

UNIT 3C: MINISTRIES AND MISSION

90: Evangelisation and Missions

(Lecture originally delivered at a Church Conference in 2011 held at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire, UK - with additional references).

First Principles: The Holy Spirit in Mission

Attend to this contribution from Fr Emmanuel, concluding his talk on the Holy Spirit in the New Testament at the aforementioned Conference:

It is the Holy Spirit that wants each of us to become joined to God—to follow the Father’s will to become one with Christ and to be empowered in that oneness with Christ through His gifts. As in the life of Christ Himself, that means we will each experience times of suffering and times of joy, times of challenge and times of achievement, times of promise and times of fulfilment, times of quiet peacefulness and times of noisy conflict. This is all part of living according to the Holy Spirit, of seeking the will of the Father in our lives, of accepting the suffering and joys of being one with Christ that our search for the will of the Father brings us.

The Department of Evangelisation in the OCA (the Orthodox Church in America) also places union with God as the first and most personal priority in preparing any local church for growth.¹

¹<http://www.oca.org/PDF/evangelization/2005-Evangelization-Hndbk.pdf> OCA Mission Planter’s Resource Kit, p. 11. In considering “How did New Testament Evangelism Work?” Father Michael Keiser points out that “by the third century Christians constituted an estimated twenty-five per cent of the Roman Empire.” He suggests that this success was based on five principles: “(1) personal experience of God; (2) trust in God; (3) a Spirit-led community; (4) a profound sense of forgiveness; and (5) a focus on essentials . . . worship, teaching, and collecting alms for those in need.” *Spread the Word: Reclaiming the Apostolic Tradition of Evangelism* (Chesterton, Ind: Conciliar Press [now Ancient Faith Press], 2011), pp. 23-51.

Numerical growth cannot be based on anything other than growth in the Holy Spirit ... in short, knowing God personally:

For the Church to grow there are certain priorities, or prerequisites, that must be met. The first of these is not acquisition of new members. That comes later, and only if other spiritual conditions are met by the existing members. **The first and most important priority is for each and every member to know God.** The First Commandment is to love God with our whole being. “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.”² This means giving ourselves completely over to unification with God, and to the arduous work of developing our interior being. Christ affirms this priority of loving God by telling us to seek first His [God’s] Kingdom and His Righteousness.³

If we do not acquire the Holy Spirit, given in baptism but only activated through the renunciation of self will and a radical reorientation (metanoia) toward God, then we shall never have anything to offer another seeker after God. We can only share that which we know and if we do not know Him then we should not expect to see

² Deuteronomy 6:5; Mark 12:30; Matthew 22:37; Luke 10:27. The intensity of this Biblical insistence on the importance of knowing and loving God was expressed by St Gregory of Nazianzen, the 4th century Archbishop of Constantinople and Theologian, with the dictum that: “It is more important to remember God than it is to breathe.” Father John Anthony McGuckin, *The Book of Mystical Chapters: Meditations on the Soul’s Ascent, from the Desert Fathers and Other Early Christian Contemplatives* (Boston, Mass: Shambhala, 2003), p. 74.

³ Matthew 6:33. See reference 9 below on seeking God’s kingdom. St Hesychios of Sinai, who lived in the 8th or 9th century, stressed the importance of watchfulness as “a spiritual method which, if sedulously practiced over a long period, completely frees us with God’s help from impassioned thoughts, impassioned words and evil actions. It leads, in so far as this is possible, to a sure knowledge of the inapprehensible God, and helps us to penetrate the divine and hidden mysteries.” See the website: http://hesychia.narod.ru/hes_en.htm. (A video ‘pop-up’ appears on this page. You may easily dismiss it).

Father John also opens *the Book of Mystical Chapters* with the advice of St Hesychios: “Watch your heart always. Constantly say the prayer ‘Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.’ Be humble. Set your soul in quietness.”

much fruit in our evangelism. Conversely, “acquire the Holy Spirit (know God), and a thousand around you will be saved.” This famous aphorism of St Seraphim of Sarov reminds us of the absolute priority of a transformative union with God in order for salvation to become perceptible in us by others. These seekers are looking, not for words without power, but for fire; the empowering and enlightening fire of God. We then must burn with the Holy Spirit, as did the bush, not consumed but transfigured and bearing the Light, which is Christ Himself.

From the Fathers of the ancient Egyptian Desert we hear this story, to be repeated in the snows of the central Russian forests so many centuries later when St Seraphim famously conversed in the Holy Spirit with his own spiritual son, Nicholas Motovilov:

Abba Lot went to see Abba Joseph and said to him, 'Abba as far as I can I say my little office, I fast a little, I pray and meditate, I live in peace and as far as I can, I purify my thoughts. What else can I do?' Then the old man stood up and stretched his hands towards heaven. His fingers became like ten lamps of fire and he said to him, 'If you will, you can become all flame.'”⁴

So this is the first and vital step toward mission. Acquire the Holy Spirit.

