

Mission and the Orthodox Churches

The Revd Darrell Jackson, Researcher in Mission and Evangelism, Conference of European Churches
PMTI-CEC, H-1461, Budapest, Pf.150, Hungary
Jackson@pmti.edu.hu

An introduction to Orthodox Mission in the twentieth century: historical & geographical development and the practices that stimulate and carry forward the mission of the Orthodox

The NATURE of contemporary Orthodox Mission

The **SCOBA** Conference of Bishops (1994) characterises Mission and Evangelism:

- It is a reflection of the nature of the church.
- It involves making disciples in N. America (& not only immigrant communities).
- Integration through inter-marriage.
- Re-evangelise Orthodox who are disconnected from the Church
- The co-operative responsibility of all Orthodox in N. America.
- Requiring theological education of priests.
- A stimulus for renewal of church life and Order.

Liturgical

“The Mission of the Church, from one perspective, can be described as introducing the themes of Christ’s crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and glorious Second Coming into the consciousness of a community, so that the tension between all that has come to pass and all that will be fulfilled on the Last Day animates and inspires, directs and critiques, judges and vindicates the actions and words of its members. Christian liturgy is the manifestation and celebration of this tension through art, architecture, music and ritual. The sacraments are its visible signs.” M Oleksa *Orthodox Alaska* St Vladimirs Seminary Press 1992 p40

Centrifugal

“It is often said that Orthodox mission is centripetal rather than centrifugal, with people being attracted to Orthodoxy from the outside, rather than Orthodox churches sending missionaries out (Bosch 1991:207). The growth of Orthodoxy in Kenya and Uganda certainly seems to bear this out. It was largely the result of people in those countries seeking Orthodoxy, rather than Orthodox missionaries from elsewhere seeking them. The Orthodox Church in those countries may truly be said to be an African initiated church.” (Hayes *Missionalia* 1998)

Gossiping the Gospel

“Perhaps the commonest method is the pre-Nicene method of "gossiping the gospel". People hear about the Orthodox Church from friends, family, or colleagues at work, and their interest is aroused. Even this happens in a great many different ways: a Zimbabwean army officer undergoing training in Greece or a factory worker talking to an Orthodox colleague.

In Kiboine, in the Rift Valley Province of Kenya, the local chief of the Nandi people encountered Orthodoxy among the Luahs in Western Kenya, who had in turn got it from Uganda. He became a church reader and catechist, and in that area the Orthodox Church is the predominant Christian group. Some have joined the Orthodox Church from other denominations.” (Hayes *Missionalia* 1998)

Signs & Wonders

“A Luo Anglican school teacher had a problem of pupils being bewitched in the high school where he taught. An Orthodox charismatic evangelist, Charles Omuroka, who is based at Kakamega in Western Kenya, came to the school and prayed for some of the pupils, who were healed. Such methods are usually associated with Pentecostal Protestant missionaries rather than with Orthodox missions.

In Konyabuguru, near Bukoba in Tanzania, a priest, Fr Sosthenes Kiyonga, came to the village in 1974 to teach the Orthodox faith. The people there had to walk 8 kilometers to fetch water. He prayed, and a spring appeared in the village, which has not dried up since then. This caused many, including pagans, Anglicans and Roman Catholics, to join the Orthodox Church. Such methods are usually associated with Celtic missionaries of the seventh century rather than with Africa in the twentieth century.” (Hayes *Missionalia* 1998)

Incarnational

Bria's Liturgy beyond the Liturgy points to the incarnational presence of the mystical body of Christ active in and through the lived out faith of the members of the Church.

Literature Evangelism

“There have been several instances of people reading about the Orthodox Church in books, and then travelling, often for long distances at great expense, to try to find the church. This was the case with Reuben Spartas and those in Ghana as well. One Lutheran seminarian, having learnt from the study of church history in the seminary that the Orthodox Church was the original one, decided to find the Orthodox Church and join it. This could be described as "literature evangelism", except that most of the literature they read was not written with evangelism in mind.” (Hayes *Missionalia* 1998)

Educational and medical mission

The beginnings of the Orthodox Church in Kenya are tied up with the Kikuyu Karing'a Educational Association, and in many places in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, clinics and dispensaries have been built.

