have received from God that which they would not have achieved if they were permitted to make war, though they might have been quite able to do so." The Christian refusal of military service, he went on, did not indicate indifference to social responsibility, but response at the level of spiritual combat: "The more devout the individual, the more effective he is in helping the Emperor, more so than the soldiers who go into the lines and kill all the enemy troops they can ... The greatest warfare, in other words, is not with human enemies but with those spiritual forces which make men into enemies."

In the same century, St. Justin the Hieromartyr wrote along similar lines: "We who were filled with war and mutual slaughter and every wickedness have each of us in all the world changed our weapons of war . . . swords into plows and spears into pruning hooks." Elsewhere he writes, "We who formerly murdered one another now not only do not make war upon our enemies but, that we may not lie or deceive our judges, we gladly die confessing Christ."

Late in the second century, we find another North African, Clement of Alexandria, calling on those not yet brought to the Christ's Church to enlist "in an army without weapons, without war, without bloodshed, without wrath, without stain — pious old men, orphans dear to God, widows armed with gentleness, men adorned with love. Obtain with your wealth as guardians of body and soul such as these whose commander is God." "If you enroll as one of God's people, heaven is your country and God your lawgiver. And what are His laws? You shall not kill, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. To him that strikes you on the one cheek, turn to him the other also."

At the heart of these and similar writings from the early Church is the conviction that we are, through baptism, people under the rule of God, obeying the rulers of this world only insofar as their regulations are not in conflict with God's law. As St. Euphemia, a martyr of the early fourth century, declared, "The Emperor's commands and [those of anyone in authority] must be obeyed if they are not contrary to the God of heaven. If they are, they must not only not be obeyed; they must be resisted."

In the Church in Asia Minor in the early fourth century, it was declared, "Let a catechumen . . . if he desire to be a soldier, either cease from his intention, or if not, let him be rejected. For he has despised God by his thought and, leaving the things of the Spirit, he has perfected himself in the flesh, and has treated the faith with contempt." One finds similar declarations in other parts of the Church throughout the Empire in the pre-Constantinian era.

Yet, we know that the Church was seeking converts throughout society, including in the army. There was no profession, high or low,

respected or detested, which were seen as excluded from the Gospel message. Soldiers, prostitutes, tax collectors, criminals — these and every sort of people were seen as potential converts.

Beginning at the end of the second century, we find burial stones indicating soldiers who had been baptized. The oldest known Christian grave marking indicating the deceased had been in the army dates from 197. Keep in mind that the army was not something you served in for a few years and left — you were a soldier from youth until retirement due to old age or infirmity. Many were born into the military — if you were a healthy male and your father was a soldier, so were you. Nor was there provision for special discharge because you had been converted to a religion opposed to killing.

What about those who came to baptism faith while in the army? They were told they must never take anyone's life. "Anyone who has received the power to kill ... in no case let them kill, even if they have received the order to kill," stated the Canons of Hippolytus of the Church in Egypt in the mid-fourth century. This is similar to St. John the Baptist's instructions to soldiers, "Do violence to no one, accuse no one falsely, and be content with your pay."

Anyone guilty of actually killing another person was subject to grave penances and prolonged exclusion from the Eucharist. The Canons of Hippolytus stated, "If anyone has shed blood, let him not take part in the [eucharistic] mysteries, unless he has been purified by penance, by tears and groans." To this day, we have canons survive dating from the Ecumenical Councils which require that priests and iconographers be persons who have never shed human blood.

Records survive of Christians being martyred for their refusal to accept military service in a period when other Christians were willing to accept conscription. For example, in 295, a young Christian, St. Maximilian, was brought before the Roman Proconsul, Dion, in North Africa. His testimony is recorded in the ancient *Acts of the Saints*.

"I will not be a soldier of this world," Maximilian said, "for I am a soldier of Christ." "But there are Christians serving in the army," the Proconsul replied. "That is their business," said Maximilian. "I too am

a Christian, and cannot serve.” Condemned to death, he proclaimed, “God lives!”

A generation later, in 336, we find St. Martin of Tours, an army officer who later became a missionary bishop, applying for discharge. “I am a soldier of Christ,” he declared. “It is not lawful for me to fight.” As his request was made on the eve of a battle, Martin was accused of cowardice. He responded by volunteering to face the enemy and to advance unarmed against their ranks. Julius Caesar instead ordered Martin imprisoned, but soon after, St. Martin was permitted to resign from the army.

Late in the fourth century, St. John Chrysostom compared the violent with wolves: “It is certainly a finer and more wonderful thing to change the mind of enemies and bring them to another way of thinking than to kill them, especially when we recall that [the disciples] were only twelve and the whole world was full of wolves . . . We ought then to be ashamed of ourselves, we who act so very differently and rush like wolves upon our foes. So long as we are sheep, we have the victory; but if we are like wolves, we are beaten, for then the help of the shepherd is withdrawn from us, for he feeds sheep not wolves . . . This mystery [of the Eucharist] requires that we should be innocent not only of violence but of all enmity, however slight, for it is the mystery of peace.”

How strange all these texts seem even to us in the Orthodox Church. We are famous for our careful preservation of the ancient Liturgy and for maintaining many other traditions of the early Church. We are rightly scandalized and saddened when we notice new distortions of the faith in other sections of Christianity. Yet, there is much from the Church’s first centuries that we have forgotten as completely as everyone else.

When did the change begin? Perhaps, the crucial years was 313, when the Emperor Constantine ended the persecution against the Church by issuing the Edict of Milan. No longer the object of suppressive actions by the state, Christianity soon became the most favored religion of the Empire — in a matter of a few generations, the

only legal religion. Those who wanted to advance in the world had first to accept the emperor's religion and quickly lined up for baptism — though it is striking to notice that Constantine delayed his own baptism until he lay on his deathbed.

The relationship between the Church and state was drastically changed. Before Constantine, Christians had, in effect, been either barred from the army or permitted to serve in areas where their work was what today is done by police and firemen. Within a century of Constantine's death, all *non*-Christians were excluded from the army. As St. Jerome wrote from his cave in Bethlehem late in the fourth century, "When the Church came to the princes of the world, she grew in power and wealth but diminished in virtue."

Within the Orthodox Church for the past fifteen centuries, only monks, priests and iconographers are seen as having a vocation, which, of its nature, bars them from bloodshed. They are required to live by a standard that had once been normal for all followers of Christ.

Late in the fourth century, the foundations of the 'Just War Theory,' as it is called in the Western Church, were laid by St. Ambrose of Milan and Blessed Augustine of Hippo. While both maintained the traditional view that the individual Christian was barred from deadly violence in self defense, they proposed that armed defense of one's community was a different matter. Yet, even for the soldier, they maintained that Christ's command to love one's enemies remained in full force.

In the course of centuries, the just war theory gradually evolved, obtaining the main elements in its development by the thirteenth century. According to this doctrine, a war could be considered just only if declared as a last resort by the state, fought for a just cause, with the burden of guilt clearly on one side, undertaken with a just intention, employing just means, and respecting the lives of the innocent and of noncombatants.

Has the just war doctrine had any influence on the actual conduct of war or prevented certain wars that might have been? We can fairly say that whatever influence it may have had was long ago. What is most striking about modern war is how completely all restraints

are ignored. In the past 150 years, there has been an ever-growing percentage of noncombatant victims in war. Today, the person most likely to survive a war is the soldier while the typical casualty is a non-combatant. Modern war relies on methods which inevitably result in massive numbers of noncombatant deaths. We now have the hellish term ‘collateral damage’ in our working vocabulary — newspeak for killing innocent people.

Development of the just war doctrine occurred chiefly in the west, gradually becoming a well-established doctrine if one without the authority of dogmatic teaching. While we can early find examples of Orthodox hierarchs fervently supporting war, it is noteworthy that in the Orthodox Church, the just theory never acquired dogmatic status. In researching patristic sources, Byzantine military manuals, and a wide range of Orthodox declarations about war, the respected Orthodox theologian Father Stanley Harakas was startled to discover “an amazing consistency in the almost totally negative moral assessment of war coupled with an admission that war may be necessary under certain circumstances to protect the innocent and to limit even greater evils. In this framework, war may be an unavoidable alternative, but it nevertheless remains an evil. Virtually absent in the [Orthodox] tradition is any mention of a ‘just’ war, much less a ‘good’ war. The tradition also precludes the possibility of a crusade. For the Eastern Orthodox tradition... war can be seen only as a ‘necessary evil,’ with all the difficulty and imprecision such a designation carries.” Nonetheless, he continues, “The pacifist emphasis is retained in liturgy and in clerical standards.”

We find what Father Harakas describes as a gradual “stratification of pacifism” in the Church. “Clergy were to function as pacifists, uninvolved in any military activity, even prohibited from entering military camps.”

Despite the gradual acceptance of military service that followed Constantine’s act of peace with the Church, Christianity and war have never been happily joined. If the great majority of Christians came to regard war in some situations as the lesser of two evils, and

military service an honorable calling, there has never been a period in Christian history without its nonviolent teachers and witnesses, nor a time without those who taught Christianity as a way of love rather than violence and coercion.

Reflecting on the word and example of Christ, we can identify seven aspects of spiritual life that are essential aspects of Christian peacemaking: love of enemies; prayer for enemies; doing good to enemies; turning the other cheek; offering forgiveness; breaking down walls of division; and resisting evil in ways which may lead one's enemies toward conversion.

Love of Enemies: As used in the Bible, the word 'love' has first of all to do with action and responsibility. The stress is not at all upon sentiment. It does not refer to how you *feel*. To love is to *do* what you can to provide for the spiritual and physical well-being of another, whether you like that person or not, whether you feel like it or not. What God *does* is love. In explaining His Father's love, Christ talks about what God gives. He offers the metaphor of rain falling on both the just and the unjust.

An act of love may be animated by a sense of delight in someone else or, more significantly, it may be done despite anger, exhaustion, depression or fear, done simply as a response to God, our common Creator, "who makes the sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust."

Paul taught that the greatest gifts of God were faith, hope and love, and, of these, the greatest is love. Genuine love, he wrote, is patient and kind, without jealousy or boasting, without arrogance or rudeness; it does not demand its own way, does not rejoice at wrong but rather in the right, and endures everything. These are the essential qualities of any peacemaker.

Prayer for Enemies: Inseparable from love of others is prayer for them. "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

Prayer is the primary form of connection — an invisible reaching out, first toward our Creator, but also toward other people, whether loved or feared, through God. The moment I pray for another human being, I am connected to that person. He may be unaware of it, but a relationship is established in prayer.

Without prayer for enemies, how can we possibly love them? In fact the only love we can offer anyone, friend or enemy, is God's own love. Prayer can give us access to God's love for those we would otherwise regard with disinterest, irritation, fear, contempt or active hostility.

We are given a witness to the power of prayer in the life of Saint Silouan of the Holy Mountain. He was a Russian peasant born in 1866 who fell asleep in the Lord in 1938 after many years of monastic life on Mount Athos. He devoted all his adult life to prayer. Earlier in his life, he had an intimate experience of his own violence, nearly killing a neighbor in his own village. In his many years of spiritual combat as a monk, Saint Silouan learned that the love of enemies is not simply an aspect of Christian life but is "the central criterion of true faith and of real communion with God, the lover of souls, the lover of humankind ... Through Christ's love, everyone is made an inseparable part of our own, eternal existence ... for the Son of Man has taken within Himself all mankind."

Doing Good to Enemies: Jesus calls us not only to prayer but to action: "Do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you." Prayer is not an alternative to action; in fact, prayer may empower us to take personal responsibility for what we wish others would do. In his Letter to the Romans, St. Paul says, "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them ... Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay,' says the Lord." No, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by doing so you will reap burning coals upon his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

This is what the Samaritan was doing to the Jew he found dying on the side of the road in Jesus' parable of the compassionate enemy. In offering help to an enemy in his distress, he transformed the wounded Jew's idea of Samaritans. He could never again think of Samaritans simply as enemies. If we were to tell the story in modern terms, it could be a Turk assisting an injured Greek or a Christian helping a Muslim.

Turning the Other Cheek: Jesus says to His followers, "If someone strikes you on the cheek, offer him the other also." How different this is from the advice provided in the average Hollywood film or politician's speech! There the constant message is: "If you are hit, hit back. Let your blow be harder than the one you received. In fact, you needn't be hit at all in order to strike others." Provocation, irritation, or the expectation of attack is warrant enough.

Turning the other cheek is often seen as a suspect doctrine, even dismissed as masochism. We hear it as Jesus at His most unrealistic: "Human beings, but especially my enemies, just aren't made that way." For a great many people, the problem can be put even more simply: "Turning the other cheek isn't manly."

The conversion of the ancient world had much to do with Christians turning the other cheek in many acts of courageous witness that can never be forgotten. In the 20th century, such witness was offered again by countless believers persecuted in the Soviet time.

Forgiveness: Every time we say the Lord's Prayer, we ask God to forgive us only insofar as we ourselves have extended forgiveness to others: "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." Christ also says, "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own?" On another occasion, Peter asks Jesus how often he must extend forgiveness. "As many as seven times?" Jesus responds, "I do not say to you

seven times, but seventy times seven." It is such teaching that inspires the verses we sing every Easter: "Let us call brothers even those who hate us and forgive all by the Resurrection."

The Desert Father Abbot Moses was once asked to take part in a meeting in which the community was planning to condemn a certain negligent brother. Abbot Moses arrived carrying a basket from which sand was pouring out through many openings. "Why are you doing that?" he was asked. "You ask me to judge a brother while my own sins spill out behind me like the sand from this basket." The embarrassed community was moved to forgive their lax brother.

Nothing is more fundamental to Jesus' teaching than His call to forgiveness: giving up debts, letting go of grievances, pardoning those who have harmed us. We are called to forgive. We need to seek forgiveness, offer forgiveness, and accept forgiveness. We are followers of Jesus who taught us forgiveness even when His hands were nailed to the wood of the cross: "Father, forgive them. They know not what they do."

Breaking Down Walls: In Christ, enmity is destroyed. As St. Paul wrote to the Church in Ephesia, "For He is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of enmity ... that He might create in Himself one new person in place of two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing enmity to an end." Jesus gives the example Himself many times, for example in His encounters with the Roman Centurion and the Samaritan women at the well.

We live in a world of many walls of separation: racism, nationalism, all sorts of tribalism. Nothing is more ordinary than enmity. Far from living in communion with others, we tend to flee from communion. Metropolitan John of Pergamon comments: "Communion with the other is not spontaneous; it is built upon fences which protect us from the dangers implicit in the other's presence. We accept the other only insofar as he does not threaten our privacy or insofar as he is useful to our individual happiness ... The essence of sin is the fear of the Other, which is part of the rejection of God."

Resisting Evil while Seeking Conversion: We are obliged to oppose evil and, as we are both flesh and spirit, we must use both flesh and spirit in our acts of resistance. But in what way ought we to resist? Certain kinds of resistance are clearly rejected in the Gospel: “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, do not resist the one who is evil.”

Responding to evil with its own weapons, though it can seem an obvious good, easily results in a life centered on evil. Very often people who live in fear of violent men *become* violent men. They take up the same weapons and even adopt characteristics and hated practices of the adversary. When the Nazi forces bombed cities, there was immense revulsion in Britain and the United States, but in the end, the greatest acts of city destruction were perpetrated by Britain and the United States.

But then what are we to do? Are Christians supposed to do nothing more than pray in the face of injustice and oppression? Are there not warriors as well as pacifists among the saints?

We see in the example of many saints that our choice is not limited to passivity on the one hand and bloodshed on the other. There is the alternative of unarmed resistance. This is a form of combat that begins with the refusal to collaborate with injustice but which actively assists the victims of oppression, which protests evil, and finally which prays and works for the conversion of adversaries. Among the saints of this century, Mother Maria of Paris is an example of these qualities. The houses of hospitality she founded in France became, in the time of Nazi-occupation, centers for rescuing Jews and others whose lives were in danger. She herself finally was sent to a Nazi concentration camp, dying on Good Friday, 1945. We see in her that nonviolent, spiritually-rooted struggle is not without risk and great suffering. It can easily cost us our lives, just as happens in armed struggle. But we prefer to put our own lives at risk rather than the lives of others. Only we must not be cowards.

This approach to conflict begins with a conscious aspiration to find solutions rooted in respect for life, including the lives of our enemies, and our hope that they too may be saved. We cannot be sure

we will always discover a nonviolent solution, but what we fail to seek we certainly will fail to find. As is expressed in the membership statement the Orthodox Peace Fellowship: "While no one can be certain that he or she will always find a nonviolent response to every crisis that may arise, we pray that God will show us in each situation ways of resistance to evil that will not require killing opponents."

This a way of life that many men and women witnessed in the great Russian saint, Seraphim of Sarov, who lived in peace with everyone around him and who sometimes fed a wild bear from his own hands.

"Men cannot be too gentle, too kind," he said. "Shun even to appear harsh in your treatment of each other. But remember, no work of kindness or charity can bring down to earth the holy breath, unless it be done in the name of Christ. When it is, joy, radiant joy, streams from the face of him who gives and kindles joy in the heart of him who receives. All condemnation is from the devil. Never condemn each other, not even those whom you catch committing an evil deed. We condemn others only because we shun knowing ourselves. When we gaze at our own failings, we see such a morass of filth that nothing in another can equal it. That is why we turn away, and make much of the faults of others. Keep away from the spilling of speech. Instead of condemning others, strive to reach inner peace. Keep silent, refrain from judgment. This will raise you above the deadly arrows of slander, insult and outrage and will shield your glowing hearts against the evil that creeps around."

Consider the Beatitudes, that short summing up of the Gospel that we find at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. The Beatitudes are only eight. No Christian dares be inattentive to any of them. The seventh is the Beatitude of peacemaking.

In the early Church, the whole world was astonished at how Christians witnessed to the peace of Christ, not only refusing to shed the blood of their enemies but trying in every possible way to save their enemies. May we do all in our power to renew such faithful witness in our time.

