

# *The Unity of the Orthodox Church in America*

*Serge S. Verkhovskoy*

Last June the primates of the Orthodox Churches in America decided to create an all-American standing episcopal conference or synod "for the consideration and resolution of common problems,, the coordination of efforts in matters of common concern, and the strengthening of the unity which is the essence of Orthodoxy" as it was said in the minutes. Eleven different commissions will be established by this synod. They will work in the fields of Christian education, theological schools, Orthodox chaplaincy in colleges, boy scout organizations, English translation of the services, chaplaincy in the armed forces, missionary activity and fund raising. One of these commissions will deal with relations of the Orthodox Church in America with other denominations. Another will follow civil legislation of the United States on church affairs. The Synod will direct the activity of the Council of Eastern Orthodox Youth Leaders of America.

One can but rejoice at the organization of the Pan-Orthodox synod. And we must wish it great success. Nevertheless this synod is only the first step toward final unification of Orthodoxy in America, and there are certainly many obstacles in obtaining this goal.

Many orthodox Christians understand the necessity of unity, and it is known to all how destructive the effect of this division of Orthodoxy is regarding the fruitfulness of church activity, church discipline, education, relation with other denominations, etc. However, indifference to the unity of Orthodoxy is widely spread. Behind this indifference, there is one of the most dangerous defects in the life of the Orthodox clergy and people in America: indifference to everything beyond the limits of parish life. Many Orthodox laymen and priests not only disregard whatever does not directly concern their parishes, but are even inclined to consider everything above parish life as dangerous for their parishes and not deserving confidence. Unity, cooperation and obedience to the central authorities

is often considered as harmful to the rights and interests of the parishes and particularly dangerous to their property rights... Among the bishops we also see a reticent attitude towards the problems of unification; the reasons for this reticence are probably various. But in any case it is the duty of the episcopate to lead the Church toward unity, a good example of which we see in the organization of the Synod.

We must also point out that the Orthodox of Western Europe and America are unfortunately accustomed to divisions. In Western Europe the Orthodox Church was never canonically organized because very few Orthodox lived there before the 1920's. In America there existed a strictly canonical organization before the Russian Revolution that created such a terrible turmoil in the Russian Church. Since the 1920's for forty years already a complete disunity reigns among the Orthodox in America. During this period almost 1½ generations have grown up. It is no wonder that the existence of numerous "jurisdictions" seems normal. It is dreadful that the people are so used to this evil. But even within some of these jurisdictions there is no unity. Parish separatism ruins church life. The canonical consciousness of many Orthodox approaches that of the Protestant Congregationalists, who recognize the full independence of each parish, the union of which has the form of a federation. These parishes recognize only those obligations which they willingly accept. Some Orthodox in America openly proclaim that the parishes not only have the right to oppose their rectors and bishops, but that the decisions of the general councils of the Church are not binding to them. Anarchical ideas poison the life of our Church. The episcopate often feels helpless in the face of this evil.

Not only does parish separatism lead to the denial of the necessity for unity, but nationalism does so even more strongly. Too many Orthodox either consider nation higher than Church or Orthodoxy as a national religion and sometimes even as a nationalistic form of Christianity. The intelligentsia and hierarchy share this idea no less than do the people; therefore it is difficult to overcome this deformation of the understanding of the relations between religion and nationality. From the point of view of church nationalism, the division of the church into national groups is the best form of its organization. This division is consciously asserted and

supported although it contradicts Orthodox canons and was condemned by the Constantinopolitan patriarch as the heresy of filetism.

The last obstacle in reaching the unity of Orthodox Churches in America is the existence of clergymen irregularly ordained. Experience shows that the majority of Orthodox churches refuse to be in communion with this clergy, but thousands of Orthodox recognize it. The reason for this acceptance is again nationalism: the people are ready to accept any hierarchy, even irregularly ordained if it is nationalistically minded. The Orthodox hierarchy would probably be willing to grant a regular ordination to this clergy for the sake of "economia."\* We hope that this possibility will be used as it was by a bishop this year... A church with a falsely ordained hierarchy is in a position worse than in a schism: such a church has no apostolic succession of ministry and can be excommunicated from the Orthodox Church. This will necessarily also happen in America if the "self-ordained" hierarchy does not canonically regularize its position.