The second prerequisite of mission in the OCA Handbook is the formation of the Church in the Love of God between her members:

⁴ *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection*. Translated by Benedicta Ward. (Kalamazoo, Cistercian Studies Series, 1984) number 59. Saying 7 of Abba Joseph of Panephrisis, p. 103. On St Seraphim, see Helen Kontzevitch, *Saint Seraphim: Wonderworker of Sarov and His Spiritual Inheritance* (Wildwood, Calif: St Xenia Skete, 2004); Donald Nicholl, *Triumphs of the Spirit in Russia* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1997), Chapter 1, “The starets: Saint Seraphim,” pp. 11-66); Julia de Beausobre, *Flame in the Snow: A Russian Legend* (London: Constable, 1945); *Little Russian Philokalia: Volume 1: Saint Seraphim of Sarov*, trans. by Father Seraphim Rose (Platina, Calif: St Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1996).

The second priority is to build and to manifest a spiritual quality of life throughout the whole community. **We must love one another in Christ and strive to become one undivided body in Him.**⁵

Here again, we find a link in baptism concerning the Holy Spirit. Just as we received the Holy Spirit in chrismation, we are called each and every day to be filled with Him as one body⁶ manifesting that indwelling of the Holy Spirit by the quality and depth of our love for the brethren. This love is practised first in the household of faith, as the school *par excellence* of forgiveness, burden-bearing and the giving of life to one another. In this God is preparing us for a deeper loving in the world beyond the Church.

God's judgement lies heavy, however, on households of faith that are unloving. Jesus called them whitewashed sepulchres.⁷ St John Chrysostom referred to this parlous spiritual state in very personal terms as **“when we grow cold in love, and when we do things that are impure and unworthy, and that contradict the body.”** We cannot then escape personal responsibility from any malaise in the community whether or not we consider ourselves to be personally involved in those spiritual sicknesses. Let us then stir up ourselves to embrace the exact opposite of the malaise by turning St John's warning inside out. As we might then say in prayer: **“May we grow warmer in love (with a heart enlarged) and do such things as are**

⁵ Ibid., p. 12. For helpful guidelines on building up a “love of one another in Christ,” see Father John, *Christ Is in Our Midst: Letters from a Russian Monk* (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 1996). Although this is set in a monastic context, note that Metropolitan Antony of Sourozh points out in the Foreword, “When a Man Starts on the Way,” “we can each seek “to cling to all that is good and to turn away from all that is evil” and then seek “to know nothing but God in a final, ultimate surrender, in the wisdom of holy ignorance ... respond[ing] at once without reservation to all Divine promptings.” p. xi-xii.

⁶ 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

⁷ Matthew 23:27. In considering how the Orthodox Church can fulfil its mission, Father Alexander Schmemmann urges that the Ecumenical Patriarch should take the lead “to liberate us from pagan and heretical nationalisms which choke the universal and saving vocation of the Orthodox Church.” His strictures apply to all Orthodox jurisdictions. *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy in the West* (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 1979), p. 116.

pure and of good report so that the body may be built up in love.” Thus shall we maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.⁸ If we acquit ourselves well in this arena of Divine Love in the Church, we might just then be able to do the same in the world as we love our neighbours as ourselves.⁹

It is at this point that the Church’s *inner* life in the Holy Spirit becomes the Church’s *outer* life in the Holy Spirit, that is, **mission through shared life and unconditional sacrificial love**. There does not need to be any reason for sharing our life with others or a sense of obligation in doing that if it comes naturally to us by the Holy Spirit; which of course it should! We love after all “**because He first loved us.**”¹⁰

The third principle enshrined in the OCA document flows naturally from this outward movement of God’s Love into the world.¹¹ It is put in a very striking and challenging way. Every word counts:

⁸ Ephesians 4:3. As set out above in reference 6, Metropolitan Antony reflects that “St Seraphim was asked how it was that he knew what to say to every person at first sight. He replied that he knew nothing but said what came to his mind unquestioningly, as coming from the deep serenity of God’s own presence.” “This,” writes Metropolitan Anthony, “is ‘mere Christianity’—so alien and strange to the modern sophisticated mind which has lost touch with the heart, the core of man’s being, the depth where we can find God’s holy dwelling place” p. xii. However, this “serenity of God’s own presence” remains a possibility for each of us. As John Barnett of St Vladimir’s Theological Seminary points out “All things—even knowledge of one’s vocation—are provided to those who first seek God’s kingdom,” p. 44, “Seek First His Kingdom: An Invitation to Christian Vocation,” in Ann Mitsakos Bezzerides (Ed.), *Christ at Work: Orthodox Christian Perspectives on Vocation* (Brookline, Mass: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2006), pp. 43-69.