How desperately we need such people! We need them not only in places where wars are being fought or might be fought, but we need

them in each household and we need them within the Church and within each parish. Even the best and most vital parishes often suffer from deep divisions. And who is the peacemaker who is needed? It is each of us. Often it is harder to forgive and understand someone in our own parish than an abstract enemy we see mainly in propaganda images on television. Even within our Orthodox Church that we do not simply disagree with each other of many topics but often we despise those who hold opposing views. In the name of Christ, who commanded us to love one another, we engage in a war of words in which, far from loving our opponent we do not even respect him. But without mercy and forgiveness, without love, I am no longer in communion either with my neighbor or with Christ.

At the deepest level, the peacemaker is a person being used by God to help heal our relationship with God — for we get no closer to God than we get to our neighbor, that is any person regarded as ‘different’ and a ‘threat.’ St. Silouan of the Holy Mountain taught that love of enemies is not simply an aspect of Christian life but is “the central criterion of true faith and of real communion with God, the lover of souls, the lover of humankind.”

Let us recall those challenging words of Mother Maria Skobtsova of Paris, a martyr who died in 1945 in a German concentration camp:

The bodies of fellow human beings must be treated with greater care than our own. Christian love teaches us to give our brethren not only spiritual gifts, but material gifts as well. Even our last shirt, our last piece of bread must be given to them. Personal almsgiving and the most wide-ranging social work are equally justifiable and necessary. The way to God lies through love of other people and there is no other way. At the Last Judgment, I shall not be asked if I was successful in my ascetic exercises or how many prostrations I made in the course of my prayers. I shall be asked, did I feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and the prisoners: that is all I shall be asked.

THE TEACHING ON PEACE IN THE FATHERS

Fr. Stanley S. Harakas

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Introduction

It has been customary, when approaching the social teachings of the Fathers of the Church, to speak of the patristic teaching on the topic of war rather than to speak of the Church Father's teaching on peace. Nevertheless, it is certainly more within the spirit of the tenth topic of the forthcoming Great and Holy Council, as presently formulated, to speak of peace, rather than war, even though the two topics are far from being unrelated.

In 1978, I published a small, popular study on the topics of the forthcoming Great and Holy Council to which I would like to refer briefly in these introductory remarks.⁵⁷ This study referred to an agenda item on the list of topics for the forthcoming pan-Orthodox Council: item ten was "the contribution of the local Orthodox Churches to the adoption of the Christian ideals of peace, freedom, brotherhood and love among the peoples of the world and the elimination of racial prejudice."

The inclusion of this topic in the list of agenda topics was heartening to me because it reflected a need of the Orthodox Church to address the problems of our age from the perspective of the Orthodox Christian truth, a truth which is not merely a sectarian affirmation, but which the Church teaches is, in fact, the actual description of the human condition and the response of God to it.

⁵⁷ Stanley S. Harakas, *Something is Stirring in World Orthodoxy*, Minneapolis, 1978.

Until now, it has been a bit disheartening, however, to note that only two of the Orthodox Churches, Greece and Czechoslovakia, offered to address the topic. To my knowledge, only Czechoslovakia's Orthodox Church has responded to it with a significant and substantial document. In a sense, this is quite sorrowful, for the potential of an Orthodox contribution is significant in this area. Nevertheless, individual studies have been made and conferences have been organized over the past few years on some of these topics, notably on the topic of 'Peace', with the Orthodox Churches in socialist countries taking the lead on this topic.

In some of my comments on the tenth topic after the publication of my little work on the forthcoming Great and Holy Council, I have tried to show the wisdom and balance with which it was formulated, especially as it appealed to the social concern interests shown by the First, Second and Third Worlds. Though all nations in the world have a vested interest in the maintenance of peace and the avoidance of the nuclear holocaust, it is in large part resolvable only by the major First World powers. Anyone who has travelled knows that the Peace topic has become a favorite popular cause in the socialist nations, who accuse the Western democracies of promoting war, a charge denied and reciprocated by the West.

The favorite popular cause in the capitalist countries, in contrast, is the issue of personal freedom. The West charges the Eastern bloc nations with a suppression of freedom, a charge vehemently denied by the socialist nations. Second and Third World nations find themselves particularly resonant with the issues raised in the tenth topic of the forthcoming Great and Holy Council under the rubrics of brotherhood and the struggle against racism, charging both of the blocs with insensitivity to the need for a more corporate world concern for the requirements of the less powerful nations and peoples of the world, and with intemperate and degrading racism.

The topic, therefore, in my judgment is well formulated, and it is particularly welcome at this time that the Patriarchal Centre at Chambésy should choose to focus on one of its chief elements,

‘Peace.’ The topic calls for the “adoption of the Christian ideal of peace ...” And so it is appropriate to concern ourselves with its clarification and study.

In my brief discussion of the topic of ‘peace’ in the above mentioned book, I wrote the following words of caution:

There are very few Orthodox writers and thinkers who have dealt deeply and thoughtfully with these issues. Still fewer, if any, have provided the theoretical underpinnings for a consistent and authentic Orthodox Christian Social Ethic. Because of this, there is the danger that our social concern will become subject to mere sloganeering and, worse yet, become the tool of alien forces. For example, Peace as an ideal for the Christian Church is almost self-evident. Yet, there is no such thing as a coherent body of Orthodox peace studies. Few, if any, Orthodox theologians have concerned themselves with the problems of pacifism, disarmament, nuclear war, just war theory, peace movements, etc. There is a danger on this issue that we will allow ourselves simply to be used as a propaganda outlet.⁵⁸

It is for this reason that the sustained study of the topic of peace in this seminar is most welcome, and I am sure will supply the Orthodox world with some worthwhile resources for the development of the tenth topic of the forthcoming Great and Holy Council. Without question, a development of an uniquely Orthodox Christian approach to the issue of peace in our day cannot take place without some study of the Patristic teachings on peace, and the related issue of the Christian approach to war. In this paper, unfortunately, only the surface can be dealt with; neither can this presentation be one of the “in depth studies” which I called for in the quotation above, because of the breadth of the topic. We are, however, fortunately assisted in our work by a number of new writings on the topic.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁵⁹ In English, three volumes are of particular interest: Louis J. Swift, *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service*, Vol. 19; 1983 and Peter C. Phan, *Social Thought*, Vol.

In this paper, I propose to survey the subject by treating the topic in three parts. In the first, I will survey and illustrate the stance of the Fathers of the Church on the ideal of peace, as a normative and determinative patristic stance. Part two will seek to apply the peace bias of the Fathers to its military dimensions. In the third part, the paper will delineate Eastern and Western Church approaches to the peace ideal in the post-Constantinian period. I would remind you that the treatments of these topics cannot be exhaustive, and can only, at this stage, be suggestive and illustrative.

The Pro-Peace Patristic Stance

The Background: The concern for peace as a desired spiritual, moral, social and political good did not begin with the New Testament and the Fathers of the Church. Both the cultural environment of the Roman Empire and its Greek philosophical tradition, on the one hand, and the Old Testament and Jewish roots of the Christian tradition, on the other, provided significant antecedents for the Fathers of the Church regarding their views on peace.⁶⁰

Among the ancient Greeks, the fundamental characteristic of the use of the term *eirene* was to denote the state or condition of non-war, the interlude, so to speak, between stages of almost continuous war. The Romans provided, with their term ‘*Pax*,’ an instrumental connotation to the same goal with its understanding as “a reciprocal legal relationship between two parties,” thus used in phrases such as a “treaty of peace,” “the conclusion of peace,” and the “conditions of peace.”⁶¹ As ‘absence of war,’ peace took on metaphorical meanings as

20, 1984, in the series *Message of the Fathers of the Church*, Wilmington, DE. See also the study, by John Helgeland, Robert J. Daly, and S. Patout Burns, *Christians and the Military: The Early Experience*, Philadelphia, 1985.

⁶⁰ I am here closely following Gerhard von Rad and Werner Foerster, in Gerhard Kittel, ed.: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 11. Tr. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Grand Rapids, 1964, pp. 400–420.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 401.

applied to the individual, essentially signifying the absence of hostile feelings, a sort of Stoic '*Ataraxia*.'

The Old Testament term '*Shalom*' is an extremely rich and variegated word, fertile with multiple levels of meaning. It certainly connotes more than 'peace.' At its root, '*Shalom*' means 'well-being,' with a heavy emphasis on the material side of life. As such, it often refers to bodily health, or to the nation enjoying prosperity. Numerous Old Testament passages use the term — by extension — to indicate a relationship between political entities, as well as among persons, rather than just as a state of being. It follows that the word '*Shalom*' found occasional use to connote the practice of making covenants. By extension, thus, it referred to the inner dispositions of those involved in them. For example, in Isa. 54:10, we read, "My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed."

A few other things need to be noted about '*shalom*.' It was always seen as a gift of Yahweh, and as such connected with the saving and redeeming work of God. Often genuine prophets would condemn false prophets who were inspired by self-interest and not God, as proclaiming "peace, peace, when there was no peace," in truth (Jer. 6:14). The term, however, also carries with it, in the Old Testament, elements of eschatological anticipation. It expresses an expectation of a final condition of unending peace, both on earth and in heaven. And significantly, the Messianic King in Proto-Isaiah carries as one of His titles, the appellation "Prince of Peace," but all of the titles can be subsumed or closely related to the broad term '*Shalom*' (Isa. 9:6). What is notably missing, however, in the Old Testament, is a specifically spiritual connotation to the word, the inner disposition of the soul as spiritual. In fact, '*Shalom*' in the Old Testament is an almost exclusive public and social term.

Regarding the Septuagint, let it suffice to say that the Hebrew word was translated in most cases as *eirene* and that the Septuagint served admirably to convey to the Greco-Roman world the senses of well-being and of salvation characteristic of the Hebrew understanding of the term. The social dimension is strong, as well, however, as

the absence of war. The Septuagint conveys as well the source of peace as being God.

‘*Shalom*,’ widely used in rabbinical literature as a frequent greeting, connotes ‘well-being.’ Seen as a gift of God, it is a summary word for the blessings of the messianic period, with almost exclusive limitation to concord within Israel. What is new, however, in the rabbinical literature is that peace is also strongly applied to individual relations, and not just as among nations. Thus, the Rabbis frequently refer to the making of peace among men. It is the judgment of some scholars that ‘peacemaking’ in the sense of eliminating strife among persons in Judaism takes on the same significance which the love commandment has for the New Testament and subsequent Christianity. Strife and enmity among people is contrary to God’s will. The rabbinical literature also focuses strife and peace on the relationship of humanity with God. Sin creates strife and the proper relationship of God and man restores peace between them.

In the Apocryphal writings, *eirene*, of course, is used with variety. Of interest is that in some writings, such as the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* and the *Ethiopian Enoch*, the opposite of peace is not “strife between God and Israel or humanity,” as is found in the rabbinical literature, but “the judgment of God,” conceived in much more personal terms. Peace is the absence of the judgment of God upon the righteous. Philo, strongly within the Greek philosophical tradition, sees peace as the political state of the absence of war and the inner rest which is the absence of desire, with the inner conflict deemed worse, even, than the outer lack of peace.

In the New Testament, there is a continuation of the rabbinical tradition in terms of greetings. Also, *eirene* as salvation, as peace with God, and as concord among people, are prominent in the New Testament. Further, the New Testament presents peace as the appropriate and fitting normal state of things under God. The opposite of disorder is peace, for, as in 1 Cor. 14:33, “God is not a God of confusion but of peace.” *Eirene* is also a catchword for “the eschatological

salvation of the whole man.”⁶² Thus, the angelic announcement of “peace on earth” is incarnational and salvific peace, neither limited nor primarily focusing on social or political peace. Thus, Jesus Christ gathers together for the New Testament the major senses of peace. He is “the King of Peace” (Heb. 7:2).

In the framework of salvation, sanctification and peace are closely aligned and we are instructed to seek them. “Strive for peace with all men, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord” (*eirenen diokete meta panton, kai ton aghiasmon, ou choris oudeis opsetai ton Kyrion*) (Heb. 12:14). Further, the New Testament closely associates the term *eirene* with the powerful salvific term *zoe* (life), which serves almost as a summary term for the whole consequence of Christ’s saving work, the very opposite of *thanatos* (death). Its positive, personal, social, holistic and eschatological dimensions are expressed powerfully in 1 Thess. 5:23: “May the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Rarely, the New Testament understands *eirene* as “peace with God,” mostly in the sense of salvation and the result of reconciliation (*katallage*), between sinful humanity and God. Not absent, as well, from the New Testament is the sense in which *eirene* is concord, harmony and order among human beings, for the Kingdom is “righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17). But there is also the sense of ‘*eirene*’ as inner peace, much richer than the Greek and Stoic sense of the absence of disturbance (*ataraxia*). Peter speaks of the “inner person of the heart with the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit” (1 Pet. 3:4). The wisdom which comes from above is ‘peaceable,’ according to James 3:17.

By its association with joy, *chara* (Rom. 15:13) and in the context of the salvation meaning of peace, as the normative human condition, peace of soul points to the content of the spiritual and moral life, and its reflection in our relations with others. Thus, in 1 Timothy, the

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 412.

Christian's goal is to "lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way" (*hesychion kai eremon bion*) (2:2). Thus, the disciples are instructed "to keep the peace" (*eireneuete*) among themselves (Mark 9:50), and with all people (Rom. 12:18, 2 Cor. 13:11). Hebrews teaches that the heavenly Father's and the earthly parent's discipline yield "the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (Heb. 12:11). Most significantly, Jesus' Beatitudes call blessed those who are peacemakers, as establishing peace and harmony among people, in imitation, in the likeness of, and parallel to Christ's work of salvation and reconciliation, according to which He makes "peace by the blood of His cross" (Col. 1:19). Thus, the making of peace between God and humanity and among human beings becomes a function of the loving and salvific work of God for us, but also a reflection of the will of God for the relations of human beings among each other. On this basis, the Fathers of the Church build their teachings on peace.

The Patristic Teaching on Peace

The Christian emphasis on love, brotherhood, reconciliation, and peace rooted itself in the moral standards of the Christ-like and Christ-ordered life in the early Church. The Evangelical Ethic⁶³ picks up many of these themes in the focus on peace in the patristic corpus. It must, however, be seen as providing the background for the patristic desire for peace, and also for the sense of its harmony with the spiritual and moral character of Kingdom living. The Sermon on the Mount commandments of non-resistance to evil, the return of good for evil, the spirit of reconciliation and brotherhood underpin for the Fathers the reference to, and the understanding of, peace. In the synoptic account which I am going to present now, I will not focus on the issue of peace as contrasted to war, but on the broader based conceptions as delineated in the background material which

⁶³ Stanley Harakas, *Toward Transfigured Life: The Theoria of Eastern Orthodox Ethics*, Minneapolis, 1983, chapter 7.

we have just surveyed. I will follow this with more careful attention to the issue of peace and war.

For the Fathers of the Church, the source of peace, and its fundamental meaning, come from God as a gift to humanity. Clement of Rome's *First Epistle* serves as a patristic example:

*Let us run on to the goal of peace, which was handed down to us from the beginning. Let us fix our eyes on the Father and Creator of the universe and cling to His magnificent and excellent gifts of peace and kindness to us... Let us consider how free He is from anger toward His whole creation.*⁶⁴

In the same vein, Chrysostom teaches that "the true peace is from God."⁶⁵ Clement of Rome also attributes the source of peace to Christ and associates it with the Holy Spirit. He says, "Content with Christ's rations... you were all granted a profound and rich peace and an insatiable longing to do good, while the Holy Spirit was poured out upon you all."⁶⁶

St. Basil says in his Homily on the Psalms, "He who seeks peace, seeks Christ, for He is the peace..." When commenting on the Lord's farewell gift of peace to His disciples, he adds "I cannot persuade myself that without love to others, and without, as far as rests with me, peaceableness towards all, I can be called a worthy servant of Jesus Christ."⁶⁷ In the *Divine Names* of Dionysios the Areopagite, several paragraphs are committed to the discussion of the name of peace as attributed to God and its embodiment in the person and work of Jesus Christ. There, he writes:

Now, the first thing to say is this: that God is the Fount of True Peace and of all Peace, both in general and in particular, and that

⁶⁴ 19:2, 3.

⁶⁵ Homily I on 1st Corinthians.

⁶⁶ Op. cit., 2,2.

⁶⁷ Letter 203, 2.

*He joins all things together in an unity without confusion ... There is no need to tell how the loving-kindness of Christ comes bathed in Peace, wherefrom we must learn to cease from strife, whether against ourselves or against one another, or against the angels, and instead to labor together even with the angels for the accomplishment of God's Will, in accordance with the Providential Purpose of Jesus Who works all things in all and makes Peace, unutterable and foreordained from Eternity, and reconciles us to Himself, and, in Himself, to the Father.*⁶⁸

As such, since God is the source of all good, peace is taught by Gregory of Nyssa to be an essential good, a necessary concomitant to every other good in which the faithful participate.⁶⁹ Thus, the Letter of Barnabas calls the Christians "children of love and peace,"⁷⁰ and Chrysostom says that the peace from God is the Christian's "nurse and mother," arising from spiritual harmony in the Christian from the "peace which is in accordance with God."⁷¹

One of the major emphases in the patristic corpus which does not appear strongly in the earlier traditions described above is the patristic emphasis upon peace as a personal spiritual phenomenon. Seen from the perspective of the inner spiritual life, with some clear philosophical overtones, is Origen's expectation that the mind and reason of Christians must be formed with God's "free cooperation ... when the soul is quiet and in the enjoyment of that peace which passes all understanding, and when she is turned away from all disturbance and not buffeted by any billows."⁷² Similarly, referring to the "peace which passes all understanding," St. Basil holds that if such a peace "guards our hearts, we will be able to avoid the turbulence ... of the passions."⁷³

⁶⁸ II, 2, 4.

⁶⁹ On the Beatitudes, 7.

⁷⁰ 21, 9.

⁷¹ Against the Jews, 3, 6.

⁷² Commentary on John, 6, 1.

⁷³ Homily on Psalm 29.

