

**EASTERN ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL AND ECCLESIOLOGICAL
THOUGHT ON ISLAM AND CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS IN THE
CONTEMPORARY WORLD (1975-2008)**

by

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Abstract

This study examines the distinctly ecclesial dimensions of Orthodox thinking on Islam and Muslim-Christian encounters within the context of the modern theological renewal in the Orthodox Church over the past few decades. It shows how by building on the patristic, ecclesial, and liturgical revival over the past half-century – inspired by figures such as Afanassieff, Bulgakov, Florovsky, Lossky, Schmemmann, Staniloae, and Zizioulas – Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Georges (Khodr), Dr. Tarek Mitri, Archbishop Anastasios (Yannoulatos), and others have reframed the discussion within the Church, and within ecumenical circles, about Christian-Muslim relations. By creatively applying traditional concepts of christology and pneumatology, they have posited Islam as part of the divine economy for salvation and have publicly endorsed (and directly participated in) Muslim-Christian dialogue. The study surveys these interactions between Orthodox Christians and Muslims and analyzes their significance in the broader context of their collective and independent attempts to redefine their identity during the years 1975-2008. The study concludes that it is now possible to speak of an Orthodox ‘position’ on Islam and relations with Muslims. It also suggests that in their interactions with each other, Orthodox Christians and Muslim are putting forth new paradigms for addressing some of the world’s pressing concerns.

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Introduction

It has been said that Eastern Christians form the last surviving bridge between Islam and Western Christianity.¹ In an era when Christianity and Islam are at the forefront of the continuing debate about an apparent “clash of civilizations,” it is unfortunate that this important “bridge” is so rarely explored. Orthodox Christians themselves – because of the cultural and historical contacts with Muslims, as well as certain aspects of their theology and religious practices – are in a unique position to be peacemakers and a link between the West and the Muslim world. Though a growing number of Orthodox theologians and hierarchs have shown interest in the topic, to date no comprehensive study has been attempted to systematically examine the theological basis for the relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims in the current global situation and to survey their interactions with each other over the past few decades. This study is an attempt to fill that void. It is hoped that it will help to illuminate what might be considered a distinctive Eastern Orthodox approach on Islam and Muslim-Christian relations, from the perspective of Orthodox Christians themselves, while also conveying the variety of attitudes and nuances on these and related matters within the broader Orthodox tradition.

The emphasis of this inquiry will be to examine the distinctive ecclesial dimensions of Orthodox thinking on Islam and Muslim-Christian encounters within the context of the modern theological renewal in the Orthodox Church over the past few decades. In doing so, it will establish a common canon of theological thought – from within this broader ecclesial context – that provides the authority from which to comment and evaluate the religious *other*, and specifically Islam. Special attention will be given to certain essential figures in this re-articulation of timeless aspects of Orthodox thought in order to establish a new theological and ecclesial context through

which to open a space for a positive assessment of Islam and to support harmonious relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims in the present age. For example, it will examine how by building on the patristic, ecclesial, and liturgical renewal over the past half-century – inspired by figures such as Nicolas Afanassieff, Sergius Bulgakov, Georges Florovsky, Vladimir Lossky, Alexander Schmemmann, Dimitru Staniloae, and John Zizioulas – Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Georges (Khodr), Dr. Tarek Mitri, Archbishop Anastasios (Yannoulatos), and others have reframed the discussion within the Church, and within ecumenical circles, about Christian-Muslim relations. It will also analyze the degree to which they, and those sympathetic to their views, have attempted to transform this new thinking into action through dialogue and common work with Muslims in a variety of contexts across the globe. Consideration will be given as well to the re-claimed authority and international significance of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople in recent years as a leader in the area of inter-religious relations and the pressing ecological and humanitarian issues of concern to many of the world’s religious leaders.

Such a study is important in part because it can encourage Orthodox Christians to more accurately assess their own history. On this point, several aspects will be explored: 1) whether, and if so why, in the process of forming nation-states after the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire, certain Orthodox societies have suffered from a collective identity crisis that has affected their perspective of Islam and relations with Muslims; 2) the degree to which those living in these societies, including even esteemed leaders within the Church, have used Islam as a convenient scapegoat for problems faced by Orthodox Christians in their respective nations or regions; and 3) the ways in which, though no one would deny that “tradition” is central to the Orthodox religious ethos, there has been an unhealthy idealizing of the past. It will be

argued that developing a better understanding of Islam and a more accurate vision of the common ground of Orthodox Christians and Muslims as they face similar realities in the current age can greatly assist Orthodox Christians to find a more sure footing in the ever-changing world around them and in their quest to apply the fullness of their tradition in the present day.

It would be prudent before going much further to define what is meant in this study by “Eastern Orthodox” or “Orthodox Christianity,” terms used often and interchangeably. This would be any of the Eastern Christian churches that affirm the Seven Ecumenical Councils and, outside of unusual and temporary circumstances, are in communion with the Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. These are significant as they represent four of the five ancient patriarchates known in Byzantine times as the “pentarchy.” (Rome completes the pentarchy, but has been separated from the other ancient sees since the time of the formal split between the Latin and the Eastern Orthodox Churches.² However, there have been several unprecedented conciliatory gestures in recent years between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches that have raised hopes that the five ancient sees of Christendom may one day return to full communion.) The term, “Eastern Christian,” which is used with less frequency in this study, generally means a member of any of the Eastern or Oriental Orthodox Churches (the latter being the Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopian, and Syrian Orthodox) and sometimes also the Church of the East and the Eastern Catholic Churches. In order to make this study manageable in terms of the sheer volume of sources to be addressed, its focus was limited in the main to Orthodox Christian figures and documents. Broadening it to include all branches of Eastern Christianity would have presented certain challenges that would have required significant adjustment to the methodology and organization of the

study, which would have extended its size dramatically and possibly altered the outcomes. Despite its limited scope, it is highly plausible that Oriental Orthodox and other Eastern Christians will find many aspects of this study in line with their own thoughts, circumstances, and experiences with Islam and their Muslim neighbors.

Having defined the various terms used for the Christians referenced in this study, there are a few more points to be made about what is implied in its title. This is primarily a work about the attitudes and actions of Orthodox Christians in relation to Islam and Muslims. Though a portion of one chapter focuses specifically on attitudes and actions of Muslims, it is essentially a summary of commonly held views in the fields of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, as they relate to and parallel that experienced by Orthodox Christians during relatively the same time period. In this sense, the present study argues nothing necessarily new, particularly in the field of Islamic Studies. What is new is the way in which the experiences of Muslims and Orthodox Christians are connected and, perhaps, derive from or are in response to the same realities that they have collectively faced over the past few centuries.

A further point of clarification is that, though this study will draw from sources and personalities from all parts of the Orthodox world including to a lesser extent even the Oriental Orthodox, its *primary* focus will be on those regions in which Orthodox Christians and Muslims have historically had the most contact, living often as neighbors. That said, one must also keep in mind the ‘scattering’ (*diaspora* in Greek) throughout the globe of Orthodox Christians composing a variety of ethnic and cultural identities, a trend which greatly increased during the modern period (particularly during the 19th century through the two World Wars of the 20th century). The same trend can be noted within the worldwide Muslim community, though the emigration from traditional lands in some cases took place at different times and for

different reasons. One result of this new mobility of people is that it is not uncommon to have noteworthy communities of Muslims and Orthodox Christians living side-by-side in the “diaspora,” which can be virtually any part of the world, though especially in Europe, Australia, and the Americas.

One final point relates to the time period that was chosen with regard to the primary source materials covered in this study: 1975-2008. Though the study will begin at a much earlier point (the 15th century of common era with the fall of Constantinople to Muslim invaders) in order to establish the broader context for the themes and issues examined during the period under consideration, 1975 is when one can begin to detect the effort to re-articulate the Orthodox theological tradition specifically as it relates to Islam and Muslim-Christian relations in today’s world. The story of the renewal of Orthodox Christian-Muslim relations continues to the present moment and will go on for at least the next generation. However, the autumn of 2008 is a convenient place to end this present study, because it was at that time that Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew convened a Synaxis of the Orthodox patriarchs and their representatives from across the globe, who collectively re-affirmed their commitment to, among other things, the “participation of the Orthodox Church in theological dialogues with the non-Orthodox” (including Muslims). This was a watershed moment within the Church in terms of its commitment to interreligious dialogue with and common action with those of other faiths, and Islam in particular because of the historic connection between Orthodox Christianity and Islam.

This study in many ways builds upon and takes as models similar general works and surveys in the area of Muslim-Christian studies covering the same period.³ One thinks, for example, of Kate Zebiri’s, *Muslims and Christians Face to Face* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1997), a significant portion of which is devoted to

modern Christian writings on Islam during the second half of 20th century. Though it is a useful book in many respects, the Eastern Christian perspective is nearly non-existent in both the presentation and conclusions. Another important book that takes a serious look at Christians attitudes on Islam, and vice versa, along with Muslim-Christian dialogue in recent years (and throughout the entire period from the advent of Islam to the present) is Hugh Goddard's, *A History of Muslim-Christian Relations* (Chicago: New Amsterdam Books, 2000). Though excellent in its method, analysis, and presentation, it is lacking in quantity of material about Eastern Christians during the period under consideration in this study. Another work that should be mentioned is Jutta Sperber's, *Christians and Muslims: The Dialogue Activities of the World Council of Churches and the Theological Foundation* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000). This is one of the best treatments to date on the activities sponsored by the World Council of Churches (WCC) on Islam and Muslim-Christian dialogue through the end of the 20th century. Sperber covers to some extent the Orthodox involvement in WCC in interfaith dialogue and charitably speaks about its significance. However, the book is not exhaustive and mostly discusses the Orthodox contributions in relation to the comments and actions of their Protestant counterparts within the Council. Paul Riddell's book, *Christians and Muslims: Pressures and potential in a post-9/11 world* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), also gives some limited attention to the engagement of the Orthodox with Islam, but again the sources are few and confined to a relatively short period of time. Finally, Risto Jukko's work, *Trinity in Unity in Christian-Muslim Relations: The Work of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), though quite exhaustive, is limited almost exclusively to Roman Catholic theology on religions.

There have been a number of articles written by Orthodox theologians and scholars on Islam and Muslim-Christian relations over the past few decades, found in a variety of places and contexts and serving a wide range of purposes. Often these writings can be located in academic journals or in compilations of WCC sponsored events. Among the latter, most worthy of mention is the series of writings and speeches by Catholicos Aram I in, *For a Church Beyond its Walls* (Antelias, Lebanon: Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, 2007), as well as a collection of the key works of Archbishop Anastasios (Yannoulatos) in, *Facing the World: Orthodox Christian Essays on Global Concerns* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2003). One can also find a few compilations from conferences sponsored by academic and theological institutions in which the Orthodox leaders and scholars have contributed on the topics of Muslim-Christian relations and dialogue. Three key examples would be: *Orthodox Christians and Muslims*, N.M. Vapouris, ed. (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1986); *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, Y.Y. Haddad and W.Z. Haddad, eds. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995); and *Paths to the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East*, James Cutsinger, ed., (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, Inc., 2002).

One exciting development in recent years has been the work on this topic, along with a number of others relating generally to Orthodox theology, through the Academy of Theological Studies in Volos, Greece. Papers from a “roundtable” lecture series that took place in November 2001 were published in a volume titled, *Islam & Fundamentalism – Orthodox Christianity and Globalization* (in Greek), Pantelis Kalaitzidis and Nikos Ntontos, eds. (Athens: Indiktos Publications, 2004). Also, the “winter academic term” at the academy from late autumn 2006 to spring 2007 was devoted to the topic, “Orthodox Christianity and Islam – Islam in Europe,” and

consisted of a series of lectures involving scholars and religious leaders from several countries. (This will be discussed in detail in one of the chapters of this study.) The work at Volos further indicates not only a growing interest among Orthodox Christians in the study of Islam and an openness (at least in some circles) to Muslim-Christian dialogue, but also the need for a comprehensive survey of the thought and work of the Orthodox in this area in recent years.

Many of these articles and others from a variety of sources are brought together in the following chapters. The methodology essentially consists of an analytical survey of such articles as well as the following sources: scripture, patristic literature, synodal decrees, official statements, speeches and published works by Orthodox theologians and hierarchs, historical writings, and major works on modernity and postmodernity (by Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike). The first four are relevant as they are sources of authority within the Orthodox Church and the other sources are important as well as they frame the key questions in this area of inquiry and provide a context through which to present many of the major themes on the topic. As it would be impossible to include in this study every source germane to the topic at hand, the included materials are representative contributions in sufficient number to be able to form some basic and general conclusions. It is hoped that by pulling these key sources together in one volume one can begin to tell a story or rather construct a mosaic that can serve as a window into the ‘mind of the Church’ on the matter of Islam and Muslim-Christian relations today. In doing so, it will be important to note whether there has been an attempt on the part of Orthodox Christians to continue a tradition of understanding about the relationship between the Church and those of other religions and/or to break new ground, either in continuity

with timeless dogmatic principles or by re-evaluating those principles in order to find Muslims within the divine economy.

In order to place this work in context, considering the long and complex history of relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims, chapter one is devoted to identifying some of the defining moments in Orthodox Christian-Muslim relations from the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in the mid-15th century to the present day. This background information is essential in order to examine through the rest of the study the full limitations and potential of Muslim-Christian relations in the postmodern age. Chapter two gives an introduction to Orthodox theological perspectives on other religions generally and Islam in particular. It highlights the scriptural foundations and patristic example from which one can derive a distinctive Orthodox understanding of the source and purpose of the religions and how they relate to the mission and place of the Church in the world. Chapter three presents various statements, in numerous contexts, by Orthodox hierarchs and leaders on the topics of Islam and Muslim-Christian relations. It also outlines and analyzes Orthodox participation in dialogue with Muslims in a variety of contexts and locations throughout the world. Special attention will be given to the role of Orthodox Christians in dialogue efforts by the World Council of Churches and the Orthodox Center for the Ecumenical Patriarch. Chapter four examines the ways in which Orthodox Christians have attempted over the past several decades to define and refine their identity in the postmodern age. It will also look at ways in which Muslims have gone through a parallel process with similar responses and comparable results. Finally, it will argue that an honest assessment of the relationship (past and present) with Islam and Muslims will be essential for Orthodox Christians in their quest for their identity for today and for future generations. Chapter five will consider the potential effects of the terrorist attacks in the United States in the autumn of 2001, and elsewhere in the years

following, on Orthodox Christian-Muslim relations around the globe. It will discuss how the events, statements, and dialogues in the months and years after the terrorist attacks of September 11th might have challenged the Orthodox, in particular, to examine anew their identity, history, and religious convictions and whether Orthodox Christian-Muslim dialogue entered into a new phase after 9/11 that was different in substance from the previous period. Finally, the very end of the study will present a few of this author's conclusions about what was discovered through this study, some new questions it may have raised, and some general projections about what to expect with Orthodox Christian-Muslim relations in the coming years.

Chapter 1: Historical Background

It is a great pity that, though the two religions [Christianity and Islam] have emerged and developed in neighboring countries, they have not as yet come to really know each other.... Muslims and Christians are called today to ask themselves about the different aspects of their common course through a turbulent history of fourteen successive centuries.... Orthodox Christians and Muslims are called to know each other better. They are called to examine more deeply their faith and their religious beliefs, to search diligently for God's will, and to try to bring man back to God, who calls everyone, who forgives everyone, who transforms everyone.⁴

~ Metropolitan Constantine of Derkon

William Dalrymple made two important historical observations while traveling throughout the Middle East several years ago visiting the remaining Christian communities, which prior to Islam, had formed the cradle of Christianity. First, he noted when visiting ancient cells of monks near the Monastery of Mar Saba in Israeli-Occupied West Bank, that each of them had a prayer niche almost identical to the *mihrab*, which is a basic feature of all mosques today. He concluded that, "...the prayer niche must be another of those features of the early Christian world which has been lost to modern Western Christianity, yet which is still preserved in Islam."⁵

Dalrymple's second noteworthy observation, related to the first, was that Islam and Christianity have a deep connection with each other. Comparing the religious views and practices of John Moschos, a six century Christian whose journey Dalrymple was retracing, with those of modern Muslims, he made the following statement:

Certainly if John Moschos were to come back today it is likely that he would find much more that was familiar in the practices of a modern Muslim Sufi than he would with those of, say, a contemporary American Evangelical. Yet this simple truth has been lost by our tendency to think of Christianity as a Western religion rather than the Oriental faith it actually is....[Today] few are aware of, or indeed wish to be aware of, the profound kinship of Christianity and Islam.⁶

Dalrymple's observations attest to a truth that Orthodox Christians and Muslims have known instinctively for centuries – that they originally came from one civilization and share the same ancestry.

Though in modern times, particularly after some painful memories from the past two centuries, they may have forgotten this fact to some extent, Orthodox Christians and Muslims share a great deal in common with each other. Just as with any family lineage, there are aspects of which to be proud and other things that one would like to forget and the relationships between the various branches of the family tree become increasingly complex over time. In order to understand the rich heritage of this shared ancestry between Orthodox Christians and Muslims, it is essential to peel back each generation one layer at a time and to understand the circumstances and events that helped define those who lived in each age. The hope is that by examining certain defining moments in the family history of Orthodox Christians and Muslims, it will be possible to capture the full limitations and potential of Muslim-Christian relations today.

MID-15TH C. – LATE 18TH C.

To begin to understand relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims in the postmodern age, one must start with a pivotal event from the middle of the fifteenth century. Twenty-nine May in 1453 of the Common Era stands out as the day that Constantinople finally fell to the Muslim Turks, after nearly two months of resistance and following many years potential threat.⁷ The fall of Constantinople, the beloved capital of the Byzantine Empire, marked the end of one age and the beginning of another. In many ways, it marked the final key event in the transfer of ultimate power and influence in the oikoumene from Christendom to Islamdom.⁸

Though Constantinople had been in decline for many years, in comparison with its former glory in centuries past, when it finally fell into Muslim hands it seemed to some to be the end of the world. As the capital of what remained of the Roman Empire and the symbolic center of Christendom, at least outside of Western Europe, Constantinople was a world class city. It was hard to imagine that, from the point of view of some of its inhabitants, it could ever fall to infidels. According to the Byzantine calendar, the fall of the city was dated at approximately 7,000 years after the creation of the world. Among the Byzantines, with their biblical worldview and known penchant for symbolism and metaphor, there were those who argued that the fall of the city would usher in the period of rule by the Antichrist that would be followed by Armageddon and the end of the world.⁹ Others believed that the world would go on and that the best hope for the future was for Orthodox Christians, especially Greeks, to unite under Turkish rule, with the hope that at some point in the future Byzantium would rise again.

The world did go on for both Christians and Muslims after the fall of Constantinople, despite the apocalyptic predictions of some, but Muslim rule of the city and the former Byzantine Empire did cause changes of broad significance for Muslim-Christian relations. It caused somewhat of an identity crisis for Christians who no longer were part of a Christian empire, nor had as their leader an emperor around whom to base a universal Christian civilization. In practical terms, however, the impact of Muslim rule on the daily lives of Christians was not as extreme as one might imagine.¹⁰ Many areas of everyday life did not change, in fact, and this was in large part due to the policies of the new ruler, Mehmed II.

Sultan Mehmet II, who had worked diligently to conquer much of what was once the heartland of the Byzantium empire, saw Constantinople as his greatest prize.

It possessed many riches, which he and his army could enjoy as the spoils of war, but it held an even greater symbolic value to him. Mehmet had much respect for the great civilization the Byzantines had cultivated for many centuries and he was proud to inherit it. Conquering Constantinople meant that he had arrived as a world-class leader, and as such he had increased his prestige throughout Islamdom. He saw himself as the new leader of the empire and even called himself *Kaysar-i-Rum* (the Caesar of Rome).¹¹ Therefore, the Greeks of Constantinople were very important to him. Mehmed continued the custom of Muslim conquerors from the time of Umar that allowed Christian subjects to continue with their religious practices and most of their traditions. There were no forced conversions to Islam and Christians remained in many important positions within the expanding Ottoman Empire. Mehmed made sure that it was clear, however, that this was a Muslim not a Christian empire. The religion of the Christians had to be relatively low key under Ottoman rule and the crescent would always be shown above the cross.

One of the biggest changes with regard to relations between Christians and Muslims under Ottoman rule, was the introduction of the “millet system.” Millet, from its Persian root, means “nation” and, since for centuries in the East religion was equated with nationality, the millet system was the modus operandi for Muslims to govern religious minorities.¹² Mehmed II followed the Islamic practice of tolerating the *ahl al-kitab*, or people of the book, namely those religions with divinely inspired scriptures. He gave them the status of *ahl al-dhimmi* or *dhimmis*, the protected people, allowing them to practice their religious traditions as long as they paid taxes and stayed in their proper place in society.¹³ Initially, there were only two recognized religious communities or millets in the Ottoman Empire, one for the Christians and one for the Jews.¹⁴

Through the sultan's *berat* of investiture, or 'seal of approval,' the Patriarch of Constantinople (a.k.a. Ecumenical Patriarch) took on a new role as ethnarch (*afthentēs kai despotēs*, Lord and Despot) of all Christians.¹⁵ By imperial decree, the Ecumenical Patriarch became, in addition to the head religious leader, the temporal administrator of the Ottomans' Christian subjects. He was arbiter in matters of clerical discipline, the sale and transfer of property, marriage and divorce, and civil disputes within the millet. He was also responsible to administer many educational institutions, courts, and churches for the *dhimmi*s throughout the Ottoman Empire. So long as a matter did not involve what may have been considered treason against the empire, it was handled for the most part by the Patriarchate.

This arrangement worked well in many respects for both Muslims and Christians. From the time of Mehmet II until the rise of the modern nation-states, Christians served as important functionaries within the Ottoman government. Also, the empire was able to expand in part, both territorially and in prestige, through the success of Christian merchants. The Phanariots for example, Greeks from the Phanar region of Istanbul, became particularly wealthy and influential as key traders in the empire. They along with Christian merchants from the Levant played an important role as an essential bridge between the Ottoman rulers and Western powers.¹⁶ Over time, the relative autonomy afforded to the Christians would adversely impact Ottoman rule, as it gave Christian communal groupings the opportunity to expand their power to the point where they were able to win independence from the empire itself. Christianity was preserved in a sense under Muslim rule and Christians and Muslims lived together and tolerated each other within the Ottoman Empire while it lasted for several centuries.

There were, however, negative consequences for Christians, who did not enjoy all of the privileges granted to Muslim subjects in the empire. Two of the most difficult challenges were a lack of Christian schools and the institution of *devshirme* (Turkish), or *paidomazoma* (Greek). Steven Runciman has said that under Ottoman rule, “It was in the sphere of education that the Greek Church was to feel the effects of servitude most profoundly and most disasterously.”¹⁷ Many schools were destroyed during the Turkish conquests in the former Byzantine Empire, and under Ottoman rule the patriarchate had little money or ability to keep many schools open. There was a decline in literacy among Christians generally and Christian education among clergy and laity alike was minimal. This was truly a shift from the Byzantine world with its highly educated citizenry, which was preoccupied with religion and theology. The elite among the Christians would travel to schools in Europe for their education and a fair number of priests and bishops received their theological training outside of the empire. The *devshirme* was the practice within the Ottoman Empire of taking one male child from a Christian family and raising him as a Sufi Muslim so as to build up the elite Ottoman military troupe known as the Jannisaries.¹⁸ The sons of many Christian families were forced to convert to Islam and serve in the sultan’s corps of Jannisaries through the *devshirme*. Outside of this practice, however, there were very few examples of forcible conversion of Christians to Islam during the Ottoman period.

Ottoman rule and the often second-class status of Christians in the empire also had negative long-term consequences for Orthodox Christians in the region. First, though the centralization of Christian leadership in the patriarchate afforded a level of freedom to Christians in the empire, it also led to the rise of Greek hegemony within the Orthodox Church. Though canonically the ancient patriarchates of Alexandria,

Antioch, and Jerusalem retained their independent status, in practice they had to defer to the Patriarch of Constantinople in many ways, particularly since he was the one who submitted names to the sultan for all patriarchal appointments. Furthermore, religious leaders among the Serbs, Bulgarians, and other nationalities ultimately all submitted to the Ecumenical Patriarch because of his role as head of the Greek Orthodox millet. Though the Greek language and Hellenism had always played an important role during the Byzantine period, the Orthodox Church in the Roman Empire was considered a universal body that encompassed many peoples with a variety of languages, customs, and liturgical traditions. The influence of the Ecumenical Patriarch over the churches led not only to an increased emphasis on all things Greek, but also to an disproportionate number of Greeks to positions of leadership in the Church as it manifested itself in the Ottoman Empire.

The second consequence for Orthodox Christians, which was closely related and a contributing factor to Greek hegemony, was the rise in influence among the Phanariots of Istanbul who over time gained much control over the Ecumenical Patriarch.¹⁹ One factor that led to this situation was corruption that stemmed from the custom of giving a *peshkesh* (Turkish, “gift”) to the Ottoman authorities for the *berat* of investiture each time the sultan appointed a new patriarch. The *peshkesh* enabled the Greeks, particularly the Phanariots of Istanbul, to tightly control the patriarchate based on what would benefit their political and commercial needs. The result was that from 1495-1595 CE there were 19 changes to the patriarchal throne, from 1596-1695 there were 61 changes among 31 individual patriarchs, and from 1696-1795 there were 31 appointments from 23 different patriarchs. In addition to their political and economic motivations, the Phanariots also wanted to emphasize the patriarch’s

role in preserving and strengthening Hellenism over and above more universal religious traditions and theological and spiritual treasures of Orthodox Christianity.²⁰

Though in many ways the continuity of the Orthodox Christianity was preserved and maintained during the Ottoman period by the faithful who gathered regularly to pray and partake of the richness of the church's liturgical tradition, there were also important intellectual contributions from a handful of theologians. Historians have noted, however, that theological and intellectual life among Christians of the Near East was influenced to a greater degree by the changes that were taking place in the West than the developments that were occurring in the Ottoman Empire. In particular, Orthodox thought developed largely in response to ideas from the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation in Europe. By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Orthodox theologians seemed to be preoccupied with defending themselves against these developments by using, "Roman arguments against the Protestants and Protestant arguments against the Roman Catholics."²¹ With Christian thinkers having lost touch with their own authentic tradition and having even less interest in engaging in dialogue with Muslim religious leaders, Orthodox Christianity in the Ottoman Empire during this period was marked by the trends of traditionalism and westernization.²² There was a sense in which Christians wanted desperately to preserve their Byzantine past, so they often uncritically copied the traditions and practices of previous generations without attempting to apply the timeless principles of the past to the realities of life under Ottoman rule. Concurrently, they began to employ western terminology and thought patterns in their attempts to articulate Orthodox views on the issues with which Christians occupied themselves during this period.²³

The fall of Constantinople to the Muslim Turks did not mark the end of the world for Orthodox Christians, but the way that Christianity would be worked out in society did change dramatically during the first few centuries of Ottoman rule. Under the Ottomans, Christianity was able to survive, but there were important consequences. Overall, one could say that the most significant change occurred in the way Orthodox Christians thought about themselves. Though the Ottomans graced them with relative freedom to continue with their religious and cultural traditions, the period marked the initial stages of an identity crisis for Orthodox Christians that in many ways has continued to the present day. Losing their beloved city to the Muslim Turks and living for several centuries under Muslim rule have been bitter pills for Orthodox Christians to swallow, in light of their assertion that they are the only ones to preserve the fullness of the Christian faith from the time of the apostles. Some have resolved this tension through introspection, questioning in what ways to redirect the sinful ways of Christians, which led God to allow the Muslims a measure of success in the first place.²⁴ At the same time, others have endeavored to at least preserve Byzantine culture and theology, so that the spirit of Byzantium would never die.²⁵ In either case, the Ottoman period marked a significant paradigm shift in the relations between Christians and Muslims, the effects of which continue to the present day.