We have said that the newly-created Synod is only a first step towards the perfect organization of the Orthodox church in America. Cooperation between Orthodox jurisdictions is indeed highly desirable. But the very existence of many jurisdictions in one country contradicts the canons.

The Orthodox Church must be organized on the territorial principle which requires that there should be only one church organization or as we now say jurisdiction (diocese, metropolitan district, patriarchate), in every country. Before the 1920's there existed no case in the whole history of the Orthodox Church of the same territory being governed by several bishops, in other words, that there existed more than one diocese on the same territory.

Until the present no one objected to this principle. Orthodox belonged everywhere to the same Church organization and were under the jurisdiction of the same bishop regardless of their origin, nationality, class, profession and convictions concerning the affairs of this world. It happened at all times that Orthodox living in the same city were of various nationalities and generally differed in

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\* Economia is a principle by which the Church eases the strictness of its laws by condescension.



many respects, but before the present it occurred to no one to organize several independent jurisdictions in the same place on account of this fact. Parishes might use different languages. We know that in the second century already there were parishes of different nationalities in the same cities but they always belonged to the same diocese. When the Bulgarians wished to establish their own diocese in Constantinople, the patriarch condemned them. He was right although the Greek hierarchy itself sometimes sinned against Orthodox tradition by compelling other nations to have services in Greek and by imposing Greek priests and bishops on them. From the most ancient times variety of languages in the Church was considered completely normal and in apostolic times already clergymen could be of any nationality. In general the Church does not condemn differences of secular character which might exist among us, but it does not establish its own organization on the basis of them.

Some believe that nationality is far deeper and more spiritual than is territory: nationality is connected with moral consciousness, love of our country and culture; territory is but a section of land, which has no spiritual meaning. Is it not better to establish the Church on more spiritual principles? This question is answered by Our Lord in His teaching about love of neighbors. Our Lord teaches us to love all men, whoever they are. He affirms that the highest and deepest link between men is their unity in God and their faithfulness to Him which is the essence of the Church. The value of national relation and kinship is not denied by Jesus Christ, but He puts them in second place. The commandment about the love of men orders us to love our **neighbors** that is those with whom we are in direct relation and to whom we can do good. Let us remember the parable of the good Samaritan, which was told by Christ exactly for the purpose of explaining who is our neighbor. The thieves who wounded the Jew were probably of the same nationality as he was as also were those who passed by indifferently. His neighbor became the Samaritan, a man of different nation, hostile to the Jews. He became a neighbor because Providence brought him to the side of the wounded man and he did not remain indifferent to his suffering. Therefore to love our neighbor means to love him with whom we are in direct relations even if he is our enemy. Inability, or to say better, lack desire to love our neighbor is the inability or refusal

to be Christian. In search for closeness with people of the same nationality one does not need to be a Christian. If Orthodox living in the same city do not want to belong to the same church organization they ruin the very essence of the Church, which is to unite all neighbors in mutual love and faith in God. Thus the territorial principle is not at all superficial. On the contrary it expresses the fundamental task of the Church, to unite all men, if only communion between them is possible in fact. If people of different nationalities are incapable of uniting even within the Church, they prove that they do not live as Christians but as men of this world.

When St. Paul proclaimed that in the Church there are no Greeks or Jews, no bound or "free, no male or female, but Christ is all and in all," he not only proclaimed the moral commandment of unconditional love among all Christians but also points out the very essence of the Church, that is to be in Christ. In Christ we find communion with God, spiritual perfection, knowledge of truth and justice, the power of Grace, love from God, reconciliation with Him and with men, spiritual purity and liberation from evil. The Orthodox faith, the life in Grace (in particular the sacraments and services), moral law and holiness; all this elevates us above this world and must be the content our Christian life regardless of the nation to which we belong and the form of our life and activity on the earth. The task of Church organization is to organize our common Christian spiritual life because the life of the Church must be Christian and spiritual and not simply one of the forms of worldly social activity. Therefore the organization of the Church, by the very nature of its purpose, must be independent from everything worldly.