Thus, for Basil, spiritual peace is “the most perfect of blessings,” which he defines as a “kind of stability of the rational ability (*hegemonikon*).”⁷⁴ The ascetic side of Basil is highlighted, nevertheless, when he emphasizes the view that “true inner peace comes from above . . . and that one should ‘seek peace,’ which is the separation from the turbulences of this world . . . so as to obtain the peace of God.”⁷⁵

That this inner peace should express itself in outward behavior and external relationships, as a function of the proper relationship with God, and the control of the passions, as well as love and forgiveness, is the next emphasis of the patristic tradition on peace. Thus, the following progression in Theodore of Mopsuestia’s commentary on Romans serves to illustrate the point: “Peace is release from invisible enemies, from whom Christ frees us, and for the body not to rebel against the thoughts of the soul’s dispositions, and the pious harmony (*eusebes symphonia*) with others.”⁷⁶

Thus, the patristic understanding of *eirene* has a decided social and moral application as well. Clement of Alexandria identifies *eirene* and *dikaiosyne* in the *Stromateis*.⁷⁷ He denotes the Christians as the “peaceable generation” (*eirenikon genos*)⁷⁸ and identifies the moral role of the believer in establishing peace: “Man is a pacific instrument . . . the one instrument of peace, the Word alone by which we honor God is what we employ.”⁷⁹ Therefore, for Clement, Christ uses the Christians as His soldiers of peace:

This is the proclamation of righteousness: to those that obey, glad tidings; to those that disobey, judgment. The loud trumpet, when sounded, collects the soldiers, and proclaims war. And shall not Christ, breathing a strain of peace to the ends of the earth, gather

⁷⁴ Homily on Psalm 28.

⁷⁵ Homily on Psalm 33.

⁷⁶ 1:7.

⁷⁷ 4, 25.

⁷⁸ Instructor, 2, 2.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 2, 4.

*together His own soldiers, the soldiers of peace? Well, by His blood and by the word, He has gathered the bloodless host of peace, and assigned to them the kingdom of heaven.*⁸⁰

As His soldiers, the Christians fight evil for the sake of bringing about a moral and spiritual peace. Thus, writing in his 114th letter, *To Cyriacus, at Tarsus*, enjoining steps for the reunion of divided Christians, St. Basil opines that “nothing is so characteristically Christian as being a peacemaker, and for this reason our Lord has promised us peacemakers a very high reward.” And before him, the *Didache* admonished, “You must not start a schism, but reconcile those at strife” (*eireneuseis de machomenous*).⁸¹

The striving for peace among men, of course, is not unconnected with the other virtues, such as justice and righteousness, but in particular, as we have noted above, it is intimately related with the chief of the Christian virtues, love. Chrysostom thus teaches, “if there be peace, there will also be love; if love, there will be peace, also.”⁸²

When this range of patristic thought is coupled with the teachings of the Gospels on non-retribution, the avoidance of violence, the returning of good for evil, it forms a holistic view which sees peace, peacemaking, and the harmony of peoples among themselves as a normative good which Christians must seek to realize with God’s help. This is the background for seeking to understand the patristic stance toward civil peace, and peace among nations.

Peace and War in the Early Church

The teaching of the Fathers of the pre- and post-Constantinian Church on War in general, on Christian participation in the military, and on whether the early Church was pacifist or not, has a huge bibliography. Important studies have exhaustively grappled with these is-

⁸⁰ Exhortation to the Heathens, II.

⁸¹ 4, 3.

⁸² Homilies on Ephesians 24, v.23.

sues. Certainly, we cannot, nor is there need, to reproduce here what has been fully and adequately described in great detail elsewhere.⁸³

The Pacifist Strand

Let it suffice to document briefly what we can properly call a pro-peace stance of the Fathers of the Church. A few examples are all that is needed for this purpose. Around the end of the first century, in the 1st letter of Clement, there are petitions to God for the civil rulers of the Roman Empire. We read: "It is You, Heavenly Master, Ruler of the Ages, who give to the sons of men glory, honor and power over earthly things. Guide their decisions Yourself, O Lord, according to what is good and acceptable in Your eyes, so that by dutifully wielding in peace and gentleness the authority You gave them, they may gain Your favor."⁸⁴ Obviously, based on the New Testament injunctions regarding the Christian attitude toward the civil rulers in Romans and the pastoral epistles, such prayers focusing on the role of civil rulers in the maintenance of peace are fairly common in the second century. Justin Martyr perceives the messianic period prophesied by Isaiah when the peoples will beat their swords into ploughs and their spears into pruning hooks, as having arrived with the Christians, for the Christians, he says, "who formerly killed one another ... refuse to make war on [their] enemies."⁸⁵ In his treatise *On the Crown*, Tertullian makes a sustained argument against the idea of Christians serving in the military of the pagan empire. Arguing both from the

⁸³ A few representative titles in English are: Cecil J. Cadoux, *The Early Christian Attitude to War*, Oxford, 1919; *The Early Church and the World. A History of the Christian Attitude to Pagan Society and the State down to the Time of Constantinius*, Edinburgh, 1925; C. E. Caspary, *Politics and Exegesis: Origen and the Two Swords*, Berkeley, 1979; H. A. Deane, *The Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine*, New York, 1963; A. von Harnack, *Militia Christi: The Christian Religion and the Military in the First Three Centuries*, Philadelphia, 1980; G. Zampaglione, *The Idea of Peace in Antiquity*, Notre Dame, 1973.

⁸⁴ 28 61, 1–2.

⁸⁵ First Apology, 39:3.

idolatry connected with that service and the taking of life, he holds that “the sons of peace” cannot be soldiers: “Will a son of peace who should not even go to court take part in a battle? Will a man who does not avenge wrongs done to himself have any part in chains, prisons, tortures and punishments?” Tertullian asks rhetorically.⁸⁶

In a third century document attributed to Hippolytus of Rome, there is the expectation that lower rank soldiers may not obey orders to kill anyone, and if they do, that they are to be expelled from the Church.⁸⁷

In his writing *To Donatus*, St. Cyprian of Carthage decries war:

*Everywhere wars have broken out with the ghastly bloodletting of the camp. The world is drenched with mutual bloodshed. When individuals slay a man, it is a crime. When killing takes place on behalf of the state it is called a virtue. Crimes go unpunished not because the perpetrators are said to be guiltless but because their cruelty is so extensive.*⁸⁸

In this same spirit, Origen maintains the total impropriety of Christians going to war themselves, but he does commend the rightness of the Roman emperor in waging war “in a just cause.” Nevertheless, Origen notes, in his *Against Celsus*, that Christians do support the effort with their prayers: “We do not go out on the campaign with (the emperor) even if he insists, but we do battle on his behalf by raising a special army of piety through our petitions to God.”⁸⁹

Elsewhere he says of the Christians, that “we no longer take up the sword against any nation, nor do we learn the art of war any more. Instead, ... we have become sons of peace through Jesus our founder.”⁹⁰

⁸⁶ II, 1–7.

⁸⁷ Apostolic Tradition, XVI.

⁸⁸ 6.

⁸⁹ 7, 73.

⁹⁰ 5, 33.

Other pre-Constantinian writers such as Lactantius also clearly present to the reader a sense of the wrongness of war, and a bias toward peace. No less so, does this same predilection for peace and against war continue into the post-Constantinian patristic period. Eusebius of Caesarea, Constantine's staunch supporter, praises the *pax Augusti* that permitted the uninhibited spread of Christianity.⁹¹ For Eusebius, the coming together of the Church and the Empire meant that "the whole human race was converted to peace and friendship when all men recognized each other as brothers and discovered their natural kinship," a sign for him that the Constantinian synthesis was the fulfillment of scriptural prophecies for peace on earth.⁹² Thus, the priority of peace for the Christian conscience remained strong. No less a figure than Chrysostom embodied this patristic bias for peace in his writing and preaching. In his 14th Homily on Philipians, Chrysostom states:

*God is not a God of war and fighting. Make war and fighting cease, both that which is against Him, and that which is against your neighbor. Be at peace with all men. Consider with what character God saves them. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." Such always imitate the Son of God; you too must imitate Him. Be at peace. The more your brother wars against you, so much greater will be your reward [for not responding in kind]. For hear the prophet who declares, "With the haters of peace, I was peaceful" (Psalm 120:7, Septuagint). This is virtue, this is above understanding, this brings us near to God. Nothing delights God so much as to forget all evil. This sets you free from your sins, this looses the charges against you. But if we are fighting, we become far off from God, for enmities are produced by conflict, and from enmity springs remembrance of evil.*⁹³

⁹¹ Demonstration of the Gospel, 3, 7, 140; Preparation for the Gospel 1, 4.

⁹² In Praise of Constantine, 2, 3.

⁹³ On v. 8.

The Endorsement of Christian Involvement in War

My purpose in bringing these few quotations is to emphasize the patristic commitment to peace. I have not entered into the debate as to whether the pre-Constantinian Church was pacifistic. I tend to agree with modern scholarship which rejects—as overly simplifying the issue—the view that the pre-Constantinian Church was fully pacifist, and that the post-Constantinian Church compromised its peace principles. Scholarship, which focuses not only on the patristic writings but also on Christian practice, such as that of Helgeland,⁹⁴ Daly and Burns,⁹⁵ Ryan⁹⁶ and Swift,⁹⁷ seems to show that the early Church had elements in its teaching which supported a pro-peace, but not a pacifist position. Considerations founded on the stories of soldier saints and martyrs, the goodness of the state, the rightness of the exercise of the sword by the state, prayers for the state and spiritual support of military actions of defense, as well as the need for the defense of order and the protection of the innocent, lead to the view that these pre-existing factors came to the fore when the danger of pagan pollution and compromise was eliminated and the Christians and their Church assumed responsibilities of governing.

Nevertheless, my point is that in the patristic mind, the bias for peace continued. How that bias for peace was handled, however, differed in the East and in the West.

Eastern and Western Patristic Approaches to Peace and War

It is clear that the early Fathers saw war as an evil in which it was perceived that Christians should not participate. It is also clear that

⁹⁴ “Christians and the Roman Army: AD 173–337”: *Church History*, 43, 1974, pp. 149–163.

⁹⁵ *Christians and the Military: The Early Experience*, op. cit.

⁹⁶ “The Rejection of Military Service by the Early Christians”: *Theological Studies*, 13, 1952, pp. 1–32.

⁹⁷ *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service*, op. cit.

they recognized the important and necessary role of the state to use “military force for the protection of the temporal order as a function proper to the governance of the empire,” in the words of one new study of the subject.⁹⁸

Pacifistic Emphasis Retained: Liturgy and the Clergy

The exuberant enthusiasm of Eusebius of Caesarea for the new situation, as it impacted on peace and war perspectives of the newly established Church, did not find much endorsement in the rest of the patristic conscience. On the other hand, the benefits of the end of persecution, the establishment of the Church, the support for the spread of the Gospel, the eradication of heresies, and the incorporation of Christian values into the legal and social system of the Empire, seemed great enough benefits for the Church so as to outweigh some of the concerns which the earlier Church found so ready to promote in a radically different social, religious and moral climate.⁹⁹

Nevertheless, in both East and West, there were efforts to preserve in the life of the Church a witness to the earlier emphasis which did not approve of military service for Christians. This is to be seen in the Church's disapproval of military service by the clergy and by the continued heavy emphasis in the liturgy of the Church on the theme of peace. In the latter case, there is an unbroken liturgical tradition based on the Old Testament, Rabbinical, New Testament tradition of the ‘giving of peace’ in the form of blessings. For example, the blessing “May the peace of God be with you all” is to be found in the Liturgy of the *Apostolic Constitutions*. There is no need, I believe, to document the continued tradition of prayer on behalf of peace both within and outside the Church in the liturgies of both East and West to this day.

⁹⁸ Helgeland, Daly, Burns, op. cit., p.89 of the page proofs. I am grateful to Fr. Robert Daly who made the page proofs available to me before the publication of the book.

⁹⁹ 8, 13, 1.

The continuity of the pro-peace bias of the Church can be recognized in the ready agreement of the consciousness of today's Church with the early second century sentiments of St. Ignatius. As he was being escorted by a military guard on the way to his judgment, taught, according to his *Letter to the Ephesians*, that "There is nothing better than peace, by which all strife in heaven and earth is done away."¹⁰⁰ Involvement in the empire's public life meant for the post-Constantinian Church an enhanced appreciation of those elements in the Christian tradition which affirmed the need for order, the punishment of evil doers, defense of the innocent and other such conditions. These new conditions also permitted and even enjoined the involvement of Christians in the military, though there were steps to preserve, in the life of the Church, the earlier pacifistic tendencies of the pre-Constantinian Church.

In addition to the liturgical emphasis on peace, this was accomplished by what I have called elsewhere the "stratification of pacifism" with the canonical requirement that at least the clergy not be involved in military service.¹⁰¹

In seeking to deal with these two tendencies in the revelatory teaching upon which it based its life, that is, the moral repugnance of war and all it stands for, and the need to support order and defend and protect life, one solution was to embody the peace ideal in its fullest sense in the clergy:

... the Church decided to require monks and clergy to be the pacifists in a Church which spoke for the whole of society. Thus, canon LXXXIII of the Apostolic Canons says that a priest or bishop may not engage in military matters. Also prohibited to clergy is government service (Apostolic Canons VI and LXXXI, canon III of the IV Ecumenical Council and canon X of the VII Ecumenical Council), because one thereby compromises his priesthood. Canon

¹⁰⁰ 13, 2.

¹⁰¹ Stanley S. Harakas, "The Morality of War", Joseph J. Allen, ed., *Orthodox Synthesis: The Unity of Theological Thought*, New York, 1981, pp. 67–94.

7 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council combines both injunctions: "We have decreed in that those who have once been enrolled in the Clergy or who have become Monks shall not join the army nor obtain any secular position of dignity. Let those be anathematized who dare to do this and fail to repent, so as to return to that which they had previously chosen on God's account."¹⁰²

While a solution of sorts, it also reflects serious problems, not the least of which is the ecclesiological problem of the place of the laity in the Church for whom no such requirement is made, and who must meet the question of participation in war by Christians on the basis of different criteria. This stratification of the pacifistic tendencies of the early Church was common, and continues to be common to Eastern and Western Christianity, at least, to Roman Catholicism.

Variant Responses in East and West

Not shared, however, in my judgment, are the theological rationales used in the East and the West in dealing with the participation of Christian laity in the military. It is not necessary at this point to delineate the development of the 'Just War' tradition in the West. I believe that it is sufficiently familiar.¹⁰³ St. Ambrose and St. Augustine are its clear founders. These two Western Fathers drew on the scriptural and patristic sources which in one way or another validate the participation of Christian laity in government and in military service. These two seminal writers led the Western Church, not only to an acceptance of the military role by Christians, but its enhancement into a positive virtue through the development of criteria by which a war could be distinguished from an unjust war, and be called 'just.'

It is my contention that the East developed a different approach to the issue. Rather than seek to elevate war morally and Christian

¹⁰² *Ibid*, p. 85. See also Swift, op. cit. pp. 88, 92–93.

¹⁰³ See bibliographical references above.

participation in it so that it could be termed 'just,' the East treated it as a necessary evil. I have previously developed this idea in an evaluation of the United States Conference of Roman Catholic Bishops' recent encyclical letter on war and peace.¹⁰⁴ I present here a somewhat revised version of that argument.

Contrary to Augustine, "who called it a Manichaean heresy to assert that war is intrinsically evil and contrary to Christian charity,"¹⁰⁵ the Eastern Patristic tradition rarely praised war, and to my knowledge, almost never called it 'just' or a moral good. Two cases, only, are known to me where it might be implied that, in passing, wars were characterized as possibly just. These references are to be found in Origen and Eusebius. Origen, in an argument specifically rejecting Christian participation in the military service of the Empire, appears to acknowledge the possibility of just wars. He says, "Though they keep their right hands clean, the Christians fight through their prayers to God on behalf of those doing battle in a just cause and on behalf of an emperor who is ruling justly in order that all opposition and hostility toward those who are acting rightly may be eliminated."¹⁰⁶ In the same manner, in his *Demonstration of the Gospel*, Eusebius, while speaking of the distinction of the clergy and laity life styles in the Church, refers by way of illustration only, and in passing to "practical rules for those 'serving in the army, according to justice (*tois kata to dikaion strateuomenois*)."¹⁰⁷

Whatever meaning and value these passages may have, they do not seem to be in the mainstream of Eastern thinking on the matter. I believe that Louis Swift is correct in substance, but wrong in tone and implication, when he notes that "the whole problem of public and private responsibility in this area and the moral limits surrounding the *ius belli*

¹⁰⁴ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*. Washington, DC, 1983. The paper, under the title "The NCCB Pastoral Letter: 'The Challenge of Peace' — An Eastern Orthodox Response" was published in 1985 by the Catholic University of America Press.

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in footnote 31, *The Challenge of Peace*, Sec. 82.

¹⁰⁶ Against Celsus, 8,73.

¹⁰⁷ 1,8. I do not think that Swift's translation 'practical rules for those fighting in a just war' is adequate.

and the *ius in bello* were never serious topics of interest in the minds of eastern writers.”¹⁰⁸ The East did not seek to deal with just war themes, such as the correct conditions for entering war, and the correct conduct of war on the basis of the possibility of the existence of a ‘just war,’ precisely because it did not hold to such a view of war. Its view was different from that of the West. The East’s approach to war was that it was a necessary evil. The peace ideal continued to remain normative and no theoretical efforts were made to make conduct of war into a positive norm.

The *locus classicus* illustrating this view is the 13th canon of St. Basil from his *first Canonical Letter to Amphilocheus*. The canon struggles to free killing during war from the ethical judgment of being equivalent to murder, while concurrently refusing to call the act good or just. Here is the text:

Our Fathers did not consider murders committed in the course of wars to be classifiable as murders at all, on the score, it seems to me, of allowing a pardon to men fighting in defense of sobriety and piety. Perhaps, though it might be advisable to refuse them communion for three years, on the ground that they are not clean handed.