LATE 18TH C. – END OF THE 19TH C.

A far greater challenge for Orthodox Christians than the impact of Ottoman rule began to emerge during the last half of the eighteenth century. The advent of the “modern technical age” brought about significant challenges and opportunities for Orthodox Christians, as it did for all peoples of living faiths. From the broad perspective of human history the sudden and decisive rise of Western Europe as the

dominant social and political force was an “event” that changed the world.²⁶ It had a drastic impact on the Ottoman Empire, and was of great significance for both the Muslims and non-Muslims who lived within it. For this reason and in order to fully appreciate the context for Orthodox Christian-Muslim relations in the modern and postmodern periods, the following several pages will consider the consequences of modernization for Muslims, as well as Orthodox Christians.

To understand the changes from outside the Ottoman Empire during this period, one has to appreciate the massive shift in power that was taking place on the world stage. It was not just the rise of a political or military power, caused by an advance in one area that led one society to have an advantage over others for a period of time. The transition from what has been termed ‘traditional’ society to ‘modern’ society, with its emphasis on reason and the cultural values of the West, has proved to be more lasting, far-reaching, and decisive than anyone could have predicted when it started at the end of the eighteenth century.²⁷

Two events symbolize the shift in worldview that was beginning to take place then and continue to the present day to be the foundation of all modern societies. The first was the French Revolution of 1789 with its rallying cry of “liberté, égalité, and fraternité” and the second was the Industrial Revolution, “when specialized technical development decisively transformed the presuppositions of human product.”²⁸ These two events embodied both the philosophical principles of the new civilization: *modernity*, and the methods that would be used to translate them into substantive change: *modernization*. The new way of thinking about the world emphasized: 1) the rights of the individual and equal opportunity for everyone to achieve his or her full potential, 2) the interconnectedness of human beings, 3) a faith in science to solve life’s problems, 4) the notion that perpetual change is necessary and good, and 5) the

belief that economic production is the key to happiness. These concepts were applied by the increasingly dominant Western European powers through: 1) the development of world markets to facilitate the extraction of natural resources needed to produce material goods, 2) the institution of nation-states, with centralized and representational governments, 3) the establishment of businesses, organizations, and universities to support all manner of scientific research and rational, intellectual inquiry, and 4) the exertion of direct and indirect hegemony over nearly all non-Western cultures and political groupings.²⁹

It was an exhilarating time for those who benefited most from the transitions that were occurring, first and foremost in the West, but eventually in all corners of the globe. R.T. Robertson has characterized it this way:

Industrialization in the nineteenth century transformed the social and political structures of Europe and provided its states with an all-encompassing power that only a century before would have seemed unimaginable. Clearly a new age had dawned for mankind, or so many middle class Europeans believed. With Europe's expansion unchallengeable and the applications of science unlimited, the future of the world seemed bright and assured.³⁰

Europeans so often saw it as their duty to spread the new values of modernity, no matter what the cost. Students who today are eager to judge the moral hypocrisies and cultural arrogance of the western colonialists fail to appreciate the sense of optimism and drive that characterized this period in the West.³¹ One cannot underestimate, however, the impact of modernity and modernization upon religion. The figure of Napoleon perhaps best represents the modern man in the age of the Enlightenment, in that he, "believed in reason rather than dogma and exalted not God's law and God's rights but human rights and the ideals of secularism, equality and democracy."³² Modern secular civilization presented a clear challenge to Muslims and Christians alike – as well as Buddhists, Hindus, and Jews – because it disengaged the primary human enterprises from pursuing the ultimate questions of

life. It pushed the distinction between the sacred and the profane that had developed in the Middle Ages among European theologians to its logical extreme. Religion at best was relegated to the realm of the individual and for the true scientist it was considered to be totally irrelevant to modern man and the unstoppable march of progress.

Despite the predictions of many philosophers and social scientists of the Enlightenment, religion did not die. In fact, technology and the rise of international trade paved the way for the great expansion of Western Christianity. Vigorous missionary campaigns were born in nearly every major center of Western Europe and were launched upon the successes of their nation's colonial enterprises. The zeal of these missionaries and the faith that inspired them to endeavor to convert the world to Christianity deserves a great amount of respect. Muslims, as well as indigenous Christians of the Near East, cannot deny that their ancestors benefited from the schools, hospitals, and charitable institutions established in their lands by the European, and later to some extent American, missionaries. Ironically, though the ultimate purpose of the missionary efforts of the Protestants and Catholics (and even Jews) was a religious one, they served as a primary vehicle for the spread of modern secular values throughout the world.³³

Karen Armstrong has said, describing Western missionaries who were part of what she calls the "New Crusaders in the West," that:

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Romantic movement had stressed religious themes like redemption and salvation and there is no doubt that the Westerners presented themselves as bringing salvation and liberation of sorts. It was a message that was underlined by the influx of missions and missionary schools into the area. These inevitably tended to undermine Middle Eastern culture at the same time as they offered "salvation."³⁴

In other words, even the most well intended missionary who sought to share the redeeming qualities of his religious tradition to the Muslims, Jews, and heterodox

Christians of the Middle East, had difficulty separating this purely religious message from the forces of modernization that had become so powerful. In fact, Western Christianity had itself been so influenced by the philosophical principles of modernity, that one could make the case that the Christian missionary enterprise had become one of the most effective vehicles for modernization.

The missionaries used and were used by those who controlled international trade and the emerging technologies. They were willing to accept this symbiotic relationship with merchants, politicians, traders, and scientists because it enabled them to spread their gospel in an unprecedented way throughout every corner of the globe. They did not recognize, however, the degree to which the modern notion of “progress” had influenced the way they had come to measure success. Where once Christians of the West had relied on figures such as Thomas Aquinas and Martin Luther to translate the lofty ideals of their religion into the realities of everyday life, modern Christians turned more and more to men such as Immanuel Kant and Victor Hugo.

Modernity and modernization changed the way Christians and Muslims related to each other. Muslims of the Near East encountered a new kind of Christianity and an increasingly powerful Western Civilization. In some ways, both knowingly and unknowingly, they embraced the new ideas and opportunities that presented themselves through this encounter. In other ways, though, Muslims more and more viewed the West and Christianity generally as a challenge to their religious ideals and a corroding influence on the treasures of their once glorious civilization. Where Muslims and Eastern Christians had lived together in relative peace and mutual respect in the Near East for centuries, new rivalries and suspicions began to emerge on both sides. Both individually and in their communal groupings, they had

to decide how to respond to modernity. They could not ignore the modernization that was taking place all around them and this affected the way they viewed each other's religion.

Though the origin and source of many of the significant developments that influenced Orthodox Christian-Muslim relations in the Near East from the late eighteenth through the end of the nineteenth century can be located outside the Ottoman Empire, there were also important factors that emerged from changes that took place within the empire. Structural changes to the millet system led to the weakening of the Ottoman Empire and paved the way to its disintegration and ultimate dismemberment following World War I. Kemal Karpat has identified at least three structural changes and has argued persuasively that, "the rise of rural notables to power..., the birth of new entrepreneurial-commercial elites in towns, and...the rise of a secular intelligentsia," within the Ottoman Empire during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries greatly impacted the way Muslims and Christians related to each other.³⁵ Karpat argues that these internal changes, "altered the land tenure system, the army, the social arrangement, the communal organization and ultimately the social structure and leadership of the millets," leading to increased friction between Muslims and Orthodox Christians living in the Ottoman Empire.³⁶ Muslims increasingly identified themselves, both culturally and religiously, with the central government, whereas Orthodox Christians turned toward the ethnic cultures of their communities, which they merged with their religious traditions.³⁷ This trend was a direct challenge to the essence of the millet system, because of its tendency to fracture the unified Orthodox Christian millet into component parts based on linguistic differentiation.

The emphasis on language over religion led to anti-clerical attitudes within the new Christian merchant class, the rise of independence movements, and further

polarization between Orthodox Christians and Muslims. Among the Greeks, for example, the Phanariots of Istanbul greatly criticized the Ecumenical Patriarchs for claiming, “to be modern while clinging to their medieval traditions and to their Turkish titles.”³⁸ These successful Christian merchants were emboldened to make such statements against the powerful head of the Orthodox millet because of their protégé status from Western rulers, as a result of establishing themselves, along with Christians of the Levant, as the brokers of trade between the Ottomans and Europeans.³⁹ Figures such as Rigas Velestinlis and Adamantios Korais emphasizing the glories of the Greeks’ classical past, as opposed to the medieval Byzantine focus of the Patriarchal Court, championed the notion of Greek independence from the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁰ The fact that one could see among Christians in the Ottoman Empire both a tendency toward nationalist sentiments, as well as the desire to preserve the rights and privileges of the old millets, did not sit well with Muslims. They could not, like their Orthodox Christian neighbors, seek protection from European powers. As they perceived their position in the increasingly modernized world to be diminishing, Muslims began to blame the Christians in their midst, along with the West, for their plight.⁴¹ Over time, the resentment was mutual between Orthodox Christians and Muslims in the Ottoman Empire, and only increased as the Christians edged closer to declaring their independence from Ottoman rule.

The French and the American revolutions of the last quarter of the eighteenth century set the stage for a new way of envisioning power and governance. In addition to the lofty ideals such as liberty, equality, brotherhood, democracy, and freedom, these modern “revolutions” inspired a whole new way of thinking about political organization and governance. The “nation-state” was born and became over time, perhaps, the most important vehicle for the propagation of the new modern, Western

way of life. It could be said that nationalism broke the mold for the world, then reformed it, so that the traditional relationships and assumptions no longer applied.

Robert Palmer put it this way:

The idea of the nation-state has served both to bring people together into larger units and to break them apart into smaller ones...for many in the nineteenth century, nationalism, the winning of national unity and independence and the creation of the nation-state, became a kind of secular faith. A nation state may be thought of as one in which supreme political authority somehow rests upon and represents the will and feeling of its inhabitants. There must be a people, not merely a swarm of human beings. They must sense that they belong – that they are members of a community, participating somehow in a common life, that the government is their government, and that outsiders are “foreign.”⁴²

The grouping of human beings into “peoples” shifted the point of reference away from empires that relied heavily on a dominant religion as a unifying political force. In fact, as Palmer asserts, one could make the case that at least for some the concept of nation surpassed religion in terms of its significance for modern man.

Though religion, language, territory, and culture played a role in the development of many nation-states, the nations that emerged in Western Europe and North America formed primarily by the grouping of a “people” on the basis of a shared language. This Western model of the nation-state was not always duplicated in the nations that eventually declared independence from the Ottoman Empire. In the East, both Christians and Muslims historically have shown a reluctance to separate religion from politics. This has been the subject of numerous studies and has been identified as one of the primary factors in the apparent, “clash of civilizations.”⁴³

Kemal Karpat has studied this trend in the East and has concluded that:

In effect, the political, social and cultural crises which have buffeted the national states in the Balkans and the Middle East since their emergence can be attributed in large measure to the incompatibility of the secular idea of state with the religious concept of nation rooted in the *millet* philosophy.⁴⁴

Karpat emphasizes the important consequences of the millet system even upon those political groupings that eventually demanded independence from the Ottoman Empire. Despite the fact that rise of independent nations out of the Ottoman Empire, was a result of European backed national revolutions and a substantial degree of Westernization, particularly among non-Muslims, these new nation-states also embodied many of the concepts derived from the millet system.

The first national independence movements came from the non-Muslims of the Balkans that were part of the Orthodox millet, but these were soon followed by similar drives from the primarily Muslim Turks and Arabs. Among the Christians of the Balkans, from which the first nations were derived, there were different views about what freedom from the yoke of the Ottomans might mean. Some envisioned a revival of Byzantium, in which Orthodox Christianity, or at least Hellenism, would play a decisive unifying role.⁴⁵ Others pushed the nation-state model embraced by the West, though ironically, this secular approach was most successful in Turkey where the majority of citizens were Muslim by creed. For the most part, however, the successor states to the Ottoman Empire maintained a careful distinction between the old millet system concept of nation, meaning primarily a religious community, and state, referring in the main to territory, and established “nations” on the basis of the former. They were unwilling to secularize completely, as was so common in the West, in order to merge the competing notions of nation and state.⁴⁶

In almost every case, as non-Muslims fought for independence from Ottoman rule, the result was a nation in which a national church served as one of the primary institutions of the new state.⁴⁷ Starting with Greece in the first half of the nineteenth century, the peoples of the Balkans won their independence from the Ottoman Empire and formed their own nations. In doing so, they established for themselves national

churches that were separate from the Orthodox millet and the control of the Ecumenical Patriarch. The Patriarchate resisted in every case but eventually had to accept the changes as the national churches became a reality: the Church of Greece in 1833 (recognized in 1850 by the Ecumenical Patriarch), the Church of Romania in 1864 (recognized by the Patriarch in 1885), the Church of Bulgaria in 1871 (recognized officially by the Patriarch on in 1945); and the Church of Serbia in 1879.⁴⁸ These new nations, with their nation churches, have played a decisive role for the Christians within them in terms of their self-concept, their relationship to their Muslim neighbors, and their perspectives on the West and Western values. This notion will be further developed in later chapters of this work.

Before turning to the eventual partitioning into nations in the twentieth century of the areas outside of the Balkans that were once part of the Ottoman Empire, there is one more important development to address from the late eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century: the rise of the Arabs. Despite their auspicious beginning during the age of Muhammad and subsequent world dominance at the same time that Western Europe was going through its dark ages, by the later part of the eighteenth century the Arabs were more culturally depressed than perhaps anyone else in the Ottoman Empire, or even in all of Islamdom.⁴⁹ Turkish had nearly replaced Arabic entirely as the spoken language in the region and most Arabs had completely lost touch with their literary and theological heritage, as well as their cultural traditions. Though Christians, both Arabs and non-Arabs, and Jews dominated commerce in the Levant, the Ottomans still ruled Muslim, Christians, and Jew alike.

Increasingly, Arab Christians were being influenced by the culture and ideas of the modern West, separating them further from their Muslim neighbors and their cultural heritage as Arabs. Despite this tendency, and ironically since Christians were

much fewer in number when compared with Muslims in the region, Christian Arabs were among the first to rediscover the treasures of their Arabic language and the glories of their historical past. They helped revive, along with their Muslim neighbors, the memory and cultivate the notion of an Arab heritage, which was so essential for bringing the Arabs into the modern world.⁵⁰ The result was what is known as the Arab Renaissance, or *Nahdah*, which emphasized the unity of the Arab nation and role of its language to transform a people in the modern age, while at the same time evaluating modern civilization from a specifically Arab perspective.⁵¹

The early pioneers of the Arab renaissance had a relatively positive view of modernity and the West. As Albert Hourani described it, they believed that, “they could adopt institutions and laws from the outside without being untrue to themselves.”⁵² However, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, this began to change as Arab authors and leaders grew more cautious of the intentions of the West. The new focus was on how they could become modern while still holding onto the important elements of the past that had enriched the Arabs throughout the centuries. For both Muslims and Christians, the heritage was closely associated with the historical civilization that was inspired and shaped by Islam.

At the close of the nineteenth century, relations between Eastern Christians and Muslims were dominated by the transition that was taking place in almost all regions of the world from traditional society to modern civilization. This trend was characterized by the emergence of nations, the boundaries and form of which were at least influenced to some degree by the dominant powers of the West. Muslims and Orthodox Christians of the Balkans and the Near East found themselves pulled in many directions. More and more they discovered that they were in competition with each other as they scrambled to find their place in the modern world. The patterns

established by the millet system continued to influence relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims, even when they were not aware of it. At the same time, they began to focus less frequently on religion as the primary source of identity, choosing rather to define themselves by language, culture, and adherence to modern secular values. This trend both opened new opportunities for mutual respect and understanding between them and presented new barriers to their ability to live together in peace.

EARLY 20th C. AND THE INTER-WAR PERIOD

The first half of the twentieth century was marked by the impressive growth of European power and imperialism throughout the world. This had important consequences for both Muslims and Orthodox Christians in the Balkans and the Middle East. The First World War brought the end of the last Islamic Empire and with the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the stage was set for the power struggle between Capitalism and Communism that would eventually dominate much of the globe. Muslims and Eastern Christians found that their religious concerns and communal aspirations were often overshadowed by the devastation of war, the political push toward national identities, and the realities of being ruled by powers that were increasingly hostile toward their religious traditions. Though in much of the world Communism and Capitalism seemed to be diametrically opposed from the philosophical, social, economic, and political points of view, Eastern Christians and Muslims often experienced these competing systems as two sides of the same coin. Communism and Capitalism both embodied the philosophy of modernity, which had been developed in the West during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and were experienced simply as two different programs for applying and implementing the core

values of modern life in the homelands of Muslims and Eastern Christians, and throughout the world.

The years leading up to the First World War saw the continued rise of nationalist sentiment in the Middle East, particularly among the Turks and the Arabs. As many of the Christians from the Ottoman Empire formed the independent nations of Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, and Serbia, the future of the Ottoman nationalism seemed to be in the hands of Muslims at the turn of the century. The reforms in the Ottoman Empire from the previous century, known as the Tanzimat, had instituted Western military techniques, governmental forms, educational principles, and legal systems. The Young Ottomans who had embraced modern values such as personal freedoms, humanitarianism, and a constitution that would limit the power of the sultan could not combat Islam as a unifying political symbol in the diminishing Ottoman Empire. Sultan Abdulhamid II appealed to this pan-Islamic sentiment in an effort to reinvigorate fledgling Ottoman power and to position himself symbolically as a caliph with spiritual authority over the worldwide Muslim community. Ottoman nationalism was finally eclipsed, however, by Turkish nationalism, which modeled closely the Western model for nation-states.

The movement toward nationalism among the Arabs took a slightly different form. Building upon what had started primarily as a literary movement at the end of the nineteenth century, Arab nationalists began to assert themselves as a political force by the early part of the twentieth century. This development involved both Christians and Muslims from Greater Syria.⁵³ Though at this early stage Arabs in the region had not yet seriously proposed an independent Arab nation or nations, they did challenge growing Turkish influence emanating from Istanbul and became a force to be reckoned with by European powers that were rapidly asserting their hegemony in

the region. Soon after World War I began in 1914, the Ottoman Empire chose to side with Germany and Austria. In doing so, it put itself in a position to fight Russia in the northeast portion of the Empire and Britain in the east and the south.⁵⁴ The Ottomans had lost all of the former Arab territories to the military might of England and France by the war's end and the League of Nations divided control of the Middle East between the two countries in a formal way in 1922. Though it was touted as a step toward nationalism for the Arabs, who were supposed to be granted at least a margin of independence, the reality was that after the war, France controlled Lebanon and Syria and England ruled Palestine, Jordan, Iran, the Emirates, Oman, and Aden. This reality only reinforced what had already become a clear trend of Western influence and efforts to modernize Orthodox Christians and Muslims alike.

The Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 marked the official end of Ottoman Empire. Its remaining European territories became independent nations and Turkey was declared a republic under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk, "Father of the Turks"), who was Turkey's first president. Ataturk built upon the foundation for Turkish nationalism established by Zia Gökalp and took bold steps to create the first, and what remains the only, purely secular state in the Islamic world.⁵⁵ Even before Turkey was officially declared a republic, the growing sense of Turkish nationalism was transforming the region. In order to establish a nation on the basis of language and culture, it became important to "exchange" Turkish population for Greeks, Kurds, and Armenians. This movement of peoples involved mass deportations, particularly of the Armenians who suffered the most for the nationalist fervor that had engrossed the area. It is estimated that up to 1.5 million Armenians were killed during what is now commonly referred to as the Armenian Genocide, which lasted from roughly 1915-1922.⁵⁶ While Turks in neighboring countries were encouraged to join in the

movement toward the first Turkish nation, non-Turks who had in many cases lived peacefully for centuries as part of the Orthodox millet were forced to leave their homes and never return. Because Muslim irregulars, along with ethnic Kurds and Turkish militants, were the perpetrators of many of the atrocities during the dark years that preceded the founding of Turkey, to the present day many Eastern Christians of Greek and Armenian heritage associate violence and treachery with Islam. The tragic events of this period have often overshadowed in the historical memory of Christians from the region the centuries of relatively peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims during the Ottoman years.

Turkish nationalism, particularly by way of the secularizing policies of Ataturk, caused drastic consequences for Muslims as well. Within less than a decade, the Turkish government abolished the caliphate, replaced Sharī‘ah (Islamic law) with Swiss style legal codes, closed almost all Sufi tariqahs, banned Islamic styles of headdress and replaced them with western equivalents, took “Islam” out of the constitution, and introduced a Latin style script to replace the Perso-Arabic alphabet. Despite the efforts of Ataturk, and the so called Kemalists, to secularize Turkey, the religious principles of Islam as expressed by the majority Muslim population continued to be an important part of Turkish life and culture, even to some extent for Orthodox Christians. However, the state ideology of secularism, which emerged despite the fact that the region at no point was directly ruled by a European colonial power, did significantly impact the religious views Turkish Muslims in particular. Among all Muslims, those from Turkey were the most eager during the first half of the twentieth century to adapt Islamic principles creatively in the modern context. This trend led the Western scholar of Islam, William Cantwell Smith, to describe Turkish Muslims as, “the most realistic and self-critical group in present-day Islam.”⁵⁷

The first generation of Muslims living in the newly formed Republic of Turkey witnessed radical changes on many levels in their society. They did not, however, fully reject or forget their Islamic heritage as they responded to the transition from a traditional to modern society.

The fall of the Ottoman Empire posed a significant religious challenge as well to Orthodox Christians, even those living outside of Turkey, because of the questions it raised about the role of the Ecumenical Patriarch. Some had proposed, because so many Greek Christians had either emigrated from the country or had been forced to leave during the first quarter of the century, that the Patriarchate be moved to Greece. They argued that the secularizing tendencies of the Turkish government would severely threaten the Patriarchate were it to remain in Istanbul. Others endeavored to establish a Turkish Orthodox Church with its own Patriarch so that Christians could better find their place among other religious minorities in the predominantly Muslim Turkey. In the end, however, neither of these ideas could gain momentum because the majority of Orthodox Christians, Greeks in particular, wanted to retain at least symbolically the ecumenical significance of the Patriarchate.⁵⁸ Many feared that moving the Patriarchate out of Turkey or the establishment of a Turkish Orthodox Church would leave a void within the Church worldwide, further eroding any sense of pan-Orthodox identity. The universal role of the Ecumenical Patriarch only increased in the years following the establishment of Turkey. This was in large part due to the changes that were taking place in Russia, which at that time was home for more Orthodox Christians than any other place in the world.

The Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 and the great expansion of the power of the Soviet Union diminished the ability of the Patriarch of Moscow to provide any kind of significant leadership to the Church on the international level. These events also led

the greatest period of persecution for Christians since the time of the Romans. In fact, in many ways the Soviet period provided even more challenges because the Communists were atheists and militantly opposed in principle to religion. As the 'opium of the masses,' to use Karl Marx's famous label, religion was viewed as one of the biggest obstacles to the goals of communism. Many churches were destroyed or converted into functional buildings for the purposes of the state, a number of bishops and priests were killed or imprisoned, and clergy were no longer allowed to do charitable work or visit parishioners. The Church could not conduct any sort of religious education program and Christians were forbidden to meet together in each other's homes for Bible studies or other religious related gatherings. Every word preached by a priest during a sermon and uttered in a conversation with a church member after the service to parishioners was monitored by the secret police, who could not be distinguished from anyone else in the crowd. Gifted lay leaders and clergy who became too popular or inspirational to their flock would often disappear at the hand of the Communists and never return.⁵⁹ Basically, the Church survived only through regular celebration of its divine services and the patient faith of its members who hoped for the day that their basic religious freedoms would be restored.

Though Christians and Muslims in the Balkan nations were not under the control of, nor were they directly affected by, the Communists during the first half of the twentieth century, the rise of the Soviet Union did have indirect consequences for them as well. The national Churches in the Balkans had only recently established their independence and were still relatively weak during the years following World War I. They could have used the model and leadership of a strong Russian Church to help them build their own. Since the Russian Church was by far the largest Orthodox Church at that time and since from the sixteenth century Moscow had been considered

the “Third Rome” because of its significance in the Orthodox world, the fact that it was under the control of militant atheists was a crisis. Perhaps nowhere outside of Russia was the impact of this felt so strongly as in the nearby Balkan countries.

Before turning to events following the Second World War, it is worth mentioning one other development that occurred during the inter-war period. It has already been noted that following World War I the majority of the Middle East, with the exception of Turkey and to a limited extent Egypt, was under the control of either France or the UK. Though the sense of Arab nationalism was growing throughout the period, it was only after the Second World War that Arab nations began to form as they won their independence from colonial rule. There was one exception to this, however. In 1932, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia became the first modern state among what by the end of the century would become many Arab nations in the Middle East. Its basis for statehood was not Arab nationalism, however, but rather a marriage between religion and politics. Though Saudis were Arabs, Saudi Arabia was touted as an Islamic State. What made this possible was the key alliance between the Saudi royal family, which had been powerful in the Arabian peninsula for decades, and the Wahhabis, a conservative revivalist movement established by Muhammadibn Adl al-Wahhab in the eighteenth century. The Qur’an was made the constitution, the land was governed by the Sharī‘ah as interpreted by the *ulamā* (religious scholars/leaders), morality was enforced, and religion was used to justify everything.

The significance of Saudi Arabia for Muslim-Christian relations was its prestige and influence in the Islamic world. The Saudis became very powerful and controlled the holy sites of Mecca and Medina, so they were in a particularly good position to influence the worldview of all Muslims. Also, the Wahhabi ideology, which was both traditional with a literal application of the Qur’an and modern, was

appealing to many who lived outside of the country. Later in the century, the influence of the Wahhabis spread to many parts of the globe, and the Saudis also increased their influence by being hosts to the Muslim World League, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the Islamic Development Bank. Saudi Arabia became the dominant power in the Middle East in terms of the extraction and sale of oil to the rest of the world. The nation's oil wealth, as well as its position as the first modern Islamic State, made it the symbolic leader of the Islamic world for much of the twentieth century, challenged for this position only later on and intermittently by Egypt and Iran. Initially, the new Saudi paradigm for nationalism only had an indirect impact on Orthodox Christian-Muslim relations and Orthodox views on Islam. Over time, however, the ideology it fostered began to spread throughout the region and across the globe, introducing new obstacles to dialogue between Orthodox Christians and Muslims and placing further strain upon their often fragile relations with each other.