Development programmes

The agricultural development work in Zaire is an example, and in 1988 the Uganda Orthodox Church drew up an ambitious development programme for reconstruction and development after the devastating civil wars and upheavals of the previous 25 years. In such projects, assistance has often been given by the Churches of Finland, Greece and Cyprus, and by the Orthodox Christian Mission Center in the USA through teams of short-term volunteers helping the local people to build and equip clinics, dispensaries, schools and churches.

Mission as liberation

Another aspect of mission, mission as liberation, is closely bound up with the history of the Orthodox Church in Kenya, and the Orthodox Church was seen by many Kenyans (and the British colonial rulers) as the church of *uhuru*.

Missio ecclesia

Orthodox mission, internal or external, is through its nature "ecclesiastic." It cannot be understood as an individual-al or a group activity, separated from the body of Christ. Those who work for it, it is the church that they serve, the church that they represent; it is the life of the church that they transplant. No one is saved alone; no one offers Christ's salvation alone. We are saved within the church, we act within the church, and what we transfer is in the name of church.

Apostolic and Catholic

"The missionary revival, with its accent on the apostolicity and catholicity of the church, is a reminder that the gift of *metanoia* and salvation should by no means be turned into a private, individual affair. Our duty is to live a life centered on the church, making its horizons our own -- and these horizons extend worldwide, "ecumenically." It is a gift destined for the whole world, to everybody, given so as to transform all things. Christ was crucified for the sake of the whole world... Yet, it would not be an exaggeration to say that, in many cases, Orthodox identification with the catholic and apostolic aspects of the church is expressed rather weakly. The fault lies, to some extent, with the excessive nationalism of the local churches." (Anastasios *History of Missions* p10, 12)

Is 'mission' a western preoccupation only?

Is it then possible to apply a term that arose in Western Christianity in the sixteenth century to the Orthodox Church? Many of the assumptions of Western theology, and the conditions in which they have been applied since that time, have been different from those of Orthodox Christians. Any application of the term to a time before the sixteenth century must be in some sense anachronistic. If one can speak of Orthodox mission at all, it will necessarily be different from the Western understanding of the term.

"Mission" is a term derived from Latin, and means "sending". For the Orthodox Church, whose theology is based on Greek rather than Latin, the cognate term for "missionary" (used as an adjective) would be "apostolic". One of the marks of the Church in the *Symbol of Faith* is that it is "apostolic", and, based purely on the etymology of the terms, one could perhaps translate "apostolic" as "missionary", and deduce from that that mission is one of the essential marks of the Church.

"Missionary", however, has a narrower connotation than "apostolic", and when one says that the Church is "apostolic" it means more than simply saying that the Church is "missionary"; it proclaims that the Church as a body continues "in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Ac 2:42). The apostles were sent into the world as the Father sent the Son into the world (Jn 17:18; 20:21). The Father sent the Son into the world "to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" (Lk 4:18).

The Son likewise sent his disciples to "Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation" (Mk 16:16), and as they go they are to "make disciples of all nations (*ethne*), baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit", teaching them to observe all Christ's commands (Mt 28:19). As an interim definition, therefore, one could say that Christian mission is the sending of the Church into the world, and what the Church is sent into the world to do." (Hayes, S. email correspondence October 2001)

The EXTENT of Orthodox Mission

1. NORTH AMERICA

Alaska

The Russian Orthodox Church first arrived in 1794 with Russian missionary monks under St. Herman; now venerated by Alaska's Orthodox faithful. In the city of Anchorage, the finishing touches were made on the new cathedral in 2004, necessary as the result of growing congregations.

"At the sale of Alaska, everyone thought that orthodoxy would disappear because all the Russians left. Actually quite the contrary has happened - we are now the largest church in Alaska," says Bishop Nikolai, the Russian Orthodox bishop of Alaska.

The Church of Alaska is mainly concerned with mission as an internal affair, consolidating the population there (Aleutians, Eskimos and others) in the Orthodox faith resisting the radical changes introduced with the technological current of American society, which is undermining their racial tradition and, with it, their Orthodoxy. The church is served by 26 native priests. The training of native clergy is carried out by St Herman Seminary, which has been functioning on Kodiak Island since 1972 and has close ties with St Vladimir's Seminary. Nuns and monks here follow the traditions of St Herman - living a life of prayer in this remote outpost with no electricity or running water. As of 2004 the Russian Orthodox Church has 49 parishes in Alaska and up to 50,000 followers.