The major early patristic passage, which Basil may have been referring to, is found in St. Athanasius’ *Epistle to Amun*.¹⁰⁹ In passing, and by way of illustration, as he seeks to show that circumstances serve to modify moral judgments, St. Athanasius refers to killing in war: “... thus it is not right to commit murder, but to kill enemies in war is lawful and praiseworthy.”¹¹⁰

His conclusion, however, does not place him so far from Basil as might first appear. “Therefore, the same thing on the one hand according to which at one time is not permitted, is on the other, at appropriate times permitted and *is forgiven*.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁰⁹ MPG, 26, 1169–80.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1173B.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* Emphasis mine.

The inclusion of ‘forgiveness’ needs to be understood as reflective of the strong tradition in Eastern Christianity of the concept of ‘involuntary sin.’ This widely documented teaching acknowledges the lack of direct and willed responsibility for an act, while concurrently acknowledging the involvement of the moral agent in an act which in itself is not good and not in accordance with the divine will. In fact, St. Basil’s 13th canon follows on a canon where this concept is discussed in the context of ‘involuntary murder.’ In the case of ‘involuntary murder,’ Basil imposes a penance of abstinence from communion for eleven years (not a small period, compared to twenty years for a voluntary murderer), because “the man who struck had no intention of killing him.” Nevertheless, he adds, “we deem the assailant a murderer, to be sure, but an involuntary murderer.”¹¹²

Clearly, Basil, like Athanasius, evaluates killing in war to be less of an evil than a face-to-face killing between non-military persons, albeit involuntary, since in canon XIII he provides for three years of abstinence from Communion, rather than eleven years of abstinence in the preceding canon.¹¹³ Other patristic sources for the concept of ‘involuntary sin’ are the 5th Canon of St. Gregory of Nyssa,¹¹⁴ and Canon XXIII of Ancyra (c. 314–331).¹¹⁵

This view is characteristic of Byzantine society, even the military establishment. In an anonymous manual of strategy, written in the sixth century during the reign of Emperor Justinian I, war is acknowledged to be “the greatest of evils,” though often necessary:

I know well that war is a great evil, even the greatest of evils. But because enemies shed our blood in fulfillment of an incitement of law and valor, and because it is wholly necessary for each man

¹¹² Canon 11, *Ibid.*, p. 800.

¹¹³ For more on ‘involuntary sin,’ see Stanley S. Harakas, *Toward Transfigured Life*. op. cit., p. 84.

¹¹⁴ *Canonical Epistle to Letoius, Bishop of Melitine*. Canon V. *The Pedalion*. *Ibid.*, pp. 874–5.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 502.

*to defend his own fatherland and his fellow countrymen with words, writings, and acts, we have decided to write about strategy, through which we shall be able not only to fight but to overcome the enemy.*¹¹⁶

A careful study of the chapters of this work will show that most military definitions are couched in defensive language. Further, it will be seen that the majority of tactics espoused seek to embody subterfuge, cunning, deception, tricks, and hoaxes in order to avoid battle, and to cause the enemy to withdraw of his own volition. The Byzantines also preferred the payment of tribute rather than the doing of battle.

This is not the only evidence. Walter Kaegi, a historian of Byzantine military strategy, summarizes a late 6th or early 7th century major Byzantine strategic treatise, known as the *Strategikon of Maurice*, which shows that every means possible was used to avoid open warfare.¹¹⁷

The author of the *Strategikon* advises his readers to fashion craftiness and cunning in war and to avoid open battles, that it is often preferable to strike the enemy “by means of deceptions or raids or hunger” instead of open battle.

He cautions against using open warfare. The object of warfare is the defeat and disruption, not necessarily the slaughter, of the enemy. In fact, the author of the *Strategikon* counsels against using the technique of encirclement because it would encourage the enemy to remain and to risk battle. He advises that it is better to allow an encircled enemy to flee to avoid forcing him to take a life-or-death stand, which would be costly in casualties to the encircling party. There is no more eloquent testimony to the desire to avoid decisive battle.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ “Der Byzantiner Kriegswissenschaft,” 4.2 *Griechische Kriegsschriftsteller*, ed. H. Koehly and W. Rustow, Leipzig 1855, vol. 2, p. 56.

¹¹⁷ *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, ed. George T. Dennis and German translation by E. Gamillscheg, and the Dennis English translation, published by the University of Pennsylvania Press.

¹¹⁸ Walter Emil Kaegi, Jr., *Some Thoughts on Byzantine Military Strategy*, Brookline, MA: 1983, p. 8.65.

We are not here primarily interested in Byzantine military strategy, of course. The purpose of quoting the passages above is to show that, both religiously and militarily, the East recognized the necessity for war, as well as its evil and the need and desire to mitigate its consequences. Though one might question the practical outcome of such a view, it is considered by some to have been an important contributing factor to the long life of the Byzantine Empire.¹¹⁹ In the last analysis, it would appear that the Eastern approach served to limit and reduce war and its evil consequences, in practice, while neither making it into a good, nor following the path of pacifism.

I believe that these approaches express well the viewpoint of the Eastern Orthodox Church on war. Thus, in a strict sense, it cannot speak of a 'good war,' or even a 'just war.' There are, of course, problems on both sides of this issue. For example, seeing war as a necessary evil, rather than as a 'just' and thus morally approved practice, raises the question of motivation for the waging of war, since calling it a necessary evil can hardly be encouraging to a strong military *élan*. Consequently, some might be motivated to charge the Eastern approach as guilty of contributing to the possibility of defeat and failure by fostering the begrudging taking up of arms. Nevertheless, it is perhaps because of some such considerations (with the possible exception of Heraclius' Persian campaign), that crusades were noticeably absent from Byzantine imperial military policy. All that this does, however, is to re-emphasize the great difficulties for the Church in dealing with the pro-peace bias in a world fraught with sin, evil and injustice. My point is that the East has responded to the issue in a way that is different from that of the West.

Conclusion

All the evidence, I believe, points to the realization that the patristic sources see peace as an integral aspect of the Christian truth. For

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.

the Fathers, whether one speaks of the inner world of the soul, the intimate relationship of the soul with God, the life in the Church, the social relationships among believers, the encounter of believers with the world at large, the enforcement of justice within societies, or the defense of nations from external threat, there is a bias for peace.

That emphasis on peace is an ongoing and permanent focus of the Christian teaching as it addresses the issues of today's nuclear-threatened world, and justifies its inclusion in the topics of the forthcoming Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church.

THE SANCTITY OF THE MILITARY ENDEAVOR

Anton Kartachov

Before his exile to France in 1919, Anton Kartachov served as last Procurator-General of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, a position he abolished in order to allow the Church to elect its Patriarch. In France, he was one of the founders of the St. Sergius Theological Institute where he taught Church History and Old Testament Theology. This article was published in a special issue of the "Leaflets of St. Sergius" dedicated to the Russian Veterans' Association of St. George, Paris, 1929.

"Thou shalt not kill," the Lord commanded mortals from the heights of Mount Sinai; in other words: do not lay your hands on what is not yours, what your hands have not created. The only master of life and death is the Lord Creator. "The Lord kills and brings to life; He brings down to Hades and raises up" (1 Sam. 2:6). In the commandment to the Patriarch Noah, the Lord has said, "For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning; of every beast I will require it and of man; of every man's brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image" (Gen. 9:5–6).

The commandment that the life of a man belongs only to Him Who has given it, to God the Giver of life, protects life by a vengeance which, even though inflicted by the hand of man, comes not from man. Man as a private person has no right to vengeance, and for a Christian, this is simply forbidden. "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord'" (Rom. 12:19). It is God who avenges, "by the judgments that He knows" [prayer of St. Mardarios, third hour]: by the seal of refusal on the front [ref. to Rev. 7:3], by floods, by sulphuric rains of fire, by drowning amidst the waters of the sea, by the opening up of the earth, by all the plagues of Egypt; i.e. by

miraculous punishments and natural calamities, epidemics, plagues, hail and, equally naturally, by setting man against man and people against people. All of sacred history, all the prophetic books are full of explanations of the different fates of humanity as the judgment of God for sins and transgressions by means of the very same hand of man, chosen by God as a means of vengeance. On the same place where Ahab has shed the blood of the poor Naboth, the dogs lap the blood of his descendants, shed by Judah, whom God has chosen as an avenger (2 Kings 9 and 10). Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ says as well, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword" (Matt. 26:52), and the Apocalypse repeats, "If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone slays with the sword, with the sword must he be slain" (Rev. 13:10).

What does this mean? It means that the commandment on Mount Sinai "Thou shalt not kill" is an unconditional prohibition to man as such, following his own passionate incentives, to raise his hand against the sacrament which is the life of his neighbor. But it also means that the Creator, All-foreseer and Avenger God Himself, sometimes gives man the order to be the means of his providential will, to shed the blood of another man not personally for himself, but super-personally, and, so to say, in a dispassionate way. This thought is so evident and so simple in all the teaching of the Old and New Testaments, that only the blindness of sectarians can refuse it. Sectarians, letter-worshippers and non-Christian humanists are trying to introduce into the teaching of the Church their idea, alien to Christianity, of the natural equality of the rights of all men. In their opinion, contrary to the views of the Church, no one ever has the right to kill. Certainly, if we consider an abstract private person. But the biblical world-view is not abstract, not dead, but a world-view of life and, therefore, not egalitarian, but hierarchical. Among all that lives, "There are celestial bodies and there are terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another" (1 Cor. 15:41).

All creation differs in quality, finds itself at different levels, in different orders, in different dignities, in different services. Not only

angels, but also mankind. This is even more valid for people in their social and religious organization, as members of the sacramental body of the Church: “And His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers ...” (Eph. 4:11). Of what equality of right we can speak here? To one the truly divine power has been granted to work wonders with the words, “and make this bread ...” and “what is in this chalice,” and to me merely to receive humbly this supernatural mystery.

The natural hierarchical order in creation and in human society has been established and sanctified by the Creator and is in contradiction with a wrongly understood idea of equality. “By Me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just; by Me princes rule, and nobles govern the earth” (Prov. 8:15), i.e. not only the power, but also the written laws which it creates finds the source of its authority in God. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself recognizes that power of Pontius Pilate “which has been given from above” (John 19:11) and the Apostle Paul traces all power to God (Rom. 13:1–2). In particular: the power of the sword, meaning the right to execute, to kill for a crime and to defend a state from its enemies. “For he is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer” (Rom. 13:4). Self-sacrificingly, St. Paul applies this right of the punishing sword to himself: in Caesarea, judged by the prosecutor Porcius Thestus, he declares, “I am standing before Caesar’s tribunal, where I ought to be tried; to the Jews. I have done no wrong, as you know very well. If then I am a wrongdoer, and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death; but if there is nothing in their charges against me, no one can give me up to them” (Acts 25:11).

In the hierarchical order of life, which is both natural and full of grace, people are given supra-personal rights and obligations. And their rights in this case surpass the level of the commandments of personal morality. This concerns the rights of state power and its related functions of legislation, government, judgment and punish-

ment. And, of course, it concerns military service, the essence of which is not to kill but to offer one's life as a sacrifice for one's society, killing enemies merely out of necessity, for we are of God, and the whole world is in the power of the evil one (1 John. 5:19) and is full of thorns, snakes, scorpions, evil beasts, wrongdoers and possessed, the struggle against which, in many cases, inevitably leads the "servants of God" (Rom. 13:4), i.e. the authorities, not to pacify but to destroy them physically. The Church from the very beginning accepted this order and sanctified it by its authority. The Apostle strongly warns against social revolution, asking all to remain in the position, which they occupied when they were called (when they entered the Church). This also includes the military profession, in the terrible period of the alien pagan Roman authority, which in the Apocalypse is described in the image of the beast and the Antichrist! Among the soldiers of the Roman state, many belonged to the Church, composing as soon as the 2nd century almost entire legions in the army of Rome. For soldiers, as well as for civil servants and regular citizens of the pagan empire, certain rites of idolatry — but not military service itself — were an insurmountable barrier, which led them to martyrdom. The military rank has been sanctified by tens of names of martyrs and hundreds of nameless martyrs. After completing military service, Christians have become shepherds of the Church and ascetics-anchorites. The founder of organized monasticism, St. Pachomios the Great, was a soldier from the Egyptian legions.

The over-devoted sectarians who refused military service for Christians were not part of the body of the Church. They were the heretical Montanists of the 2nd century and Donatists of the 3rd. In the name of hierarchy and the segregation of specific services, the Church has obliged members of the clergy to abandon any parallel worldly professions and state service of any kind. But never was military service prior to ordination seen as an obstacle for the priesthood, either in the pagan period of persecutions or when the Empire became Christian and when military service acquired a clear meaning as a theocratic service, a defense of the Church herself. The canonical

letter of St. Athanasius of Alexandria to the monk Ammun is very instructive in this respect, explaining the heretical sense of a dispraising attitude towards natural life, which has been made by the Creator (the life of the body, food, marriage, birth), in which the holy Father explains that the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” needs to be understood according to the aims and conditions of its application. He writes, “for instance: it is not allowed to kill. But to kill enemies in battle is permitted and worthy of praise... In this way, one and the same thing, considering some times and circumstances, is not permitted, yet in different circumstances and at the right time it is permitted and accepted.” In the first canonical letter to Amphilochius of Iconium, the 13th canon of St. Basil the Great equally witnesses that “our fathers did not consider killing on the battlefield as murder, pardoning thus defenders of chastity and piety.” The holy Father continues: “It might be good to advise that these, having unclean hands, would abstain three years from partaking of the holy sacraments.” St. Basil’s thought behind this is that any killing naturally contradicts the absolute ideal of the Gospel, that such killings, just as the whole worldly order of justice and authority itself “is the result of the original sin,” as the Apostle says, and that the Christian consciousness cannot but feel the need for a cleansing *epitimia* after any, even the most justified killing. All this is true. But another spiritual experience and canonical practice of the Church is characteristic as well. The 9th-century canonists Zonaras and Balsamon affirm that the advice of St. Basil has never been applied in the Church. And this can be understood: in Orthodox Byzantium, theoretically united with the Church, military service obtained so clearly a cross-bearing character, that the advice of St. Basil the Great, which had appeared in the atmosphere of the still half pagan empire and army of the third quarter of the 4th century, had lost its sense.

In the Orthodox Greek Empire, in other Orthodox states and in our own Orthodox Russian Empire, the cross-bearing spirit and sense of military service subsequently become so self-evident and obvious for the conciliar self-consciousness of the Church, that mili-

tary service as such, as the endeavor of defending by the sword the Church and the Christian fatherland against paganism and heresies, was itself crowned by an aureole of sanctity. Emperors, princes, generals as well as Christian soldiers entered into the host of saints. And the heavenly light of their holy glory has forever sanctified all Christ-bearing and Christ-loving military endeavors and struggles for the Holy Church, Christian statehood and the baptized people, for the Kingdom of God on earth.

The heavenly hierarchy itself is the most holy example of the earthly Christ-loving army. For the Lord Sabaoth Himself, after His descent to His creatures whom He granted freedom, has engaged in battle with Satan. Therefore, He is the King of the heavenly armies: Sabaoth. His “powers, the hosts of hosts that serve Him constitute the heavenly armies,” led by the *archistrateges*, literally, “chiefs of command” face the army of dark powers, the angels of Satan and wage battle with them in the decisive moments of the final fate of the world and mankind. The Empress of heaven herself is not only the merciful mother and defender of the Christian generation, but also the ‘victorious lady’ (*hypermachos stratigos*), because she takes part in the battle of Christian armies against impious barbarians. In heavenly visions, she is enthroned above the armies of Byzantium and in her holy icons sanctified the banners of Holy Russia at the battles of the Don, Kazan and Moscow. This is the ecclesio-religious, Orthodox and holy-Russian reality and the truth, full of grace, which rejoices the heart of the Christ-loving army. And as a linking image, a sacred symbol of the two armies ‘the heavenly and the earthly,’ we have the image of the Archangel of the bodiless powers: the earthly soldier, the great-martyr George.

ETHNICITY, NATIONALISM AND RELIGION

V. Rev. Dr. Georges Tsetsis

The Rev. Dr. Georges Tsetsis served as the permanent representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the World Council of Churches from 1985 to 1999, having previously served as the Middle East secretary in the WCC Commission on Inter-Church Aid and Refugee Service and later as its deputy director. From 1961 to 1964, he was archdeacon of the Princes Islands Diocese in Istanbul. In 1988, he received a Doctorate of Theology from the University of Thessaloniki, Greece. He has published over 70 articles on theological, liturgical and ecumenical issues in Greek, English and French.

His address was given at the international conference “The Orthodox Churches in a Pluralistic World: an Ecumenical Conversation” at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, October 5, 2002. Published at: www.goarch.org/en/special/hchc_conference/presentations/tsetsis.asp.

“Any form of national ethnic egotism whereby the love of one’s own people leads to the suppression of other nationalities or national minorities, or to the failure to respect and appreciate the gifts of other people, is a sin and rebellion against God, who is the Creator and Lord of all peoples.”¹²⁰

If I started my address by quoting this aphorism of the 1937 Life and Work Conference in Oxford, it is to remind us that the subject of ethnicity, nationalism and religion did not appear only recently in the ecumenical agenda, following the eruption of ethnic conflicts in several parts of the world in the last two or three decades. Churches involved in the *Life and Work* and *Faith and Order* Movements in the 1920s and 1930s, and after their amalgamation in 1938, in the World Council of Churches, have extensively dealt with these crucial issues,

¹²⁰ Report of Section I of the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State, in M. Kinnamon/B. Cope (eds), *The Ecumenical Movement—An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices*, Geneva/Grand Rapids, 1997, p. 271.

prompted by alarming developments in Europe during the inter-war years, and later in the aftermath of the Second World War. But even before that, in the late 19th century, the Orthodox Church was compelled to deal with the issue of ethnicity, when nationalistic disputes in the Balkans started to threaten Orthodox unity.