If the Church and its organization must be the same for everyone it does not mean that variety is excluded from this unity. There can be different forms of spiritual life (contemplative, active, mystical, moral, ascetic) although all these elements have to be present in some measure in the life of every Christian. There can be different tendencies in theology, especially developing one of its aspects. There can be variety in services and rites. Christians can use different languages. All the more we can have different political convictions and in general a different understanding of the problems of this world. But if such a variety is admissible in the Church it must not be a cause of division. Nevertheless this is exactly what the Orthodox of Western Europe and America have

been doing for the last forty years. We divide the Church according to nationality, language or attitude towards the Communist governments. If some group founds a parish it is inclined to consider it as its own property, independent from any general organization of the Church. If we would really possess the spirit of the Church, we would create national, political and cultural organizations within Orthodox society, without trying to organize a special jurisdiction for each of them. No people would believe that if they found a parish it belongs to them independent from the Church like some organization arising from the private initiative of a group of persons.

Let us discuss the general problems of the place of nationality in Orthodoxy. Since apostolic times the Church blessed patriotism, faithfulness to the state, the use of our own language. If it is good to love our people, the first duty of Christian patriotism is to convert our nation to Christianity, to make it really Christian, to create a national Christian culture and statehood. Christ and the apostles tried to convert their own, that is the Jewish people, first. However the majority of the apostles finally consecrated their life to preaching among other nations. This fact shows that the love of other nations is not less natural and necessary for Christians than patriotism. It is generally easier to serve our own people but sometimes, as it was in the case of Jesus Christ and the apostles, our own nation is closed to Christianity while others are far more open.

The creation of a national Christian culture is a great and honorable task. The Russian culture of the nineteenth century was on the whole Christian and in this lies its great importance. However the main task of the Church is in establishing a purely Christian culture directly connected with theology, church art, services and spiritual life. The national element in such a culture is secondary. Such for example was the Byzantine church culture.

Many Orthodox sincerely believe that Orthodoxy itself is nothing more than a religious form of their national life. They admit necessity for each nation to have a religion even if the latter is not considered important. To some nations this religion is Orthodoxy, therefore it is natural for all those belonging to these nations (for example Russians, or Greeks) to be Orthodox, and to be unfaithful to Orthodoxy for them is to be unpatriotic. Thus religion is lowered to the significance of a simple addition to national life.



There is a more refined but equally incorrect understanding of the national character of religion. It consists in the recognition of an absolutely inseparable link between religion and nation. However important religion may be it is always necessarily national, being the highest creation of the national spirit. If one nation takes on the religion of another it falls under its spiritual influence. From this point of view Christianity is a form of Judaism and all Christian nations are in their religious aspect under the influence of ancient Israel. Orthodoxy becomes a Christian form of Hellenism... Religion outside a nation is an abstraction: in real religion everything is national and is connected to the development of the national spirit and history.

The only truth in this theory is that the relation between religion and nationality can indeed be very deep and that one nation may be converted by the missionaries of another. However it is wrong that religion is the product of a national spirit. Even the so called natural religions (except primitive paganism) were founded by great religious leaders and thinkers. Their influence on their people was far more considerable than the influence of environment was upon them. Where true religion is concerned its very truthfulness results from the fact that it is based on divine revelation! We believe in the revelation of the Holy Spirit and not of Jewish spirit; Orthodoxy is for us a doctrine preserved in its purity and explained by the God-bearing Fathers, and not the creation of Hellenistic genius. True religion is the gift of God to men, although, once accepted by them it becomes a part of their life. Nations are born and die, are converted to the Faith and lose it, but the Church remains and shall always remain the same. All the faithful, regardless of nationality belong to the one "holy nation" of God, (I Pet., II:9) participating in the Church which was founded not by men and nations but by God. In general it is wrong to consider the Church as a **worldly** or purely human institution. Men and nations can grow spiritually in the Church. Because of their efforts and cooperation with God, the body of the Church can develop. However its essence, that is grace, truth and the spirit of true life, is always of God and not of us or of this world.

The danger of nationalism in the Church is not only in its dividing character but also in the fact that it replaces little by little the spirit of Christianity by national traditions, interests and even pas-

sions. The Church sometimes becomes an instrument of gaining national and political goals. The hierarchy more or less consciously blesses that which is desired by the people and state. Finally the church is led by the nation and not the nation by the Church. Many inadmissible compromises are justified by the affirmation that they serve national interests.