⁹ It should also be noted that we can incorrectly frame our own wishes in prayer, both for ourselves and for others. The 4th century monk and desert father St Evagrius of Pontus reflected: “I have often prayed and asked God for what seemed good in my own estimation. Like a fool, I kept on at God to grant me this; I would not leave it to him to arrange as he knows best for me. Then, having obtained the thing I had prayed for so stubbornly, I have often been sorry that I did not leave it to the will of God, for the reality often turned out very different from the way I had imagined.” *The Book of Mystical Chapters*, pp. 29-30.

¹⁰ 1 John 4:19

¹¹ Matthew 28: 19-20 (“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...”) “puts the emphasis on the power of God and not the strength of humankind to evangelise. To evangelise is to be an *evangelistes*, the deliverer of *evangelion* [gospel], or the Good News of salvation.” Chad Hatfield, “Evangelism,” in Father John Anthony McGuckin (Ed.), *The Concise Encyclopedia of Orthodox Christianity* (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), p. 190. St Innocent of Alaska

The third priority is to go out into the world proclaiming the message of the gospel and leading men to its truth through incorporation into the Church. This aspect of growth must also concern itself with serving human beings in their distress and providing for their essential needs in this world. The Church grows by manifesting sacrificial love, which gives freely, expecting nothing in return.¹² The light of God must be allowed to illumine through us, and God's goodness must be made to season life by our activity. To make disciples, to baptise, and to teach is God's command, and is an integral part of Church growth. If one actually has a personal experience of the illumination, beauty and goodness of God, then surely one will want to let others know about it.¹³ If one has truly tasted the peace, joy, and love of God, then one will want to share those things with others. Awakenning the interest of others to the message *and* person of Christ is thus essential to Church growth. Leading others to see and experience God personally is a spiritual work required of every member.¹⁴

made a similar point in urging: "Pray, pray, pray. Conversion comes from God, not from the evangelist. The missionary is only a tool in God's hands (Cited by Keiser, p. 217).

¹² The centrality of human free choice is beautifully captured in *The Book of Mystical Chapters*: "One of the monks asked the great teacher Abba Nistero: 'What should I do for the best in life?' And the Abba answered: 'All works are not equal. The scripture says that Abraham was hospitable, and God was with him; it says that Elias loved quiet, and God was with him; it says that David was humble, and God was with him. So, whatever path you find your soul longs after in the quest for God, do that, and always watch over your heart's integrity.'" pp. 15-16. See also Christos Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality*, trans. from the Greek by Elizabeth Briere (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 1984) which begins with the words of St Isaac the Syrian: "When you enter the path of righteousness, then you will cleave to freedom in everything." In the Foreword, Metropolitan Kallistos writes that this freedom, "the glorious liberty of the children of God (Romans 8:21) ... [can] only be attained through asceticism.... 'Where the Spirit of God is, there is freedom' (2 Corinthians 3:17)."

¹³ Father Luke Veronis points out that: "The *Philokalia*, a collection of sayings from the Church Fathers, teaches, 'Blessed is the one who rejoices in his salvation, but even more blessed is the one who rejoices in the salvation of the other.' St. John Chrysostom emphasizes the same idea: 'I do not believe in the salvation of anyone who does not try to save others.'" "Foreword," Father Michael Keiser, *Spread the Word: Reclaiming the Apostolic Tradition of Evangelism*, p. 6.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

At this point in talks such as these the lecturer often senses a resistance in his hearers. The auditorium has been largely in agreement up to this point. “Acquire the Holy Spirit and a thousand around you will be saved.” Yes, that’s fine ... as is “serving human beings in their distress and providing for their essential needs in this world” ... a timely reminder that social justice and care is inextricably bound up in the Gospel, at least if we take Christ’s teaching about the sheep and the goats at the Last Judgement¹⁵ seriously. This other aspect though, the difficult business of (to quote again the OCA document) “awakening the interest of others to the message and person of Christ”— isn’t this what those wordy Evangelical Protestants do? We are Orthodox. We don’t do that sort of thing. Bear with me. I hope to show you now that this “sort of thing” is what the Orthodox have been doing for centuries;¹⁶ but I am going to start not in antiquity but in the modern era, not in Eastern Europe but in Japan. We shall learn from the work of Nicholas Kasatkin, the now glorified St Nicholas of Japan, Evangeliser of that country, who lived from