The proliferation, however, in the last years of ethnic conflicts and regional wars stimulated by nationalistic aspirations almost in every continent, again incited the Churches to deepen reflection on these issues, allowing them to make their contribution in the resolution of conflicts. The study initiated by Faith and Order in 1990, on the topic “Ethnic identity, National identity and the search for the Unity of the Church” is an evidence of the Churches’ will to have a deep theological reflection on these burning issues. It was therefore quite timely to include in the agenda of the present Conference this issue, and I thank its conveners for asking me to present the subject.

If for a Greek speaking person it is relatively easy to deliver a conference in English or French about the meaning of religion, it is not so simple to do the same as far as ethnicity and nationalism are concerned. Simply because in the Greek language these two notions — both originating from the word *ethnos*, which literally means “nation” — very often overlap and lead to confusion. For example, in Greek the term nationality corresponds to *ethnikotis*, nationalism to *ethnikismos*, ethnicity to *ethnismos*. Therefore before speaking about the relation of ethnicity and nationalism to Religion and to the Church in particular, it will be helpful to first clarify the meaning of these two terms as they are being used nowadays.

On several occasions there were attempts to define the meaning of the terms *ethnicity*, *ethnic group* and *nation*. By ethnologists, anthropologists, historians or politicians. Let me present some examples.

According to Richard Schermerhorn, a pioneer of the study on ethnic relations, an *ethnic group* is a collectivity within a larger society, having real or putative common ancestry, common memory of a historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood: e.g. kinship

patterns, physical continuity, religious affiliation, language, nationality and a consciousness of kin among members of the group. For Joshua Fishman, ethnicity was always experienced as a kinship phenomenon, as a continuity within the self and within those who share an intergenerational link to common ancestors. In this sense ethnicity is a tangible, living reality that makes every human a link in an eternal bond from generation to generation, from past ancestors to those in the future. For anthropologist Fredrik Barth, the term *ethnic group* designates a population that is largely biologically self-perpetuating, that shares fundamental cultural values, and has a membership which identifies itself as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of people,¹²¹ while for Steve Fenton ethnicity is a social phenomenon embedded in social, political and economic structures, that form an important element of both the way ethnicity is expressed and the social importance it assumes.¹²²

As to *nation* and *nationalism*, an interesting definition of the term nation is given by *The International Relations Dictionary*, which asserts that a nation is a social group that shares a common ideology, common institutions and customs, a sense of homogeneity, as well as a sense of being associated with a particular territory, considered to be peculiarly its own.¹²³ From his perspective Ernest Renan believes that a nation is grounded in common history, language and culture. It is a soul, a spiritual principle, and the end product of a long period of work, sacrifice and devotion. It presupposes a past, but it resumes itself in the present by a tangible fact: the clearly expressed desire to continue life in common. On the other hand, according to Joseph Stalin a nation is a historically constituted community of people and not a tribal or racial entity. It is not a casual or ephemeral conglomeration, but a stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, common territory, economic life and psychological, make-up, manifested in a

¹²¹ These definitions are taken from J. Hutchinson/A. D. Smith (eds.), *Ethnicity*, Oxford 1996, pp. 16, 63 and 75.

¹²² S. Fenton, *Ethnicity, Racism, Class and Culture*, MacMillan Press, 1999, p. 21.

¹²³ J. Plano/Rolton, *The International Relations Dictionary*, New York, 1969, p. 119.

common culture. While for anthropologist Clifford Geertz, in addition to common history, language, culture and territory, basic components that make up a nation, are also religion and custom.¹²⁴

From the point of view of the Consultation on “*Ethnicity and Nationalism*” held in Colombo, Sri Lanka in November 1994 and jointly sponsored by the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), *ethnicity* is a collective group consciousness defined by reference to a configuration of elements, such as language, homeland, descent, religion and values; while *nationalism* is a collective group consciousness built around the boundaries of an actual or perceived nationhood. As to *religion*, it constitutes a key factor that shapes the identity and character of a community on the basis of doctrines, rituals and a code of behavior and ethical values.¹²⁵

Beside these definitions however, one should add that *ethnicity*, -in its meaning as *ethnismos*, is also identical to love of and dedication to one’s homeland, as well as to national consciousness and patriotism. On the other hand nationalism, in the sense of *ethnismos*, could certainly mean attachment to national ideals, but it could also be synonymous to chauvinism or *phyletism*, when it fails to acknowledge, or deliberately ignores, the distinctiveness of the others. The crucial issue is how to discern the healthy and legitimate nationalism in the sense of *philopatria* (love of the country) aiming at the prosperity of a people and the preservation of its national and cultural identity, from those corrosive and divisive forms of chauvinistic ethno-nationalisms that result in wars and endless conflicts.

This is the challenge that we all face today, following the socio-political developments in the second half of the 20th century in many parts of the world, and particularly in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus since 1990.

¹²⁴ Definitions taken from J. Hutchinson/A.D. Smith (eds.), *Nationalism*, Oxford, 1994, pp. 16, 18 and 29–30.

¹²⁵ See Consultation Report in T. Tschuy, *Ethnic Conflict and Religion, Challenge to the Churches*, Geneva, 1997, p. 156.

In the preface of a collective volume they edited in 1996, John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith pointed out that after the surfacing of ethnic movements already in the 1950s in Asia and Africa, and later on, in the 1960s and 1970s, in Europe and the Americas, and more particularly after the disintegration in 1990 of Soviet Union, in the territory of which emerged within a few years some twenty new nations and countries “based largely upon dominant ethnic communities ... ethnicity has become a central issue in the social and political life of every continent.”¹²⁶

It is worth noting that this assertion was almost identical with the view formulated two years earlier by the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in an address he delivered at the opening session of the Conference on Peace and Tolerance, convened by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, in cooperation with the Appeal of Conscience Foundation (Istanbul, February 7–9, 1994). Referring to the fratricidal war which was then devastating Yugoslavia, as well as to ethnic conflicts affecting at that time Central Asia and the Caucasus, Patriarch Bartholomew remarked that “nationalism remains one of the central problems of the Church,” which ought to be answered “in a deep and uncompromising ecumenical spirit.” And after having urged those in power “to overcome divisions and disputes brought about by excessive nationalism” the Patriarch reiterated the appeal made by the Orthodox Primates at the conclusion of their first, in modern times, Summit Meeting (Synaxis) at the Phanar in March 1992, calling on all religious leaders to offer “particular attention, pastoral responsibility and wisdom inspired by God, in order to avoid the exploitation of sentiments for political and nationalistic reasons.”¹²⁷

This was a legitimate pastoral concern of paramount importance. For the simple reason that, following the rapid and quasi cosmogonical socio-political changes occurred in Central and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, after the abrupt collapse of the “Eastern Block” and

¹²⁶ J. Hutchinson and A. D. Smith (eds), *Ethnicity*, preface, p. v.

¹²⁷ See patriarchal address in *Orthodoxia*, 131 (1994), pp. 335–41.

the marginalization of its totalitarian ideology, the specter that started haunting Western societies was, according to Ali Rattansi, "no longer communism, but a series of racisms and ethno-nationalisms."¹²⁸

One has to admit however that *ethno-nationalism* to which Rattansi refers, is not a new phenomenon, which sprang up in the aftermath of the dislocation of Soviet Union and of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The concept of ethno-nationalism emerged already in the 19th century, as a consequence of the Enlightenment, and when nation-states began to replace multinational empires, thus becoming the political model par excellence. And to be more accurate one could say that in fact "since the French revolution it has been the main spiritual and emotional force cementing all the elements of statehood into nation-states."¹²⁹

In July 1966, at a crucial moment of modern history, when the world was undergoing a revolutionary social change after the end of colonialism and the creation of new states particularly the Southern Hemisphere, the WCC convened in Geneva a World Conference on Church and Society, in order to discuss the role of Christians in face of the technical and social revolutions of our time. Referring to these newly created, or to be created, states, this unique Conference of great importance in the Ecumenical chronicles, admitted that "a sense of nationalism is essential for the building of a new nation." After having asserted this however, the Conference added that this nationalism ought not to be confused with any kind of aggressive nationalism that leads to wars and conflicts, but on the contrary it "must be based on the equality of nations and on mutual cooperation. It should be a means of achieving integration and not become an instrument for emphasizing the divisions which in the past were ethnic, religious or frontier issues."¹³⁰

¹²⁸ A. Rattansi, "'Western' racisms, ethnicity and identities in a 'post-modern' frame," A. Rattansi and S. Westwood (eds.), *Racism, Modernity and Identity on the Western Front*, Cambridge, 1994, p. 1.

¹²⁹ N. Koshy, *Churches in the World of Nations*, Geneva, 1994, p. 46.

¹³⁰ *World Conference on Church and Society, Official report*, Geneva, 1967, p. 106.

Yet, the political developments in Africa, Asia and the Middle East in the course of the second half of the twentieth century (in the late 1940s and later during the post-colonial years of the 1960s and 1970s), or the changes occurring in the former Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, demonstrated that in many cases national emancipation had disastrous consequences. The armed conflict between India and Pakistan (continuing even today over the issue of Kashmir); the Arab-Israeli wars over the still unresolved question of Palestine; the civil war in Lebanon; the deadlock created after the occupation and division of Cyprus; the clash between Tamils and Sinhalese in Sri Lanka, the bloody confrontation of Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda; the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea; and more recently the tragic fratricidal wars in the territory of Fortner Yugoslavia; the conflict between Armenians and Azeris over the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh; the armed confrontation of Russians and Chechens or of Georgians and Abkhassians in Caucasus; are only few flagrant examples of the fact that conflicts created by the aspirations and apprehensions of *ethno-nationalism*, have become a source of instability and threat for world peace.

The question that preoccupied the wider public opinion all these years was whether religion constituted a key factor in the resurgence of ethnic conflicts. This very question was insistently raised and commented in different ways, particularly after the breaking of the civil war in Yugoslavia, when the belligerents were depicted not so much on the basis of their nationalistic, ideological and geopolitical aspirations, but rather on the basis of their religious affiliation. That is to say, "Serbian Orthodox against Croatian Roman Catholics," "Bosnian Moslems against Serbian Orthodox," "Christian Croats and Serbs against Moslems of Bosnia," "Roman Catholic Croats and Bosnian Moslems against Orthodox Bosno-Serbs"! The same religious character was attributed earlier to the Lebanese civil war, although the root cause of this conflict was not any theological dispute between Shiite Islam and Maronite Christianity, but the misery and the subsequent revolt of the populations of the Beka'a-Valley and of the Palestinian refugee

campes, who could not stand any longer the provocative life style of a Lebanese elite, formed both by Christians and Sunni Moslems. And in fact, as Tarek Mitri once remarked, "on both sides of the barricades there were people who never went to the church or to the mosque, who have never read the Qu'ran or the Gospel."¹³¹

It is worth mentioning also that at the height of the war in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and later during the NATO raids in Serbia and Montenegro following the Kosovo crisis, there were attempts to qualify these events as nothing else but a new crusade of the "catholico-protestant West" against the "Orthodox East." Some even (for example, the French psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva) invoked the theological controversy of Orthodox and Roman-Catholics over the *Filioque* in order to explain NATO's attitude vis-a-vis Serbia, regardless that Clinton and Blair, Chirac and Schroeder, Milosevic, Putin or Simitis, in hearing the term *filioque*, would ask with astonishment, "What are you talking about?"¹³²

During these tragic years, Churches and ecumenical organizations repeatedly tried to dissociate the religious element from the various ethnic conflicts and confrontations that shook the Balkans and the Caucasus and attempted to mediate for peace and reconciliation. For example the Assembly of Bishops of the Orthodox Church of Serbia in its encyclical of May 1993 was indicating that the chief causes and actors of the misfortune of the peoples of Yugoslavia were not the religious communities of this country, but the power-holders "no matter which side they belong to, who by spirit, mentality and methods all were trained in the same school of a totalitarian, god-

¹³¹ *The Role of the Church in Conflict Situations*, Life and Peace Institute, Uppsala: 1991, p. 122.

¹³² At the least, it was bizarre to speak about a "holy alliance" of European and American Christians against the "Orthodox East" as was frequently done in both the secular and church press of Greece during the Yugoslav crisis. After all Greece joined NATO not because of any fear of the Roman-Catholic or the Protestant West, but of the countries of the North, including Tito's Yugoslavia, namely countries of the traditional "Orthodox space" that for centuries dreamt of having direct access to the Mediterranean.

less communist system.”¹³³ Something reiterated explicitly and unambiguously later by Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro during a conference organized in Brussels by *Pax Christi*, namely that the war in Yugoslavia was not a religious war encouraged by religious leaders, but a civil war “to which politicians and former communists factor religious coloration in order to exploit the religious factor in this conflict.”¹³⁴

Similarly, and always on the situation in Yugoslavia, the aforementioned Conference on Peace and Tolerance was quite explicit when it stated that the war in former Yugoslavia is not a “religious war and that the appeals end exploitation of religious symbols to further the cause of aggressive nationalism are a betrayal of the universality of religious faith.”¹³⁵ The same clear position was taken also over the issue of Nagorno-Kakabakh by Armenian Catholicos Vasken I and the Azeri Sheikh ul Islam Pacha-Zadeh, who in a peace making effort declared: “We firmly refuse the attempts to present this conflict as inter-religious. Those who preach hate among religions commit a heavy sin before the all-Highest.”¹³⁶

From its side the World Council of Churches, as early as 1991 was qualifying the armed confrontation in Yugoslavia as “civil war,”¹³⁷ and was challenging those involved in the hostilities “to resist every attempt to use religious sentiment and loyalty in the service of aggressive nationalism.”¹³⁸ While the Conference of European Churches, inspired by the theme of the Second European Ecumenical Assembly

¹³³ See “The Tragedy of Bosnia,” *Background Information*, CCIA/WCC, Geneva: 1994/1, p. 117.

¹³⁴ See Metropolitan Amfilohije’s interview in *Service Orthodoxe de Presse*, No 187, April 1994, p. 18.

¹³⁵ See “*The Bosphorus Declaration*,” in H. Bos/J. Forest (eds), *For Peace from Above — An Orthodox Resource Book on War, Peace and Nationalism*, Bialystok 1999, p. 133.

¹³⁶ See in H. Bos/J. Forest, *op. cit.* p. 135.

¹³⁷ See WCC 1991 Central Committee Meeting, p. 37.

¹³⁸ *Message to the Churches in the Countries of Former Yugoslavia*, WCC 1994 Central Committee Meeting, p. 78.

(Graz, 1997) "Reconciliation — Gift of God and Source of New Life," and conscious of the fact that the ethnic conflicts in South-Eastern Europe were jeopardizing the European integration, was calling the Churches to undertake an "active role in peaceful resolution of the conflicts ... and participate in the peace and reconciliation processes."¹³⁹

Yet, one has to admit that although ethnic conflicts are not religious in essence, they nevertheless take a religious character, in cases when the belligerents belong to two different faiths. And most particularly when religious symbols are being used in order to boost up the fighting spirit of combatants, or the nationalistic feelings of the masses. Flagrant examples of such exploitation of religious sentiments were given in many recent ethnic conflicts. During the war in Bosnia involving Christians and Moslems; in the confrontation of Sinhalese Buddhists and Hindu Tamils in Sri Lanka, in the territorial dispute of Kashmir involving Moslems and Hindus; in the socio-political upheaval in Fiji involving indigenous Christians (Methodists) and Indian Hindu settlers. In all these conflicts the religious component was quite obvious. But, "a crime committed in the name of religion is a crime against religion," as the above-mentioned Bosphorus Declaration stated.¹⁴⁰

Here lies precisely the responsibility of the Church, or any other religious body. Namely, to act prophetically, and to be in agent of peace and reconciliation.

An immediate victim of ethno-nationalism following the gradual dismantlement of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century and the subsequent creation of new nation-states in the Balkans, was, undoubtedly, the Orthodox Church. Indeed, political aspirations, ethnic rivalries and the use of the religious factor in order to promote nationalistic ideas in the newly emerging states, severely hit Orthodoxy and profoundly affected the very essence of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic (Orthodox) Church.

¹³⁹ *Report on the XI Assembly of the Conference of European Churches, Graz, Austria, 30 June–4 July 1997*, p. 165.

¹⁴⁰ H. Bos/J. Forest, *op. cit.* p. 133.

In the Ottoman Empire, the Orthodox Church existed and gave her witness as a *supernatural entity*, in spite of the ethnic origins and the cultural particularities of the peoples that formed the entire “Orthodox nation” (*to genōs tōn Orthodoxōn*) living in this vast Empire. The emergence however of “National Churches” within these newly formed nation-states, “caused rivalry and hostility between neighbors, brought discord over jurisdictions, and created enemy images at the expense of the unity and the mission of the Church.”¹⁴¹ And interestingly enough, the nationalism that erupted among the Orthodox of all ethnic backgrounds of the Empire, was not directed only against the Moslem ruler, but also against fellow Orthodox.

For example the Church of the newly independent Greek State broke its ties with the Mother Church of Constantinople because, according to the theoretician of Greek nationalism Adamantios Korais, it was unthinkable for the clergy of free Greece to obey the instructions of a Patriarch, captive in the Ottoman capital. In fact this was the argument used by the Orthodox Church of Romania when it submitted to Constantinople the request for Autocephaly. On the other hand, Bulgarians could not tolerate any more Greek hierarchs in their soil and Romanians could not accept the canonical rights of the Serbian Patriarchate in some areas of the Balkans. As a consequence of the gradual nationalization of the local Orthodox Churches and the ecclesiastical disputes that followed, “the unity of the ‘Orthodox Commonwealth,’ which for almost ten centuries had extended over the whole of eastern Europe and the Middle East, was irrevocably broken.”¹⁴² We are today the powerless witnesses of the end result of this fragmentation, when the Orthodox Church not only cannot speak and act as a single body, but even worse, is unable to convoke its Great Council that has been in preparation for 41 years now. (In

¹⁴¹ T. Sabev, “Church, Nation and Nationalism,” in *Études Théologiques* 12, “Religion et Société,” Les Éditions du Centre Orthodoxe, Chambésy, 1998, p. 263.