FROM WORLD WAR II TO THE PRESENT

The period between the Second World War and the present day has been filled with events and changes that few Orthodox Christians or Muslims could have predicted during the inter-war period. They have found their religious traditions and cultural identities challenged in new ways by forces beyond their control and sometimes even beyond their understanding. The increase of nation-states, the intrigue of the Cold War, the dependence of the West on Arab oil, and the manipulation of traditional religious symbols by modern ideologues have all had a major impact on relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims. These and other factors have at times increased the ethnic and religious divisions that existed at the beginning of the twentieth century. On the other hand, increased globalization

and rapidly advancing technological developments have provided greater opportunities for fruitful dialogue and solidarity.

The rapid ascendance of the superpowers of Western Europe and their influence over much of the world began to break down as the Second World War was in full swing by the end of 1941. Both the UK and France, which had dominated the Middle East for much of the inter-war period, were less and less in a position to assert control in the Arab world. The end of the war brought the essential withdraw of Britain and France from the region, giving Arabs the opportunity to assert themselves anew as a people and to ferment the dream of Arab nationalism. New nations were formed throughout much of the Islamic world during the years following the war, ending Europe's age of hegemony.⁶⁰

As Western Europe struggled to rebuild after the ravages of the war, the United States and the USSR established themselves as the two new super-powers that would dominate the globe until about the last decade of the twentieth century when the Communist regime collapsed. This new power alignment on the world stage led to significant changes in the Balkans and the Middle East. The primarily Orthodox Christian nations of the Balkans fell under the control of newly formed Communist regimes. Christians in these countries had to face the difficult task of working out their faith in an environment that was ideologically opposed to organized religion. In each case, the State took many of the same measures toward Christians and their churches, as had the Soviet regime toward the Russian Church beginning in 1917.⁶¹ Muslims suffered a similar fate to that of Christians under the Communists in places such as Albania and Yugoslavia. The atheist regimes banned Muslims from wearing traditional headdress, closed and destroyed mosques, and killed and imprisoned imams and religious teachers.⁶²

The Middle East experienced the consequences of the Second World War in a different form. Where Muslims and Christians in the Arab world had easily found common ground before the war in their opposition to nascent Zionism, this unity was increasingly difficult to maintain following World War II. The establishment of the state of Israel, the later defeat of the combined Arab armies in the Arab-Israeli war, and corrupting influences from the increased demand for Middle Eastern oil brought a deterioration of Arab unity, which had provided so much hope for a bright future for Arab peoples at the end of World War II. Arabs, both Muslims and Christians, found it increasingly difficult to agree on the best way to respond to the new Jewish homeland that had been carved out of their land and supported by Western powers.⁶³ Arab nations also had to contend with the social and economic burdens of the refugee crisis from displaced Palestinians, at the same time that many of their own citizens were migrating to the Gulf states to work in the booming oil industry.⁶⁴ These issues continue to be unresolved and at the forefront of Arab consciousness. If the Arab Christians and Muslims are united on anything, it is in their unanimous support of the Palestinian cause and condemnation of the West for allowing Israel to continue with its stated and unstated policies to expand settlements into the Palestinian territories.⁶⁵

Muslims and the remaining Orthodox Christians in Turkey were also faced with new challenges in the second half of the twentieth century as secularism increased and the Turkish government struggled to find its identity either as part of Europe or the Middle East. Though the policies initiated by Ataturk to disestablish religion have been watered down to some degree over the years, the powerful message of Kemalism has been a continuous force in Turkish life to the present day. This can be seen by the emotionally charged and seemingly endless controversy between government officials and activists over whether to allow Islamic head

coverings in public. Christians in Turkey have also suffered at the hands of the political ambitions of the Turkish government. Many Christians in the country are still bitter over the anti-Greek (and anti-Christian) riots in Istanbul either instigated or simply allowed by the Turkish authorities in the 1950s over political controversy surrounding Cyprus.⁶⁶ The invasion of Cyprus by Turkish forces in 1974 only added to the problem, which continues to be one of the major stumbling blocks to Turkey's acceptance into the European Union. Also from the early 1970's the Turkish government closed Halki Seminary, which was a famous school for the training of Orthodox theologians around the globe. Despite recurring pleas by the Ecumenical Patriarch to be allowed to reopen the school, and frequent articles in Greek newspapers worldwide condemning its continued forced closure, the Turkish government has not relented. Also, in recent years there have been random attacks on the Patriarchate's buildings in the Phanar by religious and ethnic zealots in Istanbul. This has only added to the frustration and tension between Orthodox Christians and Muslims in Turkey and throughout the world.

The final decades of the twentieth century up to the present day have witnessed a number of events and changes that have added more complexity to the relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims. On the list would be: 1) growing corruption caused by the massive accumulation of wealth by the Arab oil states, 2) bloody civil wars in places such as Lebanon and the former Yugoslavia on the basis of ethnic or religious divisions, 3) rapid expansion of technology and the power of the media to spread the values of modernity across the globe, and 4) increased efforts on the part of the United States to influence global politics following the fall of the Soviet Union. Each of these subjects have been frequently analyzed and debated in the writings of historians and social scientists over the past thirty years

and need not be addressed in detail here. A more pertinent theme, however, to the topic of relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims is the rise in “fundamentalism” among the world’s religions, especially Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Fundamentalism is such an overused and abused term that it is almost better avoided altogether. In light of its frequent appearance in discussions relating to Muslim-Christian relations, however, it is important at least to address some of the ways in which it is used and to identify the important trends behind the label. It can be said that fundamentalism is simply a response among people of religion to the growing secularism of the modern age. It is a phenomenon observed in many of the world’s religions, but it has been particularly appealing to Jews, Christians, and Muslims who refuse to let religion die and will do whatever they can to make it still mean something in a world that is hostile to it.

Those who have studied fundamentalism as a social and religious phenomenon have pointed out that some common characteristics are: 1) literalism, especially with sacred texts, 2) an idealization of the past, 3) a strong emphasis on community, but only within one’s own group, 4) a bipolar attitude between the modern and the traditional, 5) activism against all secular forces, and 6) a fear-based skepticism about the world, sometimes leading to theologies of rage, resentment, or revenge.⁶⁷ Fundamentalists, often unknowingly, embrace many of the values of modernity while they simultaneously and selectively retrieve ‘fundamentals’ from the past that fit the modern situation.

Much has been written in recent years about how fundamentalism has led to extremism in the form of terrorism or other types of violence. For example, beyond the popular trend toward revivalism among Muslims who are now more likely to

connect their identity with the classical Islamic past, some Muslims have transformed Islam into an ideology that is in direct conflict with the norms and values of their religion.⁶⁸ In a similar fashion, Protestant fundamentalists in the United States have become more “reactionary, intransigent, and literal-minded” and have attempted to “[bring] God back into the political realm” in recent years.⁶⁹ Though Orthodox Christians have been less prone to fundamentalism for various reasons, they have not been immune to the trend. One can observe some characteristics of fundamentalism in certain Orthodox parishes, particularly in areas of the world where Orthodox Christianity is in the minority and there are large numbers of individuals in the churches who have converted from Protestant Evangelicalism to the Orthodox faith.⁷⁰ This trend has had an indirect impact as well on the Christians in the Balkans and the Middle East because of the close ties between the old country and the “diaspora,” the term often used to refer to Orthodox communities established in primarily the Americas, Europe, and Australia after emigration from traditional Orthodox lands during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The rise of fundamentalism has had another consequence for some Orthodox Christians and has provided an additional challenge to their ability to conduct fruitful dialogue with Muslims. As the Communist regimes in the Balkans fell toward the end of the last century, Orthodox Christians struggled to rebuild their churches and communities, which had been under direct attack by the atheists in power for decades. At the same time that the churches were recovering from being in such a weakened state, Evangelical missionaries, primarily from the United States, actively tried to gain converts in the region. The Orthodox hierarchs from the various national churches resented the efforts of these Protestant missionaries to proselytize the remnant of their own flocks that had already suffered under years of communist oppression. They

argued that Christianity had been well established in the Balkans for centuries and that in the spirit of Christian unity the Evangelicals should help them rebuild the indigenous Christian communities instead of weakening them further by imposing their Westernized version of Christianity on the region.⁷¹ Though not directly related to the question of Muslim-Christian relations, this issue became such a preoccupation in some areas that it served as a distraction from efforts to foster inter-religious dialogue.

Another thematic development in the latter part of the twentieth century that can be seen both among Muslims and Orthodox Christians is what could be labeled as the rise of postmodernism and the revival of traditionalism. Stated otherwise, there has been a growing trend to reject many of the core values of “modernity” and to attempt to replace them with “traditional” values and customs from the pre-modern period. Many Orthodox Christians and Muslims from the Balkans and the Middle East have been critical of the programs of modernization and Westernization, which they have identified as the source of many of the hardships they have endured over the past hundred years. In contrast to the generally positive assessment of modernity by previous generations, they have become more cynical about the motives of Western governments and businesses that have “interests” in the region.

The trend toward traditionalism has manifested itself among Orthodox Christians in the growing number of clergy, monastics, and lay persons who call for a strict, literal adherence to the *Typikon* (a collection of rubrics governing liturgical and ascetic practice) and the *Pedalion* (the primary compilation of canon law). Proponents of this approach have not been deterred by the fact that these volumes have by and large not been critically updated for centuries. One can also observe numerous examples of church leaders taking actions and making statements with the

clear intent of distancing themselves from Western influences. Perhaps the best example is the withdrawal, usually for short periods of time and in protest to specific events, of various Orthodox Patriarchates from the World Council of Churches.⁷²

The trend toward postmodernism can be observed in the speeches and writings of a number of prominent Orthodox theologians. For example, certain “neo-orthodox” theologians, as they have been occasionally labeled, shared a common goal of liberating Orthodox theology from its “pseudomorphosis”⁷³ or, as Alexander Schmemmann was so inclined to say, its “western captivity.”⁷⁴ What the neo-orthodox theologians shared, despite the different focuses of their independent work, was a desire to do a critical analysis of Orthodox thought on the basis of a fresh reading of the Church Fathers (and Mothers).⁷⁵

Perhaps the most striking development among Muslims that indicated the growing popularity of traditionalism toward the end of the twentieth century was the Iranian Revolution of 1979. For all that it was and for all that it represented, in the main the revolution was a reaction against what was perceived as years oppression through the American sponsored Shah and the imposition of modern and Western values in Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini was in large part able to build the Islamic Republic of Iran on the promise that he would restore the Sharī‘ah to its rightful place as the foundation of society’s laws and cultural norms. Though many Muslim leaders who lived before and after Khomeini have had the same goal, Iran has probably had the most success in implementing traditionalism in a widespread and sustained way.

Muslims, much like the “neo-orthodox” theologians in the Orthodox Church, have had their own proponents of postmodernism. Without slipping into some of the fundamentalist tendencies of revivalists or extremists, while at the same time rejecting in large part the modernizing trends of certain reformists, these individuals have

emphasized traditional religious practices and the norms of traditional Islamic societies. With highly developed philosophical arguments, they have pointed to the fallacies of modern presuppositions and have identified the devastating consequences of modernization.⁷⁶ Though the proponents of this type of postmodernist thought have often been confined to academicians, in recent years their themes have grown in popularity among the masses, to the extent that it is not uncommon today for imams to express postmodernist notions in their Friday sermons.

One final factor to consider in any discussion about relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims in the postmodern age is the impact of the American-led wars in the Middle East over the last decade and a half. Politics aside, one cannot overestimate the negative consequences of the Persian Gulf War of 1991 and the current War in Iraq upon Muslim-Christian relations. The rhetoric on both sides of these conflicts has revived the old paradigm of the Crusades and the Counter-Crusades and has brought to the surface painful memories from past interactions between the Muslim world and the West. As was the case with the Crusades in the Middle Ages, not only have these wars increased the animosity and misunderstanding between Christians and Muslims generally, they have also had a negative impact on Christianity in that they have led to inter-religious divisions.

To the extent that the wars have indicated a trend towards the polarization of Western and Islamic civilizations, Orthodox Christians have been in between the two extremes. In many ways, in fact, they have found themselves to be closer to the Islamic side of the continuum. For example, in the months and weeks leading up to the start of the War in Iraq, many Orthodox hierarchs issued statements in opposition to the impending war. Their rationale included, in addition to the general and predictable plea to spare human life and to avoid the inevitable destruction caused by

war, concerns that the motives for the war were imperialistic or driven out of the need to fuel Western excesses.⁷⁷ As Islamic extremists have learned to use the media to their advantage, Muslims have increasingly come to associate Christianity with the Crusades. The claim that the nation of Israel is in large part a platform from which Western powers, such as Britain and the United States, purposefully perpetuate their historic, cultural, and religious imperialism seem plausible to a growing number of Muslims in the Middle East and throughout the world. These troubling circumstances have placed many Orthodox Christians in the Middle East in a very uncomfortable position. Many have a lot of sympathy with the point of view of their Muslim neighbors with regard to recent actions in their region by Western nations, for they too have felt offended and betrayed by the West. Also, even among those who themselves are not Palestinians, there is sustained support and concern for the plight of Christian and Muslim Palestinians.

CONCLUSIONS

The relationship between Orthodox Christians and Muslims has grown in complexity over the last five and a half centuries. The last two centuries in particular, have posed many challenges to their ability to live together in relative peace and mutual respect as new rivalries and suspicions have emerged in response to the pervasive, global trend toward modernization. In fact, with the rise of nation-states and the fall of the Ottoman Empire, some Orthodox Christians and Muslims found it possible to distance themselves from each other and their shared past.

The atrocities of the twentieth century showed that nationalism would not necessarily lead the human race to a more humane world, nor would it guarantee a greater degree of tolerance, understanding, and peace. In places such as Lebanon, (the former) Yugoslavia, Egypt, and Turkey, Christians and Muslims found

themselves face-to-face once again, competing for the illusionary good life promised to them by the modern world, even if it meant killing each other to get it. There is hope, however, at the start of the twenty-first century. Increasingly, Orthodox Christians and Muslims have realized that they need to rediscover their shared ancestry. In the process, many have done a fresh reading of their past and have discovered that together their religions may have something crucial to offer to the Westernized, modern man – his heart. What follows in the proceeding chapters is one side of that story and an examination of what Orthodox Christians have been saying about religion in the postmodern world, their Church, and relations with their Muslim neighbors. Many, it seems, have started to see Islam, or at least their relationship to the religion, as an essential part of their own identity. It is this theme of “identity,” in particular, that will be explored throughout the study, both directly and indirectly as a lens through which to evaluate what Orthodox Christians have had to say in recent years about Islam and Muslims.

Chapter 2: Orthodox Theological Perspectives on the Religions

What is the significance of the entrance of Moses into the cloud and his vision of God? ... As the mind, moving forward by ever more perfect concentration, comes to understand true knowledge of realities, as it draws closer to contemplation, the more it sees that the divine nature is invisible. Leaving behind all appearances, not only of the senses but of what the intellect sees in thought, it turns always more to the interior world, until by the effort of mind it penetrates even to the Invisible and the Unknowable and there it sees God. For in fact true knowledge and true vision of the One it seeks consists in seeing that He is invisible, wrapped all around by His Unknowability as by a cloud. That is why the great John, who penetrated into that luminous cloud, says that “no one has ever seen God” (John 1:18), asserting by this negation that the knowledge of the divine essence is inaccessible not only to men but to all intellectual beings. Thus when Moses makes progress in knowledge, he declares that he sees God in the darkness, that is to say, he understands that the divinity is that which transcends all knowledge and escapes the grasp of the mind. “Moses entered into the darkness where God was,” the Scripture says. What God? “He who makes darkness his retreat,” as David says.⁷⁸

This passage from Gregory of Nyssa, one of the “Cappadocian Fathers” from the fourth century, is quoted as an example of the *apophatic* approach of the Eastern Church. This ‘negative theologizing’ is used by Orthodox Christians to free the intellect of its earthly presuppositions and open the heart to the divine mystery, which through the grace of the Holy Spirit they believe will lead to *theōsis*, the Greek term for deification.⁷⁹

It is useful to reflect on the central Orthodox concept of apophatic theology at the beginning of this discussion on the theological perspectives of Orthodox Christians toward the religions of the world. This is because, when it comes to figuring out what God does or does not do, the Orthodox tend to proceed with caution. They affirm that at a certain level what God does, how He does it, and why are a mystery. On the other hand, Eastern Christians do affirm that one can know God through his ‘energies,’ as Gregory Palamas so eloquently explained,⁸⁰ which can be observed in many ways and in many places. In other words, while Orthodox

Christians constantly strive to have a better knowledge of God, they are also reluctant to define Him, fearing that with the limitations of the human mind, they will construct merely a caricature of the Divine. This tendency has certain repercussions for how Orthodox Christians view other religions. Though Orthodox theologians have always been passionate, and in many ways unyielding, about their dogmas and traditions – the term “Orthodoxy” translates as “right belief” or, better, “right worship” – at the same time they highly value humility when it comes to the beliefs and practices of others. Peter Bouteneff, echoing a common sentiment among Orthodox theologians in recent years, puts it this way:

Truth is truth, wherever it is found, and while Orthodox Christianity does claim uniquely to teach the fullness of truth, it does not claim a *monopoly* on truth. On that basis, Orthodox Christians are open to *mutual learning* and *mutual transformation*. This step may sound radical. But once we admit that truth exists outside our own faith, and especially if we say that everything that is true is true because it reflects Jesus Christ (who *is* Truth), then we must be open to the ways in which God’s truth has been found even in faiths that do not share our belief in Christ.⁸¹

Therefore, it is not only possible to maintain a strong sense of one’s own beliefs while searching for common ground in other religions, but the search for truth itself, no matter where it might be found, will only strengthen one’s faith.

Before moving on, however, to the ways in which Orthodox Christians have sought to find common ground with other religions, it is first necessary to have a framework for *how* the Orthodox tradition determines truth in general. In other words, whether it is in relation to non-Christian religions or to any given topic, how do the Orthodox determine an authoritative position? It is in answering this question that one encounters a particular challenge for the Orthodox Church in terms inter-religious relations.

Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, which because of its centralized ecclesiastical structure is able to make clear position statements about the church’s

relationship to non-Christian religions or any other matter, the Orthodox Church must often struggle to come to a clear, standardized position on just about anything. Unlike many Protestant denominations, in which a problem can be solved in a relatively short period of time through the formation of a committee to examine the issues and then bring a resolution to a vote by either the leaders or a representative body within the denomination, the Orthodox do not resolve matters of faith through the use of modern democratic principles. It is not that Orthodox Christians are incapable of formulating dogmas, for they have a number of clearly defined beliefs that they have defended for centuries. It is, rather, that they take very seriously the notion of consensus and are willing to take the painstaking steps necessary to determine the “mind of the Church.”

Where would one turn then to find the sources of authoritative truth within the Orthodox tradition? On this question, Orthodox theologians generally point to the following: 1) scripture, 2) “Tradition,” as expressed through liturgy and pious practices, 3) local and/or “ecumenical” councils, 4) canon law, and 5) the wisdom from the fathers of the Church. Among these sources, the greatest and most controversial matters within the Church were resolved through the seven “Great” or “Ecumenical” councils, which occurred during the 4th-8th centuries of the Common Era. For many of the reasons discussed already in chapter one, the modern period has produced a number of very challenging issues and questions within the Orthodox Church. This has led a number of Orthodox Christians to propose and long for an “Eighth Ecumenical Council” of leaders in the Church from across the globe. Indeed, there has been talk of a “Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church,” as it has been called, since the beginning of last century and over the past ten decades there have been a number of Pan-Orthodox conferences and commissions in efforts to plan for the future convening of the council and to establish the subjects for discussion.⁸²

Since the subject of non-Christian religions falls clearly under one of the ten proposed topics on the agenda for the forthcoming Great Council, once the council meets it may be possible to point to a more definitive Orthodox position on inter-religious relations. What this decision will be, and the degree to which it will be accepted by Orthodox Christians worldwide, remains to be seen, however.

There have been several leading Orthodox theologians who have had a particular interest in the question of Orthodox relations with other (non-Christian) religions and have spoken out on the issue through various means and in different contexts.⁸³ These individuals, as they have waited for the convening of a Great Council, have turned to a combination of the other sources in an attempt to establish the most likely Orthodox position on the topic. Thus far, they have primarily looked at scripture, patristic sources, and the central Christological and Trinitarian doctrines of the Church. A close examination of their treatment of these sources will demonstrate that one can already begin to see an emerging authoritative Orthodox position on inter-religious relations.

SCRIPTURE AND THE RELIGIONS

The starting point for Orthodox theologians who have attempted to articulate a scriptural understanding of other religions is the biblical view of the human person. According to Genesis 1.26-27, humankind is made in the image and likeness of God. This common origin for all persons – regardless of race, gender, time and place of origin, or religious orientation – has been emphasized a great deal by the Orthodox, as well as the wide spectrum of Christian theological tradition. Nevertheless, it is a key component in the Orthodox understanding of scripture as it relates to inter-religious relations, because it shows that every man, woman, and child share central core attributes and that they were created to have basically the same life purpose.

Archbishop Anastasios Yannoulatos of Albania, commenting on the significance of this in the Eastern Christian tradition in terms of how Christians are united with those of other religious (and non-religious) traditions, says:

Since the human race was created from one homogeneous substance, the introduction of sin brought on an infirmity throughout the entire human race. Humanity's nature continues to be unified, both in its greatness and in its fall. All human beings share a common place before the judgment of God, "since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). In the East there is unshakable theological certainty that all people have both "the desire...to seek God," as St. Gregory the Theologian expresses it, and also the ability to obtain some faint knowledge of God through their reason and mental powers....People also have an innate ability to love and to sense, even if imperfectly, that love occupies a "greater" position.⁸⁴

Archbishop Anastasios illustrates here the ways in which human beings are bound up together, for better or worse, and that because of this Christians and non-Christians should work together in their search for God and their attempts to be conformed into his likeness.

Metropolitan Georges Khodr of Mount Lebanon has also found that scripture is helpful in determining an Orthodox perspective on inter-religious relations. He points specifically to the actions of Paul and the early Christian community for answers on this question. Quoting sections from the *Acts of the Apostles*, which is where one sees the Church's unique identity emerging at a time and place in which extreme religious pluralism was the norm, Metropolitan Georges states:

In the Cornelius narrative we learn that 'in every nation the man who is god-fearing and does what is right is acceptable' to God ([Acts] 10:35). 'In past ages God allowed all nations to go their own way' (14:16) 'yet he has not left you without some clue to his nature' (14:17). There is among the Gentiles a yearning to the 'unknown God' (17:23), a search for the God who 'is not far from each one of us, for in him we live and move, in him we exist' (17:28)...the view of the apostle as expressed in his Areopagus speech is that the Athenians worshipped the true God without recognizing him as the Creator. His face had not been unveiled to them. In other words, they were Christians without knowing it. Paul gave their God a name. The Name, together with its attributes, is the revelation of God.⁸⁵

Metropolitan Georges does not deny that Paul in many ways continues the Old Testament notion that, “paganism is [to be] regarded...as an abomination.”⁸⁶

However, he does assert that there is an opening in Paul’s theology towards a positive assessment of the general religious experiences of all people, because in their sincere expressions of religious devotion they are unknowingly responding to Christ.

The late Greek theologian, Ioannes Karmires found Paul to be even more sympathetic towards those outside of the visible boundaries of the Church. He says:

...not only Christians, but also non-Christians, the unbelievers or gentiles, are able to become fellow heirs and ‘members of the same body and partakers of the promise of Jesus Christ’ (Eph. 3:6), through the Church to which the gentiles, the heterodox, may also belong invisibly, on the basis and by the power of their faith and of the saving grace bestowed on them by God as a free gift, both of which have as it were an ecclesial character.⁸⁷

For Karmires, the message is that non-Christians truly can participate in and benefit from the saving work of Christ, even while adhering to their own religious beliefs and pious practices. Metropolitan Georges and Professor Karmires see a biblical precedent for finding as much as possible that might be good and of God in other religions. They argue that this is necessary since the Divine sometimes works in ‘mysterious ways,’ which may not always be visible or immediately evident to the Christian community.

This theme of humility with regard to those of other religious persuasions is a common one among Orthodox theologians interested in inter-religious relations.

They often comment that though Christians may affirm that God is working within their community, this does not mean that they are in any position to put a limit on Him or to claim that He is not working in and through another revelation(s).

Archbishop Anastasios has observed that Jesus himself, whose example Christians should emulate, showed a great deal of affection and humility to those outside of his religious community. He remarks that:

Jesus Christ did not exclude people of other religions from his concern. On certain occasions during his earthly life, he conversed with people of different religious traditions (such as the Samaritan woman, the Canaanite woman and the Roman centurion) and gave them help. He expressed admiration and respect for their faith, which he did not find among the Israelites: ‘...not even in Israel have I found such faith’ (Mt. 8:10; cf. 15:28, Lk. 7:9)...He, the ‘Son of God’, who at the Last Judgement will identify himself with ‘the least’ of this world (Mt. 25) regardless of their race or religion, exhorts us to approach each human person with genuine respect and love.⁸⁸

Archbishop Anastasios makes the case here that an important aspect of Jesus’ teaching was that God works through all people and that Christians in particular should have enough humility to listen to what God may be saying to them through other religions. One could also add, as is argued below, that a very similar idea is present in the Hebrew scriptures:

Beginning with the prophets in the Old Testament, anytime a notion of judgment is presented it is meant as a message to God’s people – not to those outside the covenanted community. In fact, in Isaiah 10 God uses Assyria, a foreign nation, to judge his own people who have not been faithful to Him. This same idea can be seen throughout the New Testament. Any message of judgment seems to be directed towards insiders. What is important is for the individual to respond in love, being faithful to God to the degree to which he or she has received revelation of Him.⁸⁹

In other words, scripture presents for the Christian the heavy responsibility of finding God’s own voice speaking directly to them through the adherents of the non-Christian religions.

THE FATHERS AND THE RELIGIONS

Orthodox theologians interested in recent years with the question of inter-religious relations have in addition to scripture sought guidance from the writings of the patristic age. They have pointed out that from the time Christianity emerged as a distinct religion from Judaism up to the present day, Christians have had to face the question of how to understand and relate to non-Christian religions. This has

especially been the case for Eastern Christians who have had a long history of living side by side with those of other faiths.