¹⁵ Matthew 25:31-46. For an excellent Orthodox interpretation of the Last Judgement, see T. L. Frazier, *A Second Look at the Second Coming: Sorting Through the Speculations* (Ben Lomond, Calif: Conciliar Press [now Ancient Faith Press], 1999. For an exegesis of the Book of Revelation, see Archbishop Averky Taushev, *The Apocalypse in the Teachings of Ancient Christianity*, trans. and edited by Father Seraphim Rose, Second Edition (Platina, Calif: St Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1995),

¹⁶ Considering evangelism in the early Church, Father Michael Keiser stresses that: “Evangelism is not only about words, but deeds as well. Part of preaching the Gospel is confronting evil, whether that evil is sin or the demons!” *Spread the Word*, p. 58. Then, as now, Father Michael notes that Christian homes can be “centres of outreach,” especially in “the face-to-face exchange between the teacher and the listeners [with] some good hospitality ... [enabling] people [to] encounter the Gospel in circumstances that did not put them on the spot.” p. 63. Furthermore, these early Christians “faced death with courage. It is doubtful that Christianity would have spread in the way that it did if there had not been an obvious connection between what Christians taught and the way they lived.... This was an important factor in evangelism because among pagans, there was no necessary connection between behaviour and religious belief.... The Christians met death with joy, not because they hated life, but because they knew that nothing, not even death, could separate them from God.... We see in the lives of the saints how even the manner of their dying sometimes converted their executioners. Very few of us will have to face death because of our faith in Jesus Christ, but all of us have to face life. The way we do so should have the power to convert others” pp. 67-69.

1836 to 1912 and who was an embodiment of the very ideal of the Orthodox Spirit-filled missionary, both a true pastor and a saint.

St Nicholas, Enlightener of Japan: A Case Study

At the end of his life work St Nicholas left behind him more than 30,000 Orthodox Christians, translations of almost the entire Bible, almost all of the Orthodox liturgical texts and theological literature, several schools, a seminary, a library and countless other institutions, many of which are still functioning today. Richard H. Drummond,¹⁷ a noted historian of Christianity in Japan, wrote approvingly as follows:

The life and life fruits of St Nicholas compel us to recognise him as one of the greatest missionaries of the modern era. In accordance with Orthodox tradition he respected highly the language and cultural traditions of the people among whom he served. He respected the people and loved them as persons ... He stressed above all the raising up of national workers and the indigenisation of the Church, even as he urged it to remember its distinctive association with the kingdom of God.

So, what can we discover about this man, his faith, his vision, his missionary methodology? (Much of the following information is referenced from an excellent account of St Nicholas' life and work published by Divine Ascent Press, itself culled from a vast archival resource of the saint's own diaries and letters together with other witnesses and commentaries).¹⁸

¹⁷ Richard H. Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, (Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans, 1971), p. 354.

¹⁸ Michael Van Remortel and Father Peter Chang (Eds.), *Saint Nikolai Kasatkin and the Orthodox Mission in Japan*, (Point Reyes Station, Calif: Divine Ascent Press, Monastery of St John of Shanghai and San Francisco, 2003).

Nicholas was born in the Belsky district of Smolensk province, the son of a deacon and a devout mother who died when he was only five years old. He entered the Smolensk seminary in 1853 and graduated with honours at the St Petersburg Theological Academy in 1860. With a brilliant academic career ahead of him his mentors tried to persuade him to stay at the Academy and pursue his research interests. It was not to be. He responded to a request for a chaplain to the Russian Consulate in Japan but with mission very much on his mind. Before he left Russia he was tonsured as a monk and ordained to the priesthood. He arrived in Japan in June 1861 after spending some time en route with the great missionary bishop, St Innocent of Alaska who encouraged him to persevere with his vocation.

A great disillusionment, however, awaited his arrival. The Japanese had just begun to emerge out of centuries of xenophobic isolation, but not confidently enough to abolish the laws that prescribed deportation for active foreign missionaries and possible death for any Japanese convert. Nicholas retreated into his study and his love for European languages in the Consulate. It was another visit by Bishop Innocent that rekindled his missionary zeal and stirred him into the colossal task of learning Japanese.¹⁹ It took Nicholas seven years to learn the language and during this time he also studied the culture and history of Japan, its mythology, literature and religious philosophy. He even attended the sermons of popular Buddhist preachers and storytellers to get an authentic appreciation of the Japanese religious mind. Here we may remark upon one of the most important principles of Orthodox Mission—a respect for the indigenous, culture, language and spirituality. This was no Russian pseudo-missioner, a political puppet using religion to extend Russian political and economic hegemony! Much later, when war broke out between Russian

¹⁹ Fr Chad Hatfield, cited in reference 12 above notes that “This crucial principle ... of using the vernacular tongue to evangelise ... is regrettably still not fully supported or practiced as Eastern Orthodoxy expands beyond the borders of traditionally Orthodox Christian countries.” It is clear that St Nicholas’ willingness to learn Japanese and his respect for Japanese culture was an essential precondition for effective evangelism.