¹⁴² P. Kitromilidis, “Orthodoxy and Nationalism,” J. Hutchinson/A. Smith, *Ethnicity*, p. 208.

fact 72 years, if we take into account the 1930 Inter-Orthodox Pre-synodical meeting of Mount Athos!)

If, however, the term *catholicity* denotes, according to John Karmiris, “the fullness of the one, true and perfect Church through which the salvation of the whole world is sought,” one can easily detect the incompatibility between this ethno-nationalism, developed in the whole “Orthodox space” during the 19th century, and the Orthodox ecclesiological understanding of the catholicity of the Church. For Orthodoxy, it was a tragedy indeed to “reduce the universal and eternal Church, by identifying it with local ‘national’ Churches, restricted geographically and unduly influenced by civilization, language, idiosyncrasy... and serving political purposes, dictated by nationalism, racism and chauvinism of peoples and states.”¹⁴³

It is precisely this narrow concept of ethno-nationalism, qualified as *phyletism*, that was condemned as heresy by the 1872 Great Council of Constantinople, attended also by the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, as well as by the Archbishop of Cyprus.

According to this Council, nationalism or ethno-phyletism was a perversion of normal patriotic sentiment and constituted the worst enemy of the Orthodox Unity. “In the Christian Church,” the Council said, “which is a spiritual communion, predestined by its Lord to contain all nations in one brotherhood in Christ, phyletism is alien and quite unthinkable... All Christian Churches founded in the early years were local and they were named after the town or the country of their residence and not after the ethnic origin of their people.” The Biblical terms “Church of the Thessalonians,” “Church of Laodiceans,” etc., do not indicate an ethnic group, for there has never been either a Thessalonian or Laodicean nation. They refer to the faithful living in the cities of Thessalonica and Laodicea, regardless of their ethnic origins.” After having observed that the creation of Churches on ethnic grounds alone, constituted a “mortal blow”

¹⁴³ Karmiris, “Catholicity of the Church and Nationalism,” S. Agouridis (ed.), *Procès-Verbaux du Deuxième Congrès de Théologie Orthodoxe à Athènes, 19–29 août 1976*, Athens, 1978, p. 470.

against the faith in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, the Council of Constantinople censured and vigorously condemned “racism, ethnic feuds, hatreds and dissensions within the Church of Christ, as contrary to the teaching of the Gospel and the holy canons of our blessed fathers.”¹⁴⁴ According to Vladimir Lossky the decision of this Great Council ought to be the basis governing Orthodox relations. Lossky, firmly believed that “every special conscience linking us with one national or political or cultural group must disappear, giving place to a ‘catholic’ conscience which is greater than that conscience, that links us to the whole humanity.”¹⁴⁵

Whether we like it or not, the present system of Orthodox governance is a reality today, and one has to accept this historical evolution. But, if Orthodoxy is expected to give a convincing concerted and united Orthodox witness in today’s pluralistic world, then the rediscovery of an Orthodox conscience, to which Lossky refers, that goes beyond ethnic and national cleavages is, I believe, an urgent matter. Orthodoxy will be credible only when all local Autocephalous and Autonomous Orthodox Churches will be able to speak and act as *one single body* and not as separate ethnic or national entities.

¹⁴⁴ See “Patriarchal and Synodical Documents on the Bulgarian Schism,” p. 429, cited in Maximos of Sardes, *The Ecumenical Patriarchate in the Orthodox Church*, Thessaloniki, 1976, p. 303–9.

¹⁴⁵ V. Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, (Greek translation), Thessaloniki 1974, p. 176, cited by J. Karmiris, op. cit., p. 479. No doubt the instrumentalization of Orthodoxy by politicians, and sometimes even by church leaders, in order to foster political and nationalistic aspirations could have detrimental consequences for the Church itself. The Church of Greece still suffers from the consequences of the “Greece for Greek Christians” policy applied during the dictatorship years. And yet the colonels, some of whom came from the bosom of pietistic movements, claimed to be Orthodox! And what about Gennady Zyuganov who, prior to the 1996 presidential elections, although affirming that he did not believe in God, he nevertheless declared that his Communist Party of Russia would assist the Orthodox Church of Russia, “acknowledging its role in the formation of Russian statehood, Russian national identity, patriotism, and the cultural and spiritual traditions of the Russian people”? See “The Position of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation Regarding the Issue of Religion,” in V. Fedorov, F. Stolz, H. Weder (eds), *Religion and Nationalism in Russia*, St. Petersburg, 2000, p. 251.

Before concluding, I wish to remark that in dealing with the issues of ethnicity, nationalism and religion we must not lose sight of the fact that all nations exist under God's sovereignty and that no religion or ideology can replace the God-given unity of humankind, since God himself "from one blood [one ancestor] made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where you would live" (Acts 17:26). We must remember that "there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, male and female for all of us are one in Christ" (Gal. 3:28). And we should also meditate on what the author of the Epistle to Diognetus was saying to his correspondent. Namely that Christians certainly "dwell in their own countries, but only as aliens; as citizens they take part in everything, but endure all hardships as strangers; every foreign land is a fatherland to them, and every fatherland is foreign. They inhabit the earth, but they hold citizenship in heaven."¹⁴⁶

This fundamental Christian understanding must be the basis of our behavior vis-à-vis our neighbors, both in times of peace and of conflict.

¹⁴⁶ "Letter to Diognetus," V 15, in *Bibliotheki Ellinôn Paterôn*, Vol. 2, Athens 1955, p. 253.

NONVIOLENCE AND PEACE TRADITIONS IN EARLY & EASTERN CHRISTIANITY

Fr. John McGuckin

Fr. John McGuckin is professor of Church History at Union Theological Seminary and professor of Byzantine History at Columbia University, both in New York City. His essay originally was published as a chapter in Non-Violence: Concepts and Practices Across Religions and Cultures, edited by Fr. K. Kyriakose.

Ideals of Peace in a Violent World.

Christianity has had a very checkered history in terms of its peace tradition. It is often to images of Inquisition and Crusade that the popular imagination turns when considering the darker side of the church's imposition of control over the personal and political worlds it has inhabited over long centuries. The figure of a pacific Jesus (the poet of the lilies of the fields, and the advocate of peaceful resistance to evil, who so inspired Tolstoy and Gandhi among others) is often contrasted with a church of more brutish disciples who, when occasion presented itself, turned willingly, and quickly enough, to tactics of oppression and coercion, policies which they themselves had lamented, as being against both divine and natural justice, when applied to them in the earlier centuries of the Roman persecutions.

The common version among Church Historians of this generic tale of a progressive sinking into the "brutal ways of the world," also points to regular cycles of renewal and repentance, when Christians are said to re-appropriate the "real" meaning of their past, and renounce violent resistance in the cause of a 'truly Christian' non-resistance. This, of course, is usually a matter of occasional academic protest from the sidelines, or the wisdom of the aftermath, since in times of war the ranks of those who rush to defend the Christian defensibility of hostilities are rarely short of representatives, it would seem.

The key academic studies of the Early Church's peace tradition, for example, had to wait until the 20th century. They appeared in two clusters, both of them the immediate aftermath of the great conflicts of 1914–18, and 1939–45, followed by a longer 'tail' which was overshadowed by the Cold War's generic fears of nuclear holocaust, and which produced a more thorough-going tenor of the 'suspicion of war' in academic circles. Both the main-clusters of post-war re-assessments of Christian peace tradition in antiquity, witnessed a conflicted product in the tone of the literature. All lamented the fact and experience of war, from a Christian perspective, but some justified the concept of limited war engagement (usually Catholic scholars defending the then dominant Augustine-Aquinas theory of the Just War) while others were evidently more pacifist in tone (generally Protestant scholars calling for a "reform" of defective medievalist views).

The more recent work, inspired by the public sight of several disastrously "failed" military interventions (such as Vietnam and Afghanistan) and the horrific record of genocidally-tinged conflict at the end of the 20th century (one of the bloodiest and nastiest on human record, though we still like to regard the ancients as less civilized than ourselves) have, again understandably, caused the Christian witness on war and violence to come under renewed scrutiny. Today the literature on war in early Christian tradition is extensive,¹⁴⁷ and a

¹⁴⁷ The chief sources in English are: Ronald Bainton. *Christian Attitudes to War and Peace. A Historical Survey and Critical Re-Evaluation*. Nashville. 1960; C. J. Cadoux. *The Early Christian Attitude to War*. Oxford, 1919 (repr. NY. 1982); A von Harnack. *Militia Christi: The Christian Religion and the Military in the First Three Centuries*. (tr. D.M. Gracie. Philadelphia. 1980; original German ed. 1905; H. A. Deane. *The Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine*. New York. 1963 (chs. 5–6); J. Helgeland. *Christians and Military Service: AD 173–337*. PhD Diss. University of Chicago. 1973. (summarized in Idem. "Christians and the Roman Army. AD. 173–337." *Church History*. 43. June 1974. 149–161; J.M. Hornus. *It is Not Lawful for me to Fight: Early Christian Attitudes to War, Violence and the State*. (trs. A. Kreider & O. Coburn). Scottsdale, PA, 1980; H. T. McElwain. *Augustine's Doctrine of War in Relation to Earlier Ecclesiastical Writers*. Rome, 1972; T. S. Miller & J. Nesbitt (eds). *Peace and War in Byzantium. Essays in Honor of G. T. Dennis*. CUA Press. Washington, 1995; E. A. Ryan. "The Rejection of

synopsis of the primary sources has recently been collated in a useful ready-reference volume, with a good contextualizing discussion.¹⁴⁸

While the common image of a militaristic Church is still, perhaps, prevalent in popular estimation, there are nevertheless, a multitude of pacific figures who feature in the Church's exemplary stories of the lives of the saints.

One such hagiography was the narrative on Abba Moses the Ethiopian in the *Tales of the Desert Fathers* who, when warned in advance of the impending attack of marauding Blemmyes tribesmen in 5th century Lower Egypt, refused to leave his cell, and (though famed as a strong man of previously violent temper) stayed quietly in prayer waiting for the fatal assault of the invading brigands. This story of his election of pacific martyrdom was celebrated as most unusual; a heroic and highly individualist spiritual act of a master (and thus not normative). All the other monks of Scete in his time were either slaughtered because they were surprised, or else had much earlier fled before the face of the storm of invasion.

In terms of pacific saints, the Russian church celebrates the 11th century princes Boris and Gleb, the sons of Vladimir, the first Christian ruler of ancient Rus (Kiev) who, in order to avoid a civil war on the death of their father (when the third son, Svyatopolk, took up arms to assert his right to monarchical supremacy), are said to have adopted the role of "Passion-Bearers." Refusing to bear arms for their own defense, and desiring to avoid bloodshed among their people, they followed the example of their new Lord, who suffered his own unjust Passion. The image and category of "passion-bearing martyr" is one that is dear to, almost distinctive of, the Russian church, so troubled has its history been.

Nevertheless, even this celebrated example contrasts, in many respects, with the witness of other Russian saint-heroes, such as the great

Military Service by the Early Christians." *Theological Studies*. 13. 1952. 1-32; W.R. Stevenson. *Christian Love and Just War: Moral Paradox and Political Life in St. Augustine and his Modern Interpreters*. Macon, GA, 1987.

¹⁴⁸ L. J. Swift. *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service*. (Message of the Fathers of the Church. Vol. 19). 1983. Wilmington, DE.

warrior prince Alexander Nevsky and contrasts with the witness of many other ancient churches too (such as the Byzantine, Romanian, Serbian, Nubian, or Ethiopian) who had an equally fraught pilgrimage through history, but who proudly elevated and honored the icons and examples of warrior-saints who resisted the onslaught militarily, and died in the process.

In the Romanian Church one of the great heroic founders was the warrior prince Petru Rares who slaughtered the invading Turkish armies under the guidance of his spiritual father and confessor Saint Daniel the Hesychast. The saint commanded the prince to erect monasteries on the site of the great battles, to ensure mourning and prayer for the lost souls whose blood had been shed. This was an act that was seen as a necessary expiation of Petru's "equally necessary" violence. Both he and his spiritual mentor were heavily burdened by their perceived duty of defending the borders of Christendom. To this day Romania's most ancient and beautiful churches stand as mute witnesses to a bloody history where Islam and Christianity's tectonic plates collided (as often they did in the history of the Christian East). The national perception in Romania of prince Vlad Dracul (the western bogeyman of Dracula) is diametrically opposed to the common perception of more or less everyone outside. Within the country Vlad himself is regarded as a national hero and a great Christian warrior who assumed the duty of defending the Faith against the military attempts of Islam forcibly to convert Europe.

Similarly, almost all the saints of Ethiopia are either monastic recluses or warriors. The saints of the (now lost) Church of Nubia¹⁴⁹ were also predominantly warriors. Likewise, the frescoes of saints on the walls of the ancient Stavronikita monastery on Mount Athos, on the Halkidiki peninsula, demonstrate serried ranks of martyr protectors dressed in full Roman battle gear, in attendance on the Christ in Majesty.¹⁵⁰ The monks were not particularly warlike themselves,

¹⁴⁹ Byzantine in foundation and structure, until its annihilation in the late 15th century

¹⁵⁰ See: M. Chatzidakis. *The Cretan Painter Theophanes: The Wall-Paintings of the*

but knew at first hand the terrors of living in the pirate-infested Mediterranean. Like the Nubians, a life entirely and permanently surrounded by hostile foes, gave the Athonite monks a very practical attitude to violence, pacific resistance, and the need for defense in varieties of forms.

The western church too has its share of noble saint-warriors. In medieval English literature the warrior saint was a highly romantic figure.¹⁵¹ We can also think of the famed Crusading juggernaut Louis the Pious. These, however, are noticeably not, any longer, “popular saints” (as their counterparts remain in Eastern Christianity) though this may be laid to the door of a generic loss of interest in hagiography and the cultus of the saints in contemporary Western Christianity, as much to a sense of embarrassment that the ranks of saints included so many generals of armies.

Along with its warriors, the Western Church often appealed, for an example of pacific lifestyle, to the Christ-like image of Francis of Assisi, in preference perhaps to the more robust figure of Dominic and his inquisitorial Order of Preachers, although one ought not to forget that the Franciscan order itself had from its early origins a foundational charge to evangelize Muslims in the Middle and Near East; its own form of potential “Inquisition” that never had the opportunity to flourish because of Ottoman power, but which was often felt as real enough and resented greatly by the Eastern rite Christians of those places.

This macro-picture of Church History as a sclerotic decline, where simple origins are progressively corrupted into oppressive structures as the church seizes an ever-larger foothold on the face of the earth, is so familiar, almost clichéd, that it hardly needs further amplification.

It is perfectly exemplified in the general presumption that the Christian movement before the age of the Emperor Constantine the

Holy Monastery of Stavronikita. Thessaloniki. (published on Mount Athos). 1986.

¹⁵¹ Cf. J. E. Damon. *Soldier Saints and Holy Warriors: Warfare and Sanctity in the Literature of Early England*. Aldershot. Ashgate Press, 2003.

Great (4th century) was mainly pacific in philosophy, but afterwards began theologically to justify the use of coercive force, and so began the long slide into all manner of corruption of power, and abandonment of the primitive spirit of the gentle Jesus.¹⁵²

The theory is problematized to some degree by the issue of “conflicted contextualization” for the notable resistance of the earliest Christian movement (2nd through to early 4th centuries) to military service: whether this was predominantly pacifist in temperament; or was related to the military requirements to worship the pagan pantheon of gods; or was simply an aspect of the fear of an oppressed and persecuted group in the face of the state’s arm of power. In early canon law the military profession had the same status as a harlot when it came to the seeking of baptism: before admission to the church was countenanced an alternative career had to be sought.

After the Pax Constantina, that prohibition was relaxed as even the Christian emperors expected their fellow-Christians to take up their station in the army. Recent historical study has progressively argued that the advancement of Christians to political and military power should not be seen as a surprisingly miraculous event (as the legend of Constantine would have it be), but the result of more than a century of prior political and military infiltration of the higher offices of state by Christians bearing arms. The earliest materials (martyrial stories of how the poor resisted the Roman *imperium*) tend to come from the account of the churches of the local victims.¹⁵³

The full story (why, for example, Diocletian targeted Christians within his own court and army to initiate the Great persecution of the

¹⁵² Helgeland (1973, p. 17.) illustrates how both Harnack and Cadoux’s works progress from this shared presupposition despite their different perspectives on the issue of pacifism as a general Christian ideal. (Cadoux regarded Harnack as having soft-pedaled the Church’s early peace witness).

¹⁵³ The early martyrial acts are charged with the dramatic characterization of the martyr as the apocalyptic witness, and the condemning magistrate as eschatological servant of the Beast. The narratives often deliberately follow the literary paradigm of the Passion Story of the Gospels. The Martyrdom of Polycarp is one such example.

early 4th century¹⁵⁴) is less to the front: but clearly the great revolution of the 4th century which saw an internationally ascendant Church, was not simply an altruistic ‘gift’ of power to a pacific Christian movement, but more in the terms of an acknowledgment by Constantine that his own path to monarchy lay with the powerful international lobby of Christians. The question as to ‘who patronized who’: Constantine the Church, or the Church Constantine, remains one that is surely more evenly balanced than is commonly thought. The military and political involvement of Christians, therefore, (as distinct from the ‘Church’ shall we say) is something that is not so simply ‘switched’ at the 4th century watershed of Constantine’s “conversion.”

Nevertheless, the story that from primitive and “pure” beginnings the Christian movement degenerated into a more warlike compromise with state power, is a good story precisely because it is so cartoon-like in its crudity. It ought not to be forgotten, however, that it ‘is’ a story, not a simple record of uncontested facts. It is a story, moreover, that took its origin as part of a whole dossier of similar stories meant to describe the movement of Christianity through history in terms of early promise, followed by rapid failure, succeeded by the age of reform and repristination of the primitive righteousness.