2. THE CARIBBEAN

Cuba

Progress in accomplishing the return of Sts. Constantine and Helena Church in Havana has been slow and hampered by moves to regain the property through diplomatic pressure. Word has reached us that the Russian Orthodox Church under the Patriarchate of Moscow is in the process of building a new church in Havana. Father Michael Alvaro Acosta, a Cuban national, of our jurisdiction, is currently continuing his studies in Thessaloniki, Greece. Fr. Michael was ordained a Priest in Cuba last Summer, and it is planned that he will return to Cuba after completing his studies, and will work for the development of the Church in his native land.

Haiti

Mission in Haiti has existed for the last 13 years, supported by the Orthodox Christian Mission Center. Volunteer visits provide opportunity for service, including repainting the St. George Church in Petion-Ville, but more importantly offer witness to the larger American Orthodox Church. The church in Haiti is isolated. Many have taken baptism in the Orthodox Church, but are not aware of the wider Orthodox Church. In thirteen years Fr. Michael reports around 300 baptisms. Fr. Michael has translated the services into Creole.

Martinique

Father Lazarus was ordained to the Priesthood in January (year unknown).

Puerto Rico

Since 1995, Fr. Peter Di Leo has been building up a community of Orthodox Christians into a young and thriving parish in San Juan, the capital city. Currently known as St. Spyridon's Orthodox Mission, funding is being sought for a church building. An OCMC Mission Team of 2005 will go to Puerto Rico from March 4-13 to assist in outreach efforts among college students & young people under 35 years. The Mission Team will also be doing maintenance work on a church building and assisting in a homeless shelter. Fr. Peter has acquired land and hopes to build a family services centre as part of his community's outreach projects. (OCMC 13 Jan 2005)

3. EUROPE

Albania

The Church was silenced under former President Enver Hoxha. Following the collapse of the regime, the Ecumenical Patriarch sent Anastatios Yanatoulis as his Patriarchal Exarch to reconstruct a canonical Autocephalic Church of Albania in 1991. Anastatios was elected Archbishop in 1992. Seventy new churches were built in the first six years, 63 reconstructed and 100 repaired. There were 233 churches in 1996 compared to the 324 closed by Hoxha. In 1992,

a theological Seminary was opened in Durres and a monthly magazine began publication. By 1998 92 new priests had been ordained in addition to the five that survived the Communist regime. OCMC supports missionaries working alongside Albanian Orthodox believers.

4. AFRICA

The Orthodox Church in Africa falls under the jurisdiction of the Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, and its history goes back to the first century. The tradition of the patriarchate is that it was established by St Mark in AD 62. In the first few centuries it was confined to North Eastern Africa. The North Western part was under the jurisdiction of the Pope of Rome. At first Christianity had only a rather precarious toe-hold on the African continent, but towards the end of the second century it became indigenous, and spread rapidly among the native Egyptian population (rather than the Graeco-Roman ruling class).

The African Orthodox Church (AOC) was the offspring of the Pan African movement in the 1950s and 60s.

Cameroon

When Archbishop Irenaeus became Metropolitan of Accra (actually based in Yaounde, Cameroun) in 1976, he began extending Orthodoxy in Cameroun, which had previously been confined to the Greek community. There were people from the Toubouri tribe on the Chad border. One of these who was interested in Orthodoxy became a catechist, and was ordained in 1981. Initially the Archbishop gave teaching and celebrated the Divine Liturgy in French. Later some students who went to the university and knew French translated the Liturgy into the Toubouri language. The Archbishop would hold garden parties at his home 3-4 times a year, at which catechumens would be baptised. These feasts were customary in the African community on special occasions.

By 1990, when Archbishop Irenaeus was transferred to Carthage, there were 8 parishes among the Toubouri-speaking people along the Chad border, and there is now a priest in Chad itself.

Cameroon has one Orthodox community with 2 native priests.

Ghana

In the town of Larteh a group that had formerly belonged to the Salvation Army joined the African Orthodox Church (in 1977), and, after reading Bishop Kallistos Ware's book *The Orthodox Church*, began to have doubts about their canonical status. On hearing that a World Council of Churches meeting was being held in Accra, a group of three young members of the church travelled there to meet some of the Orthodox representatives. As a result of this meeting, one of them, Joseph Kwame Labi, travelled to the USA, where he attended St Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary. He was later ordained and served as a priest in Larteh.

Ghana now has 12 Orthodox parishes, with 9 church buildings served by 5 native priests and 2 deacons. The Divine Liturgy, a summary of church history, and the services of baptism, marriage and burial have all been translated into Fanti.