Though responses of patristic writers have varied considerably based on time and place, as well as the context of the interaction and the orientation of the speaker or author, Archbishop Anastasios has argued one can construct a historical outline of the Orthodox Church's theological positions toward other religions.⁹⁰ The first period, he says, comprises basically the first three centuries of Christianity during which Christians interacted primarily with Judaism and the pagan religions of the pre-Christian Roman world. He emphasizes that during this period there was, "...a constant attempt to understand religious belief outside the Christian faith."⁹¹ The second period that he describes relates to the era directly preceding the establishment of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire up to the seventh century when Islam appears as a rival to Christendom. He points out that as "leaders interested in social-political cohesion sought religious uniformity,"⁹² the "inclusive/universalist tradition"⁹³ of Christians from the first three centuries began to fade. Archbishop Anastasios argues that a third period of Orthodox theological reflection on non-Christian religions can be identified as starting with the rise of Islam in the seventh century and going at least to the beginning of the Ottoman period.⁹⁴ He says that during this third period:

...the moderate attitudes of earlier centuries were abandoned [as]...the Orthodox Church [was]...confronted with military and political pressure from a new religion [Islam] which appear[ed] on the scene with claims to worldwide domination. In an eschatological perspective, the appearance of Islam looked like the beginning of the great final struggle as described by John the Evangelist in Revelation. The reaction of the Christian community began with conversations, but quickly turned into military defense and counter attack. At the same time, a series of anti-Islamic works appeared in Byzantium.⁹⁵

He points out here that the discussion on inter-religious relations by Byzantine theologians becomes more narrowly focused and in some ways preoccupied with Islam from the seventh century to at least the pre-modern period.

Archbishop Anastasios concludes from all of this that outside of a few notable exceptions from later centuries,⁹⁶ the first period of theological reflection is most helpful in terms of articulating an Orthodox position on other religions in today's world. He characterizes the open and pluralistic nature of the patristic writers from this early phase in this way:

When we examine the earliest layers of theological thought in the Orthodox East, we find that...there is a constant attempt to understand religious belief outside the Christian faith, with discernment and the recognition of a certain revelation of God to the world.⁹⁷

After demonstrating his point by quoting and analyzing several early patristic authors, he then concludes that they, “impel us to take an attitude of respect and at the same time discernment towards the other religious experiences of mankind.”⁹⁸

Much like Archbishop Anastasios, Alexander Men finds that the early patristic period was an age of openness, which could serve as a useful paradigm for today's Christians. Father Men says:

When Christianity first appeared in the ancient world, it faced the question: how to treat all this heritage? How to treat the philosophy, art, literature and in general all the great edifice of ancient culture? Should we say it's all rubbish?...The main answer given by the classic Christian thinkers, who are known as the patristic writers or the Fathers of the Church was, however, a positive one. Christianity could and should be open to all these questions....The return of contemporary Christian thought...to the tradition of the Church Fathers, is the return of Christianity to an open model, which participates in the whole movement of human society.⁹⁹

He makes the case here, while arguing against the tendency in some Orthodox circles to withdraw from the world and reject anything considered “secular,” that Christians today must recover the courage of the early Christians who engaged the world.

He presents the vision of the early Fathers of the Church in order to counter the

tendencies toward extremism in what he calls a kind of, “other-worldly culture-denying Christianity.”

There have been other authors as well who have been interested in this early phase of theological reflection on non-Christian religions. It seems that, like Archbishop Anastasios and Fr. Alexander Men, they have found the writings of this early period to have an important resonance with today’s realities. John Garvey is one example. In his recently published work on Orthodoxy’s relationship with other religions, he states:

Our situation today can be seen as not all that different from the world the early apologists had to address. Orthodoxy must now make itself known and understood in a world where no religion has a privileged place. Some may mourn this fact, but it may be a new and profoundly important opportunity.¹⁰⁰

Fr. Garvey makes a parallel here between the persecution of the early Church by Roman authorities and the realities for Christians today who have had to adjust to the dominant social-political principles of secularism. Likewise, Metropolitan Georges Khodr has argued that it is important for the Orthodox Church to rediscover the wisdom from the early patristic writers in relation to other religions. He identifies a clear shift in attitude beginning in the seventh and eighth centuries stating:

Suffice it to say that in the Greek-speaking Christian Byzantine East following John Damascene, the attitude towards Islam was somewhat negative.... The negative evaluation of other religions obviously rests on an ecclesiology which is bound up with a history which has been lived through and with a definite outlook on history.... What I should like to emphasize here is that this linear view of history is bound up with a monolithic ecclesiological approach.... It comes to this: contemporary theology must go beyond the notion of ‘salvation history’ in order to rediscover the meaning of the *oikonomia*.¹⁰¹

Metropolitan Georges’ reference to the Orthodox notion of *oikonomia* refers in this instance both to the work of Christ and that of the Holy Spirit among peoples of all cultures and religious traditions. His analysis of the central Christological and Trinitarian doctrines of the Church in relation to non-Christian religions will be

examined in further detail. Before moving on to that, however, it would be useful to summarize the basic views – covered in various degrees by Archbishop Anastasios, Fr. Garvey, Metropolitan Khodr, and others – of the relevant patristic writers from the first three Christian centuries.

Perhaps the earliest author from the patristic period to talk about Christianity's relationship with other religions was Justin Martyr. As with the patristic authors who will be mentioned in this section, the 'other religions' that Justin specifically had in mind are Judaism and Greek philosophy. Justin's argument was hinged around his, now famous, concept of *logos spermatikos* ("seminal reason"). Building on the Stoic understanding of *logos* as 'reason' or an 'universal law' inherent in all things and persons, Justin makes this conclusion about the Greek philosophers, poets, and historians:

For each man spoke well in proportion to the share he had of the spermatic word [*logos spermatikos*], seeing what was related to it.... Whatever things were rightly said among all men, are the property of us Christians.... For all writers were able to see realities darkly through the sowing of the implanted word that was in them.¹⁰²

He also says that:

...those who lived reasonably [*meta logou*] are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists; as, among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus, and men like them; and among the barbarians, Abraham, and Ananias, and Azarias, and Misael, and Elias, and many others whose actions and names we now decline to recount, because we know it would be tedious.¹⁰³

Orthodox theologians in recent years have found Justin's use of *logos spermatikos* to be of great significance for inter-religious relations. They have argued that it is indeed appropriate to apply this theological concept to the relationship of Orthodox Christianity to all non-Christian religions. For example, Olivier Clément says of Justin's *logos spermatikos*:

We must regain this vision today, extending it to the entire planet, and first and foremost to Islam which recognized in Jesus the Messiah the

manifestation of the Word [*logos*] and of the Spirit and awaits his return at the end of time, and which maintains the close connection between the “seal of holiness” and the “seal of prophecy.”¹⁰⁴

Here he sees a universal application of Justin’s inclusivist orientation with regard to the ‘other religions’ of his day.

John Garvey argues as well for a universal application of Justin’s thought, though he approaches it in terms of the way one can find manifestations of ultimate “truth” in the world’s religions. After quoting extensively from Justin’s first apology, he gives this analysis:

[Justin] says that all truth belongs to Christians because God, through the Word, is the source of all truth, and the Word who took on human flesh in Christ is the fullness of all human truth. But those who even unwittingly have participated in this truth are in some sense in communion with it, however imperfectly, and this is because “seeds of the Word (*Logos*)” [*logos spermatikos*] are found everywhere.¹⁰⁵

Fr. Garvey identifies that for Justin, truth as it is found in the religions of man is in very close association with Christ, the Logos. It is perhaps no coincidence that he uses the word “communion” here, since Orthodox Christians would likely connect this image with their concept of the Eucharist, through which they believe they experience an intimate, physical and spiritual connection with the Divine.

Clement of Alexandria is another figure from the patristic period in whom Orthodox scholars today find a precedent for positive interaction with other religions. They will point out, for example, that in his *Exhortation to the Heathen* 7 he says that:

...the Greeks, having received certain scintillations of the divine word, have given forth some utterances of truth, they bear indeed witness that the force of truth is not hidden....¹⁰⁶

Clement also suggests that God gave philosophy to the Greeks as a kind of scripture, leading them to the fullness of the truth, which they will find in the Logos. This can be seen, for example, in *Stromata* 1.5:

Perchance, too, philosophy was given to the Greeks directly and primarily, till the Lord should call the Greeks. For this was a schoolmaster to bring ‘the Hellenic mind,’ as the law, the Hebrews, ‘to Christ.’ Philosophy, therefore, was a preparation, paving the way for him who is perfected in Christ.¹⁰⁷

Metropolitan Georges finds Clement’s thought in passages such as these to be significant because of his openness to the religious and philosophical worldviews of his day. He gives this analysis of Clement’s theology, in terms of how it should be applied to the question of inter-religious relations:

In the thought of Clement of Alexandria, the divine Word speaks to the entire world, and God justifies mankind through numerous salvation paths. God is not only the God of Israel, He is also the savior of the world, and appears to be engaged throughout the world by means of multiple faces of his wisdom.¹⁰⁸

Metropolitan Georges clearly believes that were Clement alive today, he would find “scintillations,” or glimmers, of the Divine Logos in many of the non-Christian religions and that he himself would assert that God is using these various “paths” to lead men and women to salvation.

Similar to Metropolitan Georges, Nicholas Arseniev perceived the same kind of openness in Clement of Alexandria, as well as Justin Martyr, and found that their theology forms a significant piece of the Orthodox position on other religions. He says, for example, that:

...there is a certain knowledge of God or a yearning and craving and searching after Him given to all men....[T]wo early Christian Fathers – Justin [Martyr] the Philosopher and Clement of Alexandria – say of the seed of the Divine Logos scattered in the hearts of the just among the Greeks, thus in the hearts of Socrates and Heraclitus. There is a natural leaning in man, innate to man, toward God: it is the working of the Divine Logos who gives light and life. Man is naturally attracted by the Divine Logos who is the interior Law according to which the world has its being.¹⁰⁹

Though Arseniev does not go as far as Metropolitan Georges to say that, “God justifies mankind through numerous salvation paths,” he does agree that according to the early fathers of the Church there is an “interior Law,” which is the “Divine Logos,” in each person guiding him toward truth.

Continuing with the Alexandrine school of thought among the early fathers of the Church, Orthodox scholars have found Origen's contribution to be of note on the topic of inter-religious relations. In his *Against Celsus*, he says:

For he [Celsus] was unable so to consider the times of Moses and the prophets, as to see that the Jewish prophets predicted generally that there was a "Son of God" long before the Greeks and those men of ancient time [i.e. pagan religions] of whom Celsus speaks. Nay, he would not even quote the passage in the letters of Plato, to which we referred in the preceding pages, concerning Him who so beautifully arranged this world, as being Son of God.¹¹⁰

Theologians have interpreted this and similar passages by Origen to mean that God has and can speak through a variety of prophetic voices, even those that are outside of the canonical boundaries of the Church. Archbishop Anastasios, for example, says that:

Origen...taught that God did not give testimony of himself only among certain peoples and at certain periods, but had enlightened chosen souls (e.g. Plato) at all times and places...Hence Christians should not mock the likenesses of the gods, because they represent attempts to depict the Divine.¹¹¹

In other words, Christians should approach other religions with respect and humility, following the example of Origen in his treatment of Jewish prophecy, Greek myths, pagan traditions, and Hellenic wisdom.

Eusebius of Caesarea is also presented as an example from patristic sources during the first three Christian centuries of the open attitude toward other religions.

Similar to Origen in outlook, though perhaps more direct, Eusebius claims that:

All that are said to have excelled in righteousness and piety since the creation of man, the great servant Moses and before him in the first place Abraham and his children, and as many righteous men and prophets as afterward appeared, have contemplated him with the pure eyes of the mind, and have recognized him and offered to him the worship which is due him as Son of God. But he, by no means neglectful of the reverence due to the Father, was appointed to teach the knowledge of the Father to them all.¹¹²

Archbishop Anastasios finds this specific passage to be particularly significant in terms of its usefulness as a paradigm for how Orthodox Christians should view adherents of other religions. He says:

Eusebius of Caesarea stressed the catholicity of divine revelation of all nations and all people, maintaining that religious feeling is innate...at all times and among all nations there were people...who, because of their inner purity, assimilated divine truths through an inner revelation which opened the eyes of their mind.¹¹³

In other words, Orthodox Christians should contemplate on the universality of God's revelation across language, religion, culture, and time itself.

These are just a sample of the early patristic sources that recent Orthodox theologians have referenced in their attempts to establish an Orthodox position on other religions.¹¹⁴ Along with scripture, the principles established in these early traditions, have allowed Orthodox scholars to open the discourse into broad areas of theology, which will be the focus of the next section of this chapter.

THE ECONOMIES OF THE LOGOS AND THE SPIRIT IN THE RELIGIONS

Perhaps the most important contribution from the Orthodox in recent years to inter-religious relations is the application of their Christological and Trinitarian doctrines to the question of non-Christian religions. Though several theologians have written on the topic, by far the most visible and outspoken have been two individuals already mentioned several times in this chapter, namely Metropolitan Georges Khodr of Mount Lebanon and Archbishop Anastasios Yannoulatos of Albania (formerly Bishop Anastasios of Androussa). These two men were actively involved, beginning in the late 1960s, in the development of a theology of religions and guidelines for dialogue within the World Council of Churches and have been key personalities on the international, regional, and local levels with interfaith encounters ever since.¹¹⁵

Both have attempted to construct an Orthodox position on non-Christian religions

with a special emphasis on what they have argued are Eastern Orthodoxy's relatively unique contributions in the areas of christology and pneumatology.¹¹⁶

During his address at the World Council of Churches Central Committee meeting in 1971, Metropolitan Georges put forward what he believes to be a distinctive approach of the Eastern Church with regard to Christology as it relates to other religions. As Jutta Sperber explains, Metropolitan Georges' remarks were in many ways a challenge to the basic assumptions of much Catholic and Protestant ecclesiology, because he:

...dealt mainly with the church's exclusive claim to truth which was expressed in all theological disciplines but could not be combined with genuine spiritual life among non-Christians.¹¹⁷

Metropolitan Georges argued that the "negative evaluation of other religions," which has been so prevalent in the modern period, is a direct result of, "an ecclesiology which is bound up with a history which has been lived through and with a definite outlook on history." He proposed as a solution to this divergent perspective a more balanced Christology, which he argued was characteristically Orthodox. In the words of Metropolitan Georges:

Too much emphasis has been placed on the succession of salvation events, with the result that Christ appears as the end of the history of the Old Covenant and the end of human history....What I should like to emphasize here is that this linear view of history is bound up with a monolithic ecclesiological approach which, while rightly rejecting the Graeco-Asian idea of eternally recurring cycles, turns its back on the idea of an eternity transcending history and based on a conception of the Church in which Christ is seen 'not merely chronologically but also and above all ontologically.'¹¹⁸

He presents here a view of Christian history much more in line with the thought of Irenaeus, who evaluated all of human history from the point of view of the incarnation of Christ.¹¹⁹ In other words, he proposes that Christians must move beyond the antiquated, linear concept of "salvation history" because it reduces the "economy of Christ" to "its historical manifestation."¹²⁰ He emphasizes that the entire world

changed when ‘Christ took on human flesh’ and that the Church’s primary mission is to be a witness to the life-changing potential resulting from this event. Metropolitan Georges says that:

The coming of Christ, in whom ‘all things are held together’ (Col. 1:17) has led the whole of mankind to its true existence and brings about spiritual renewals, economies which can take charge of human souls until he comes. The Church’s mediatorial role remains unimpaired. But the freedom of God is such that he can raise up prophets outside the sociological confines of the New Israel just as he raised them up outside the confines of Old Israel.¹²¹

The alternative view that he presents, which he argues is the authoritative Eastern Orthodox position, results in a very different outcome for inter-religious relations.

For, as he puts it:

The supreme task [of the Christian community] is to identify all the Christic values in other religions, to show them Christ as the bond which unites them and his love as their fulfillment. True mission laughs at missionary activity. Our task is simply to follow the tracks of Christ perceptible in the shadows of other religions.¹²²

According to Metropolitan Georges, Christ is at work in many of the world religions and, therefore, Christians have the opportunity to grow closer to Him through dialogue and expanding their understanding of both their own religious tradition and those of others.

One can see a very similar line of reasoning in terms of Christology, in the thought of Archbishop Anastasios. Echoing Metropolitan Georges, he has this to say about the distinctiveness of the traditional Orthodox Christian approach as contrasted with other ‘modern’ forms of Christianity:

During the last four centuries [17th-20th] of Western Christianity, deep faith in the uniqueness of Jesus Christ has expressed itself on numerous occasions as exclusivity. Several verses in the New Testament – such as “no one comes to the Father, but by me” (Jn 14:6) and “there is salvation in no one else” (Acts 4:12) – were isolated from their context and used to defend a Christology of exclusivity. Christian thought in the Eastern Church has shown a greater degree of understanding.¹²³

He begins with what he sees as a rather myopic treatment of scripture with regard to Christology and soteriology, which he argues has had the direct result of a very closed orientation in the West toward non-Christian religions. Then, after quoting and giving an analysis of several biblical and patristic sources, he goes on to further clarify the different emphases between theologians of the West and the East:

When they discuss Christology, many Western theologians tend to focus their attention on Christ's earthly life, from his birth until the Resurrection – the so-called “historical Jesus.” In the East, however, emphasis is placed on the risen Christ, on Christ ascended, on Christ who will come again, on the Lord and *Logos* of the world.¹²⁴

Archbishop Anastasios emphasizes here the eschatological nature of Orthodox theology in which there is always a sense that the kingdom of God is both at hand and yet to come. Though the Orthodox would agree that salvation is only found in Christ, the notion of salvation is much more fluid than it is in the West.¹²⁵ For this reason, according to Archbishop Anastasios, Orthodox Christians are much more willing to contemplate the saving work of the *Logos* at all times and places – past, present, and future. In the often repeated words of Saint Athanasius, “God become man so we might be made God,”¹²⁶ which in essence is the Orthodox concept of *theōsis*, there is an implicit openness to seeing Christ wherever he might be found. Orthodox Christians, therefore, are much less prone to the kind of “Christology of exclusivity,” which Archbishop Anastasios describes.

This leads to the second theological contribution of the Orthodox in recent years with regard to inter-religious relations. As Archbishop Anastasios puts it, one cannot discover a full view of the Christian perspective based solely on Christology.

He says:

The debate in the West on how to evaluate other religions theologically has always centered on christological issues. Western theological thought on this subject is defined mainly by the Augustinian and Calvinist legacies, with secondary influences from Luther and Wesley. In Orthodox tradition,

however, theological problems related to this subject – especially with regard to Christian anthropology, i.e., to that part of Christian teaching that concerns the origin, nature, and destiny of human beings – have always been viewed in the light of our theology of the Holy Trinity.¹²⁷

Both Archbishop Anastasios and Metropolitan Georges have emphasized the important role of the Holy Spirit with regard to other religions, though they have come to slightly different conclusions.

The role of Christ in the world, according to Metropolitan Georges, can only be understood in terms of its connection with the role of the Holy Spirit, in that, “The economy of salvation achieves its full reality as the End, as the ultimate meaning of all things. The economy of Christ is unintelligible without the economy of the Spirit.” Here, one can see the characteristic emphasis on Trinitarian theology, a theme which is nearly always present when the Orthodox are involved in an ecumenical gathering. Without identifying it by name, Metropolitan Georges clearly alluded to one of the essential issues of contention between the Christian East and West, the *filioque*.¹²⁸ However, he does this not to dwell on a long-standing point of theological disagreement, but rather to identify one of the ways in which the role and actions of the Holy Spirit have often been overlooked. He says, based on Acts 2.17 and 10.45, as well as Irenaeus’ presentation of the *Logos* and the Spirit [as] the “two hands of the Father,” that:

The Spirit is present everywhere and fills everything¹²⁹ by virtue of an economy distinct from that of the Son.... This means that we must affirm not only their hypostatic independence but also that the advent of the Holy Spirit in the world is not subordinated to the Son, is not simply a function of the Word....Between the two economies there is a reciprocity and a mutual service....The Spirit operates and applies his energies in accordance with his own economy and we could, from this angle, regard the non-Christian religions as points where his inspiration is at work.¹³⁰

His basic point is that the kind of Trinitarian theology that makes the Holy Spirit subservient to the Son obscures the work of the Holy Spirit both inside and outside of

the visible Church. He would argue, in fact, that this is the case in the West's Christocentric orientation, which has led to the linear concept of the "history of salvation."

Metropolitan Georges finds that because of the role of the Holy Spirit, there is an intimate connection among the people of God, both Christian and non-Christian, and he refers to this mystical communion of saints as the, "universal religious community." He says that:

All who are visited by the Spirit are the people of God. The Church represents the first-fruits of the whole of mankind called to salvation. 'In Christ all will be brought to life' (I Cor. 15:22) because of this communion which is the Church. At the present moment the Church is the sacrament of this future unity, the unity of both 'those whom the church will have baptized and those whom the Church's bridegroom will have baptized,' to use Nicholas Cabasilas' wonderful expression.... They are all within the eucharistic cup, awaiting the time of the Parousia when they will constitute the unique and glorious body of the Savior and when all the signs will disappear before 'the throne of God and of the Lamb.' (Rev. 22:3)¹³¹

This was one of the most controversial aspects of Metropolitan Georges' argument when it was first presented to the WCC Central Committee in 1971 and it continues to be so today. It was quite appealing to some because it was, "the first clear theological formulation of what may have been behind many of the pleas by the supporters of dialogue, especially from the 'Third World.'"¹³² Orthodox leaders themselves, of no less stature than Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, who have been in favor of dialogue continue to find Metropolitan Georges' presentation convincing.¹³³ On the other hand, his claims about the Holy Spirit have been troubling to others, to the extent that none of his statements were included in the final document adopted by the WCC Central Committee in Addis Ababa, in large part because of his implicit rejection of the *filioque*.¹³⁴

Hugh Goddard frames the question very simply in his analysis of Metropolitan Georges:

Does the Holy Spirit proceed from the Father only (as the Eastern churches hold) or does the Spirit proceed from the Father and the Son (as opinion developed in the West)? If the first view is correct, then it is easier for Christians to perceive the activity of the Holy Spirit even where the Son is not specifically named...[as Metropolitan Georges] Khodr suggests....¹³⁵

Unfortunately, most critics of Metropolitan Georges or those who have presented similar arguments with regard to inter-religious relations, start from a position of intolerance, or a negative assessment of other religions, and then attempt to support this viewpoint with theological arguments or proofs from scripture. Few, even among the Orthodox who would agree with Metropolitan Georges in his statements about the *filioque*, have been able to argue successfully that his connection between Orthodox pneumatology and non-Christian religions is invalid. Perhaps the only Orthodox theologian to successfully argue a slightly different case, in terms of the role of the Holy Spirit within world religions, is Archbishop Anastasios. He does so with subtlety, however, and as will be seen below in the broad stroke he basically agrees with many of Metropolitan Georges' points.

Archbishop Anastasios supported from the start the notion that Orthodox pneumatology might be the answer to many of the difficult questions faced by the World Council of Churches, and Christianity generally, with regard to a consistent position on the non-Christian religions. Like Metropolitan Georges, he too argued that this was the case because, "Orthodox thought sees the activity of the Holy Spirit very broadly," allowing for many possibilities in terms of the presence of the Divine in all men and all religions. He declared with all confidence, "In addition to the 'economy of the Logos,' the Christian East, full of hope and humble expectation, gazes at the 'economy of the Spirit.'"¹³⁶ He has often spoken of numerous possibilities in terms of the role of the Holy Spirit outside of the visible Church. He says for example:

The manifestation of the Trinitarian God's presence – everywhere in the world, throughout time, and for all eternity – occurs through the constant activity of the Holy Spirit. The one “who is everywhere present and fills all things” continues to act for the salvation of every person and the fulfillment and completion of the entire world.¹³⁷

Like Metropolitan Georges Khodr, Archbishop Anastasios uses the imagery in the Trisagion (“Thrice Holy”) Hymn to illustrate the activities of the Spirit throughout the entire cosmos. He goes on to say that the Holy Spirit:

...vigorously renews the atmosphere in which human beings live and breath...motivates and inspires people to crave and search for the truth...[and] soothes our hearts and helps to create a new kind of relationship between human persons...Nothing can restrict the radiance of the Holy Spirit. Wherever we find love, goodness, peace, and the Spirit's other “fruits” (Gal. 5:22), there we discern the signs of its activity. Furthermore, it is clear that quite a few of these things are present in the lives of many people who belong to other religions.¹³⁸

All these assertions are again similar and supportive of the perspective given by Metropolitan Georges some years earlier.

Where Archbishop Anastasios departs with Metropolitan Georges is on the question of whether it is imperative for Christians to affirm that the Holy Spirit *must* be independently at work in other religions. According to him:

We do need to be very cautious, however, concerning theological ideas that arise in this area; moreover, we need to be theologically sensitive and precise.... In order to avoid slipping into ambiguous notions or performing theoretical acrobatics, theological study of the Holy Spirit should be carried out with constant reference to our doctrines about Christ and the Holy Trinity.¹³⁹

This statement was perhaps to soften the previous statements in ecumenical circles by his fellow churchman. Metropolitan Georges had, after all, continued to speak out passionately about the need for extreme humility with regard to non-Christians. For example, at an inter-religious colloquium in Crete (Kolybari, 1987) he said, “A person who claims to be religious condemns himself to hell if he does not see, in love, the light of God on the face of one who is different.”¹⁴⁰ Archbishop Anastasios had more

in mind, however, than making peace between the Orthodox and their Protestant and Catholic brethren. His statements were an attempt to give a bit more, and necessary, precision to the Orthodox position on the work of the Holy Spirit among the religions.

The same can be seen in a clarification by the Archbishop on the *filioque*:

In the great discussion about filioque, we did not say that the Spirit acted only through Christ, but we cannot say so clearly that the Holy Spirit is working outside of Christ.... The Holy Spirit remains always undefined; we avoid defining the Spirit.¹⁴¹

Jutta Sperber indicates that statements such as this and the previous one cited were much more palatable at the time, in comparison to those by Metropolitan Georges, to most of the Protestants in the World Council of Churches. In Sperber's words, "[His] expressions are considerably more 'biblical' but therefore do not constitute such a closed conception. On the contrary, the statements about pneumatology remain so much in suspense that the wording must almost be considered brilliant."¹⁴² Though Archbishop Anastasios words may have contributed to progress in the ecumenical dialogue, more importantly, perhaps, he has also elaborated for his coreligionists another possible position based on Orthodox pneumatology with regard to an Orthodox view on other religions.

There is one other particular contribution of note from Archbishop Anastasios that has more to do with expressly Trinitarian theology, than either christology or pneumatology. This is his introduction of the concept of '*koinōnia agapēs*' in relation to interaction between Christians and non-Christians.¹⁴³ *Koinōnia* means *communion, association, partnership, and or fellowship* in Greek and *agapē* means *love*.