In short, the common view of Christianity’s peace tradition, as sketched out above, is clearly a product of Late-Medieval Reformation apologetics. That so much of this early-modern propaganda has survived to form a substrate of presupposition in post-modern thought about Christian history is a testimony to the power of the apologetic stories themselves, and (doubtless) to the widespread distrust of the motives of the late medieval church authorities in western Europe at the time of the Reformation.

The common view about Christianity’s peace tradition, however, is so hopelessly rooted in western, apologetic, and ‘retrospectivist’ presuppositions (a thorough-going Protestant revision of the

¹⁵⁴ Or how it might well be the case that Christian soldiers had already taken the imperial throne by force of arms in the mid 3rd century (in the case of Philip the Arab).

Catholic tradition on the morality of war and violence that had preceded it) that it is high time the issue should be considered afresh.

The common histories of Christianity, even to this day, seem to pretend that its eastern forms (the Syrians, Byzantines, Armenians, Copts, Nubians, Indians, Ethiopians, or Cappadocians) never existed, or at least were never important enough to merit mention; or that western Europe is a normal and normative vantage point for considering the story. But this narrow perspective skews the evidence at the outset.

Accordingly, the figures of Augustine of Hippo (the towering 5th century African theologian) and Thomas Aquinas (the greatest of the Latin medieval scholastic theologians) loom very large in the normative western-form of the telling of the tale. Both theologians were highly agentive in developing the western Church's theory and principles of a 'Just War.'

In the perspectives of the eastern Christian tradition, not only do these two monumental figures not feature but, needless to say, neither does their theory on the moral consideration of war and violence which has so dominated the western imagination. Eastern Christianity simply does not approach the issue from the perspective of 'Just War,' and endorses no formal doctrine advocating the possibility of a 'Just War.'

Its approach is ambivalent, more complex and nuanced. For that reason it has been largely overlooked in the annals of the history of Christianity, or even dismissed as self-contradictory. It is not self-contradictory, of course, having been proven by experience through centuries of political suffering and oppression. If it knows anything, the Eastern Church knows how to endure, and hardly needs lessons on such a theme; but it is certainly not a linear theory of war and violence that it holds (as if war and violence could be imagined as susceptible of rational solution and packaging). Its presuppositions grow from a different soil than do modern and post-modern notions of political and moral principles.

Christianity was, and remains at heart, an apocalyptic religion, and it is no accident that its numerous biblical references to war and

violent destruction are generally apocalyptic ciphers, symbols that stand for something else, references to the ‘Eschaton’ (the image of how the world will be rolled up and assessed once universal justice is imposed by God on his recalcitrant and rebellious creation). Biblical descriptions of violence and war, in most of Christianity’s classical exposition of its biblical heritage, rather than being straightforward depictions of the life and values of ‘This-World-Order’ are thus eschatological allegories. To confound the two orders¹⁵⁵ (taking war images of the apocalyptic dimension) for instances of how the world (here) ought to be managed¹⁵⁶ is a gross distortion of the ancient literature. This has become increasingly a problem since the medieval period when allegorist readings of scripture have been progressively substituted (especially in Protestantism) for wholesale historicist and literalist readings of the ancient texts.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ What the ancient sources described as the “Two Ages” (This Age of turmoil that stands within the historical record and permits brutal oppression as the ultimate symbol of “the Beast,” that is evil personified, and the Other Age, which is the Transcendent “Kingdom of God” when peace will be established by the definitive ending of violent powers hostile to the good., and the comforting of the poor.

¹⁵⁶ It is a major category mistake, therefore, for fundamentalist Christians to apply apocalyptically matrixed scriptural references to “war in the heavens spilling out on earth,” as authoritative “justifications” from the Bible for Christians to engage in violent conflict for political ends. The essence of biblical, apocalyptic, doctrine is that the Two Ages must never be conflated or confused. The “Next Age” cannot be ushered in by political victories gained in “This Age.” By this means Christianity, in its foundational vision, undercut the principles that continue to inspire Judaism and Islam with their (essentially) non-apocalyptic understandings of the spreading of the Kingdom of God on Earth in recognizable borders, and militarily if necessary.

¹⁵⁷ As if, for example, the biblical narratives of the Pentateuch where God commands Moses and Joshua to slaughter the Canaanite inhabitants in the process of seizing the “Promised Land” were to be read literally — as both vindicating war for “righteous reasons,” and validating the forced appropriation of territories after conflict. Protestant fundamentalism would, of course, read the texts with that political slant (symbolically going further to adapt the text to justify Christianity’s use of violence in a just cause); whereas the ancient Church consistently reads the narrative as allegorically symbolic of the perennial quest to

This is not to say that eastern Christianity itself has not been guilty of its own misreadings of evidences, in various times of its history, or that it has no blood on its hands, for that would be to deny the brutal facts of a Church that has progressively been driven westwards, despite its own will, by a series of military disasters, for the last thousand years. But, Christian reflection in the eastern Church has, I would suggest, been more careful than the West, to remind itself of the apocalyptic and mysterious nature of the Church's place within history and on the world-stage, and has stubbornly clung to a less congratulatory theory of the morality of war (despite its advocacy of 'Christian imperium'), because it sensed that such a view was more in tune with the principles of the Gospels. What follows in this paper is largely a consideration of that peace tradition in the perspective of the eastern provinces of Christianity, the 'patristic' foundation that went on to provide the underpinning of Byzantine canon law, and (after the fall of Byzantium), the system of law that still operates throughout the churches of the East.

In the decades following the First World War, Adolf Von Harnack was one of the first among modern patristic theologians to assemble a whole dossier of materials on the subject of the Church's early traditions on war and violence.¹⁵⁸ In his macro-thesis he favored the theory of the "fall from grace," and argued that the Church progressively relaxed its earliest blanket hostility to bloodshed and the military profession in general. The relaxation of anti-war discipline, he saw as part and parcel of a wider 'corruption' of early Christian ideals by 'Hellenism.'

And yet, no Eastern Christian attitudes to war, either before or after the Pax Constantina, have ever borne much relation to classic

overcome evil tendencies by virtuous action. The Canaanites assume the symbolic status of personal vice, the Israelite armies, the status of the ethical struggle. While this allegorical symbolism still depends in large degree on a symbolic reading of violent images, it successfully defuses a wholesale biblical "sanction" for violence and war.

¹⁵⁸ A. Harnack. *Militia Christi. The Christian Religion and The Military in the First Three Centuries* (Tr. D. McL. Gracie). Philadelphia, 1981.

Hellenistic and Roman war theory,¹⁵⁹ being constantly informed and conditioned by biblical paradigms (reined in by Jesus' strictures on the futility of violence) rather than by Hellenistic Kingship theory or tribal theories of national pride.

In the second part to his study (subtitled "The Christian Religion and the Military Profession"), Harnack went further to discuss the wide extent of biblical images of war and vengeance in the Christian foundational documents, suggesting that the imagery of "spiritual warfare" however removed it might be from the "real world" when it was originally coined, must take some responsibility for advocating the sanctification of war theories within the church in later ages.¹⁶⁰

For Harnack, and many others following in his wake, Constantine was the villain of the piece, and not less so his apologist the Christian bishop Eusebius of Caesarea. The latter finds no problem at all in comparing the deaths of the wicked as recounted in Old Testament narratives of holy war, with Constantine's conquest and execution of his enemies in the Civil War of the early 4th century.¹⁶¹ For Eusebius, writing in 336, the cessation of the war in 324 was a fulfillment of the Psalmic and Isaian prophecies of a golden age of peace.¹⁶²

Eusebius' fulsome rhetoric has had a great deal of weight placed upon it by those who favor the "theory of fall," even though on any sober consideration, to extrapolate a court-theologian such as

¹⁵⁹ Though Ambrose and Augustine take much of their views on the subject from Cicero.

¹⁶⁰ He probably underestimated the extent to which the early Church was propelled, not by subservience to emperors, but more by the way in which the war theology of ancient Israel was passed on as an authoritative paradigm, simply by the force of ingesting so much of the Old Testament narratives in the structure of its prayers, liturgies, and doctrines. It is, nonetheless, worthy of note that formally, from early times, the war passages of the Old Testament were consistently preached as allegorical symbols of the battle to establish peaceful virtues in human hearts (not the advocating of conquest of specific territories). Harnack himself admitted (when considering the example of the Salvation Army, that this aspect of this thesis could limp badly.

¹⁶¹ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*. 9.9. 5–8; *Life of Constantine*. 1.39.

¹⁶² Is. 2.4; Ps. 72.7–8.

Eusebius into a marker of general opinion in the Church of the early 4th century should have been more universally acknowledged to be a serious mistake. Eusebius' more sober thoughts on the expansion of the Church (as exemplified by Constantine's victory over persecuting emperors, and his clear favoritism for the Christians) was really an intellectual heritage from that great theological teacher whose disciple he prided himself on being — Origen of Alexandria.

It was certainly Origen who had put into his mind the juxtaposition of the ideas of the Pax Romana being the providentially favorable environment for the rapid internationalization of the Gospel. Origen himself, however, was pacifist in his attitudes to war and world powers, and was sternly against the notion of the Church advocating its transmission and spread by force of arms.¹⁶³ In his wider exegesis, Eusebius shows himself consistently to be a follower of his teacher's lead and the Old Testament paradigms of the "downfall of the wicked" are what are generally at play in both Origen and Eusebius when they highlight biblical examples of vindication, or military collapse.

Several scholars misinterpret Eusebius radically, therefore, when they read his laudation of Constantine as some kind of prophetic justification of the Church as an asserter of rightful violence. His Panegyric on Constantine should not be given such theoretical weight, just as a collection of wedding congratulatory speeches today would hardly be perused for a cutting edge analysis of the times. In applying biblical tropes and looking for fulfillments, Eusebius (certainly in the wider panoply if all his work is taken together not simply his court laudations) is looking to the past, not to the future; and is intent only on celebrating what for most in his generation must have truly seemed miraculous — that their oppressors had fallen, and that they themselves were now free from the fear of torture and death.

Origen and Eusebius may have set a tone of later interpretation that could readily grow into a vision of the Church as the inheritor of

¹⁶³ See N McLynn. "Roman Empire," pp. 185–187 J.A. McGuckin (ed.). *The Westminster Handbook to Origen of Alexandria*. Louisville, KY, 2004.

the biblical promises about the Davidic kingdom (that the boundaries of Byzantine Christian power were concomitant with the Kingdom of God on earth, and thus that all those who lay outside those boundaries were the enemies of God), but there were still innumerable dissidents even in the long-lasting Byzantine Christian *politeia* (especially the monks) who consistently refused to relax the apocalyptic dimension of their theology, and who resisted the notion that the Church and the Byzantine borders were one and the same thing.¹⁶⁴

The Canonical Epistles of Basil of Caesarea.

Basil of Caesarea was a younger contemporary of Eusebius, and in the following generation of the Church of the late 4th century, he emerged as one of the leading theorists of the Christian movement. His letters and instructions on the ascetic life, and his 'Canons'¹⁶⁵ (ethical judgments as from a ruling bishop to his flock) on morality and practical issues became highly influential in the wider church because of his role as one of the major monastic theorists of Early Christianity. His canonical epistles were transmitted wherever monasticism went: and in the Eastern Church of antiquity (because monasticism was the substructure of the spread of the Christian movement), that more or less meant his canonical views became the standard paradigm of Eastern Christianity's theoretical approach to the morality of war and violence, even though the writings were local¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ For a further elaboration of the argument see: J. A. McGuckin, "The Legacy of the Thirteenth Apostle: Origins of the East—Christian Conceptions of Church-State Relation." *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 47. Nos. 3–4. 2003. 251–288.

¹⁶⁵ The "Canonical Epistles of St. Basil," otherwise known as the "92 canons." They can be found in English translation *The Pedalion or Rudder of the Orthodox Catholic Church: The Compilation of the Holy Canons by Saints Nicodemus and Agapius*, Tr. D. Cummings. (Orthodox Christian Educational Society). Chicago, 1957 (repr. NY. 1983). pp. 772–864.

¹⁶⁶ Basil was the Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, now a city (Kaisariye) of Eastern Turkey.

and occasional in origin. Basil's 92 Canonical Epistles were adapted by various Ecumenical Councils of the Church that followed his time. His writing is appealed to in Canon 1 of the 4th Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451), in Canon 1 of the 7th Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (787), and is literally cited in Canon 2 of the 6th Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (681) which paraphrases much else from his canonical epistles. By such affirmations eventually the entire corpus of the Basilian Epistles entered the Pandects of Canon Law of the Byzantine Eastern Church, and they remain authoritative to this day.

Basil has several things to say about violence and war in his diocese. It was a border territory of the empire, and his administration had known several incursions by "barbarian" forces. Canon 13 of the 92 considers war:

"Our fathers did not consider killings committed in the course of wars to be classifiable as murders at all, on the score, it seems to me, of allowing a pardon to men fighting in defense of sobriety and piety. Perhaps, though, it might be advisable to refuse them communion for three years, on the ground that their hands are not clean."¹⁶⁷

The balance and sense of discretion is remarkable in this little comment, one that bears much weight in terms of Eastern Orthodox understandings of the morality of war. The "fathers" in question refers to Athanasius of Alexandria, the great Nicene Orthodox authority of the 4th century church. Athanasius' defense of the Nicene creed, and the divine status of Christ, had won him immense prestige by the end of the 4th century, and as his works were being collated and disseminated (in his own lifetime his reputation had been highly conflicted, his person exiled numerous times, and his writings proscribed by imperial censors), Basil seems to wish to add a cautionary note: that not everything a "father" has to say is equally momentous, or universally authoritative. In his Letter to Amun Athanasius had apparently come out quite straightforwardly about the legitimacy of killing in time of war, saying:

¹⁶⁷ Basil. Ep. 188. 13; Pedalion. p. 801.

“Although one is not supposed to kill, the killing of the enemy in time of war is both a lawful and praiseworthy thing. This is why we consider individuals who have distinguished themselves in war as being worthy of great honors, and indeed public monuments are set up to celebrate their achievements. It is evident, therefore, that at one particular time, and under one set of circumstances, an act is not permissible, but when time and circumstances are right, it is both allowed and condoned.”¹⁶⁸

This saying was being circulated, and given authority as a “patristic witness” simply because it had come from Athanasius. In fact the original letter had nothing whatsoever to do with war. The very example of the “war-hero” is a sardonic reference *ad hominem* since the letter was addressed to an aged leader of the Egyptian monks who described themselves as Asketes, that is those who labored and “fought” for the virtuous life. The military image is entirely incidental, and Athanasius in context merely uses it to illustrate his chief point in the letter—which is to discuss the query Amun had sent on to him as Archbishop: “Did nocturnal emissions count as sins for desert celibates?” Athanasius replies to the effect that with human sexuality, as with all sorts of other things, the context of the activity determines what is moral, not some absolute standard which is superimposed on moral discussion from the outset. Many ancients, Christian and pagan, regarded sexual activity as inherently defiling and here Athanasius decidedly takes leave of them. His argument, therefore, is falsely attributed when (as is often the case) read out of context as an apparent justification of killing in time of war. He is not actually condoning the practice at all, merely using the rhetorical example of current opinion to show Amun that contextual variability is very important in making moral judgments.

In his turn Basil, wishes to make it abundantly clear for his Christian audience that such a reading, if applied to the Church’s

¹⁶⁸ Athanasius Epistle 48. To Amun. full text in A Robertson (tr). *St. Athanasius Select Works and Letters. Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Church*. Vol. 4. (1891). repr. Eerdmans. Grand Rapids, 1980. pp. 556–7.

tradition on war, is simplistic, and that is it is just plain wrong-headedness to conclude that the issue ceases to be problematic if one is able to dig up a justificatory “proof text” from scripture or patristic tradition (as some seem to have been doing with these words of Athanasius). And so, Basil sets out a nuanced corrective exegesis of what the Church’s canon law should really be in terms of fighting in time of hostilities. One of the ways he does this is to attribute this aphorism of Athanasius to indeterminate “fathers,” who can then be legitimately corrected by taking a stricter view than they appeared to allow. He also carefully sets his own context: what he speaks about is the canonical regulation of war in which a Christian can engage and be “amerced”;¹⁶⁹ all other armed conflicts are implicitly excluded as not being appropriate to Christian morality). Basil’s text on war needs, therefore, to be understood in terms of an “economic” reflection on the ancient canons that forbade the shedding of blood in blanket terms. This tension between the ideal standard (no bloodshed) and the complexities of the context in which a local church

¹⁶⁹That is find canonical forgiveness for the act of shedding blood: which is canonically prohibited. The background context of the canons which forbid the shedding of blood are important to Basil’s thought, and are presumed throughout. He takes it for granted that clergy are absolutely forbidden to shed blood: and even if they do so accidentally, will be prohibited from celebrating the Eucharistic mysteries afterwards. In this case, just as with the church’s canonical rules relating to the prohibition of second marriages, what began as a general rule, was relaxed in its application to wider society, although the clergy were required to sustain the original strict interpretation (see *Apostolical Canons* 66. *Pedalion*. pp. 113–116.) Today in Orthodoxy, marriage is described as a one-time occurrence: but if the marriage is broken a second (and even third) marriage can be contracted “as an economy” to human conditions and relational failures. The clergy, however, are not allowed to contract second marriages (even if the first wife has died). The economy is not permitted to them. Clergy in the Eastern tradition are still canonically forbidden from engaging in any violence, beyond the minimum necessary to defend their life (Apostolic Canon 66) though they are censured if they do not vigorously defend a third party being attacked in their presence. For both things (use of excessive violence in self-defense, and refusal to use violence in defense of another, they are given the penalty of deposition from orders).

finds itself thrown in times of conflict and war, is witnessed in several other ancient laws, such as Canon 14 of Hippolytus (also from the 4th century).¹⁷⁰ The reasons Basil gives for suggesting that killing in time of hostilities could be distinguished from voluntary murder pure and simple (for which the canonical penalty was a lifelong ban from admission to the churches and from the sacraments) is set out as the “defense of sobriety and piety.” This is code language for the defense of Christian borders from the ravages of pagan marauders. The difficulty Basil had to deal with was not war on the large-scale, but local tribal insurgents who were mounting attacks on Roman border towns, with extensive rapinage. In such circumstances Basil has little patience for those who do not feel they can fight because of religious scruples. His sentiment is more that a passive non-involvement betrays the Christian family (especially its weaker members who can not defend themselves but need others to help them) to the ravages of men without heart or conscience to restrain them. The implication of his argument, then, is that the provocation to fighting, that Christians ought at some stage to accept (to defend the honor and safety of the weak), will be inherently a limited and adequate response, mainly because the honor and tradition of the Christian faith (piety and sobriety) in the hearts and minds of the warriors, will restrict the bloodshed to a necessary minimum. His “economic” solution nevertheless makes it abundantly clear that the absolute standard of Christian morality turns away from war as an unmitigated evil. This is why we can note that the primary reason Basil gives that previous “fathers” had distinguished killing in time of war, from the case of simple murder, was “on the score of allowing a pardon.” There was no distinction made here in terms of the quali-

¹⁷⁰ “A Christian should not volunteer to become a soldier, unless he is compelled to do this by someone in authority. He can have a sword, but he should not be commanded to shed blood. If it can be shown that he has shed blood he should stay away from the mysteries (sacraments) at least until he has been purified through tears and lamentation.” *Canons of Hippolytus* 14.74. Text in Swift (1983) p. 93. See also *Apostolic Tradition* 16.

tative horror of the deed itself, rather in terms of the way in which the deed could be “cleansed” by the Church’s system of penance.