and Japan, Nicholas refused to return home and continued to labour selflessly for the Japanese people. He was considered a traitor by some of the Russian political elite and a spy by some Japanese. His commitment to Japanese culture was founded upon a desire that Orthodoxy should become a truly indigenous phenomenon in Japan, not a Russian transplant. The translation work was vital in order to get the Scriptures and liturgical texts accessible to the Japanese. The cultural work was necessary to ensure that Orthodox Christianity would send down deep, lasting and nourishing roots into Japanese society. In this work of listening, absorption and translation, Nicholas worked tirelessly. However, he knew that this was preparatory groundwork, not evangelism itself. For that he had to wait and pray for God to open up a possibility for the gospel to spread in Japan by the Japanese themselves. This happened through a most unlikely encounter.

A certain Samurai Shinto priest named Sawabe Takuma was employed by the Consulate to give fencing lessons to the son of a Russian officer. Sawabe was a xenophobe who openly expressed contempt for Christianity and considered St Nicholas to be a worthy object of his disdain. One day he decided to confront the Christian priest, with drawn sword, intent on killing him:

"Why are you angry with me?" Father Nicholas asked Sawabe.

"All you foreigners must die. You have come here to spy on our country and even worse, you are harming Japan with your preaching," answered Sawabe.

"But do you know what I preach?"

"No, I don't," he answered.

"Then how can you judge, much less condemn something you know nothing about? Is it just to defame something you do not know? First listen to me, and then judge. If what you hear is bad, then throw us out."

Sawabe returned the next day and Nicholas presented to him the sacred history of the Old and New Testaments.²⁰ The samurai's demeanour changed. He began to take notes and started to ask penetrating questions. He made a commitment to Christ and started his own catechism under Father Nicholas' direction. Even before he had finished in the catechumenate, he started sharing his faith with his friends, even at the risk of his own life.²¹ Initially, two friends, John Sakai and James Urano joined him for baptism, he himself taking the name of, (most appropriately), Paul. This group started to witness to those whom they knew and within one year there were 12 baptised Christians and 25 catechumens. This was God's moment, His *kairos*. In the same year, the Emperor abolished the Japanese feudal system and formally renounced the country's isolationist policies. Nicholas returned to Russia for a little while to present his work to the Russian Church and to enlist the Holy Synod's support spiritually and materially for the Mission in Japan. This he received together with four monks to join him in the work ... all of whom returned home through ill health or personal reasons!

²⁰ In *Spread the Word*, Father Michael sets out the approach to evangelism that St Nicholas followed: "The first place we look in learning about the Gospel is to the words of our Lord Jesus.... Everything [Jesus] said and did was intended to bring people into the Kingdom, into relationship with His Father. He was always ready, in any situation, when meeting any person, to turn that meeting into an encounter with God's Kingdom.... But then the question comes, how on earth can we who are fallen and living in sin enter this holy and eternal Kingdom? The answer is in the central message the first Christians proclaimed: Christ died, is risen, and will come again for us and for our salvation. The work and victory of Jesus Christ is what we, like the early believers, are called to share." pp. 14 ff.

²¹ The behaviour of this samurai is in keeping with Father Michael' guidelines on the six habits of highly effective evangelists, that they "need not be perfect" but "need to pray a lot and reflect much, seeking God's guidance" on how to "deal with each individual ... He may bring our way." The key habits are: "(1) treat people decently; (2) [have] a good dose of common sense; (3) lighten up [showing] a sense of humor; (4) [be] humble . . . [recognising] God is at the center of all things, including whatever [the] efforts [of the evangelist] might be; (5) [be] honest about the place that God has in our lives and the things He has done for us, but ... be discerning as well; and (6) [Be joyful with] an interior transformation that lets us see God in every part of creation" pp. 119-126.

Back in Japan, the Church continued to grow, starting in Hakodate where Father Nicholas had originally entered the country. This growth happened in part because Father Nicholas insisted that the Japanese build up their own church in a most methodical and spiritual manner. These were his instructions (from archival sources) concerning outreach and instruction:

The evangelists shall be organised as a deliberate body. These evangelists shall teach Christian truth to other people while still continuing to study it for themselves. There shall be two kinds of meetings. In the first, the evangelists, together with others who know the essential doctrines but desire further study, shall meet to read and explain the New Testament. Such meetings shall be held twice a week, the evangelists taking turns in conducting them. None of the number shall fail to attend; if any person is unavoidably prevented from coming, he ought before the next meeting, to learn from someone else what was said. The second meeting is for the benefit of those—whether men, women or children—who are commencing to study Christian doctrines. The evangelists shall explain to them the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. This meeting shall be held twice a week . . . Besides conducting the two kinds of meetings already mentioned, the evangelists shall go about the city every day trying to win new enquirers. If among those interested are persons unable to attend the meetings, the evangelists shall go to their houses in order to explain the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. This is to be regarded as of prime importance and should be done even if, for lack of time, the evangelist is obliged to omit the meeting for reading the New Testament. When persons have thoroughly learned the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and are established in the faith, they shall be presented to the priest for baptism.