Kenya

More extended is the missionary effort undertaken under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa. The first Orthodox groups have been formed in East Africa through the initiative of the Africans themselves.

In the 1920s one of the clergy of the Ethiopian Church, Daniel William Alexander, made contact with the African Orthodox Church, which had recently been formed in the USA, and eventually was ordained a bishop of that church.

In the early 1930s Bishop Alexander travelled to Uganda at the invitation of two former Anglicans whose reading had led them to seek to join the Orthodox Church. Alexander replied, and also wrote to the Orthodox bishop of Johannesburg, asking for a letter of introduction to the

Orthodox priest at Moshi, Tanganyika, and expressing an interest in a merger with the Greek Orthodox Church in South Africa.

Bishop Alexander returned to East Africa in November 1935. He founded a seminary where he trained eight students and subsequently ordained two priests and two deacons,

There were two groups in Kenya. The African Orthodox Church sought links with the Alexandrian Patriarchate and were received into the patriarchate as a canonical Orthodox Church in 1946.

In Kenya, the struggle against colonial rule intensified, and in 1952 the colonial authorities declared a state of emergency as a result of the activities of the Mau Mau guerrillas. The Orthodox Church was banned and its schools and temples were closed by the colonial regime.

Today there are roughly 210 Orthodox parishes and small communities there, served by 75 African clergy and 50 reader/catechists. The main body of Orthodox is to be found in Kenya, where there are 85 parishes and 67 smaller communities. They run 10 nursery schools, 5 primary schools, 1 secondary school and 3 dispensaries. The number of faithful exceeds 60,000. The missionary team consists of the bishop, a priest, 2 nuns and 8 lay people, sent and financed by the churches of Greece, Finland, America and Cyprus. This pan-Orthodox collaboration is a new trait in the history of Orthodox mission.

In Nairobi, the "Orthodox Patriarchal Seminary Makarios III, Archbishop of Cyprus" has been functioning since 1982. At present it has 12 teachers and 47 students. The seminary opened in Bishop Anastasios's time, and it began with 19 students. It was originally only for students from East Africa, but in 1995 it began taking students from other African countries as well, and there were 42 students from seven countries - Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Cameroon, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Madagascar.

Madagascar

In Madagascar the Greek community built two churches in the capital, Antananarive, in 1953. In 1972 the priest was expelled during political unrest and Madagascar's two Orthodox churches consequently fell into disrepair. In 1994 Archimandrite Nectarios Kellis went to Madagascar as a missionary priest from Australia. He was active in evangelising, visiting towns and villages, explaining the Orthodox Christian faith to anyone interested and consequently establishing new parishes, catechising and baptising the Malagasi. Within 18 months he had started about 20 new parishes in the island, and sent a student to the seminary in Nairobi.

Already a number of new congregations have been started in this way, and the Divine Liturgy has been translated into the local languages. The Orthodox Church in Madagascar is under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Zimbabwe, and by 1996 two local priests, trained by the Archimandrite, had been ordained. Eventually the church in Madagascar grew so rapidly that it needed its own bishop, and Father Nectarius was the obvious choice.

Nigeria

In Nigeria a similar group calling itself the "Greek Orthodox Church" was started by an *episcopus vagans* from America, Abuna Abraim, who later sent a bishop to ordain priests and deacons. This group was fairly well-established when it made contact with the Patriarchate of Alexandria. Two of its leaders travelled to Alexandria, and the Metropolitan of Accra, Archbishop Irenaeus, travelled to Nigeria and baptized them in 1985. He ordained the leaders of the group.

In Nigeria there are 16 parishes served by 1 missionary priest and 9 native priests, with 12 church buildings, 4 primary schools and a number of nursery schools.

Southern Africa

In 1908, Father Nicodemus Sarikas, was sent to the Orthodox community (Greek) in Johannesburg, in the recently conquered British colony of the Transvaal.

Daniel William Alexander was consecrated bishop by Patriarch Macguire of the African Orthodox

Church, and returned to South Africa, and established the African Orthodox Church among his followers there.

Tanzania

In the early 1930s Bishop Alexander wrote to the Orthodox bishop of Johannesburg, asking for a letter of introduction to the Orthodox priest at Moshi, Tanganyika, and expressing an interest in a merger with the Greek Orthodox Church in South Africa.