Is it logical to expect a Christian of his diocese to engage in the defense of the homeland, while simultaneously penalizing him if he spills blood in the process? Well, one needs to contextualize the debarment from the sacrament in the generic 4th century practice of the reception of the Eucharist, which did not expect regular communion to begin with (ritual preparation was extensive and involved fasting and almsgiving and prayer), and where a sizeable majority of adult Christians in a given church would not have yet been initiated by means of baptism, and were thus not bound to keep all the canons of the Church. By his regulation and by the ritual exclusion of the illumined warrior from the sacrament (the returning “victor” presumably would have received many other public honors and the gratitude of the local folk) Basil is making sure at least one public sign is given to the entire community that the Gospel standard has no place for war, violence and organized death. He is trying to sustain an eschatological balance: that war is not part of the Kingdom of God (signified in the Eucharistic ritual as arriving in the present) but is part of the bloody and greed-driven reality of world affairs which is the “Kingdom-Not-Arrived.” By moving in and out of Eucharistic reception Basil’s faithful Christian (returning from his duty with blood on his hands) is now in the modality of expressing his dedication to the values of peace and innocence, by means of the lamentation and repentance for life that has been taken, albeit the blood of the violent. Basil’s arrangement that the returning noble warrior’ should stand in the Church (not in the narthex where the other public sinners were allocated spaces) but refrain from communion, makes the statement that a truly honorable termination of war, for a Christian, has to be an honorable repentance.

Several commentators (not least many of the later western Church fathers) have regarded this as “fudge,” but it seems to me to express, in a finely tuned “economic” way, the tension in the basic Christian message that there is an unresolvable shortfall between the ideal and the real in an apocalyptically charged religion. What this Basilian

canon does most effectively is to set a “No Entry” sign to any potential theory of Just War within Christian theology,¹⁷¹ and should set up a decided refusal of post-war church-sponsored self-congratulations for victory.¹⁷² All violence, local, individual, or nationally-sanctioned is here stated to be an expression of hubris that is inconsistent with the values of the Kingdom of God, and while in many circumstances that violence may be ‘necessary’ or ‘unavoidable’ (Basil states the only legitimate reasons as the defense of the weak and innocent) it is never ‘justifiable.’ Even for the best motives in the world, the shedding of blood remains a defilement, such that the true Christian, afterwards, would wish to undergo the cathartic experience of temporary return to the lifestyle of penance, that is ‘be penitent.’ Basil’s restriction of the time of penance to three years (seemingly harsh to us moderns) was actually a commonly recognized sign of merciful leniency in the ancient rule book of the early Church.¹⁷³

Concluding Reflections

We might today regard such early attempts by Christians as quaintly naive. They are wired through the early penitential system, clearly, and

¹⁷¹ As developed especially (out of Cicero) by Ambrose of Milan *On Duties*, 1. 176; and Augustine (Epistle 183.15; *Against Faustus* 22. 69–76; and see Swift: 1983, pp. 110–149). But Ambrose (ibid. 1. 35.175) specifically commands his priests to have no involvement (inciting or approving) whatsoever in the practice of war or judicial punishments: “Interest in matters of war,” he says, “seems to me to be alien to our role as priests.”

¹⁷² Many churches have uneasily juggled this responsibility in times past. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher famously denounced the Archbishop of Canterbury’s post-Falklands-war service at St. Paul’s cathedral in London as “far too wet,” while other critics in the country were hard on him for not stating at the outset that the Falklands invasion did not fulfill the requirements of a “just war” in terms of classical western theory, and thus should have been more severely denounced by the Church.

¹⁷³ Ordinary murder was given a 20 year debarment from the church’s sacraments as well as all accruing civic penalties. Basil’s Canon 56. *Pedalion*, p. 827; manslaughter received a ten year debarment. Basil’s Canon 57. *Pedalion*, p. 828.

have a fundamental 'economic' character about them. By Economy the early church meant the art of doing what was possible when a higher ideal standard was not sustained. In the case of war Basil and the canonical tradition are tacitly saying that when the Kingdom ideals of peace and reconciliation collapse, especially in times of war when decisive and unusual action is required, and the ideals of reconciliation and forgiveness fall into chaos in the very heart of the Church itself,¹⁷⁴ as members go off to fight, then the ideal must be reasserted as soon as possible—with limitations to the hostilities a primary concern, and a profound desire to mark the occasion retrospectively with a public 'cleansing.' While the honor of the combatants is celebrated by Basil (even demanded as an act of protection for the weak), one essential aspect of that honor is also listed as being the public acceptance of the status of penitent shedder of blood. The clergy (as with other economic concessions of morality operative in the church's canons) are the only ones not allowed benefit of necessity. In no case is violent action permitted to one who stands at the altar of God. Even if a cleric spills blood accidentally (such as in an involuntary manslaughter) such a person would be deposed from active presbyteral office. The sight of 'warrior-bishops' in full military regalia passing through the streets of Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade left its mark on contemporary Greek sources as one of the greatest 'shocks' to the system, and one of the incidentals that were taken by the Greeks as proof positive that Latin Christianity in the 13th century had a serious illness at its center.

More than naive, perhaps, might we regard such a morality of war as seriously 'under-developed'? Can such an important issue really be dealt with by so few canons of the ancient Eastern Church, and even then, by regulations that are so evidently local and occasional in

¹⁷⁴ Note that they are not querying the collapse of peace ideals outside the church as they regard the spread of hubris and violence on the earth as a clear mark of all those dark forces hostile to the heavenly Kingdom. The advocacy of war that is not a direct response to a clear and present threat of aggression is thus permanently ruled out of the court of morality in this system.

character? Well, the charges of inconsistency (praising a noble warrior then subjecting him to penance) and muddle-headedness, were raised in early times, especially by Latin theologians who wanted to press the envelope and arrive at a more coherent and all-embracing theory of war: one that balanced the apparent biblical justifications of hostility on the part of the chosen people, with the need to limit the obvious blood-lust of our species. The Latin theory of Just War was one result. Considered primarily (as it was meant to be) as a theory of the limitation of hostilities in the ancient context (hand to hand fighting of massed armies whose very size limited the time of possible engagement to a matter of months at most), it too was an 'economic' theory that had much merit. Its usefulness became moot in the medieval period when armament manufacture took ancient warfare into a new age, and it has become utterly useless in the modern age of mechanized warfare, where it could not stop the fatal transition (on which modernized mechanical warfare depends — both that sponsored by states, and that sponsored by smaller groups which we call 'terrorism') to the centrally important role of the murder of non-combatants. Be that as it may, it is not the purpose of the present essay to offer a sustained critique on Just War theory — merely to raise up a mainline Christian tradition of the ancient East which has never believed in Just War — and to offer instead of an elegant theory, a poor threadbare suggestion of old saints: that War is never justified or justifiable, but is *de facto* a sign and witness of evil and sin.

When it falls across the threshold of the Church in an unavoidable way, it sometimes becomes our duty (so the old canons say) to take up arms; though when that is the case is to be determined in trepidation by the elect who understand the value of peace and reconciliation, not in self-glorifying battle cries from the voices of the bloodthirsty and foolish. But in no case is the shedding of blood, even against a manifestly wicked foe, ever a 'Just Violence.' The eastern canons, for all their tentativeness, retain that primitive force of Christian experience on that front. It may be the 'Violence of the Just' but in that case the hostility will necessarily be ended with the mini-

mal expenditure of force, and be marked in retrospect by the last act of the 'violent Just' which will be repentance that finally resolves the untenable paradox. Ambivalent and 'occasional' such a theory of War might be: but if it had been followed with fidelity the Church's hands might have been cleaner than they have been across many centuries; and it might yet do a service on the wider front in helping Western Christianity to dismantle its own 'economic' structures of war theory which are so patently in need of radical re-thinking. Perhaps the place to begin, as is usually the case, is here and now: with 'Christian America' at the dawn of a new millennium, in which we seem to have learned nothing at all from generations of bitter experience of hostility: except the hubris that international conflicts can be undertaken 'safely' now that other super-powers are currently out of commission. Such is the wisdom of the most powerful nation on earth, currently in an illegal state of war¹⁷⁵ which it wishes to disguise even from itself, even as the American military deaths this month exceeded 1000, with a pervasive silence all that it has to offer in relation to all figures of the deaths of those who were not American troops. Such is the wisdom under a leadership that is itself apparently eager to line up for a 'righteous struggle' with the 'forces of evil,' which so many others in the world outside, have seen as more in the line of a determined dominance of Islamic sensibilities by Super-Power secularism of the crassest order. In such a strange new millennium, perhaps the wisdom of the need to be tentative, finds a new power and authority.

¹⁷⁵ The conflict in Iraq, an invasion not given sanction of international law through the medium United Nations, but initiated to overthrow the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein on the pretext that he was manufacturing weapons of mass destruction.

CHAPTER NINE

Study and Action Guide

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INTERNET LINKS

Orthodox Churches

Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople:

www.patriarchate.org

Patriarchate of Alexandria and all Africa:

www.greekorthodox-alexandria.org

Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East:

www.antiochpat.org

Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem:

www.jerusalem-patriarchate.org

Russian Orthodox Church:

www.mospat.ru

Serbian Orthodox Church:

www.spc.rs

Romanian Orthodox Church:

www.patriarhia.ro

Bulgarian Orthodox Church:

www.bg-patriarshia.bg

Church of Georgia:

www.patriarchate.ge

Church of Cyprus:

www.churchofcyprus.org.cy

Church of Greece:

www.ecclesia.gr

Orthodox Church of Poland:

www.orthodox.pl

Orthodox Church of Albania:

www.orthodoxalbania.org

Orthodox Church of the Czech and Slovak Republics:

www.pravoslav.gts.cz

Orthodox Church in Finland:

www.ort.fi

Orthodox Church in America:

www.oca.org

Orthodox Church in Japan:

www.orthodoxjapan.jp

Peace-related web sites

Orthodox Peace Fellowship:

www.incommunion.org

World Council of Churches Decade to Overcome Violence Programme:

www.overcomingviolence.org

Resources on Nationalism on the Web

Fordham University Internet Sourcebook on Nationalism. A brief discussion of nationalism; links to many primary sources and a few secondary sources.

www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook17.html

Website dedicated to the study of nationalism.

www.nationalismproject.org

ADDRESSES

Peace Organizations

Orthodox Peace Fellowship

Kanisstraat 5

1811 GJ Alkmaar

The Netherlands

E-mail: incommunion@cs.org

Web: www.incommunion.org

World Council of Churches

Decade to Overcome Violence

P.O. Box 2100

1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland

Tel: 41 22 791 60 47, fax: 41 22 791 64 06

E-mail: dov@wcc-coe.org

Web: www.wcc-coe.org/dov

Church & Peace International

Ringstrasse 14, D-35641 Schöffengrund, Germany

tel: +49 6445 5588, fax: +49 6445 5070

E-mail: IntlOffice@church-and-peace.org

Web: www.c3.hu/~bocs/chp/leaflet/chpl-a.htm

International Fellowship of Reconciliation

Spoorstraat 38, 1815 BK Alkmaar, the Netherlands

Tel: 31-72: 512 3014

E-mail: office@ifor.org

Web: www.ifor.org

Pax Christi International

Rue du Vieux Marché aux Grains 21

B-1000 / Brussels, Belgium

Tel. 32 (0)2.502.55.50 Fax. 32(0)2.502.46.26

E-mail. webmaster@paxchristi.net

Web: www.paxchristi.net

Orthodox Military Chaplaincies or Main Offices of Orthodox Churches

Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North America

His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah, Military Ordinary

4550 East Alameda Avenue

Denver, Colorado 80246-1208

E-mail: diocese@godenverdiocese.org

tel 00 1 303 333-7794; fax: 00 1 303 333-7796

Rev. Protopresbyter Luke Uhl, Endorsing Agent 00 1 303 333-7794

FatherLuke@alumni.utexas.net

Russian Orthodox Church

Department for co-operation with the armed forces and law-enforcement agencies

V. Rev. Dimitry Smirnov

Ul. Bol'shaya Serpukhovskaya 24, 115093 Moscow, Russia

info@pobeda.ru

www.pobeda.ru

Serbian Orthodox Church

Kralja Petra br. 5, Belgrade, 11000, Serbia, Yugoslavia

Tel: 381-11-18-63-71, fax: 381-11-32-83-997

Web Site: www.serbian-church.net

Romanian Orthodox Church

Aleea Patriarhiei 2, Bucharest IV 70526, Romania

Tel: 40-1-337-27-76, fax: 40-1-337-09-08

E-mail: patriarhia@dnt.ro

Web Site: www.patriarhia.ro

Bulgarian Orthodox Church

Oboriste 4, Sofia 1090, Bulgaria

Tel: 359-2-98-75-611, fax: 359-2-98-70-289

E-mail: synod@aster.net

Web Site: bulch.tripod.com/boc/mainpage.htm

Church of Georgia

Department for interaction with the armed forces and law-enforcement institutions

His Eminence Bishop Grigoli (Verbichashvili) of Poti and Senaki

Guriis Kuca 1, 384690 Poti, Georgia

00 995 393 21456, fax 00 995 393 21000

Church of Cyprus

PO Box 1130, Nicosia 1016, Cyprus

Tel: 357-22-43-06-96, fax: 357-22-47-41-80

Church of Greece

Ag. Philotheis 21, 10556 Athens, Greece

Tel 30-10-335-23-00, fax: 30-10-322-46-73

E-mail: contact@ecclesia.gr

Web Site: www.ecclesia.gr

Synodal Committee for Poemantic Issues and Situations (Including Army Affairs)

Secretary: Very Rev. Demetrios Tzerpos

Tel: 00 30 210 7272245

Hellenic National Defense General Staff

Chaplains Directorate of the Hellenic Armed Forces

Athens, Greece

Fax 30 210 6575165

www.geetha.mil.gr/index.asp?a_id=1546

Orthodox Church of Poland

Orthodox Chaplaincy Department

His Excellency Bishop Miron of Hajnowka, Orthodox Ordinary for
the Polish Armed Forces

Secretary: Rev. Marian Bendza

ul. Banacha 2, 03-402 Warsaw, Poland

tel. 48 022 6826773

fax. 48 022 6826774

www.ordynariat.republika.pl

Orthodox Church in Finland

Very Rev. Leo Huurinainen, military Chaplain

Varuskuntakatu 14

45100 Kouvola

358 5 312 0839

358 5 312 0842

hamina@ort.fi

Orthodox Church in America

Department of Chaplaincies

V. Rev. Theodore Boback

2028 E Lombard St.

Baltimore, MD 21231, USA

00 1 443 831 6870

tboback@aol.com

chaplains@oca.org

www.oca.org/pages/departments/chaplains.html

Since the early days of the Church, Christians have struggled to come to terms with Christ's words of peace and His example of peace. In Christ's life, as recorded in the New Testament, it is striking that He neither killed anyone nor summoned any of His disciples to kill. Indeed, the final miracle Christ performed before His execution was to heal an enemy's wound, an injury caused by the Apostle Peter in an attempt to defend his master.

Yet, in the course of more than twenty centuries of Christian history, we see Christians often involved in war and, in surveying the calendar of saints, find not only those who refused to take part in war but also those who served in the military, though no one has been canonized due to his skill as a soldier. Besides the millions of Christians who have fought in armies, often against fellow Christians, we also find many priests, bishops and theologians who have advocated war and blessed its weapons.

Our subject is an urgent one. Many people today live either near conflict areas or are directly touched by war or in areas where terrorist actions may suddenly occur. Everyone on the planet is in some way affected by wars in progress or wars in the making as well as the consequences of wars in the past. Every day thousands of Christians struggle in thought and prayer with some of the most difficult of questions: May I fight injustice by violent methods? Am I allowed to kill in combat? Are there limits on what I can do in the defense of my country? Am I as a Christian allowed to disobey demands that I believe are unjust or violate the Gospel? When the demands of my country seem at odds with the demands of the Kingdom of God, how do I respond to this conflict?

Rarely do we find easy answers to these and similar questions. Thus, those of us in the Orthodox Christian tradition search for help in Holy Scripture, the canons provided to us by ecumenical councils, the witness of the saints, the writing of the Fathers of the Church as well as theologians of recent times.

Imitation of saintly forebears alone, however, will not solve our problems. Different eras have adopted different attitudes. Also many of today's problems never existed before, not least the changed character of war in an era of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and mass propaganda. Yet knowledge of the thought and action undertaken by the Orthodox Churches on the issues of war and peace in recent decades surely can help us find ways out of the dead ends that many communities are experiencing today. This is the aim of this book.