The three friends rapidly became most effective leaders of this fledgling church. They obtained premises for worship and attracted a congregation of over 150

Japanese enquirers. This is when the government sat up and began to take notice. The Emperor may have relaxed restrictions against foreigners but the edict against Christianity and missionary work had remained in place. The persecution began in 1872 when Sawabe and many of his co-workers were jailed or put under house arrest. Throughout their interrogations not one of the 140 who were arrested apostasised; rather their faith was strengthened. Indeed, the Japanese State eventually released John Sakai complaining that, as a result of his witnessing in jail, "to keep him in prison was nearly equivalent to placing a Christian chaplain there." Finally, in 1873 the old edicts against Christianity were abolished and the work could proceed openly. St Nicholas moved the centre of his operations to Tokyo and started a massive expansion in the Church's outreach within Japanese society.

Here, therefore, we may discern another principle of Orthodox missiology. God blesses a purposeful, faithful and methodical approach to church building. Practicality and spirituality are not opposed. Moreover, a readiness to suffer for the gospel is to be expected because the joy of knowing God in Christ is primary. Father Nicholas insisted that missionaries be Japanese, even using recent converts, for only in this way could a truly local church grow. However, there is a significant difference between this kind of work, bringing people to know Christ, and the longer-term task of helping the new Church to develop structures and an inner life that will enable it to transform and not destroy a whole culture. This *does* require input from the Mother Church, but not so as to subvert or replace the local leadership, but rather to encourage and equip it for the task. This is precisely what Nicholas proceeded to do. Bishop Paul of Kamchatka came to Japan to ordain the first Japanese clergy and soon with the Japanese Church growing to some 4,100 souls, Nicholas himself was consecrated Japan's first resident Orthodox bishop in 1879.

St Nicholas now turned his attention to a comprehensive translation of the Scriptures and liturgical texts into Japanese. The use of Japanese in the Church

made great demands on the new bishop but his intellect, faith and sensitivity to Japanese culture and linguistics soon enabled him to complete the work. His formation at the Theological Academy at St Petersburg had been but a preparation for this moment. He knew that everything was now coming together as God intended. A cathedral was built in Tokyo, a symbol of what the Japanese knew to be their own Orthodox Church, even if most of them of course were still not Christians. It was dedicated to the Holy Resurrection but popularly became known as "Nicholai-do," the house that Nicholas built.

The Japanese Church experienced in later years an erosion of its life through the impact of the war between Japan and Russia in 1904 when the saintly bishop refused to take sides and thereby antagonised the narrow-minded of both countries. He continued to minister to persecuted Japanese Orthodox Christian communities which were sometimes portrayed as puppets of the Tsar by antagonists in the Japanese government. The Revolution in Russia effectively terminated any further assistance from the Mother Church. Nonetheless, by 1911 when Nicholas celebrated the 50th anniversary of his arrival in Japan there were 33,017 Christians in 266 communities with 43 clergymen, including the new Archbishop, a bishop, 35 priests, 6 deacons, 121 lay preachers, 200 teachers, a seminary with 94 students and 2 girls' schools with 80 children. Nicholas reposed in the Lord a year later on 3rd February 1912. Such was his impact on Japanese culture and society, he was the only foreigner in Japan to that point who was given a State as well as a Church funeral.

This inspiring story of the life and work of St Nicholas of Japan shows but one example of how the Orthodox have evangelised in cultures where "others feared to tread." His case, however, is neither exceptional nor unique as the Timeline of Orthodox Missions makes clear (see Appendix). Nonetheless, in some places the Orthodox Church does seem rather moribund in its missionary aspect. We need to diagnose why this might be so by returning to the three principles of mission enumerated at the beginning of this lecture and augmenting those with insights

from Old Testament prophecy. Remedies will then perhaps become more apparent, even a little challenging to the lethargy of some.