The nationalism of Orthodox people in America inevitably has a double character: one is related to the former fatherland and one to the United States. The second is at present not as strong as the first, although Orthodox are politically absolutely loyal and become rapidly Americanized as far as education and way of life are concerned. The nationalism of the Orthodox people is shown mainly in the Church, in the closeness of those of the same origin and in the particular interest which each group has for their former country. The last two forms of national feeling are completely natural, but the first can be both good and bad. It is good to be faithful to the Christian tradition of our nation but it is bad to divide the Church because of an excessive nationalism and to be indifferent to the Orthodox from other nations. On the other hand it is only deplorable that many Orthodox know so little of their national culture (partly on account of lack of education) and that the second generation of American Orthodox forgets their own national language despite the fact the knowledge of, for example Russian and Greek, is appreciated everywhere. If there are some dangers in nationalism from the religious point of view, it does not mean that we must fight national Christian traditions. In the eyes of the people themselves the latter consist primarily in particular ways of celebrating the services (in language, music, rites, etc). The problem of language must be freely solved by each parish, which can either use only one language or English and the national language simultaneously. The attitude of the Church toward national organizations must be positive, but an excessive or exclusive nationalism only must be condemned. The cooperation of all Orthodox national organizations is certainly very desirable.

It seems to me that taking the strength of nationalism among the Orthodox into consideration, it would be admissible for the sake of economy to have special vicariates or deaneries, uniting the parishes according to their nationality or language, within the limits of each diocese. The Orthodox Church in North America



could be divided into no more than ten dioceses for this purpose, so that in each of them there would be a sufficient number of parishes to form national vicariates or deaneries.

Nevertheless all the parishes existing in a certain territory must be united in only one diocese. This is the requirement of the dogma of the unity of the Church, of the canons regulating Church administration and of Christian ethics calling for the unity of all Christians regardless of their nationality. We must finally understand that the divisions in the Orthodox Church in Western Europe and America may be called at best a „spiritual illness” but more strictly speaking it is a betrayal of Orthodoxy.

The diocesan bishop must have the full authority granted to him by the canons. However it would be natural and desirable to have periodical meetings of the suffragan bishops and deans of the diocese besides regular diocesan conventions of all the clergymen and lay representatives. The vicariates and deaneries could organize their own meetings.

The nationality of candidate for diocesan bishop could be considered as indifferent if this candidate would be accepted by the greater majority of the diocesan convention (for instance by more than 4/5 of voices). In the opposite case a regulation could be established according to which each new bishop should be of a different nationality than the previous one.

The same principle could be applied to the election of the Primate of the whole American Church. Thus the danger that the government of the Church would be taken by one nationality would be eliminated. The head of the American Church should govern in cooperation with the council of all bishops which could be convened twice or thrice yearly.

Only a united Orthodox Church in America would be perfectly Orthodox and strong. Only a united Church could overcome the divisions, disorders and the spirit of separatism which we so often meet. Only a united Church could be able to elevate rapidly the level of Church education by an organized and energetic effort. At present even the bishops very often feel helpless to encourage education. The clergy and laity are often indifferent to this problem. There is neither a sufficient number of well-trained personnel nor

sufficient funds for this purpose. Ignorance of one's own Faith is pernicious for the Church. For this reason thousands of Orthodox leave the Church or become so-called nominal believers... In general our Church does only part of the work which is necessary to be done: there are very few Orthodox schools, very few books about Orthodoxy, no missions, monasticism is weak, Orthodox students in colleges don't receive sufficient religious guidance, the number of chaplains in the armed forces is insufficient, we have no Orthodox hospitals and Orthodox patients are sometimes neglected (e. g. in New York); welfare organizations are weak. Our Church is represented in interdenominational organizations not as it should be. All this is chiefly the consequence of bad organization and lack of experienced personnel. A united Church would certainly overcome all these defects.

At this time the significance of Orthodoxy in America is not great. In the eyes of Americans we are one of the secondary denominations which is divided into many organizations and is not very active. This would change if Orthodoxy were united. The United States is now one of the greatest powers on earth. A strong Orthodox Church in this country could have a great influence all over the world, and could help the Orthodox Churches abroad far more than we now do. It is a real misunderstanding to believe that separate national jurisdictions in America can do more for their mother Churches than could a united Orthodox Church.