Archbishop Anastasios uses *koinōnia agapēs*, then, as a reference to the mutual, self-giving love found first and foremost between the three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – of the Trinity. It is also a reference to the opportunity given to humankind, particularly after the incarnation of Christ, to share in this communion of

love – expressed perfectly in the Godhead – and subsequently to spread it throughout the cosmos and into the heart of every person on earth.

This aspect of Archbishop Anastasios’ notion of the *koinōnia agapēs* has been around for centuries in the Orthodox tradition, as for example in the thought of Maximos the Confessor.¹⁴⁴ It forms the anthropological piece of the doctrine and practices associated with *theōsis*, because it identifies the intended meaning and purpose of earthly life. What Archbishop Anastasios does, however, is to speak of the *koinōnia agapēs* in terms of how it relates to those of other religions and how it should serve as a motivation for inter-religious dialogue. If for no other reason, Christians and those of other religions should engage in dialogue and work together for the common good in a ‘fellowship of love.’ He says, for example, that, “A faithful Christian has ‘to become a neighbor’ to each and every man, regardless of race, religion, language, guilt, especially in time of crisis.”¹⁴⁵ With all of the challenges placed upon religious persons of any sort in the modern world, this is an important message to consider and apply.

ORTHODOXY AND ISLAM

The basic outline in the preceding pages of the emerging Orthodox position on the religions can and has been applied by Orthodox theologians in the specific case of Islam. In fact, the two central figures of this discussion thus far – Metropolitan Georges and Archbishop Anastasios – developed their arguments with primarily Islam in mind. This is not surprising since of all the religions the Orthodox have had the most significant contact and interaction with Islam. Both historically and to the present day Orthodox Christians and Muslims have lived side by side, sometimes because of their life circumstances, sometimes by choice. Metropolitan George and Archbishop Anastasios are good examples of this and their personal experiences,

along with those of their communities, have informed their thinking about other religions. There has in addition to the general consideration about the relationship of Orthodox Christianity and other religions been some reflection focused specifically on Islam.

One example of this type of reflection comes from Metropolitan Georges himself. In an article that preceded his well-received address to the World Council of Churches in 1971, he wrote about the unique relationship between Muhammad and the Biblical prophets. He states in that article, “For those who believe in Jesus as God and Savior, the Abrahamic line is like a providential, mysterious path, going from the father of believers [Abraham] to the Arabic prophet [Muhammad].”¹⁴⁶ Again echoing Irenaeus of Lyons, he argues that ‘salvation history’ does not unfold in the linear manner to which we moderns are so accustomed. In his view, Muhammad should be seen not only as a prophet to Muslims, but also as a type of messenger to Christians. Metropolitan Georges finds that though Islam appeared chronologically after the coming of Christ, at least its central message of ‘submission to God’ is relevant for Christians as well as Muslims. He argues that this is the case because the “presentation that the Qur’an gives of the person of Jesus” is one of “piety and love,” with Muhammad as the “one who brings forth [Jesus’] message.”¹⁴⁷ He encourages Christians, particularly Orthodox Christians who have a deep cultural and historic connection to Islam, to study the Qur’an. He feels that this is “indispensable,” because it will help them to have a better appreciation not only of their Muslim brothers and sisters, but also of their own path toward the day when Christ returns at his Second Coming.

Another example of reflection specific to the relationship between Orthodox Christianity and Islam comes from Archbishop Anastasios in an article he wrote in the

mid-1990s to outline the historic and contemporary Orthodox approaches to Islam.¹⁴⁸

In the article, he highlights the importance of the intimately connected social-history of Muslims and Eastern Christians in many parts of the world and suggests that this is an important factor to consider with regard to an Orthodox view of Islam. In his words:

It is obvious that the cultural tradition and heritage of the Christians of the East bring them much closer to the Muslim world, with whom they have coexisted for many centuries. In spite of deep theological differences and our dramatic conflicts in the past, there is a move from many sides toward one common cultural ground.¹⁴⁹

Archbishop Anastasios sees this cultural legacy, of which Orthodox Christians are in the best position to pass on, as a special contribution of the Orthodox to the inter-faith dialogue. He further elaborates on this point by saying:

...Orthodoxy, from its long cohabitation – which I call the “dialogue of life” – with the Muslim world, offers something important to the balance in the contemporary Christian-Muslim dialogue: the witness to the Passion and the honor of persecutions, making up for a series of failures of the West.¹⁵⁰

Here he points out that the Orthodox like Muslims have suffered from the misuses of power in their lands by Western Christians. He admits too that there have been examples, past and present, of poor treatment of the Eastern Christian minority under Muslim rule and that this in some ways proves to be an impediment to inter-religious understanding. Even so, he says that with regard to Muslims, Orthodox and all Christians are, “obligated to encounter the new challenges of our age, no longer speaking to one another or one against the other but sharing in common the new signs of the times and the new, thorny problems set forth by the coming world.”¹⁵¹

There has been some interest in recent years as well in looking at the possibilities of increased understanding and learning between Orthodox Christians and Muslims by examining the shared mystical dimension of both Eastern Christianity and Islam.¹⁵² For example, Stephen Headley, an Orthodox priest in

France who spent long periods of his life in Indonesia, suggests that it would be profitable for Christians to study the ways in which Islam has provided avenues for 'union with God.' He says:

What are Christians looking for in Islam? We should look for expressions of the love of God and the paths proposed for union with him. It is this that has the greatest potential for being understood from the perspective of a Christian theology of religious pluralism.¹⁵³

He goes on to give a presentation and analysis of the spirituality of the great Sufi mystic, Al-Hallaj. In another context, Tarek Mitri comments on the benefits of Muslims and Christians collectively dialoging with the 'believing scientist community' on the topic of metaphysics. This is an area of shared interest, albeit in different ways, by mystics of both the Eastern Christian and Islamic traditions. He says in this light that:

...we are before a possible dialogue that may be motivated by a yearning to a holistic organic culture which harmoniously combines what we call, with some reservation on terminology, spiritual and temporal. Such dialogue, however, is tied to the future in that it is a renewed longing for a knowledge that is generated in making the mind occupy the heart or the heart occupy the mind according to the literature of the Eastern Church Fathers.¹⁵⁴

There is a growing sense among Orthodox scholars today that Orthodoxy and Islam can collectively help modern man regain a healthy sense of balance between the mind and the heart. Since this is a common theme in Sufism, many of these same individuals see mysticism as a bridge between Eastern Christianity and Islam with much potential for future inter-religious encounters.¹⁵⁵

A scholar from a younger generation of Orthodox theologians presents another example of those who have reflected on the benefits for Orthodox Christians in having positive relations with Islam and Muslims. Theodore Pulcini, a priest of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America and former visiting professor at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary, did his doctoral dissertation on the

Muslim scholar Ibn Hazm and has asserted that Christians have much to learn from the faith and pious customs of Muslims. He offers that a better understanding of Islam will help Christians combat the growing “neo-Gnosticism” within their churches, which ‘spiritualizes’ the faith and de-emphasizes the importance of Christ’s incarnation “in the flesh.” He says:

Islamic life...requires bodily acts of worship like bowing and prostrating, gestures often dismissed as archaic to the “sophisticated” modern Christian. In short, for all of our talk about “incarnational” Christianity, we are becoming a religion less and less likely to enfold our religious sentiments in external expression. We stress thought and emotion over physicality, enforcing a kind of neo-Gnosticism that sees religion primarily as a “spiritual” sentiment, having little to do with bodily performance. This is, I would say, a most unfortunate trend. Islam reminds us of the need for physical religious enactment.¹⁵⁶

Fr. Pulcini finds that Muslim worship has preserved well in the modern age the connection between the physical and the spiritual aspects of the faith, something which though an important part of traditional Eastern Christian worship has been lost to some extent in modern Orthodoxy.

Fr. Pulcini is similarly impressed with the way Muslims have preserved communal life, based on the Islamic concept of the *umma* (Islamic community), under the pressures of modern secularism. Here again, he asserts that even Orthodox Christians, particularly those who live in the West, could learn something from their example. He states:

As Christianity in the Western world becomes more atomized and Christian spirituality more privatized, Islam provides a strong testimony to the power of community....[Islam should] challenge us Christians in particular to revitalize our communal structures, even if that means drawing boundaries between ourselves and “the world,” boundaries that have been blurred by encroaching secularization. In re-thinking our definition of religious communities and re-shaping the dynamics of life within them, we can learn some valuable lessons from the Muslim experience.¹⁵⁷

Fr. Pulcini, whose thoughts on this topic have likely been shaped by his experiences as a parish priest, finds that Christians should see Muslim communal life as a model

for their own behavior, both in terms of family life and with regard to the health and unity within their church communities.

CONCLUSIONS

It was argued in chapter one that the fall of Constantinople to Muslim conquerors and the consequences of the “modern technical age” posed some significant challenges to the Church and the identity of Orthodox Christians in relation to it and the world around them. In this chapter, as well as the last portion of chapter one, it was noted that in an effort to find their essence as Orthodox Christians in modern times, Orthodox theologians have placed special attention on rediscovering the sources of their faith in an effort to live more authentically as “Orthodox” in this postmodern age.¹⁵⁸ To what extent, though, has this trend had an impact on their understanding of relations with those outside of their tradition, especially those of other religions such as Islam? The materials under considerations in this chapter seem to indicate that rediscovering the sources of their faith, in particular the vast and profound legacy of the patristic tradition, has led at least some Orthodox Christians – such as Archbishop Anastasios (Yannoulatos) and Metropolitan Georges (Khodr) – to see God at work in and through other religions. There certainly have been many examples going back to Ottoman times (and even before that) of Orthodox Christians and Muslims living side by side in mutual respect and peace. One could argue, however, that by rediscovering the open attitudes towards other religions held by great theologians of earlier centuries – such as Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Eusebius of Caesarea – the Orthodox Christians mentioned in this chapter may have found a stronger theological footing upon which to engage in dialogue with their Muslim neighbors. At the same time, it seems they have maintained continuity with their cherished dogmatic principles established during the Ecumenical Councils

and relating to christology and pneumatology. Without diminishing the foundational elements of their key beliefs, they have expanded the scope of the saving work of Christ and the active presence of the Holy Spirit to include Islam and their Muslim neighbors. If indeed the modern age has been a transformational event for the Church and in the daily lives of Orthodox Christians, it seems the theologians covered in this chapter have been successful in finding new ways to envision salvation beyond the paradigm of Byzantium, somewhat parallel to the way New Testament Christians had to reimage their view of how God was working his salvation plan to and through the Gentiles.

This chapter has shown that as Orthodox theologians have turned to scripture, early patristic sources, and their theological tradition relating to the Trinity for answers to various question on inter-religious relations, it is now possible to speak of an emerging Orthodox position on the non-Christian religions in the postmodern age. Among the growing number of Orthodox theologians who have developed an interest in this area of study and reflection, several individuals have made important contributions to the work of the World Council of Churches in the area of inter-religious relations and have fostered relationships with their neighbors who practice a different faith from their own. There has been a particular interest in exploring the relationship between Orthodox Christianity and Islam, looking for avenues to greater understanding and collaboration between Eastern Christians and Muslims, who in many cases have lived side by side for centuries.

Orthodox leaders have taken important steps, particularly within the past quarter century, in promoting dialogue and fostering cooperation between Muslims and Christians. This will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter. This chapter has attempted to demonstrate that Orthodox Christians have identified a

genuine theological basis for wanting to learn more about Islam and to work closely with Muslims to promote activities that will benefit humanity in general. It will be shown in subsequent chapters that with a generous spirit and great deal of humility numerous Orthodox theologians and leaders have fervently applied themselves to these tasks.

Chapter 3: Dialogue and Declarations

[The] global perspective is in the blood of the Orthodox....Instead of a globalization that transforms nation and people into an indistinguishable, homogenized mass, convenient for the economic objectives of an anonymous oligarchy, the Orthodox religious experience and vision propose a communion of love, a society of love, and call on people to make every effort in that direction. The truly Christian thing is to continue believing when there seems to be no hope, by grounding oneself in the certainty that ultimately there is Another who controls the evolution of the universe – he “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” (Rev 1:8). The truly Christian thing is to live with the certainty that a global communion of love between free persons is an ideal that deserves to be struggled for. The truly Christian thing is to be active and productive at the local level by maintaining a perspective that is global, and to fulfil our own obligations responsibly by orienting ourselves toward the infinite – the God of Love – as the purpose and goal of life.¹⁵⁹

So concludes Archbishop Anastasios Yannoulatos in his remarks at the occasion of his receiving an honorary doctorate from the University of Athens, in part because of his achievements in the areas of inter-religious and international relations. The Archbishop's words not only illustrate how he believes Christians can make a positive contribution in a world where globalization is an unstoppable force, they also summarize his approach, and that of many other Orthodox leaders in recent years, to Orthodox-Muslim relations. He and others have truly struggled for a, “global communion of love between free persons,” be they Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, or non-religious. Working at the “local level by maintaining a perspective that is global,” Orthodox leaders have at once been engaged in local, regional, and international dialogues and encounters with Muslims, as well as other non-Christians, in order to promote peace, understanding, and cooperation between all peoples. They have also encouraged members of their own flocks, and their brothers and sisters from other Christian traditions, to reflect upon what they might learn about themselves by pursuing and nurturing relationships with Muslims.

In many places and in many ways, a growing number of Muslims have extended the same generous spirit toward Christians.¹⁶⁰ One of the positive outcomes of these efforts by members of both traditions is that in the last quarter century Muslims and Orthodox Christians in particular have begun to rediscover their shared ancestry in order to build bridges between their traditions, and more broadly between Eastern and Western civilizations. This chapter will present the various occasions in recent years in which the themes of Islam and relations with Muslims have appeared in official statements by Orthodox leaders throughout the world. It will show the ways in which there has been a concerted effort to present Islam as a religious tradition and social system worthy of respect. It will also include a summary and analysis of efforts by Orthodox Christians to encounter Muslims on a personal and intellectual level through what can be broadly referred to as inter-religious dialogue. Since chapter five will examine statements and dialogues (which increased dramatically) during the period following the terrorist attacks in the United States in the autumn of 2001, this chapter will be limited roughly to the quarter century that preceded those events (roughly 1975-2001).

It would be useful before going any further to reflect briefly on the general backdrop to the dialogue and declarations discussed in this chapter. The overall history and conditions in Orthodox Christian and Muslim lands from the conclusion of World War II to the end of the twentieth century were discussed in a chapter one. Within this broader framework, there were some developments of particular significance with regard to their impact on declarations and dialogues involving Orthodox Christians and Muslims.

During the last quarter of the twentieth century, most of the newly formed nations in traditionally Muslim lands were busy establishing themselves in their

respective regions and finding their place in a world dominated by two super-powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, along with a European continent on the verge of regaining its ability to assert great influence in many areas. As these new nations defined themselves, one of the natural consequences was that religious leaders engaged in dialogue and negotiations with politicians and other religious communities in order to establish their place within their societies. These activities and relationships were most pronounced within nations, but often spread as well beyond national borders. There were peaceful encounters on the one extreme and civil strife, even wars, on the other.

The most striking examples of aggressive, violent encounters within and between nations that have had negative consequences upon relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims are the Turkish invasion of Cyprus (1974) and the resulting “Cyprus dispute,” the civil war in Lebanon (1975-1990), and the ethno-religious conflicts in the former Yugoslavia (a.k.a. Yugoslav Wars, 1991-2001). Religious leaders among Orthodox Christians and Muslims were in many ways enmeshed in these conflicts, but likewise were often the voice of reason and sanity in the face of senseless violence and brutality pervading their societies.¹⁶¹ It was during such times of trial that a number of religious leaders established important relationships and availed themselves to the opportunities for positive inter-religious dialogue.

It was also during this same period that the World Council of Churches (WCC) multiplied its ecumenical activities and began branching out into the sphere of inter-religious dialogue. Since the Orthodox (and Oriental Orthodox) churches have played such a key role in the Council over the years¹⁶², it is no surprise that Islam featured prominently from 1975-2001 in the discussions among the member churches

about the relationship between Christianity and non-Christian religions and the various inter-religious dialogues sponsored by the WCC.

On a parallel and related track, one must consider the theological reflection and activities of the Roman Catholic Church following Vatican II with regard to its relations with world religions and Islam in particular. The efforts during the papacy of John Paul II are most notable, as the Pope took many steps to reach out to Muslims, and the Orthodox churches for that matter, opening unprecedented opportunities for dialogue and improved relations between Muslims and Christians across the globe. It cannot be denied that the Pope's leadership in this area inspired a number of Orthodox bishops, clergy, and lay leaders to increase their efforts to improve relations with Muslims as well as the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁶³

OFFICIAL STATEMENTS CONCERNING ISLAM

The relationship of Orthodox Christianity and other religions, Islam in particular, was a topic that appeared in a number of official statements by Orthodox leaders in a variety of contexts during the last quarter of the twentieth century. Surprisingly perhaps, such statements emerged not only through inter-religious encounters, but also as a result of pan-Orthodox endeavors or in the context of ecumenical encounters with Christians of other traditions.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the question of inter-religious relations has been slated as one of ten major topics on the agenda for the proposed Great Council of Orthodox leaders from around the globe. Though the topic of Orthodoxy and other religions appeared in the first Pre-Synodal Pan-Orthodox Consultation in the year 1976, by the third consultation in 1986 inter-religious cooperation was identified not only as a topic for the future Council, but also as a duty

of all Orthodox Christians in the present. The document from that consultation reads as follows:

The local Orthodox Churches, in close cooperation with all the peace-loving adherents of the other world religions, deem it their duty to work for peace on earth and for the establishment of fraternal relations between peoples. The Orthodox Churches are called to contribute to interfaith understanding and cooperation, and thereby to the elimination of fanaticism from every quarter, and in this way to the reconciliation of peoples and the ascendancy of the blessings of freedom and peace in the world, in order to serve modern man, independently of race or religion.¹⁶⁴

It is clear that, the Orthodox primates and leaders who signed this statement held the belief that the Orthodox Christians owe it to themselves, their Church, other Christians, and people of all religious traditions to participate in inter-religious dialogue and to work in whatever way they can toward better relations between peoples of all the major religions.

Orthodox leaders continued to engage in inter-religious dialogue throughout the remaining years of the twentieth century, but also began to address some of the shared social and political concerns of Muslims and Christians. As tensions in the Middle East mounted in the year 1995, the primates of the Orthodox Churches gathered on the island of Patmos to celebrate the anniversary of 1,900 years since St. John wrote the book of Revelation in that place by holding the first Pan-Orthodox international symposium at which a large majority all of the Orthodox patriarchs and archbishops of national churches were present.¹⁶⁵ Commenting on the rising conflicts among nations and “hatred among peoples,” the primates made the following statement:

During these times, we believe it is our obligation to underscore what the revelation in Christ means for the progress of humanity, peace, and fellowship of all peoples. It is the responsibility of the Orthodox Churches to contribute in every way possible to the realization and prevalence of these principles throughout the world, by becoming bearers and messengers of the spirit and ethos of the revelation. Therefore...we make an appeal to all – foremost to

those who exercise power on earth and those who live in the regions of conflicts and wars – for the sake of peace and justice for all.¹⁶⁶

Though this statement was a general call for peace and tolerance in the face of warfare and oppression, it is interesting that the only specific region mentioned in the document – aside from a passing reference to “nationalistic fanaticism” which was probably directed at some Orthodox Serbs and their rivals committing atrocities in the former Yugoslavia – was the Holy Land. Though trying their best to, “remain steadfast to the fundamental principle of noninterference in politics,” the Orthodox primates condemned the “status quo” mentality and negligence of world leaders to address the pressing concerns of Muslims and Christians living in Israel. Stating that, “the Church cannot be indifferent when political decisions affect the very existence of the Orthodox Churches,” they highlighted the difficulties experienced by Patriarch Diodoros of Jerusalem and his flock under Israeli rule.

Beyond specific concerns about the dwindling presence of Christianity in the Holy Land related in part to some of the restrictive policies of the Israeli government, the message of the Orthodox primates at Patmos addressed what they considered to be the growing, dangerous tendency to mix political power with religious fanaticism. This was highlighted as one of the issues of concern for the beginning of the twenty-first century. In relation to the conflict between Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Middle East, the statement reads:

...many have expressed the view that the coming century will bring humanity to “a clash of civilizations” in which the religious elements will be dominant. Such a possibility obliges all religious leaders to show wisdom, prudence, and courage in order that every element of fanaticism and hatred may be eliminated....all of us, especially the younger generation, are called to learn and to bear witness, in word and deed, to the fact that only the love of God, of our fellow human beings, and of all His creation offers meaning and salvation to our lives, even during the most difficult periods of history.¹⁶⁷

There is a clear reference here to the notion, proposed by Samuel Huntington and other political theorists, that there will be an unavoidable collision between cultures on the basis (at least in part) of religious distinction. Without endorsing the theory, these Christian leaders urge their Orthodox flock to transcend by love any inclination towards political extremism, based as it may be on religious rivalry, and reach out to “our fellow human beings” regardless of their religious persuasion.

At about the same period as the Pan-Orthodox gathering on Patmos, the three patriarchs from the Middle East – namely Diodoros of Jerusalem, Parthenios of Alexandria, and Ignatios IV – along with Archbishop Iakovos and Metropolitan Philip of America (of the Greek and Antiochian Archdioceses respectively) joined in support of what was called the “Jerusalem Appeal.” This was a reference to, or perhaps an umbrella term for, a series of documents put together over the period of November 1994 – June 1996 that called for peace and justice for Jerusalem, emphasizing the plight of Palestinian Christians and Muslims in the face of efforts by certain world powers to “Judaize Jerusalem...[and] deprive it of its Christian-Muslim character.”¹⁶⁸ These documents indicate the willingness of Orthodox Christian leaders to join with their Muslim neighbors in the struggle to restore a homeland to Palestinians, be they Christian or Muslim. One of the documents, a letter to then President Bill Clinton, urged the U.S. government to intervene in order to stop Israeli construction into East Jerusalem and Palestinian areas and keep the Zionists from attempting to make Jerusalem “the eternal and undivided capital of Israel.” Though the Jerusalem Appeal began by emphasizing only the significance of Jerusalem for Christians, by 1996 its scope was much broader, to the extent that it had become an appeal signed by all key Arab Christian and Muslim leaders. Regardless of all of its political rhetoric and activism, the Jerusalem Appeal serves as a good example of how openness to

Muslims and a willingness to engage with them in dialogue has led Orthodox Christians (and others) to action for the betterment of both Muslims and Christians.

By the end of the century, the desire to support and engage in inter-religious dialogue remained strong among Orthodox leaders. In a clear sign that they were committed to keeping the topic on the agenda at any future pan-Orthodox encounters, the primates of the Orthodox churches made the following statement as they convened in Jerusalem several years ago to celebrate the second millennium of Christianity:

It is in ...[the spirit of peace and reconciliation] that we turn toward the other great world religions, particularly the monotheistic religions of Judaism and Islam, with a hope to create the most favorable conditions for a dialogue with them with a view to the peaceful coexistence of all peoples...The Orthodox Church condemns the spirit of hatred with regard to the convictions of others as well as religious fanaticism in whatever form.¹⁶⁹

This statement, issued by the heads of Orthodox churches from around the world prior to the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001, shows both the commitment of Orthodox leaders to peace in the Middle East as well as a united response to the rise of fundamentalism, which has had such negative effects upon the Abrahamic religions in particular.¹⁷⁰

One further statement from Orthodox hierarchs at the century's end illustrates the growing desire among Orthodox Christians to engage in a positive way with Muslims, as well as those of other faith traditions. In a pastoral letter from of the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, Orthodox Christians of North and South America were urged to resist becoming another of the many Christian sects, which by focusing inwardly have seriously neglected engagement with the culture around them. The bishops argued that:

To transform our culture we must be prepared to enter into a dialogue especially with those of other faiths. Such a dialogue must be constructive. It must be based on religious conviction. This will require that we strengthen and deepen our own theological understanding. Dialogue is more than tolerance. In dialogue we recognize that while different from us, the 'other'

does not exist simply to exist. Rather he or she exists as a person who has something to say to me...This is not syncretism. Religious syncretism rests on the assumption that each of the participating parties has a positive contribution to make, and that these when collected and collated constitute a whole...For us [however], dialogue means that while we may recognize positive elements in another religion or even philosophy, these are always to be judged against our own beliefs. We have no interest in forming another religion. But we do have a great deal to say to one another.¹⁷¹

This statement shows the extent to which the Orthodox hierarchs in the Americas were willing – even before the events of 9/11 that changed the social and political context in the United States dramatically vis à vis Islam – to dialogue with those of other religious persuasions. Perhaps the Orthodox, who continued by the year 2000 to comprise less than 1% of the overall population in North and South American countries, learned from the twentieth century that isolation and efforts toward self-preservation would neither strengthen their communities nor enable them to fulfill their mission to the gospel of Christ. By urging their collective Orthodox flock to listen and learn from adherents of other faiths, while encouraging them at the same time to evaluate what they hear ‘against [their] own beliefs,’ these bishops discovered a way to combine true mission with sincere dialogue.

STATEMENTS BY INDIVIDUALS CONCERNING ISLAM

There have been several Orthodox hierarchs who have been particularly outspoken in their views about the common bonds between Orthodox Christians and Muslims. Two of these individuals, Archbishop Anastasios of Albania and Metropolitan Georges of Mount Lebanon, were quoted several times in the previous chapter and will appear later in this chapter as well. They were leaders among Orthodox Christians in the ecumenical movement and inter-religious encounters during the last quarter of the twentieth century and their work in these areas, though in somewhat different contexts and settings, has continued into the twenty-first century.

During the period of 1975-2001, two other individuals stand out because of their open-minded and outspoken views on Islam: Patriarch Parthenios of Alexandria (†1996) and Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch of the Orthodox Church. One can argue that because of the public and elevated nature of their positions as patriarchs in a line of succession that goes back to the original apostles of the Church, their opinions are especially authoritative with regard to what could be considered an ‘Orthodox position on Islam.’¹⁷²

Patriarch Parthenios made numerous public statements in a variety of contexts about Islam and Muslims. Having lived side-by-side with Muslims his entire life, his comments seemed grounded as much in personal experience as they were in theological conviction. He was known particularly for being open and direct about his views towards Islam, and other religions for that matter. For example, in one statement he said that:

The prophet Muhammad is an apostle. He is a man of God, who worked for the Kingdom of God and created Islam, a religion to which belong one billion people.... Our God is the Father of all men, even of the Muslims and Buddhists. I believe that God loves the Muslims and the Buddhists.... When I speak against Islam or Buddhism, then I am not found in agreement with God.... My God is the God of other men also. He is not only God for the Orthodox. This is my position.¹⁷³

There is no distinction here between the God of Christians and the God of Muslims, nor is there any question about whether Muhammad was an inspired servant of God. Patriarch Parthenios makes it quite clear that he not only believes Muhammad to have been inspired, but also an “apostle.” This is quite a statement, and it is in sharp contrast with much of the polemical literature from the Byzantine period, which often presented Muhammad as a hedonist and servant of the antichrist.¹⁷⁴ Even in the age of ecumenical gentility and inter-religious politesse, few Orthodox leaders of such

stature have been willing to go as far as Patriarch Parthenios in extending the hand of friendship to Muslims.