Fr Nicodemus Sarikas went to Tanganyika from Johannesburg. In East Africa he played an important role in enabling the African Orthodox Church in Uganda to become canonically Orthodox. In N.W. Tanganyika the Orthodox Church has grown quite rapidly, and there is now a bishop at Bukoba, on the western shore of Lake Victoria. The Orthodox Church there was mainly the result of contact with the Church in Uganda. Just south of Lake Victoria, a Greek employee in a factory was asked by a fellow employee what his religion was. After hearing about Orthodoxy, this young man, Paul Budala, wrote to the Orthodox Church in Uganda, and a priest from there, Fr Theodore Nankyamas visited the places and baptised twenty people he had instructed.

The Orthodox Church in Tanzania, which has taken shape in the last 8 years, has 9 parishes, 21 small communities and 9 church buildings. The number of faithful is put at 8,000. Recently 3 dispensaries were built and equipped. The African clergy totals 4 priests and 2 deacons.

Uganda

The Orthodox Church in Uganda has 29 parishes, served by an African auxiliary bishop and 14 African priests. The number of faithful is roughly estimated to be 10,000. Quite a number of Ugandans have studied abroad. The mission runs 2 secondary schools, 10 primary schools and a polyclinic managed by a doctor who has studied in Athens. There are also 4 dispensaries. The country has suffered from civil war, and many plans for rebuilding churches and other centres are behind time.

Zaire

In 1970 Archimandrite Chrysostom Papisarantopoulos went to Zaire to begin a new mission there. In Central Africa, two big missionary centers have been established, one in Kanaga and the other in Koluwezi, Zaire. In Koluwezi another Archimandrite was evangelising, and in 1975 he was joined by a young man, Yannis Aslanidis, who in 1978 returned to Greece to become a monk on Mount Athos. He later returned to Zaire as Fr Cosmas Grigoriatis, and initiated an agricultural development programme, in which he succeeded in adapting and growing various kinds of crops that other agriculturalists had failed to do. The farm is recognised as a model farm for the Shaba province. There are 49 parishes and roughly 9,000 Orthodox in the country, served by 22 Zairois clergy. The local church is assisted by two Greek Archimandrites and 12 lay people. There are also secondary school, a primary school, a small seminary for future priests, a hostel for young people and a foreign medical service. For purposes of worship and catechism, French, Swahili and local dialects are used.

Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, Orthodoxy was for a long time confined to immigrants from Orthodox countries, mainly those of Greek descent. A young Zimbabwean, Raphael Ganda, went to Greece for an army officer's training course. There he learnt Greek, and also learnt about Orthodoxy through the services at the army bases. On his return to Zimbabwe, he began attending services at the Orthodox cathedral in Harare, and in September 1994 he and his family and some others he had gathered were baptised. Three months later he was sent to the seminary in Nairobi. On completing his course, he plans to be a rural missionary, and is working on the translation of the Divine Liturgy and other services into Shona. In these instances, the methods of mission appear

to resemble those of the pre-Nicene Church. From the fourth century onward, most Christian missionaries were monks, but in East Africa and Zimbabwe, monastic mission has not been much in evidence.

5. ASIA

China

Orthodox worship in China began in 1690 among Russian prisoners who had been granted freedom but chose to stay in China. The first church was consecrated in 1695. The Chinese Orthodox Church, founded on the work of a Russian Orthodox mission, was granted autonomy by the Moscow Patriarchate in 1957. However, the Cultural Revolution of 1966-76 soon brought its activities to a halt. Only after the Cultural Revolution was over did certain religious communities have the opportunity to reopen places of worship, though under tight government control. In 1996 the Ecumenical Patriarchate established a Metropolitanate in Hong Kong. Metropolitan Nikitas (Loulis) of Hong Kong and South East Asia told Forum 18 on 29 June that his Church has two parishes in Hong Kong and Taipei, where "ethnic Chinese are Orthodox Christians and active participants in the life of the Church". In February 1997 the Russian Orthodox Church re-established links with the Chinese Orthodox Church and maintains that the appointment of a primate is the responsibility of the Moscow Patriarch.