When the Orthodox Church in the United States will become strong great missionary possibilities will be open to it in this country itself, in Asia and possibly even in Africa where there are already a few native parishes. If Orthodoxy still has influence in the world it is on account of the interest which other confessions take in it. If the Orthodox would make the same effort to spread Orthodoxy as do other confessions for their own Faith, our Church would have many thousand of converts and its general spiritual and theological influence would be considerably increased. We ourselves badly use the treasures of Orthodoxy and do not open them to others, like the wicked servants who buried their talents.

Would not unification of the Orthodox Church in America lead to its rapid Americanization? Is not Americanization dangerous for the Church?

We face the strange fact, that many Orthodox are inclined to recognize the legitimacy of all nationalisms in the Church except American. For Americans who know English only and are not of Orthodox origin there is very often no room in our Church. In the whole United States there are only a few parishes which entirely use English and which do not declare themselves as belonging to any of the nationalities of the Old World, although even these are parts of some national jurisdiction. This situation is abnormal. I hope that there is no necessity to prove that Americans who have lost the link with their former nationality or are recently converted to Orthodoxy, have a full right not only to be Orthodox, but to have American parishes, which would be open to everybody preferring to use English. A denial of such a right and necessity would be contrary to Orthodox tradition since Apostolic times. The number of such parishes even with a favorable attitude from the hierarchy would increase slowly. The majority of Orthodox parishes will not become purely American before two or three generations. This Americanization must be absolutely free and dependent on the free choice of parishioners and their priests.

The Americanization of the Orthodox Church would make the union of Orthodoxy psychologically easier and would widen the possibilities for educational and missionary work — the latter on condition of the creation of Orthodox literature in English and of the full translation of all services into English. We must not forget that without educational work in English we are unable not only to spread our Church but even to preserve it from the loss of part of our youth. Our American young people sometimes leave the Church because the spiritual richness of Orthodoxy is not sufficiently shown to it.

Without the full English text of Orthodox services the liturgical life of those who know only English is inevitably poor. Already at the present time the greatest part of the parishioners attend only the liturgy. The exceptional spiritual value of the Orthodox services is thus lost to Americans; they are unable to use one of the most important sources of the spiritual, moral and theological education. Even some of our clergymen seem to forget the power of spirituality and depth of theology which is contained in our services.



The dangers of Americanization are real, but they are already active. If our Church would possess a better and stronger organization it would be much easier to fight them. These dangers are as follows: first, the loss of the language and culture of our old countries. Very few among our youth study the culture of their ancestors and even fewer work in this field. Professors of Russian, Greek, Serbian, etc. are mostly Americans having no original connections with these nations... Secondly American education has many negative sides connected with contemporary ideas, psychology, pedagogy, literature, television etc. Our youth is defenceless against such negative influences because in the absence of Orthodox schools and publications it is brought up entirely in the American culture. The clergy often cannot help our youth in this respect because it sometimes possesses neither a higher theological education nor an American college degree. Thirdly the insufficient attention to purely spiritual life which is spread through America undoubtedly affects the Orthodox also. Ambition, vainglory and the habit to praise oneself and others under any pretext is also very common in our Church... Finally, as we have already mentioned, there is a certain influence of American Protestantism and the ambitious anticlericalism of our laity and on the separatism of our parishes.

It is obvious that America not only has defects but also great positive qualities, for example an exceptional vital power, an openness to all that is good, a love of activity and education, a pioneer spirit, a desire and ability to work together, to help each other, to be generous and responsive, to learn one's own defects. All these qualities are also very necessary for us Orthodox. In energy, pioneering, education, organization, solidarity, generosity and in mutual help we are often behind other Americans.

On the one hand, as we see, the dangerous sides of Americanism are already actual and will be the more active the weaker the organization of our Church is. On the other hand we can but desire to assimilate all that is good in America. In any case Americans have no less right to be Orthodox than does any other nation.

However, the unity of the Orthodox Church is necessary not for the purpose of Americanization and not because a rapid denationalization of Greeks, Russians, Syrians and other Orthodox na-

tionalities would be desirable, but for the benefit of the Church and in the name of our faithfulness to Orthodoxy. The present organization of our Church is contrary to Orthodoxy. Therefore all Orthodox must wish that the first step made by our hierarchy toward unity would not be the last one. A kind of federation of the Orthodox Churches in America is welcome as a transitory state only, but not as a final form of organization which must be according to our dogmas and canons a complete unity of all Orthodox in one Orthodox American Church.