Patriarch Parthenios was a devoted advocate of dialogue between Christians and Muslims. He asserted that this was particularly incumbent upon Orthodox Christians because of their long history of living side-by-side with Muslims. He articulated his position on this quite well, for example, in an interview with the Paris based Service Orthodoxe de Presse:

Islam has a variety of aspects. For me, the question of knowing whether Islam is or is not an inspired religion does not present itself – it is, of course, inspired. It is a religion subsisting for centuries and, for us Middle Eastern Christians, omnipresent. We have lived, and are still living, alongside Islam for centuries, and we must work together.... The Muslims are monotheistic: they believe in one God. That is a fundamental fact that gives one courage for the dialogue. And for us who is Mahomet? Did he act contrary to God's will? Mahomet is a man of God who made the desert Arabs believe in one God, capable of praying, fasting, loving their neighbor and working for good.... The only thing we have to do – and, historically speaking, we have done so on quite a few occasions – is to talk with Islam, to start up a dialogue...we know the Muslims and they too know us. Let us work, without fanaticism, with love and faith in truth.¹⁷⁵

In contrast to the image that is so often depicted of the relationship between Christians and Muslims throughout history, Patriarch Parthenios paints a very different picture here. He reminds those who will listen that there is a long tradition – in at least one rather important region of the Orthodox world – of living in peace with Muslims, talking with and listening to them on key areas of religious belief and practice, and working together to build a more just and humane world. Clearly, Patriarch Parthenios saw his own ministry as a continuation of the respect and dialogue between Muslims and Orthodox Christians of previous generations in the Middle East, from the time Islam came on the scene in Arabia in the 6th century of the Common Era.

Patriarch Parthenios spoke with fervor when he called for dialogue and continual improvement in relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims. His views and his words, however, seemed to be informed by more than just theological conviction and/or a fidelity to a long-standing tradition. One statement, perhaps more than any other, gives a good indication that Patriarch Parthenios' attitudes were formed at least to some extent from his personal encounters with Muslims. In April of 1994, he delivered an address to a synod of Roman Catholic bishops ("The African Synod") during session 6 of their so-called Special Assembly for Africa. In his speech, he encouraged the Pope and the synod of bishops to, "be in touch, in dialogue with the people of Islam." He reasoned that:

The people of Islam believe in one God. In the Holy Koran we read about our Lord, and his mother, the Virgin. The whole of North Africa belongs to the Arabs of Islam and we Christians meet them throughout Africa. We have to live with them, in dialogue, in peace. We must be together and to witness our Lord to them. I speak as an African, as an African Orthodox Christian. I was born in Africa. I remember as a little boy seeing the people of Islam praying in a small room, every day, in the basement of my house. They pray to one God. I have lived all my life in Africa with Islam. I love the people of Islam.¹⁷⁶

Patriarch Parthenios clearly had an intimate and long-standing relationship with Islam, extending back to his formative years as a young child. His experiences living side-by-side with Muslims and worshipping in close proximity to them must have been positive ones. Such experiences have not been uncommon among the Orthodox Christians in the Middle East and portions of Africa and this continues to be the case to the present day.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I is another example of someone whose perspective and life's work has been influenced by early exposure to Islam and encounters with Muslims from a young age. Since as Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew is in the public eye more than any other Orthodox churchman and

throughout his episcopacy has made numerous addresses and statements, there is ample opportunity to construct his views on Islam and his early experiences with Muslims.

Patriarch Bartholomew, named Dimitrios Archondonis prior to ordination, was born in Turkey and was personally familiar with the often-contentious relations between Christians and Muslims in that part of the world. Though he had a relatively peaceful childhood growing up on the Greek (Orthodox Christian) populated island of Imbros, the Cypriot crisis caused such enmity between Greeks and Turks that his entire family, along with many other Greeks, had to emigrate from their ancestral home.¹⁷⁷ The Patriarch Bartholomew spent several of his early adult years in Europe studying and living in Switzerland, France, Germany, and Italy, where he completed his doctorate degree from the Oriental Institute of the Gregorian University before returning to Istanbul where he began his ministry as priest in 1969 and worked closely in subsequent years with the Patriarchate.¹⁷⁸ From the moment he was enthroned as Patriarch in 1991, Bartholomew showed his concern for all people of Turkey and his commitment to inter-religious dialogue between Muslims and Christians. In his enthronement speech he stated that he was, “a loyal citizen subject to the law of our country,” and stressed the importance that the Patriarchate, “remains purely spiritual, a symbol of reconciliation, a force without weapons,” which “rejects all political goals and maintains its distance from the deceiving arrogance of secular power.” He went on to say that he would endeavor to promote healthy relationships with “the principle non-Christian religions.”¹⁷⁹

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I's statements at his enthronement set the tone for a series of actions that demonstrated his generous spirit and fraternity towards Muslims, particularly his neighbors in Turkey. He befriended many Muslim Turks,

inviting prominent businessmen, government officials, journalists, and artists to the Phanar and on some of his visits and goodwill missions across the globe.¹⁸⁰ By doing so, he won the respect and trust of many Muslims in his native Turkey, where for some time there had been growing suspicion of the Patriarchate because of the tensions related to rising Greek and Turkish nationalism.

Patriarch Bartholomew made it clear that his vision for the world would not include the destructive nationalism and religious fanaticism, which he admitted had done much damage within the Orthodox Church as they had to religious communities all over the world. For example, in an address to an international audience in 1993 he said:

[N]ationalism is a phenomenon with disastrous consequences. The holy Orthodox Church searched long for a language with which to address nationalism, amid the strife and havoc this new ideology created in the Orthodox lands of Eastern Europe from much of the nineteenth century.... Today, more than a century later, nationalism remains the bane of our ecumenical Church. It is time for us to begin to reconcile nationalism and ecumenicity. They are not mutually exclusive.¹⁸¹

Patriarch Bartholomew is speaking directly to the ecclesiological issue within the Orthodox Church of rising ethnic rather than religious affiliation. In other words, thinking of oneself (and one's community) first as a Greek, Serb, Russian, or Arab and second as an Orthodox Christian. He argues here, and on a number of other occasions, that this tendency had weakened the unity and universality of the church. There is another subtle message here as well. By identifying that the source of 'ideology' of nationalism was something foreign in the traditional Orthodox lands, and was instead exported by the West, he makes it clear that he is unwilling to identify himself as the leader of Greeks in Turkey.

Throughout his time as Patriarch, Bartholomew has tried to rise above the debates between Greeks and Turks, presenting himself as a citizen of the world in an

effort to lead by his example. This can be seen in a 1997 address to the Turkish/Greek Business Council and the Young Businesspersons Association when he stated:

Turks and Greeks have sinned against each other. Even worse, like children, they have kept score of the pain and losses suffered.... I cannot accept what some say, that Greeks and Turks cannot get along any better than cats and dogs (if you will pardon the expression; it is not mine), that this is how it has always been, and that our enmity is a natural one. In the first place, we are all members of the human race, not the animal kingdom. And in the second, enmity is not something natural; rather, it goes contrary to the image and likeness of God in each and every one of us.... We are both God-fearing peoples, are we not? The greatest challenge we face today comes from the so-called Godless society, from those who leave no room for God in their daily lives.... We are proud to say that whether you are Christian, Muslim, or Jew, your efforts to reconcile Greeks and Turks make you children of God.

Patriarch Bartholomew argues that pious Greek Christians and Muslim Turks have more in common with each other than they do with secularists in Turkish society. In a subtle critique of the secularizing and westernizing campaigns of Mustafa Kemal (a.k.a. *Ataturk*), the father of Turkish nationalism, and those who have followed his example to the present day, he calls on Muslims and Christians to see their religious traditions as a unifying, rather than a divisive, force.

While Patriarch Bartholomew is critical of secularizing tendencies, he also recognizes that religious fanaticism can be an equally dangerous force in society. This kind of extremism is another topic that he has frequently covered in addresses and statements to a variety of audiences. For example, in Istanbul in 1995 he stated to an audience of business executives gathered at CEO International University:

Some have pointed to the modern “clash of civilizations” as inevitable. Yet we who live at the crossroads [i.e. Turkey] disagree – indeed, we are living proof that different cultures and different faiths can coexist in peace.... There has never been a greater need for spiritual leaders to engage in the affairs of this world. We must take a visible place on the stage, especially because too many crimes today are taking place in the name of faith.... [I]t is time not only for rapprochement but for solidarity and cooperation in order to help lead our world away from the bloody abyss of extreme nationalism, fundamentalism, and intolerance.¹⁸²

Patriarch Bartholomew presents the example of cooperation of long-standing between Muslims and Christians in Turkey as living proof that the notion of an inevitable “clash of civilizations” is an untenable theory. In fact, he presents a much more hopeful future in which humanity – in part through the intervention of peace-loving spiritual leaders from around the globe – rejects the kinds of militant nationalism, religious fanaticism, and ignorant intolerance that caused so much agony and death in the twentieth century. After referencing the historic example of the Muslim leader Mehmet II’s tolerance toward Orthodox Christians following the fall of Constantinople, Patriarch Bartholomew goes on to quote a Muslim Sufi to conclude his remarks on the importance of unity between people of different faiths. He says:

Although we may be of different faiths, we would like to offer you, like a spiritual father, some wisdom that we received from a Muslim mystic and humanist, the renowned Mevlana, who lived in the twelfth century:

Become like the sun in your compassion and generosity;
Like the night, cover up the shortcomings of others;
As the rushing waters, reach out to the entire world;
During moments of anger, at times of rage, become like a dead man;
Become like the earth (*humus*) so people can stand firm on your foundation;
And either become that whom you manifest, or manifest who you really are.

Dear friends, we are convinced that there is more that unites the community of humankind than divides us.... We pledge to you today that the Orthodox Christian Church will do everything in her power to fulfill that vision.¹⁸³

Patriarch Bartholomew here demonstrates by example the kind of solidarity that he envisions, one in which a person cannot only acknowledge the spiritual insights of a pious person from another religion, but also benefit from them while practicing his own tradition. He suggests that more than ever religious communities should reach out by faith to find the divine spark in each person, rather than constantly focusing inwardly, obsessing out of fear on self-preservation.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I and Patriarch Parthenios of Alexandria established in a very direct way during the last quarter of the twentieth century that

Orthodox Christianity could find much common ground with Islam. They showed through their words and actions their openness, solidarity, and genuine respect for their Muslim neighbors as well as the worldwide Muslim community. As the first and second ranking hierarchs of the Orthodox Church (in the traditional sense), their opinions carried a great deal of weight and set the stage for a much more engaged and active conversation about Islam within the Orthodox Church at the turn of the century. To be sure, not everyone agreed with their assessment of Islam or the efficacy of inter-religious dialogue. More will be said about that at a later point. Still, because they were so outspoken on their views about Islam and Muslims and because they had such a wide, diverse audience, many Orthodox Christians and others began to think about Islam in a new and more positive way.

ENCOUNTERS THROUGH THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

In the last quarter of the twentieth century there were a number of opportunities for and examples of encounters between Orthodox Christians and Muslims. The context, scope, and quality of the interaction varied a great deal, but it was clear that both Muslims and Orthodox Christians were engaging in serious work to build new and improve upon existing relationships, foster greater understanding, and address common concerns. The period saw an unprecedented number of international and regional conferences and dialogues in which top Muslim and Orthodox Christian leaders were organizers, participants, and attendees. There were two primary mediums through which these encounters took place: 1) direct Orthodox involvement in the activities of the World Council of Churches and 2) joint collaborations between the Al-Albeit Foundation and the Orthodox Center for the Ecumenical Patriarch. The result was the establishment of more permanent,

organized channels for sustained dialogue between Orthodox Christians and Muslims throughout the world.¹⁸⁴

Orthodox Churches and Orthodox Christians have been involved in the World Council of Churches from the Council's inception.¹⁸⁵ They have made important contributions to the WCC's work such as: 1) the theme of "eucharistic ecclesiology" in the understanding of Church, 2) a renewed emphasis on the Trinity in the Christian faith, 3) a recovery of the patristic witness, and 4) a relational approach to spirituality that focuses on humans 'growing into the likeness of God.'¹⁸⁶ Though Orthodox participation in the Council's work with non-Christian religions was perhaps less visible than, for example, with the Faith and Order Commission, a few individuals made particularly significant contributions during the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Before turning to the work and writings of these individuals, however, it is important to understand the somewhat tumultuous relationship that the Orthodox Churches have had with the World Council of Churches over the years, particularly during the 1990s.¹⁸⁷ During that period – despite the fact that one of their own, Catholicos Aram I of the Armenian Orthodox Church, served as moderator for the WCC – several Orthodox Churches and a number of Orthodox leaders questioned whether continued involvement in the Council could be justified. Their concerns ranged from moral and doctrinal positions of certain member churches to the methodologies, working style, and procedures of the Council in general.¹⁸⁸ Other members of the Council recognized that the Orthodox had some legitimate concerns and convened in 1999 the first meeting of a Special Commission on the Orthodox Participation in the WCC.¹⁸⁹ As of this writing, it remains to be seen whether certain

changes recommended by the Central Committee will be enough to satisfy the Orthodox members' most pressing concerns.

Alongside the escalating concerns of the Orthodox within the WCC, yet in some ways independent from them, a growing sentiment of anti-ecumenism was expressed in various ways by a small but vocal minority within certain Orthodox circles during the last quarter of the twentieth century. These general attitudes, held by Orthodox Christians in various regions of the world, were often due to the internal social-political problems, rising nationalist tendencies, and increased isolationism of some Orthodox Christians in the face of growing pressures from modernization. Though this topic will be addressed in greater detail in the next two chapters, at this point it would be useful to mention the following as contributing factors to this minority sentiment of anti-ecumenism: 1) anti-Westernism – particularly in response to the proliferation of exported American media and culture in most parts of the world by the 1990s, 2) international milleniarism in the years preceding 2000, as promoted by certain monks from Mt. Athos, old calendarist Greeks, and some members of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, and 3) persistent anti-Romanism based on an unwillingness to forgive and work through past transgressions of the Pope, such as the so called 'Uniatism' in several traditionally Orthodox lands.¹⁹⁰ An example of this would be the Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina in Greece, which – along with its voice in the West, the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies in California – organized a series of seminars called “Convocations for Orthodox Awareness” with the expressed purpose of, “inform[ing] the Faithful in a responsible and sober manner about the burning issues of our Faith, and especially about the deadly peril posed by the heresy of our age, the panheresy of ecumenism.”¹⁹¹ As will be seen in chapter five, the efforts of this group and others relating to the WCC, and inter-religious

relations for that matter, have continued and in some areas increased following the terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001.

Returning now to Orthodox participation in the WCC's work with non-Christian religions, three individuals stand out in terms of having made particularly significant contributions and in developing an Orthodox position on inter-religious dialogue: Metropolitan Georges (Khodr) of Byblos and Botris (Mount Lebanon), Archbishop Anastasios (Yannoulatos) of Tirana and all Albania, and Dr. Tarek Mitri (a layman from Lebanon). By way of background, it is important to note that the contributions of these individuals paralleled the efforts on two levels of the Council: 1) internal reflection among Christians about Islam and inter-religious dialogue and 2) actual encounter and dialogues – sponsored by the WCC – between Muslims and Christians. Though the theological views of Metropolitan Georges and Archbishop Anastasios, particularly on the role of Orthodox christology and pneumatology in Muslim-Christian relations, were discussed extensively in the previous chapter, this next section will examine their specific contributions, along with that of Tarek Mitri, in the context of the work of the WCC.

Metropolitan Georges grew up in a Christian neighborhood of Tripoli, which has always been a very religiously diverse city, so from his youth he lived alongside Muslims.¹⁹² Though he, along with Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch, made important contributions in his youth to the church through the Orthodox Youth Movement (MJO – *movement de jeunesse orthodoxe*), it was clear that he would be 'a voice of regeneration in the Arab world' for all Arabs – Muslim and Christian alike.¹⁹³ Metropolitan Georges' early experiences of encounter – both in his thought and in living presence – with Islam and Muslims gave him an authenticity which was greatly respected by other members of the WCC.¹⁹⁴ Though his addresses at the first WCC

sponsored dialogue in 1969 (in Cartigny) and at a 1971 meeting of the WCC Central Committee (in Addis Ababa) had established him as one of the early pioneers of the Council in Muslim-Christian dialogue, he continued to play an important role as a key Orthodox participant during the last quarter of the twenty-first century.¹⁹⁵

On the level of Christian reflection about Islam, Metropolitan Georges added several points during this period to the ones he had already made about christology and pneumatology in his famous article from 1971, 'Christianity in a Pluralistic World – the Economy of the Holy Spirit.'¹⁹⁶ For example, he argued in an article on the relationship between Christian witness and dialogue that Christians had the duty of looking for the 'traces of Christ' in Islam. He said:

What strange destiny leads Isaac and Ishmael to confront each other in the utter helplessness of Orthodox Christians? I believe that the Church can speak to the heart of Islam only to the extent that it is really poor, free from any ethnic pride or intellectual superiority, free from its own pain. I for one, know that Muslims have shown great receptivity to all dialogues carried on during the last decade. But what really matters most for us is the search for the *traces of Christ* in the Koran as well as in the tradition of Islam, specifically within the Sufi heritage....The Koran is Trinitarian rather than anti-Trinitarian. Many biblical notions are scattered in this book. Much undescribable beauty adorns the Muslim ascetic heritage. And finally, how many edifying souls have been baptized, not by the Church, but by the Church's Bridegroom, as Nicholas Cabasilas so rightly puts it.¹⁹⁷

He emphasizes here the importance of humility for the Christian participant in dialogue, a theme often present in Orthodox spirituality. Also, he suggests that it is possible for a Christian to read the Koran from a Trinitarian perspective, but on a spiritual instead of dogmatic level, in order to sense the presence and work there of Christ, through the Spirit as sent by the Father. Metropolitan Georges also suggests that the Christian can benefit a great deal through discovery and dialogue with the Islamic mystical tradition (Sufism, or as Muslims call it, *tasawwuf*). He was convinced that Christians could and should find a way within their own scriptural and theological tradition to recognize God at work within Islam and the lives of Muslims.

Metropolitan Georges' insistence that the WCC needed to develop a 'theology of religions' was criticized at various times by other members of the Council, who suggested that dialogues could be more productive if the Muslim and Christian participants would focus on humanitarian action, social justice, and peace efforts.¹⁹⁸ These individuals felt that Metropolitan Georges' approach was often too theological and abstract. However, in a statement to a WCC consultation on the theology of religions, he made it clear that he was not suggesting abstraction or religious syncretism. He argued instead that true dialogue could only take place through the interaction of persons:

Let me first suggest that what is more important than living faiths is living people whose depth are known to God, and who are capable of manifesting God to us.... Facing other religious structures and people, our spiritual endeavor invites an attitude of meekness, patience which is an imitation of God's patience. It is an attitude of eschatological expectation, a desire to eat the eternal passover with all people. The non-Christian is as unique as a Christian, equally loved by God, possibly a source of edification for fellow human beings and a place of Epiphany. We go to them with the humbleness of the poor. We are vulnerable before them, ready to receive even Christ for them.¹⁹⁹

This approach, along with his earlier statements from 1969-1971 brought to the surface, through the context of Muslim-Christian dialogue, some longstanding internal barriers among Christians to successful engagement with those of other religions.

For too long, and to the detriment of the WCC, member churches had struggled to truly commit to a theology of religions because they had refused to let go of their theological agendas, particularly with regard to mission. This had been particularly marked in the case of relations between western Christians and the Muslim world. With a long history of distrust and misperceptions going back to the time of the Crusades, many Christians had a difficult time admitting that Islam could be an alternative path to salvation. Perhaps for this reason – even though as Peter

Riddell assesses the chosen topics were often ‘current and also touched upon certain controversial features [of Muslim-Christian relations]’²⁰⁰ – the WCC dialogues with Muslims during the last quarter of the twentieth century only achieved limited success because the Christian side had not clearly asserted how Islam could be a viable path to God.²⁰¹

For Metropolitan Georges, who had himself as a Lebanese Christian lived side-by-side with Muslims his entire life, the answer was clear. He could not conceive of how a Muslim or a Christian could deny the possibility of salvation within the other’s tradition. For example, at a dialogue meeting in 1987 at the Orthodox Academy of Crete in Kolymbari, which he led alongside his Muslim co-chair, Dr. Abdul Hakim Tabibi, he stated, “A person who claims to be religious condemns himself to hell if he does not see, in love, the light of God on the face of one who is different.”²⁰² Metropolitan George, throughout all of his work with the WCC, has been a longstanding supporter of real-life encounter between Muslims and Christians. Unlike many of his detractors – who were concerned that he had gone too far in his efforts to make room for Muslims in the Divine plan of salvation – Metropolitan Georges had been in close contact with Muslims from childhood. These experiences, perhaps more than anything else, shaped his views on Islam by enabling him to see God at work in the lives of his neighbors. He demonstrated through his own example how Orthodox Christians, many of whom have lived a peaceful co-existence with Muslims at the very least up to the last century, could serve as a bridge between Western Christianity and Islam. His writings and attitudes show that the shared history between Eastern Christians and Muslims in certain regions of the world should be understood as a gift and an opportunity. Metropolitan Georges challenges

his fellow Orthodox Christians to rediscover this gift and grow in their knowledge and love of God by encountering Him at work in the lives of pious Muslims.

Far too often Orthodox Christians in this postmodern age have lamented the loss to the Muslims of their glorious past (Byzantine) civilization and have dwelt on what they have described as a subsequent period of ‘occupation’ under the Ottoman Turks. What they have neglected to realize is that this type of thinking stems more from an imported concept of nationalism, as they have applied it to understand their past in a ‘modern’ way, than it does from an honest assessment of the positive and negative features of their history since the fall of the Christian centers of the East to Islam during the Muslim conquests. More will be said on this theme in the next chapter. Metropolitan Georges’ contributions to the WCC during the period under examination were important, both to the Protestant and Orthodox members of the council, because they demonstrated in a profound way the fruits of humility, honest self-examination, charity, and love with regard to encounter with those of other religions.²⁰³

Where Metropolitan Georges presented to the WCC a theology of religions and showed a way to positive Muslim-Christian relations through discovery of a shared history and civilization, Archbishop Anastasios found points of contact through a rediscovery of mission as expressed through the Orthodox Christian tradition. Like Metropolitan Georges, Archbishop Anastasios had already been involved in the ecumenical movement for many years by the time the WCC began to seriously address the question of inter-religious relations.²⁰⁴ He had been wrestling for some time before this, though, with the relationship between dialogue and mission. His interest in mission began in the year 1959 when he helped found "Porefthentes" ("Go Ye"), “a missionary movement whose goal was to rekindle the

missionary conscience of the Orthodox Church, as well as to educate the non-Orthodox world about the rich missionary heritage of the Eastern Church.”²⁰⁵ After setting out as a missionary in East Africa a few years later, he contracted such a bad case of malaria that he decided to leave Africa and devote himself instead to serious academic study of missiology. At the same time, he took up studies in the history of religions, pursuing what had been a growing fascination with non-Christian religions.²⁰⁶ It was through the convergence these two interests that he became involved in the WCC’s work relating to other religions.

Archbishop Anastasios played a key role as an Orthodox participant in a follow-up conference (Zurich 1970) to the first international multi-religious dialogue (Ajaltoun 1970) sponsored by the WCC.²⁰⁷ He also delivered an address at the second international multi-religious dialogue at Colombo, Sri Lanka in 1974.²⁰⁸ Like Metropolitan Georges, Archbishop Anastasios posed essential questions that helped the Council formulate a position for interacting with *people of living faith and ideologies* as it began its first phase of dialogues with Muslims during the period of 1969-1975.

It was during the last quarter of the twentieth century, however, that Archbishop Anastasios was able to articulate in the context of his work with the WCC and inter-religious dialogue his resolution of the inherent tensions between dialogue and mission. In 1988 the WCC’s Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) organized a series of events to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the important World Mission Conference at Tambaram in 1938. Soon after, and in relation to these events, the WCC organized an inner-Christian dialogue at Mahabalipuram on the topic of mission and dialogue. Archbishop Anastasios was

serving as moderator of the CWME at that time and therefore played a central role in the discussions that took place.

In an important presentation that he made to fellow members of the Council, he reminded his audience that Orthodox Christians have a somewhat unique view of both mission and dialogue because of their theology and history. He stated that:

Christians in the west, having lived for many centuries in a more or less homogenous religious world, face the religious pluralism of our century as a new factor, threatening or challenging. We are reminded, however, that the [Eastern] church has faced pluralism for the last twenty centuries.... In the Orthodox world we have no decision of an official ecclesiastical body on this matter. The eastern church has allowed wide margins for personal freedom in thought and expression within the from of the living tradition.²⁰⁹

In other words, diversity has always been inherent part of the religious experience, both internally and externally, of Orthodox Christians. This, along with their theology that has required consensus and conformity in much fewer areas than in the traditions of Roman Catholicism or Protestantism, has allowed for greater flexibility in relations with other religions, according to the Archbishop.

He went on in his address to discuss what he believed to be the essential aspects, historically and theologically, of the Eastern Orthodox view of other religions. He then concluded that:

Dialogue can contribute to transplanting new seeds from one culture to another and to bringing into maturity existing dormant seeds in the field of old religions. Religions are organic wholes but, as they are experienced by living human beings, they are “living wholes” in development and evolution. They have their own internal dynamism. They receive influences, absorb new ideas coming to their environment; they adapt themselves to new challenges.

Building on this notion that dialogue is essential, in part because it helps human beings of various religious traditions meet the new challenges faced by each generation, Archbishop Anastasios asserted that it could be constructive in fostering, “world peace, world justice, human dignity, the meaning of development, of human existence and history, and [the] natural environment.”

Archbishop Anastasios also made the point that Christian mission is naturally connected to dialogue and that it is not in any way diminished because of it. He cautioned those who might be tempted to forget about mission in their dialogue with non-Christians in this way:

[N]obody has the right to minimize difficult issues in order to be courteous. Nobody would like a superficial type of dialogue. In the last analysis the essence of the religious problem is the issue of Ultimate Reality, of Ultimate Truth. And nobody has the right or the interest to castrate this force of human existence in order to assure a peaceful co-existence in the name of a unifying common denominator, an attitude that contributes to an ideological smoothing down.... the essential contribution of Christians is not to avoid, but to point to their own particularities and deeper spiritual experiences and certainties.²¹⁰

Speaking, perhaps, to certain members of the Council who had in some ways abandoned mission for dialogue – in part because of criticism they had received over certain attitudes and practices of western missionaries during the colonial age – the Archbishop asserts here that it is possible to convey one’s unique Christian views and experiences while also humbly opening one’s ears, mind, and heart to someone of another religious tradition.