There are only two indigenous Orthodox clergy in China. Since 2003, however, 15 Chinese Orthodox have been studying in several Orthodox theological seminaries in Russia. Fr Dionisy serves a liturgy in the Russian embassy in Beijing, for citizens of Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia & Montenegro and Ethiopia, approximately every six weeks. Chinese citizens are not permitted to attend. Fr Dionisy also ministers to an Orthodox community of foreign citizens in Shenzhen in the southern coastal Guangdong Province. In addition to the 20 who attend prayers in Harbin (founded in 1983) and Ghulja (Yining), two other Orthodox churches are currently open to Chinese nationals in Urumqi and Labdarin (Inner Mongolia). He estimated there to be 3,000, mostly elderly, Orthodox in China, including some 500 in Urumqi and 200 in Beijing.

India

India has the historical presence of Oriental Apostolic Orthodox Churches, mainly in the west of the country. St. Thomas is widely regarded to have been the first missionary to India.

In 1924 the Church of the Transfiguration was built by Greek merchants in Calcutta. Under the Ecumenical Patriarch, two Eastern Orthodox parishes were established in 1980 in Arambah, 150 km from Calcutta. Three Indian priests and one Deacon have been ordained. Initially a missionary, Fr. Athanasios Anthides, went there. He translated the Divine Liturgy, the Service Book, and an Orthodox Catechism into the local Bengali dialect. He formed 24 groups of Believers in the surrounding villages, mud huts normally providing shelter for the Divine Liturgy. There are an estimated 1,300

Theological education is offered by volunteers from the US and Greece who host an annual seminar. Two churches, one youth center, and an orphanage with a church on the outskirts of Calcutta, were under construction in 2004.

Indonesia

The Orthodox Church in Indonesia started by the conversion of a young man of Muslim background who had converted to Protestant Christianity and was active in the Charismatic Movements of the 1970s. After studying at the Asian Center for Theological Studies and Mission, (ACTS) in Seoul, Korea, 1978, he picked up a copy of Timothy Ware's book *The Orthodox Church*. In 1983 he converted to Orthodoxy and, after theological study in the US, returned as Priest in 1988 with four others. The first conversion occurred in 1989. The Church was legally established in 1991 and the first building completed in 1996 in Jakarta. The Church is part of the Archdiocese of Hong Kong and SE. Asia.

Japan

Orthodoxy was introduced to Japan from Russia by Nicholai Kassathin in 1861. Appointed initially as a chaplain to the Russian consulate, he was a zealous missionary and after baptizing the first Japanese Orthodox Christians in 1868, he and his disciples began work among the Japanese in the North. Later he moved to Tokyo, founding a seminary, a translation center, and numerous churches and communities, witnesses his strong missionary zeal as well as the Presence of the Holy Spirit. He died in 1912 after baptising over 20,000 Japanese. The Japanese Church received Autonomous status in 1970 from the Russian Orthodox Church though this has not been recognised by the Ecumenical Patriarch and most other Churches.

Currently, the Japanese Orthodox Church has some 30,000 members, 150 church buildings and is served by an Archbishop-metropolitan and 35 Japanese priests.

Korea

We shall start with the mission being carried out under the immediate ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. The Orthodox Church in Korea today has four church buildings and parishes in relatively big cities, two Korean priests and about 2,000 members. They are supported by two missionary priests, two laymen and three nuns, all from Greece. To prepare native staff, a seminary functions three afternoons a week. In recent years, many Orthodox books have been translated into the Korean language, both liturgical and of a more general, historical or edifying nature. (Anastasios)

The Pilippines

An Orthodox group had met since 1983, and in 1995 the leader was ordained. Three Churches, three Chapels, one Monastery, four Mission areas, and one School have since been established. There are about 560 members (Filipino and expatriot), three Filipino clergy, and four Nuns.

Orthodox Mission Agencies

During the past thirty years, Centers and groups have been created with the development and support of external mission as their sole aim:

Porefthentes, blossomed out at the beginning of 1959 with the publication in Greek and English of a magazine of the same name, which continued to appear for ten years. Since 1981 *Porefthentes* has edited the official missionary magazine of the Church of Greece, *Panta to Ethne* (All Nations).

Hellenike Adelphotes Orthodoxou Exoterikes Hierapostoles (Greek Brotherhood of Orthodox External Mission), in Thessaloniki, 1963. (Formerly the Friends of Uganda)

Ho *Protokletos* (The First-Called) in Patras (1974).

Members of the *Porefthentes* staff founded the *Grapheion Exoterikes Hierapostoles* (Bureau of External Mission) in 1968 within the framework of the *Apostoliki Diakonia* of the Church of Greece, and a Week of External Mission was adopted by all the Metropolias of Greece.