Cleansing the Heart, Strengthening the Mind, Opening the Mouth

A lion has roared!
Who will not fear?
The Lord GOD has spoken!
Who can but prophesy?²²

This prophecy from Amos was uttered almost forcibly in a time of great national apostasy and decline in the 8th Century B.C. “The Lion,” of course, was God, perhaps the inspiration for Aslan in C.S. Lewis’s Narnia cycle. The prophet, like Jeremiah after him and Isaiah his contemporary, just HAD to speak out. Isaiah felt unworthy to the task but God cleansed his lips in the Temple (Isaiah 6). Jeremiah tried to “bottle up” God’s Word, but he could not; he just had to let it out:

Then I said, “I will not make mention of Him,
Nor speak anymore in His name.”
But His word was in my heart like a burning fire
Shut up in my bones;
I was weary of holding it back,
And I could not.²³

²² Amos 3:8. Father Michael Keiser points out that: “The initial preaching was by Jews to other Jews, and focused on things such as sin, salvation and—very importantly—Christ’s fulfilment of prophecy. It is not often understood that the Jews expected the Gentiles to be brought into Israel when the Messiah came. An active outreach to Gentiles existed before the coming of Christianity, so the ideal of Jews and Gentiles together was not that much of a reach.... [M]any Gentiles found the monotheism and ethical teaching of Judaism attractive.” *Spread the Word*, p. 71.

²³ Jeremiah 20:9. Abba Matta of Egypt, known in the West as Matthew the Poor, considers Elijah’s treatment of the widow in Zarephath in 1 Kings 17:8-15, pointing out the importance of placing the Lord first in your life: “God comes first, then body; God first, then food; God first, then clothes; God first, before any earthly thing! But to say, ‘Let me go first and greet my family will

All of these men and anyone else who has spoken up for God will testify that knowing God means, eventually at least, taking courage, opening one's mouth and allowing the Uncontainable Word, which is Christ Himself, to be heard. The Lion, which is the King of the Beasts, can be heard right across the jungle. Why should we be timid? We will be accountable to God if we are unloving; but will we not also be accountable to Him if we are silent; when He puts the Word, that is Christ, into our hearts?²⁴

The OCA Mission Handbook makes it clear that genuine Mission always starts with the acquisition of the Holy Spirit and this includes growing in love for our brothers and sisters within a Christian community that is ready to love without limit beyond its confines. Until that happens our mouths should remain firmly shut ... but if we quench the Spirit because we are frightened of the implications, then we need to repent and take our strength from God! We cannot delay doing this indefinitely without dying spiritually. It is a false humility that takes refuge in the horrendous notion that we will never be ready spiritually for this task. Did not Moses declare: "Oh, that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!"²⁵ At Pentecost and in Baptism this became true for each one of

never work. Once you've placed God second in your life, He can never be first in anything at all! *Word for Our Time: The Spiritual Words of Matthew the Poor*, trans. James Helmy, (Chesterton, Ind: Conciliar Press [now Ancient Faith Press], 2012. This is the antithesis of the prophet Jeremiah's relationship to the Lord.

²⁴ On the closing pages of *Spread the Word*, Father Michael points out that: "We call the world to Christ because He came to save the world and all that is in it. He did not come to save us from the world. God's truth embraces both this world and the next, and everything we experience in our lives. If people feel disconnected and cut off from institutions, we can tell them the Truth has come to us as a Person. You can have a real relationship with God's Truth because He has become one of us, in order to reunite us to Himself" p. 214.

²⁵ Numbers 11:29. Father Michael balances "the comprehensive call of the Church" to everyone with "the exclusive nature of Christianity:" "The comprehensive call of the Church was shown in that it opened its door to all who wished to transform their lives, regardless of their backgrounds.... Celsus, a pagan opponent of Christianity, wrote that the pagan religions exercised some discretion regarding whom they allowed in, but the Christians invite "whoever, they say, is a sinner, whoever is ignorant, whoever is a baby, and in brief, whoever is a wretch, the Kingdom

us. With hearts cleansed and minds strengthened we *need* to open our mouths, for our sakes and for the sakes of others.

In the 19th century in Japan, one of the least likely of places for its day, one man did just that at the point of a Samurai sword. The sword was sheathed and the Church was born. Such is the power of the Gospel. God entrusts us with the self-same task. Let us acquit ourselves with honour, with courage and with faith.



Orthodox Church of the Holy Resurrection (“Nicholai-Do”), Tokyo

of God will receive him. The exclusive nature of Christianity was shown by the rigor with which those who were baptized were taught and examined, the restriction of the Eucharist to the baptized, and the disciplining of those who continued in sin after baptism” p. 89.

Appendix: Major Orthodox Missions in the West and the East

From the Time of the Constantinian Settlement

314: Gregory the Enlightener consecrated bishop for Greater Armenia.

318: Nina, Equal-to-the-Apostles evangelises Georgia.

311-383: Bishop Ulfilas and Christian missions to the Goths and related peoples in Romania. At this time, Martin of Tours is active in Gaul.

Early 4th C: Abba Salama consecrated bishop of Axum / Ethiopia.