## *Some Quotations*

**Meletios IV, Ecumenical Patriarch**, former Greek Archbishop in America.

We desire to mention also the question of the administration of the Orthodox Church in the **diaspora**... I saw with my own eyes the biggest and the most numerous part of the Orthodox Church in diaspora and I understood the measure in which the name of Orthodoxy would be exalted, especially in the great country of the United States of America, if the two millions of Orthodox Christian were organized there into one united ecclesiastical organization, as an "**American Orthodox Church**."

(Declaration of enthronement as **Ecumenical Patriarch**, Constantinople, January the 24, 1922, quoted in B. Zoustis, *Hellenism in America and its activities*, in modern Greek, New York, 1954, p. 147).

**Tikhon**, Archbishop of the Aleutian Islands and North America (later Patriarch of Moscow).

The diocese of North America<sup>1</sup> must be reorganized into an **Exarchate** of the Russian Church in North America. The diocese is not only multinational; it is composed of several orthodox Churches, which keep the unity of faith, but preserve their particularities in canonical structure, in liturgical rules, in parish life. These particularities are dear to them and can perfectly be tolerated on the pan-orthodox scene. We do not consider that we have the right to suffer the national character of the churches here; on the contrary, we try to preserve this character and we confer them the latitude to be guided by leaders of their own nationality. Thus, the Syrian Church here received a bishop of its own (the Most Rev. Rapheal of Brooklyn), who is the second auxiliary to the diocesan bishop of the Aleutian Islands, but is almost independent in his own sphere (the bishop of Alaska having the same position). The Serbian parishes are now organized under one immediate head, who for the time being is an archmandrite, but who can be elevated to the episcopacy in the nearest future. The Greeks also desire to have their own bishop and are trying to settle the matter with the Synod of Athens. In other words, in North America a whole Exarchate can easily be established, uniting all orthodox national

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<sup>1</sup> In 1905, when this statement was made, all orthodox national groups in America were united in the jurisdiction of Archbishop Tikhon.



Churches, which would have their own bishops under one Exarch, the Russian Archbishop. Each one of them is independent in its own sphere, but the common affairs of the American Church are decided in a Synod, presided by the Russian Archbishop. Through him a link is preserved between the American Church and the Church of Russia and a certain dependence of the former to the latter. It should be remembered however that life in the New World is different from that of the old; our Church must take this into consideration; a greater autonomy (and possibly autocephaly) should therefore be granted to the Church of America, as compared with the other Metropolitan sees of the Russian Church. The North American Exarchate would comprise: (1) the archdiocese of New York, with jurisdiction over all Russian Churches in the United States and in Canada (2) the diocese of Alaska, for the orthodox inhabitants of Alaska (Russians, Aleutians, Indians, Eskimos). (3) The diocese of Brooklyn (Syrian) (4) the diocese of Chicago (Serbian) (5) a Greek diocese.<sup>2</sup>

**Professor H. Alivizatos, Member of the Greek Academy, Professor of Canon Law at the University of Athens.<sup>3</sup>**

The language of Americans of Greek descent is the English language and, according to the views of the Orthodox Church, it can be used in the liturgy... This is the only means by which their interest towards Orthodoxy will be maintained... The Greek<sup>4</sup> Orthodox Church, in its Hellenic part, together with the other national branches, will become English speaking in thirty or forty years at the maximum, since no effort is able to maintain the national languages. As an immediate consequence, the present canonical chaos in the administration of the Church in America will be replaced, in the nearest future, by a big united American Greek Orthodox Church, governed by a synod of American bishops. This Church, in due time, will evolve, according to the established pattern, into an independent autocephalous Church. It is evident that the first immigrants of Orthodox descent became the creators of a new branch of Orthodoxy, the American Orthodox Church. The future of this Church, if the above conditions are fulfilled, will be truly great and glorious...

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<sup>2</sup>Opinions (Otzyvy) of Diocesan bishops concerning Church Reforms, submitted to the Preconcilian Commission of the Holy Synod, St. Petersburg, 1906, Part I, p. 531.

<sup>3</sup>Lectures on the Orthodox Church given in April 1953 and July 1954 at the University and the Ecumenical Institute of Chicago, Ill., published in the "Scientific Journal of the Theological School of the University of Athens," and in a book, **The Greek Orthodox Church**, Athens, 1955, p. 6-9.