In 1971, the *Kentron Hieraposiolikou Spoudon* (Centre for Missionary Studies) was organized, with the collaboration of the Holy Synod and the Theological Faculty of the University of Athens, and functioned up to 1976.

In 1972, the first ladies' monastic group was set up, which later developed into the Convent of St John the Precursor, Kareas, with the aim of serving and supporting missionary work.

In 1976 a Chair of Missiology was created at Athens University.

In Finland, a "Mission Office of the Finnish Orthodox Church" (Ortodoksinen Lahetysry) was opened in 1981.

In America the "Mission Center of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America", was established in 1985, systematically extending the work of the old "Commission for Mission," which had begun in 1963.

The SCOBA Orthodox Christian Mission Center (founded 1987?) lists as its successes, the 6,300 people who have received health care, over 800 children who have participated in catechism programs, 350 women who have attended spiritual retreats, 269 mission indigenous priests financially supported and over 30 students receiving theological education.

In 1987, the first OCMC Mission Team was sent to Loberi, Kenya followed, in 1988, by a second team to Chavogere, Kenya.

Initiation into the Kingdom of God

Orthodox Mission stresses the need for Christian initiation to be more than a change in relationship (between the individual person and the living God) but it also underlines the need for the adoption of a particular theological vision and a moral orientation (see Abraham *The Logic of Evangelism* 1989 p110)

Visit to Chesmienski Parish, St Petersburg: Sunday 4th January 2004

The Archpriest responsible for the parish is Fr. Aleksii (assisted by 4 Priests and 2 Deacons). This is a well known St. Petersburg landmark (it is painted a very delicate pink colour!) and is named after a famous battle.

There are 2-3,000 parishioners in a district of 150,000. Attendance at divine liturgy reaches approximately 400 per week. Feast Days and Holy Days see much higher levels of attendance. It is normal for there to be a ten or fifteen minutes homily during the liturgy. The focus is usually practical and relates to Christian lifestyle issues.

The Parish runs a number of ministries, including: A Child-line. Evening classes. Film evenings for students. A Theatre club. A Young women's choir. A Website. An electronic Liturgical project (a copy of which we were presented with). Visits to the Hermitage for homeless young people & Babushkas. Pilgrimages, for example to Israel. An ecumenically run Night-shelter.

Orthodox failure in Mission

"Why is the Patriarchate so sensitive and so willing to participate in the suppression or curbing of non-Russian-Orthodox organizations and groups?"

First. Evangelical Protestants have been making inroads, particularly in the Russian Far East as previous sections of this paper have discussed.

Secondly, foreign missionaries often come with humanitarian aid, literature, supplies, money and other fruits of affluence that put the Russian Orthodox activists at a disadvantage that they find galling.

Thirdly. Some missionaries come with attitudinal problems, projecting the view that Russia has been and is a Godless land that has to be won for Christ. For a Russian Orthodox person who is deeply proud of Russia's thousand-year Christian history, these attitudes on the part of some foreigners are frustrating.

Fourthly, there is a touch of chauvinism and nationalistic pride in the mix on the Russian side.

Fifthly, some missionaries come manifesting cultural and linguistic ignorance, which translates into insensitivity.

Sixthly, there is a soupcon of envy, if not jealousy, in the mix.

Seventhly, some Western missionaries are said to be motivated “in order to get money from their supporters and glory for their own success.”

Eighthly, Russian Orthodox failures, where there are failures, need scapegoats.

In some ways it is surprising that the Russian Orthodox are as generous as they are. So one can see the frustrations and human tragedies on both sides, and the result has been laws and practices on part of the Russians that project themselves as intolerance and even bigotry, and anger and resentment on the American and Western side that is sure to find its expression in retaliation and punitive action. It is all very sad.”

Davis, N. ‘Tribulations, Trials and Troubles for the Russian Orthodox Church’ in *Religion in Eastern Europe* XX (6) December 2000

Miscellaneous (requiring development)

Lawrence Uzell’s paper from *First Things* & quote re. Failure of Orthodox Mission.

Barrett, D. *Evangelise!* (quote p62 re. Orthodoxy and ‘evangelistic witness’)

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The Revd Darrell Jackson, Researcher in Mission and Evangelism, Conference of European Churches
PMTI-CEC, H-1461, Budapest, Pf.150, Hungary
Jackson@pmti.edu.hu