In his efforts to express his strong conviction about mission as an inner-necessity for the Christian, the Archbishop stated that:

In mission we proceed to the testimony of a personal experience and of certainty. We witness our faith not as a concept or even mental discovery, but as a gift of God’s grace. An underestimation or suspension of this personal witness would mean negation of the gospel. The final aim is to share in his life and glory. It is about a personal knowledge that comes through love (agape).... If we believe that the most precious gift is this being in Christ, we cannot keep this deep experience for ourselves.²¹¹

In this way, he was able to resolve the tension that some had felt – and that he himself had endured as a missionary and a student of both missiology and the history of religions – in their efforts to balance the two important Christian notions of mission and dialogue. Only by entering into the self-emptying love of Christ through “sincere self-criticism and repentance” could the Christian, according to Archbishop

Anastasios, enter into true dialogue with people of other faiths in order to “live their mission in Christ’s way.”²¹²

Archbishop Anastasios continued to pursue these dual themes of mission and dialogue in his work with the WCC in the last decade of the twentieth century.

Though he had not originally been scheduled to speak at a consultation he had planned to attend in 1993, at the last minute the organizers invited him to present his views on other religions from his Orthodox perspective. The meeting – held in Baar, Switzerland in 3-8 September and referred to as Baar II – brought together members of the Council who had been involved in a significant way with inter-religious dialogue. Its purpose was to assess the WCC’s progress and positions from the time of Baar I consultation, which had been the first major attempt to clarify the ‘where the churches [in the WCC] stand’ on the question of the theology of religions.²¹³

Archbishop Anastasios wisely framed the problem, which had not been adequately resolved by the Council in the years since his 1988 address, at the beginning of his presentation:

[H]ow can we Christians, while remaining faithful to our Christian principles and love for Christ, encounter and understand theologically the other religions? This burning question – for all present in this room – has been for many years not only an intellectual problem, but also an existential challenge, sometimes very painful.²¹⁴

He planted the seed here for the notion he developed throughout his presentation that part of the difficulty for many western Christians in the Council in reconciling mission and dialogue had been their very different experience from Orthodox Christians with those of other religions, and particularly with Islam.

As he went on with his address, he moved closer to what he believed was at the heart of the problem for some members of the Council. Again, referring to his own experience, he said:

Speaking more personally in this short meditation on the Orthodox spiritual and theological experience, I would like to note.... Christians in the East have often lived within societies having cultural, linguistic and religious pluralism. Thus they developed an attitude of respect, tolerance and understanding towards other religious experiences.... Since for us Christ is the absolute one, there is no need to diminish the others in order to exalt his magnificence. His greatness, always revealed in the mystery of humility and love, does not despise anyone and anything, but shows the truth that exists even in the most simple inspiration within the history and the world.²¹⁵

The implication here was that Christians of the West, unlike Christians of the East, have not always enjoyed such positive interaction with non-Christians and that this was due in part because of their less than stellar notions of the theology of religions. In referring to those who might “diminish the others [non-Christians] in order to exalt his [Christ’s] magnificence,” he subtly brings to the surface common attitudes and practices of many Western Christians in the not so distant past.

This reality was something certain Protestant members of the council had had difficulty facing, because it challenged them to critically reassess the behavior of their churches relating to non-Christian religions and their thinking generally about mission. For so much of their history, Western Christians (both Catholics and Protestants) have perceived themselves to be engaged in a struggle for the hearts and minds of non-Christians: From the time of the Crusades when they were literally at war with Islam, through the colonial period when they were actively involved in converting non-Christians of all sorts to the Christian religion and civilization, and up to the twentieth century when their governments forced peoples of all creeds and cultures into the quasi-Christian (at least some would see it this way) political construct of the nation-state. The Archbishop’s address gently pointed out how this history had contributed to continued problems in the WCC’s dialogue efforts with Muslims.

Archbishop Anastasios, while reminding his audience of the ways in which Christians (Eastern and Western) can learn from the mistakes of their past in relating to other religions, went on to propose another notion that he thought might help the Council come to terms with the tensions posed by the concepts of mission with dialogue. He used the Greek term *martyria* to further support his assertion that Christians needed to do a better job of entering into the ‘mystery of Christ’s humility and love’ towards all people. He stated first that, “the Triune God...embraces all people, the whole creation in a mysterious way, not clearly revealed to us.... [Therefore we Christians should] keep our eyes, our thoughts and hearts open this reality, to this mystery,” and then brought in the notion of *martyria*. As he put it:

I have always experienced difficulty with the word “mission.” Even as a member of the Commission for World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), I had proposed the word “*martyria*,” which I find clearly in the New Testament...[quotes Acts 1:8]. I saw something, I know something and I give my witness, my *martyria*; I am so sure of this witness that I am even ready to give my blood: not to give my blood in war, but to give my blood and accept suffering for my weakness and my own certainty.²¹⁶

Having established a foundation for *why* Christians should engage in ‘mission’ – because they have seen and know something about Christ and therefore *must* share what they have experienced with others – he went on to assess *how* they could go about this task. He stated:

Everything that [the Church] possesses or bequeaths is on behalf of the world of humanity. Witness can start in silence through participating in the pain of others.... Mission cannot be confined to offering education, health-care and means for external development. It has to offer to everyone, especially to the poor and the oppressed, the faith that every human being has in Christ a unique value, that being is created in the likeness of God that our destiny is to become Christ-like, to partake in his divine glory.²¹⁷

Archbishop Anastasios provided an alternate perspective to the Council, which in many ways was a distinctly Orthodox contribution,²¹⁸ on what it means to be involved in mission. He asserted that fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28.19-20) has

less to do with programs and activities than it does with relationships and attitudes. One must first cultivate an intimate relationship with God, which will naturally cause a person to reach out to others in order to spread the divine love throughout the world. Archbishop Anastasios showed through his work with the WCC during the years covered in this section how engaging in dialogue with peoples of other faiths is an appropriate and important way through which Christians can build relationships with those whom Christ loves and through whom the Holy Spirit is at work.

Perhaps no Orthodox Christian was able to have such a direct impact on the WCC's reflection and interaction with Islam during the last quarter of the twentieth century than Tarek Mitri, a layperson from Lebanon. Where Metropolitan Georges contributed a theology of religions to the WCC and provided a reminder about the shared history and civilization of Orthodox Christians and Muslims, and Archbishop Anastasios offered solutions to issues associated with relationship between dialogue and mission, Dr. Mitri organized a number of encounters through which he and the other participants were able to delve fully into some of the most pressing issues of concern to both Christians and Muslims.

The World Council of Churches was very eager to appoint Tarek Mitri as its Programme Secretary for Christian-Muslim Dialogue to fill the spot of the previous director Stuart E. Brown because as a Lebanese Christian he had substantial experience with Islam and contacts with Muslims. Though Ulrich Schoen provisionally headed the directorship for two years, Dr. Mitri became director in 1991 and served until he resigned his post in 2006. After receiving his doctorate from the University of Paris, Dr. Mitri had developed somewhat of a reputation for himself as a specialist in history, sociology, and Muslim-Christian relations long before the Council seriously considered him as a candidate for the Program Secretary post. He

had held academic positions at Université Saint Joseph in Beirut and Balamand University, worked for the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch on church and interfaith issues, and participated in WCC conferences on inter-religious dialogue and contributed to its publications.²¹⁹ Additionally, since the Council had long viewed as significant the contributions of the Orthodox to its dialogue efforts with Muslims – because of figures such as Metropolitan Georges and Archbishop Anastasios, as well as the long history of Orthodox Christians living side-by-side peacefully with Muslims – Tarek Mitri was seen as an excellent choice to lead the sub-unit’s efforts into the next century.²²⁰

What is interesting in looking at Tarek Mitri’s body of work for the WCC during the last quarter of the twentieth century is that even before his appointment as Programme Secretary he had identified three of the most crucial issues relating to Christian-Muslim relations, which then played out as central themes in the dialogues sponsored by the WCC during the first decade of his tenure with the Council. Looking at future prospects and common perspectives for dialogue from the vantage point of 1987 he suggested that Muslims and Christians should focus their attention on: 1) a “rediscovery of the national bond and its cultural foundation,” particularly in nations with significant Muslim and Christian populations; 2) “a renewed, concrete approach to the complexities of religion and state in a pluralist society,” and 3) “a commitment to the human rights of individuals as well as communities.”²²¹ Though Tarek Mitri’s contributions to the WCC were many and his written work vast, the analysis that follows will examine his efforts, and by extension that of participants at WCC dialogue meetings, in these three important areas. It will be noted that Dr. Mitri’s diligent efforts marked both significant progress for the WCC in the latter part of last century and a key Orthodox contribution to Muslim-Christian dialogue.

The first area on Tarek Mitri's agenda had to do with Muslims and Christians rediscovering a common "national bond" and "cultural foundation" upon which to build improved relations between their two religious communities. Though he acknowledged that there had been any number of flawed examples of nationalism in the past, Dr. Mitri emphasized that Muslims and Christians should look to some of this modern notion's positive aspects as well. He said for example that:

[A] number of attitudes implicit within it [nationalism] remain not only valid but desirable. A less alarmist analysis of the "Islamic Awakening," a commitment to dialogue and an awareness of the depth of the socio-cultural collective identity which transcends confessional barriers, can open the way for broad cooperation between Christians and Muslims.... [There is a] need for greater attention to the cultural content of the common identity and an urge to rehabilitate the idea of nationhood. Cultural Arabness should accommodate differences and be aware that the greatest moments in the Arab history benefited from pluralism.²²²

Here we see an attempt by Dr. Mitri to persuade Arab Muslims and Christians (many of whom are Orthodox) to look to their shared Islamicate Civilization as inspiration for a modern nationalism, with an emphasis on religious pluralism. In doing so, he implies that nationalism itself should not be seen merely as a tool of the West for its modernization programs, but as a concept that in some respects has roots in early Arab and Islamic thought, which envisioned a just society in which religious diversity would be protected.

Tarek Mitri's reputation and diverse contacts among Muslims and Christians in the Middle East enabled him to afford the WCC some unique opportunities in the mid-1990s. As a native of Lebanon, Dr. Mitri was able to witness both the terrible destruction to his country from the intense conflicts during 1975-1990 and the coming together of Muslims and Christians of various sects to rebuild their nation after this period of civil war. He saw some of the positive fruits of the exchanges and interactions after the conflicts at his own Orthodox University of Balamand, where in

1995 the institution had established its Centre for Christian-Muslim Studies in order to sponsor an ongoing education programme and opportunities for regular consultation between Muslims and Christians from Lebanon and around the globe.

Lebanon seemed to be a bright spot and a place where Dr. Mitri's hopes for a rediscovery of the common "national bond" and "cultural foundation" between Christians and Muslims seemed to be coming together. For example, he stated the following in an issue of *Current Dialogue* from the period:

[M]uch is presently said about a renewed vocation for the country as a privileged space for Christian-Muslim encounter and dialogue. This is often expressed as reaffirmation of a sort of historical role in bridge-building between Muslims and Christians that many Lebanese like to attribute, not without reason, to their country. Such a reaffirmation is manifested by an increasing number of initiatives in dialogue and cooperation motivated by a national discourse praising the riches and promises of a "shared living." These initiatives, whether they engage actively in a "dialogue of ideas" or not, often state the primacy of the "dialogue of life."²²³

Because of his faith in the Lebanese as examples for others, as well as other pragmatic reasons, Dr. Mitri's office at the WCC sponsored two important encounters in Balamand, Lebanon during the summer of 1997: 1) A Colloquium on Mutual Views and Changing Relations between Christians and Muslims, 27-29 August 1997, which evaluated Christian-Muslim dialogue over the previous 30 years and focused on prospects for the future and 2) A Consultation on Cooperation in Christian-Muslim Studies, 29-31 August 1997, at which 17 institutions of higher learning from 5 continents were represented. Having long been a critic of the WCC's past dialogues, which because of their structure and focus he claimed had gained little credibility among Muslims²²⁴, these two events gave Dr. Mitri the opportunity to bring a representative and significant group of scholars and leaders together to discuss the important issues of everyday life that constantly influenced dialogue.

A second area of concern for Tarek Mitri when he began his work on the staff of the WCC, was the relationship between religion and the state in the modern pluralistic societies. Though much of his work and that of other dialogue participants touched on this theme, at least five of the dialogue meetings that occurred from the period of 1991 to the end of 2000 dealt directly with issues associated with the topic: 1) Religion, Law, and Society (November 1993 in Nyon, Switzerland); 2) Religion in the Contemporary World (November 1996 in Teheran, Iran); 3) Religion and Co-Citizenship (October 1997 in Cairo, Egypt); 4) Religious Freedom (July 1998 in Beirut, Lebanon); and 5) Christian-Muslim Conference on Communal Tensions (November 2000 in Limassol, Cyprus). Though these meetings covered a variety of topics a nearly constant feature had to do with communal and political majority-minority relations and the issues associated with religious freedoms and limitations.

Because the discussion of religious freedom inevitably involves the legal system and its implementation in a given country, the colloquium in 1993 (along with a related one that had taken place the previous year in Geneva) served as a foundation for the further discussions that ensued in the other meetings mentioned above. It also resulted in the publication of a book, edited by Tarek Mitri, which addressed the issues relating to Muslim-Christian relations because of calls by some Muslims for greater implementation of Islamic Law (*Shari'ah*) in various parts of the world. In the introduction to the text, Dr. Mitri mentioned that part of the reason for sponsoring such as gathering was to clarify for both Christians and Muslims both the barriers to the establishment of a “coherent system [of Islamic law] that they [Islamists] can immediately apply.”²²⁵ Dr. Mitri concluded that though in many ways it was just a start on a number of fronts, the contributions of the participants were able

to address some of the key barriers to dialogue on issues germane to relations between religion and the state. He said:

Many Christians do often think that Islam, in its claim to embrace all aspects of life, favors a “theocratic” model similar to that which is familiar from the history of Christendom. Many Muslims, on the other hand, are inclined to suggest that Christians today have been led, through a socio-historical process which has been resisted but ultimately accepted, to reduce their religion to a strictly spiritual and private affair. The former position fails to recognize that religious authority and political power need not be amalgamated in Islam.... The latter position likewise falls short in failing to admit that Christian faith cannot be isolated from the realms of society and politics.... It is hoped that such an unprecedented Christian-Muslim discussion [inspired by the questions posed at the colloquia], initiated by the WCC, will enrich and stimulate the much-needed dialogue at the national level.²²⁶

Here we see another example of Dr. Mitri trying to reach out to Muslims and establish the credibility of the WCC dialogues. He knew that it is a fact that within the great diversity of Muslim responses to modernity and of views on the relationship between religion and the state, most Muslims would agree that Islamic law should play a more prominent role in society. It was, therefore, a brilliant move for Dr. Mitri to choose *shari'ah* as one of the key topics in the WCC sponsored dialogues. This gave him, and the Council, the opportunity to make a statement about the intention of the WCC in its Muslim-Christian dialogues, as well as dispel misunderstanding on both the Muslim and Christian side of the dialogue.

A third key theme that Tarek Mitri addressed during the last decade of the twentieth century through his work with the WCC, is human rights. Through Dr. Mitri's leadership, the WCC initiated two dialogues in successive years on the topic of human rights: 1) Religion and Human Rights (November 1994 in Berlin) and 2) Towards a Christian-Muslim Statement of Principles on Human Rights (September 1994 on Malta). A few years later, the WCC sponsored another consultation to deal specifically with the question of Religious Freedom (July, 1999 in Beirut, Lebanon).

After announcing that the participants in dialogue in 1994 had, “affirm[ed], together, principles of common citizenship, religious liberty, dignity of the person, the rights of women”²²⁷ – all on the basis of “justice and equality” – Dr. Mitri continued to address human rights on subsequent occasions. On this theme he often urged participants in dialogue to be patient, because of the level of complexity associated with it and the challenges faced in bringing any sort of resolution. Addressing why the question of human rights has been one of the “thorny and lively, issues” on the Christian-Muslim dialogue agenda, Dr. Mitri stated:

[H]uman rights, including community rights...are entangled in a dual problem. On one hand, they are selectively instrumentalized in the broader context of domination. On the other hand, a number of countries invoke the right to cultural difference in order to justify despotism and repression in the “developing” world. Moreover, human rights advocacy is confined, at times, to intra-Christian and intra-Muslim solidarity.²²⁸

In other words, the lack of coordinated effort among Christians and Muslims in certain parts of the world to come up with a shared religious basis for human rights had actually enabled oppressive national leaders to exploit religion to divide, discriminate, and deny rights and privileges to their citizens.

Dr. Mitri noted also in summing up the dialogues that had taken place up to the mid-1990s that:

[The] universality [of human rights] remains in question until it is possible to reconcile individual rights and community rights and look upon them in relation to duty. Such an understanding would be the basis of a Christian-Muslim commitment to defend human rights, including minority rights, wherever they are violated or threatened.²²⁹

Here Dr. Mitri emphasizes the importance of Muslims and Christians working side-by-side as world citizens to protect the uniqueness and value of each human person, made in the image of God and reaching full potential as he or she relates to others in community.

Continuing with this theme at the end of the century, Tarek Mitri took the issue of human rights even further by venturing into the often-troublesome areas of religious plurality and minority rights.²³⁰ In discussing the question of religious plurality, Dr. Mitri suggested that more than ever before religions could be a significant catalyst to bring people together. He said:

[I]n a religiously plural context, whether rooted in history or recent, a secularist option continues to be widespread. Religions are seen as divisive. Such an assumption is, more than ever before, questionable. Failing to recognize the power of religious identity, and the sense of meaning it gives in a world threatened by its loss, may defeat its own purpose, that of integration and the consolidation of civil and political rights of all, across the boundaries of religious affiliation.²³¹

Here he argued that religion would continue to be significant for the human community, as it would provide meaning and a sense of identity in a way that nothing else could. Contrary to the general secularist opinion of some, however, Dr. Mitri did not feel that increased religiosity would automatically lead to civil or political strife. In fact, he tried to make the case that as adherents of various traditions grow in knowledge and practice of their own religions, they will at the same time grow closer to those of other religions. In other words, many if not all of the world's great religions, in their most authentic expressions, reach out to all human persons, regardless of their religions orientation.

Dr. Mitri went on to caution his audience, however, in the same presentation by saying that:

At present, many examples suggest that living together across religious differences has to be constantly reconstructed and its model reinvented. This reconstruction and reinvention is not only a matter to be negotiated by actors in a particular local or national context. It is affected by the global power relations. It will have to be discussed whether and in what ways inter-religious dialogue and cooperation could contribute towards changing them.²³²

In other words, the best path to strengthening the role of religion in society and bringing the religions together might not be readily apparent. Dr. Mitri argued that

the complexity of this question was in large part due to the simultaneously local and global concerns that were often found to be in conflict with each other. He, therefore, suggested that fruitful inter-religious dialogue in the twenty-first century would increasingly need to be flexible in its structure in order to adapt to changes on the local, national, regional, and international levels. He did not, however, find such dialogue to be insignificant in terms of the power play on the world stage. In this, he presented a hopeful picture for the religions, indicating that together they could influence significant change, even in an age dominated by secularism.

One further item that Tarek Mitri addressed in his presentations in 1999 was the question of minority rights in a Christian-Muslim perspective. From the time of the cold war there had always been a fundamental disagreement between capitalist and socialist or communist nation-states on the question of human rights. The former had almost exclusively emphasized the civil and political rights of individuals (as expressed in the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights), whereas the latter had wanted to add to this things like the right to education, physical sustenance (food), and a fair work environment (as expressed in the U.N. Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights). The debate and variation on emphases with regard to human rights continued well beyond the cold war and found its way into the inter-religious dialogues of the WCC in the late 20th century. Tarek Mitri realized that some of the issues, in fact, had become significant barriers to progress in inter-religious dialogue, particularly in the area of Muslim-Christian relations. Likely for this reason, he tried to dissuade participants in dialogue to avoid the usual dead-end rhetoric surrounding human rights and religious persecution by focusing instead on the victims themselves. He said, for example:

[T]here are forces in the West, religious and political, which try to deal with the issue of religious persecution in a way ensuring that concern for human rights, including religious freedom, takes precedence over ideological and political motivations. We are aware that such forces underline that the defense of religious freedom is indivisible, no matter who the victims or the perpetrators of its violation are. But the punitive logic which is increasingly invited does not promote tolerance, mutual trust and inter-religious harmony. In most cases, it does not help the victims of persecution, which it claims to help. A logic of empowerment of the victims, a strategy of prevention through consciousness-raising, dialogue and inter-religious cooperation, is more effective.²³³

Dr. Mitri spoke eloquently here about the ways that religious minorities, which would include Eastern Christians living among Muslims, have suffered because of the shortsighted policies of Western governments and organizations. For so long, in fact centuries in some cases, the intervention of foreign powers, even of the same religion, has proven to be detrimental locally to the religious minority community. Despite the good work of the WCC, Tarek Mitri reminded participants that inter-religious dialogue is often most needed and effective on the local level, among neighbors.

The participation of Metropolitan Georges, Archbishop Anastasios, and Tarek Mitri in the work of the WCC with non-Christian religions during the last quarter of the twentieth century was of great significance. Their tireless efforts during that period, to which one could add as well their continued work to the present day, and commitment both to the WCC's objectives and to their partners in dialogue strengthened the Council's reputation worldwide. It also helped establish a theological and practical framework for Orthodox Christians to engage in dialogue with those of other faiths. Drawing upon the historical and natural amity between Orthodox Christians and Muslims, they were particularly able to establish important bridges between Christianity and Islam, setting the stage for a new era of inter-religious dialogue sponsored by the WCC as well as any number of other organized bodies, whether religious, diplomatic, or humanitarian. There were others as well

who worked in tandem with and parallel to the WCC during the last quarter of the twentieth century in order to establish more permanent, organized channels for dialogue between Orthodox Christians and Muslims throughout the world. In fact, a very significant partnership emerged which merits close examination and, thus, will be the focus of the final section of this chapter.

THE ORTHODOX CENTER FOR THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH

The most focused and sustained dialogue between Orthodox Christians and Muslims during the last quarter of the twentieth century occurred through a joint venture of the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought (based in Amman, Jordan) and the Orthodox Center for the Ecumenical Patriarch (based in Chambesy-Geneva, Switzerland). The vision was to establish more permanent, organized channels for serious interaction and discussion on topics of mutual interest to Orthodox Christians and Muslims throughout the world. Though the conferences included a diverse group of participants, based on their expertise on the topics chosen for each colloquium, continuity was maintained as well through the oversight and presence of Metropolitan Damaskenos Papandreou of Switzerland (on the Christian side) and His Royal Highness Prince El-Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan (on the Muslim side). This was a profound and serious effort to engage in academic dialogue over the long-term and one could assert that it was inspired in large part by the friendship and respect between these two men. Metropolitan Damaskenos characterized it this way:

We met as old friends and discussed serious matters candidly... [O]ur willingness to contribute constructively to the achievement of our joint objectives illuminates occasional shady areas with the radiance of the common spiritual values of the two major monotheistic religions.²³⁴

In other words, their faith and commitment to a shared vision brought them together and sustained their efforts in organizing these events, every year or two between 1986

and the end of the century. The venture persevered despite the Gulf War, which Metropolitan Damaskenos admitted, “stole away some of the original enthusiasm regarding the prospects of the dialogue.” He credited his friend, H.R.H. Prince El-Hassan, for keeping the vision alive during such dark times:

Without his unshakeable insistence on the idea of the dialogue’s necessity we should confess that its continuation, particularly following the Gulf crisis, would have been fraught with problems, not to say impossible. We thank him for his faith in the vision which maintains the bridge of our common hope in use, and gives us all the strength to carry out our duty with responsibility towards ourselves and also towards other people.²³⁵

The warm sentiments expressed here show once again the significance of a friendship, nurtured by the faith of a Muslim and a Christian as they worked side by side to serve God together, despite the differences between their respective religions.

These Muslim-Christian consultations alternated locations between Amman, Jordan and Chambésy, Switzerland or one of the cities that serve as main centers of Orthodox Christianity. Though a full scholarly analysis of these events and their significance has yet to be written, they have been summarized and addressed briefly in two articles. The first was written by Gregorios Ziakas and was titled, ‘The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and the Dialogue with Islam,’ *Phanari: 400 Chronia* (Istanbul: Ecumenical Patriarchate, 2001), 575-725 (in English and Greek) and the second was by George Papademetriou titled, ‘Two Traditions, One Space: Orthodox Christians and Muslims in Dialogue,’ *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, v. 15, n. 1 55-64, January 2004. This study will not summarize yet again the events that took place. However, for convenience the reader will find below (in Table 1) some basic information about the sponsored colloquiums from when they began in 1986 to the end of the century:²³⁶

Table 1: Dialogue Sponsored by the Orthodox Center for the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute from 1986-1998

Date	Location	Title/Theme	Report/Publication	Overview
17-19 Nov. 1986	Chambésy, Switzerland	Authority and Religion	<i>Episkepsis</i> , 17(368) – Geneva, 1986	Historical and contemporary views of authority and use of power in the two traditions.
20-25 Nov. 1987	Amman, Jordan	Models of Historical Co- existence Between Muslims and Christians and Future Prospects	<i>Documents of Muslim- Christian Dialogue</i> , 59 (Amman: Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, 1987)	Analysis of periods of peaceful co-existence between the two faiths to extract enduring criteria.
12-15 Dec. 1988	Chambésy, Switzerland	Peace and Justice in the Traditions of the Two Monotheistic Religions	<i>Episkepsis</i> , 20(411) – Geneva, 1989	Examination of peace and justice building on findings and proposals from previous consultations.
10-14 Sept. 1989	Istanbul, Turkey	Religious Pluralism	<i>Episkepsis</i> , 20(426) – Geneva, 1989	Pluralism as something that enriches the faith of all.
26-28 July 1993	Amman, Jordan	Youth and the Values of Modernization	<i>Episkepsis</i> , 24(494) – Geneva, 1993 & <i>Youth & the Values of Modernization</i> (Amman: Royal Academy of Islamic Civilization Research, 1994) – papers	The “role of religion in appeasing the spirit of conflict and in propounding the value of moderation in the relations between nations.” (Ziakas paraphrasing Met. Demaskinos)
8-10 Sept. 1994	Athens, Greece	Education for Understanding and Cooperation	<i>Episkepsis</i> , 25(510) – Geneva, 1994 and D. Papademetriou, <i>Theologia</i> 69(2): 1998	Fostering common spiritual values and dialogue through education.
3-5 June 1996	Amman, Jordan	The Philosophy of the Educational System in Islam and Christianity	<i>Episkepsis</i> , 27(532) – Geneva, 1996 and <i>The Educational Systems in Islam and Christianity</i> (Amman: Royal Academy of Islamic Civilization Research, 1997) – papers	Addressing the “various distortions and entrenchments of the historical past,” as perpetuated (too often by formal & informal education) through the generations.