<sup>4</sup>The word "Greek" is used here not in its national sense, but in the sense which embraces the whole Orthodox Church (note of H. Alivizatos).

## **Autory, Metropolitan of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of America.**

While we must still minister to many who remember the way and customs of another land it is our policy to make our church in the United States an American Church. In my own archdiocese, under my administration we have pioneered in the introduction of English in our services and our sermons. From the beginning of my ministry I began the printing of English service books, and the training of English speaking priests. We are tied to no sacred language; we recognize all tongues as the creation of God, and employ them in this worship. We have no desire to perpetuate anything but the Gospel of Christ, and that we can do as effectively in English as in any other tongue.<sup>5</sup>

## **John, bishop of San Francisco.**

Time has come for the Orthodox of America, whatever their extraction may be, to understand that the United States of America cannot be considered a colony any more either in political or in ecclesiastical sense. The past is gone. This country has ceased to be an ecclesiastical colony of the English, the Dutch, the Swedes; it cannot remain a spiritual colony of the Greeks, the Serbs, the Romanians, the Russians, whether those of the U. S. S. R. or those "in exile." Americans have indeed won the right (no less than the Cypriots, the Albanians or the Czechoslovaks) to have their own Orthodox Local Church, in conformity with the ecclesiastical canons.<sup>6</sup>

## **The V. Rev. Prof. George Florovsky, Harvard University.**

The Universality of the Orthodox Faith is obscured by human divisions, and it is often forgotten that Orthodoxy is the Church, and therefore is not, and cannot be confined to any territorial or historical boundaries. There should be no limits to the Orthodox expansion, and in new conditions, the Church may speak a new tongue.

It was the glory of the Orthodox Church that, from the very beginning, and throughout the ages, she did address diverse nations in their own idioms, and the Holy Liturgy was celebrated in many tongues. It was the glory of the Orthodox Church that she addressed the Slavs

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<sup>5</sup>"The Autiodrian Church and Christian Unity," **The Word** Vol. I, No. 6, June 1957, p. 145.

<sup>6</sup>The Russian American Orthodox Messenger, Vol. 56, No. 10, October, 1960, p. 166.

in their vernacular and encouraged them to worship God in their own language. That glorious example of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, the "Slavic Apostles," has been closely followed by the missionaries of the Russian Church, from the days of when St. Stephen of Perm endeavored to evangelize the Finnish tribes in their own language and adopted the Liturgy to their vernacular, to the days of the great Orthodox "Apostle of Japan," Archbishop Nicolai of Japan, who laid foundations of a Japanese Orthodoxy. The languages are many, and any one should be used for the propagation of the true faith and for a spontaneous offering of praise and thanksgiving to God, who is God of all nations.<sup>7</sup>

**Archimandrite Jerome Kotsonis**, Chaplain of the Royal Palace of H. M. the King of the Hellenes, Professor of Canon Law, Theological Faculty, University of Thessalonica.

The problem of the survival of Hellenism in America is essentially a problem of preserving its Orthodoxy... The liturgical and sacramental wealth of our Church must become accessible through the performing of the Divine Liturgy and the other holy sacraments and services in the English language (alongside of the Greek). Since the Roman Church, with its clergy and monastic orders being much better organized than the Orthodox, is obliged today to admit in America as elsewhere the use of the local languages in its liturgy, it is obvious that this is even more necessary for us Orthodox: we do not have the same presuppositions as the Catholic Church, and the use of local language in both liturgy and preaching belongs to the Tradition of our Church...

The unity of all Orthodox Christians in America would very much contribute to the spread of the Orthodox Church in America and would help its prestige, and thus it will better attract the Orthodox youth. Its present influence on the public life of the country is negligible if not non-existent. This situation is due, among other reasons, to our present division into several ethnic groups (Greek, Russian, Romanian, Bulgarian, etc.).... Every effort should be made to unify the Orthodox Church in the U. S. A. This would not mean that the various groups would lose their ethnic character or their inner administrative autonomy...<sup>8</sup>)

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<sup>7</sup>St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly, Vol. 2, No. 4, Summer 1954, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup>) Anaplasia, Nov. 1955, pp. 507-509.



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