395: Porphyrios of Gaza organises missions across Arabia.

400 >>>: John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, sends Orthodox missions beyond the Byzantine Empire. He helps Unila found the Orthodox Church of Gothia (Crimea) and supports Marouthas and the Orthodox Church of Martyropolis (Kurdistan).

432: Patrick's mission to Ireland.

527-565: Byzantine and Coptic missions to Nubia (modern Sudan).

596: Pope Gregory sends Augustine to the English of south east Britain.

635: Syrian Christian missions are active across China.

7th C: Celtic missions are launched in Northumbria, (Aidan, Cuthbert). Boniface's mission to Germany and surrounding areas gets underway.

7th C: Syrian missions established in Indonesia. The names of the first missionaries are Fathers Yaballah, Abdisho, and Denha

8th C: Willibrord develops his mission to the Netherlands and surrounding areas. Celtic missionaries are active across Northern Europe.

830: The first mission to Sweden by Anskar.

858: Photios the Great, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, reorganises Christian missions to Bulgaria, Central and Eastern Europe.

860: The monks (and brothers) Cyril and Methodios lead missions to the Khazar Empire in Central Asia and from 862, onwards to Greater Moravia, (Czech and Slovak Republics, southern Poland, Hungary).

865: Khan Boris establishes the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

867: The Serbian and Montenegrin peoples embrace Christianity. Clement (d. 886) and Naum (d. 893) coordinate missions to the peoples of the Skopje region.

10th C: Nicholas Mystikos, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, reorganises Orthodox mission to the people of the North Caucasus, the independent Orthodox Churches of Alania-Ossetia, Zichia and Gazaria founded in this region. Nikon Metanoeite (d. 990) establishes monastic missions amongst the non-Christian peoples along the Byzantine frontiers.

988: Prince Vladimir and Olga establish the Kievan Orthodox Church in Rus. Orthodox missions are active across Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, eastern Poland, Karelia and Finland.

After the Great Schism

1174: Empress Tamara of Georgia re-establishes Orthodoxy across the countries of Southern Caucasasia.

c1200: Sava Nemanja (d. 1236) establishes the Serbian Orthodox Church.

1315-1340: Prince Gediminas of Lithuania strengthens Orthodox Christianity amongst the Baltic peoples. Stephen of Perm (d. 1396) inaugurates the Orthodox mission to the Zyrians and other peoples of the Ural region (Komi, Mari, Udmurts, Mordovans, Chuvash etc.)

1555 >>> Gury and Varsonofy consolidate missionary work among the Tartars, Bashkirs and related people of the Steppes.

1702: Orthodox missions to Siberia.

1715: Renewed Orthodox mission work in Manchuria and Northern China.

1778: Theodore Sladich is martyred for missionary work to counter Islamic influence in the western Balkans.

1779: Kosmas Aetolos is martyred for missionary work to counter Islamic influence in the Greece and Albania.

1759-1781: Anthimos of Cephalonia set up monastic missions across the Near East amongst newly Islamicised communities.

1794: The monk Herman launches the Alaskan missions.

1830 >>> Makary Glukharev (d. 1847) takes Orthodox Christianity to the Altai regions with extensions to the Oirat and Dzungar tribes of Chinese Central Asia.

1868: Innocent Veniaminov, the leading Orthodox missionary to Siberia, Alaska and the Far East is consecrated Metropolitan of Moscow. He founds the *Orthodox Mission Society* to coordinate worldwide Orthodox Missions and the Palestine Society to support the Christian communities of the Middle East.

1891: Death of the linguist and missionary Nicolas Ilminsky who had facilitated new translations of Holy Scripture into all the languages of the peoples of the Russia Empire.

1880 >>> Nicolas Kasatkin (d. 1912) introduces a highly successful mission to Japan creating within a generation a vibrant indigenous Japanese Orthodox Church.

1898: Chrysanth Shchetkovsky leads the Korean Orthodox Mission.

1907-1962: Nestor Anisimov launches new Orthodox missions to Kamchatka, the Far East, India and Sri Lanka.

1920 >>> The African Orthodox movement gains momentum in East Africa.

1929-1966: John Maximovitch launches Orthodox missions to China, the Philippines, Western Europe and America.

1934: Russian Orthodox Missions sent by Patriarch Tikhon to Manila and Jakarta

1937: First Orthodox altar (Mother of God of Vladimir) in Manila

1946: St John Maximovitch establishes orphanage in Samar, Philippines

1975: Father Cosmas of Grigoriou ... Apostle to Zaire

1988 >>> Orthodox missions are established in Indonesia and Haiti.

The 1980's see a period of expansion in indigenous Orthodox missions within the Americas, Northern Europe and Australasia.