3-5 June 1997	Istanbul, Turkey	Perspectives of Cooperation and Participation between Christians & Muslims on Threshold of the of the Third Millennium	<i>Episkepsis</i> , 28(545) – Geneva, 1997	An analysis from Muslim and Christian participants of past examples of coexistence between the two religions on the local, regional, and international levels.
10-12 Nov. 1998	Amman, Jordan	Muslims and Christians in Modern Society: Images of the Other and the Meaning of Citizenship	<i>Episkepsis</i> , 29(563) – Geneva, 1998	Changing views in religious self-identity and images of the religious other. Nationalism and protections for those of all religions within a society.

It would be useful at this point to give a brief presentation and analysis of some key extracts made by Metropolitan Damaskenos throughout the course of the colloquiums. This would be advantageous both to see if one can perceive a progression in the thought of the primary Orthodox participant in this joint venture in dialogue and to give some idea of Metropolitan Damaskenos' contribution generally as one of the key Orthodox leaders engaged in dialogue with Muslims during the last quarter of the twentieth century.

The following quotation is from the very first official consultation lead by Metropolitan Damaskenos and H.R.H. Prince El-Hassan. In just a few words it outlines the basic tenor that the Metropolitan envisions for the proposed series of dialogues. He states simply that:

[T]his interreligious collaboration, based on reciprocal respect, should exclude all syncretism as well as any attempt to impose one religion over others. We are persuaded that by partnering in the work of God we can progress in this ministry in common with all men of good will who devote themselves to research and true peace for the good of the human community.²³⁷

In other words, the Metropolitan first wants to put to rest any suspicions and accusations that the encounters would be for the purpose of creating some kind new religion that would combine watered-down versions of both Islam and Christianity. Secondly, he clarifies that it is not only possible, but imperative that Muslims and Christians – particularly those engaged in the colloquiums – work together in joint service to the one true God. By extension, he notes as well that they ought not just work with each other for the common good, but also alongside any person, regardless of religious orientation, who strives to increase good will among all peoples.

Skipping forward to the third consultation, from which the next quotation was selected, one can perceive that Metropolitan Damaskenos and the group that he and the Crown-Prince represent are trying to make sense of the ups and downs of the relationship between Orthodox Christians and Muslims throughout history. The Metropolitan says that:

Over the course of history, relations [between Orthodox Christians and Muslims] have known fluctuations, but there has always been a great desire for peaceful coexistence. The experience of history confirms it and the sources have conserved relatively rich material for continued research – notwithstanding any temporary crises – on the peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims.²³⁸

One can see here that he feels it important to make the case that overall relations between Muslims and the Christians of the East have been positive, open, and peaceful. He also encourages participants to consider the more negative examples and experiences as isolated events, both from a geographical and historical perspective, *and* to continue to search for positive examples upon which to further build constructive relations and dialogue between Orthodox Christians and Muslims.

By the time this group of Muslim-Christian interlocutors met for their forth encounter, it seems they had begun to identify some common goals, or at least some

common foes. Setting the tone through the opening address to the participants,

Metropolitan Damaskenos put it this way:

It is not conceivable, nor desirable to ignore our differences and feed the ambition to create a supra-religion, in the sense that all the differences would disappear as by a miracle. Our goal is first to better understand our differences in order to then accept each other and finally to respect each other. It is precisely that spirit that should prevail in these encounters between Muslims who want to understand Christianity and Christians who desire to comprehend Islam: respect for the other, respect for ourselves, and respect for God. This rapprochement will make us capable, I am sure, of becoming aware of what is at the heart of a church and a mosque – that humility through which man recognizes his nothingness – both the realization of being profoundly human and that the danger of our era is found less in the conflict between the Gospel and the Qur'an but rather in the harmful idolatry of materialism, which in our day represents the major menace in both the East and the West.²³⁹

It seems that his first objective is to set the group apart from others at the end of the twentieth century that were in the habit of taking an essentialist approach to religious dialogue, glossing over the very real differences that make each religion distinct from another. Indeed, as was mentioned earlier in this chapter, even the World Council of Churches had from time to time been accused of succumbing to this temptation. The Metropolitan's second point, however, goes a bit deeper by identifying a common value and conversely a common enemy for both Muslims and Christians. He argues that materialism, and the spiritual void caused by modernity that it attempts to fill in the human heart, should be fought by Muslims and Christians alike. In fact, he implies that both religions collectively serve their calling by providing an antidote to materialism, which is presented as a kind of malignancy that feeds on a person's soul.

With the atrocities committed in the former Yugoslavia and the advent of the Gulf War toward the end of the century, it is no wonder that Metropolitan Damaskenos and the other organizers of this series of consultations were feeling anxious about the future of such gatherings. It seems that in many ways, both to each other and to their co-religionists at home they had to defend the validity and

usefulness of Muslim-Christian dialogue in a world where Islam and Christianity were reputedly warring forces or at least fueled the opposing parties of the wars in several places around the globe. Responding particularly to the atrocities perpetrated by Orthodox Christians (and other Christians) against Muslims and vice versa in the Balkans at that time, Metropolitan Damaskenos had this to say during the sixth consultation:

If our religions demand respect for the principles of moderation and if our faithful desire peaceful coexistence, then how does one explain the persistence of a religious tolerance? The response to this question, for sure, should not be limited to invoking certain political ends or certain traumatizing historical experiences on both sides.... [W]e are obliged to bend ourselves in common to our own responsibilities and omissions of simple habit – knowingly or unknowingly.... We lose our way by the local or conjunctive crises by devoting ourselves to the simple confrontations and in that way lose the unique chance to witness together to the common and abysmal spiritual problems of contemporary man. By behaving this way, we have arrived at the point where our religions, in lieu of being the only authentic and viable solutions to the problems, have themselves become the part of the problem.²⁴⁰

Then at the seventh consultation he said:

[I]t is our duty to describe the fundamental objectives of our interfaith dialogue clearly, so as not to lose our way in senseless vacillation between problems and objectives. If we do not know in what direction we wish to proceed, we will need five times the strength in order to arrive there, where our common duty calls us. Put otherwise, we must, at the very least, describe the main orientation of our common duty, even though the objective preconditions may not yet be in place for us to follow through, or to realize it in fact.²⁴¹

In both comments one can see the Metropolitan pleading with the participants at the colloquium and beyond to do some self-analysis in order to discover the ways in which their own attitudes and actions (or lack of actions) might have a bearing on what was going on around them. He emphasizes that though perhaps not caused by Islam or Christianity per se, the horrible violence and mayhem witnessed in the Balkans and the Middle East at that time were indicative of a deeply imbedded spiritual crisis among those who claim allegiance to Islam or Orthodox Christianity.

Speaking most pointedly to those of his own tradition, he challenges his fellow Christians to identify the ways in which this toxic misuse of religion had entered the churches and to discover how to remove it. He also urges the participants not to be discouraged by what is going on around them. He asks them to remember their long-term goals and objectives for their common work, even when conditions might delay any meaningful implementation. This point is repeated by the Metropolitan with even more specificity at the eighth colloquium, in which he states:

[This] interreligious dialogue between Orthodoxy and Islam attempts – with tenacity and a sense of continuity, despite adverse local and international conditions – to set in place not only the historic models, but also the future perspectives of Christians and Muslims in common effort to bring to the foreground the common spiritual values of the two religions, values that are necessary to defend peace, social justice, and human rights on the local, regional, and global levels.²⁴²

Metropolitan Demaskenos identifies here at least three values shared by Christians and Muslims: peace, social justice, and human rights. He again affirms that these three do not change, even when the temporary and often localized crises are fueled by violent reprisals, injustice, and suspension of individual rights in the name of religion.

Turning finally to the very last gathering of this group of Muslims and Christians prior to the close of the century, it is worth pondering the following selection from a speech by Metropolitan Damaskenos. With the new millennium directly in front of them, the Metropolitan asked his participants in the dialogue to consider the question of identity as it relates to religion, both within the context of their own nations as well as from the global perspective. He put it this way:

[O]ur interreligious dialogue constitutes an elegant and persuasive response to doubt [about the possibilities for peace], as well as to the aspirations of our times.... [The topic of this] ninth meeting [between Orthodoxy and Islam]...., “Muslims and Christians in Modern Society: Images of the Other and the Meaning of Citizenship,” [poses] a difficult question, because in addition to a purely religious perspective it contains aspects that proceed from the image that each of us have of believers of the other religion in modern society, Christian or Muslim, and that of the citizenship of Christians and Muslims

living in the same state, in which the nationalized will is preponderant. Nevertheless, interreligious dialogue can also be a guide for examining these parallel problems implied in our religious identity.²⁴³

In other words, how can one maintain his or her unique religious identity, while also acknowledging the validity of another religion as practiced by his or her neighbor?

He implies that inter-religious dialogue can provide an opportunity to go beyond twentieth century notions of pluralism in civil discourse, leading to a higher path of self-awareness and mutual respect among all people.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite several tragic and senseless conflicts within nations, which because of the religious undercurrents severely strained relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims, Orthodox leaders made a number of positive statements about Islam and engaged in constructive dialogue with Muslims during the period of 1975-2001 (up to the terrorist attacks in the United States in autumn of that year). A consultation of the heads of most of the Orthodox churches throughout the world, as well as the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, set inter-religious dialogue as a priority and urged Orthodox Christians to reach out to their Muslim neighbors. Individual hierarchs as well, such as Patriarch Parthenios of Alexandria and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, made numerous public statements about Islam and Muslims, noting especially the common bonds between Orthodox Christians and Muslims.

Orthodox Christians were meaningfully engaged in dialogue with Muslims during this period through the activities of the World Council of Churches. Three individuals were especially active – Metropolitan Georges (Khodr) of Lebanon, Archbishop Anastasios (Yannoulatos) of Albania, and Dr. Tarek Mitri (a layman from

Lebanon) – both in the internal reflection among Christians about Islam and inter-religious dialogue and in actual encounter and dialogues with Muslims. An even more focused and sustained dialogue between Orthodox Christians and Muslims during the last quarter of the twentieth century occurred through a joint venture of the Aal al-Bayt Institute (based in Amman, Jordan) and the Orthodox Center for the Ecumenical Patriarch (based in Chambesy-Geneva, Switzerland). On the Orthodox side of this effort was Metropolitan Damaskenos, who worked diligently to establish and sustain more permanent, organized channels for serious interaction and discussion on topics of mutual interest to Orthodox Christians and Muslims throughout the world.

How is one to assess these declarations of Orthodox Christians on Islam and their engagement in dialogue? Returning to a question posed at the end of the previous chapter, can it be said that they have maintained continuity with their dogmatic and theological principles vis à vis Islam and their relations with Muslims? Is there any sense in which they break new ground in this area? On the first question, there appear to be no breaks with the theological principles discussed in the last chapter upon which Islam and engagement with Muslims can be seen in a positive light. However, many of the statements discussed in this chapter – perhaps because of their public nature to mixed audiences that could have included both Muslims and Christians of various persuasions – seem to point more so to the responsibility of Orthodox Christians to promote peace, tolerance, reconciliation, and fellowship among those of all religions, especially in the face of extreme nationalism and fundamentalism. On the second question, from the sources covered in this chapter there were at least two key examples of Orthodox theologians taking their understanding of Islam and their responsibility to work together with Muslims to a

new level. The first is in a statement by the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas urging Orthodox Christians to “deepen [their] theological understanding.... [to] recognize...the ‘other’ does not exist simply to exist. Rather he or she exists as a person who has something to say to me.” Here we see the first hint of what will be noted in the next chapter as a prominent theme among Orthodox Christians in recent years: that engagement with Muslims is *essential* to the search of Orthodox Christians for their *identity* in the postmodern age. The second example is from a statement by the late Patriarch Parthenios of Alexandria in which he states that the, “Prophet Muhammad is an apostle....a man of God, who worked for the Kingdom of God.... [and that] Our God is the Father of all men, even of Muslims.” In this way, Patriarch Parthenios uses the traditional Christian paradigm of apostleship to illustrate the degree to which Orthodox Christians should see their Muslim neighbors not just as friends but also as teachers, through which by the Holy Spirit divine wisdom can be obtained. Both examples break new ground in the sense that Islam is presented truly, and in a tone to be received by modern ears, as part of the divine economy for salvation.

This chapter has demonstrated that as Orthodox Christians and Muslims focused on improving relations between them and worked together during the last quarter of the twentieth century to promote their shared values and cooperation between all peoples, they built upon their long history of peaceful coexistence and mutual respect. In doing so, they seemed to realize that not only could they deal with some of the pressing challenges of the day – such as religious fanaticism, war and civil conflicts, human rights abuses, and religious discrimination – but also that together they were experiencing many of the same issues in this postmodern period

because of the historic, religious, and cultural bonds that seemed to pull them together in a new way.

Orthodox Christians on the individual and communal level began to reevaluate and rediscover the place of their religious heritage in their *identity*. Looking to the past and ahead to the future they started to realize that their relations with Islam and Muslims were significant in all of this. The next chapter will take a closer look at the question of identity as it relates to Orthodox Christians and their relations with Muslims amidst the challenges and potentials of this postmodern world.

Chapter 4: Orthodox Christians, Muslims, and Identity

Intoxicated with science, proud of our power over the elements, we human beings have put our trust in our knowledge of the laws of nature, expecting peace and happiness to come from them. But it hasn't happened. Knowledge, when in the grip of that animal nature of ours with its reasoning powers, has not saved civilization, but has become its *memento mori*, its sword of Damocles. And the fault for this lies not in knowledge itself, nor in reason which is God's gift to us, but in the eclipse of the spirit which has not been able to withstand the force of the beast.... Today we are beginning to understand that, however much the world has gained, it has lost even more. Now the time of decision and choice has come.... [An] invincible power of good is rooted in human nature, in our divided and contradictory selves, and is nourished from the same source which created, sustains and gives life to the universe. That power for good is waiting for us. It has revealed itself to us. Now it's our turn to respond.²⁴⁴

These words are taken from a meditation by the late Fr. Alexander Men on 'the presence of evil and violence in the world' in the context of the late twentieth century.

They sum up so well the feeling of loss experienced by many people of religion in the postmodern world, but also give a message of hope that it is not too late to respond.

The modern period, with its designs for modernization on a world scale, had some particularly challenging moral implications for religion generally. These included at least the following: 1) blind faith in science and technology at the expense of established beliefs systems, procedures, and institutions, 2) subordination of ethics and beauty to efficiency, 3) disengaging of human thought from ultimate questions, 4) autonomy of natural sciences from life-orientational traditions, 5) the compartmentalization of human beings into various aspects of life and areas of specialization, 6) the introduction of an unquenchable thirst for all that is new, based on the belief that materialism is the key to happiness, and 7) dehumanization caused by extreme individualism and the severing of traditional familial and communal bonds.²⁴⁵ In the postmodern period, however, that is generally following the Second

World War, one began to see a breaking of the spell of modernity. As the human community emerged from the ashes of the great world wars, many began to acknowledge the tragedy and failure of the twentieth century, much of which had been based on the philosophical systems developed in Western Europe during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Though all of this continues to play out today and most likely will continue for several generations, the last quarter of the twentieth century marked at least subtle but significant changes around the globe, including: 1) a new ambivalence toward science and technology, 2) a reevaluation of the ends and means of modern economic systems, 3) an increased interest in environmentalism (and ‘saving the planet’), and 4) the return of religion to public life. Several prominent religious figures, including a number of Orthodox Christian and Muslim leaders, have taken it upon themselves to help shepherd the human community in this direction.

This chapter will examine some of the particular challenges Orthodox Christians and Muslims have commonly faced because of their unique histories, and their relationship to each other’s community throughout the period of great change they and the world experienced over the past few centuries. One of the primary tasks has been to reevaluate and rediscover the place of their religious heritage in their *identity*, as individuals and communities living out their faith amidst the challenges and potentials of this postmodern world. The chapter will focus on the ways in which Orthodox Christians have attempted to do this over the past several decades and will examine what this has meant in terms of their understanding of their relationship to the Orthodox Church, to each other, to other Christians, to other religions, to their neighbors, and to society at large. A secondary theme will be to consider whether Muslims, particularly those from the Middle East, may have gone through, and

continue to experience, a similar reality as they have attempted to rediscover themselves and their religious heritage. To the extent that Eastern Orthodoxy has had some of its institutions and worldviews severely challenged in the face of modernity, it may well be that there has been a parallel ‘crisis’ in Islam over the past few centuries. This possibility will be explored in this chapter as well as the degree to which the responses among Orthodox Christians and Muslims to these realities may have been similar with comparable results. Finally, the last section of the chapter will examine how an honest assessment of the relationship (past and present) with Islam and Muslims could be beneficial for Orthodox Christians in their quest for their identity for today and for future generations.

CHANGING VIEWS OF THE CHURCH

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, in an address to a mixed audience at the British Museum in London in the autumn of 1993, used a couple of figures from Greek mythology to make an important observation about Orthodox Christianity. He spoke of Mnemosyne, or Memory, along with Clio, the child of Mnemosyne and the muse of history, to make the point that his church, the Orthodox Church, was experiencing an internal crisis. Though, according to the Patriarch Bartholomew, the crisis was born both from outside the Church and from within, he asserted that the solution could only come from Orthodox Christians themselves. He stated emphatically, “We [that is, all Orthodox Christians] must recover our Orthodox faith and heritage and proclaim its virtues.”²⁴⁶ In other words, Orthodox Christians must recover their identity. Specifying the Mother Church (the Ecumenical Patriarchate) as the ‘repository of memory,’ the Mnemosyne, of the fullness of faith that once was the norm, Patriarch Bartholomew outlined the ways in which that memory had been obscured through a distortion of its history (represented by Clio) during the modern

period with the rise of the West to world hegemony. For example, in making the distinction between spiritual history, which is timeless and eternal, and secular history, which is subject to changes in interpretation from one generation to the next, he said that:

The Church protects and defends our spiritual history. But the Church has somehow been marginalized and excluded from secular history – at great cost not only to Greek Orthodoxy but to the entire human family.... The history and life-giving legacy of Orthodox Christianity have been lost in the waters of oblivion. The reasons for this are complex. They have to do with the predominance of the West since the Renaissance. We must remember that the victor writes the history.²⁴⁷

After identifying that in large part Western historians were to blame for downplaying the significance of the East Roman Empire, and its religion (Orthodox Christianity), after the fall of Rome to the barbarians in 476 CE, he went on to make the following conclusion:

We live in a world dominated by the West and by Western ideas. We admire those ideas and admit their power. Yet there must be a way for us to do this without betraying our own history. We must summon Clio to speak her truth, which is stronger than any power.²⁴⁸

Though on the surface, this statement appears to have the purpose of laying blame on the West for problems of Eastern Christendom, a closer examination indicates that Patriarch Bartholomew has another goal in mind. His main critique, it seems, is not of the West, Western historians, or Western Christianity, but rather with Orthodox Christians themselves. He laments their forgetfulness of certain essential elements of the Orthodox heritage, their selective memory of their own histories, and their willingness to be seduced by the ideas and paradigms of modern Western civilization.

Patriarch Bartholomew and other Orthodox theologians of his generation have consistently called Orthodox Christians to do a full assessment of their tradition, particularly in terms of what has taken place over the past several hundred years. In doing so, he and others have expressed a sense of loss, that by some way their own

religion and destiny as a people have been powerfully changed by an outside force, which could be conveniently labeled ‘the West.’ How does one explain this rise of Western Civilization and its ability to assert such influence on Orthodox Christianity, as well as many other religions and cultures of the world? Some of the reasons for the massive shift in power that took place on the world stage – transforming large sections of the globe into ‘modern’ societies based on Western values – were covered already in chapter one of this study. It will be useful at this point, however, to highlight certain aspects of the transformation, particularly from the vantage point of Orthodox Christianity. This is important because, as will be seen in the following pages, Christians of the East experienced, interpreted, and reacted to the changes that were taking place much differently than did their Protestant and Roman Catholic co-religionists. One could argue, in fact, that in some ways the divisions between Eastern and Western Christianity, which began with the great schism in the eleventh century, were exacerbated by the events of the modern period. On the other hand, the pervasiveness of modernity enabled Christians from around the world to come together in new ways, making an opening for healing, unity, and renewal of the faith.

From the point of view of identity, it could be said that the modern period marked the beginning of a crisis for Orthodox Christians primarily because it seriously challenged for the first time a basic organizational principle of the Eastern Church. Going all the way back to 381 CE, Orthodox Christianity had operated under an ecclesiological framework that presupposed a certain relationship between the leaders of the Church (especially the Patriarch of Constantinople) and emperor of Byzantium. The basic assumption was that the two would work harmoniously together (the Byzantine term for this was *symphonia*) to establish and maintain a righteous and just civilization for the benefit of all. Even when the Byzantine Empire

fell to the Ottomans in 1453, this notion of *symphonia* did not go away. In fact, as John Meyendorff pointed out, the ecclesiological framework of the Church was indeed not severely challenged until the modern period. He began with a question:

Did this entire Byzantine imperial framework disappear when Byzantium fell under the Turks? It did not. It only took different forms, and this is why the Byzantine model of church organization and mentality continued to flourish: monasticism, spirituality, martyrdom. Also the medieval concept of pentarchy was maintained and even extended in the case of the establishment of the patriarchate in Russia.... It is only in the past one hundred and fifty years that Byzantine civilization really collapsed in the most drastic, revolutionary and universal way and was replaced with a variety of ideologies, in various combinations, which dominate our own societies today. They are all connected with the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.... [in] forms utterly incompatible with the mental and social structures of the Byzantine Middle Ages.²⁴⁹

Meyendorff asserts that under the Ottoman Turks, the Orthodox Church was able to function relatively well without any major adjustments, because Ottoman rule did not alter the basic, foundational structures and assumptions of the Church. Though as was already discussed in chapter one, the fact that the Patriarch of Constantinople de facto took on the role of emperor, as well as religious leader, did bring about a number of negative consequences, the arrangement did afford basic continuity to the Church in most matters.

Returning once again to the comments of Patriarch Bartholomew, one can see that he echoes Meyendorff's notion that the Byzantine ideal did not suffer significantly under the Ottomans. He says, for example:

Western civilization found it difficult to comprehend the mysticism of the East, which felt the presence of our Lord Christ, the *Theotokos*, the myriad of angels and thousands of saints. We must also decry the simplification of Byzantium as "Greek." The Roman Empire was ecumenical.... [T]he ecumenical idea, the notion that held together the diverse Christian communities under the rubric of Rome, was reinforced under the Ottomans, whose own empire, let us remember, was also multiethnic and often tolerant.²⁵⁰

Patriarch Bartholomew speaks fondly of an ‘Orthodox ecumenical civilization,’ and implies that, though outwardly having been dealt a death blow with the Enlightenment, it still has the potential to transform the Orthodox Church from within in the postmodern age. This point aside, he again affirms the idea that Ottoman civilization reinforced for Orthodox Christians a number of their ideals and did not challenge the basic notions upon which their Church was established.

Even among those who see the Byzantine and Ottoman periods in a less favorable light – particularly with regard to just how multiethnic, tolerant, and ecumenical they may have been in comparison to modern democracies – there is still a basic acknowledgment that the Byzantine ideal was essentially present until the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the last century. An example of this can be seen in the comments of Aristotle Papanikolaou in an article in which he investigates the compatibility of Eastern Orthodox Christianity with democracy:

Most of the traditional Orthodox world after the fifteenth century fell to the Ottoman Empire, and Orthodox Christianity was a minority religion within an empire that embraced Islam as its state-sponsored and culturally dominant religion. This occupation shielded most Orthodox countries from confronting the political philosophies and reforms of the Enlightenment.... After World War II, with the exception of Greece, most Orthodox countries fell under communism, further delaying Orthodoxy’s confrontation with modern democracy. Now that communism has fallen and the Greek monarchy has also fallen, the question becomes whether the Orthodox churches can embrace modern democratic institutions, together with the inherent notions of church-state separation and multiculturalism....²⁵¹

Though it seems by the way he is framing the central questions of his article that Papanikolaou is a greater proponent of certain Enlightenment ideals and modern forms of democracy than either John Meyendorff or Patriarch Bartholomew, he is essentially in agreement with them on the point that the Byzantine ecclesiological framework was not significantly questioned until relatively recently.

If the above assertions are correct, one has to ask what it was about the modern period and the rise of the West that proved to be so difficult that it thrust the Orthodox Church into a kind of crisis. What were the challenges and why were they so much more severe and fundamental than even those experienced by Orthodox Christians as they lived for centuries under Muslim rule? How did this impact their identity as individuals, as communities, as the Church? Though few Orthodox Christian leaders would comment on these questions without acknowledging that the changes that have taken place in the modern period have had many positive advantages for the Orthodox and all of humanity, they have identified several areas as being particularly problematic and challenging for the Orthodox Church.

SECULARISM AND WORSHIP

It is often said that the most important factor that determined the survival of the Orthodox Church through the difficult periods of its history, particularly under Muslim rule and atheist Communism, was its worship. Despite the many negative requirements and restrictions imposed upon them at various times in their history, it is said that the fact that Orthodox Christians could still celebrate the liturgy – and that they did so consistently and with devotion – is the reason that the Church was not extinguished during its darkest times. A number of Orthodox theologians have made the point, however, that though the new freedoms of religious expression during the modern period brought immediate benefits to the Church, modernity itself posed a new threat, albeit more subtle and often under the radar screen, with the potential of being much more damaging. This threat is often identified as ‘secularism’ or the ‘secularization of the Church.’

Secularism has its roots in the French Revolution at a time when in Western Europe it seemed so important to liberate the people from the tyranny of the

institutional Church. To move forward into the future, it seemed imperative to separate church and state, clergy and laity, science and theology. Another basic assumption was that the individual should have full freedom of choice with regard to religion, occupation, who to marry, where to live, and any number of other matters. The consequence was that ‘enlightened’ individuals began to consider religion as (at most) one aspect or category of one’s life along with many others. For example, it is not uncommon today to hear people speak of their various ‘lives,’ that is their, “home life, sex life, spiritual life, leisure life, and work life.” In other words, one can choose to be religious, just as long as it does not spill over too much into the other categories or spheres of life. This view of religion is widely accepted today, even among many Orthodox Christians who would consider themselves religious, spiritual, and/or regularly practicing the traditions of their Church.

For a growing number of Orthodox theologians, however, secularism is seen not as a force that liberates human beings and allows them to better practice their religiosity, but rather as a force that undermines true faith. They have argued that this is particularly problematic for Orthodox Christianity because of its ‘sacramental’ character. At the end of the twentieth century, Alexander Schememann articulated this view with perhaps more success than anyone else:

[S]ecularism...is the root of the deep spiritual crisis of Orthodox. And nowhere is this crisis more visible than in the strange “religionless religion” which seems to permeate our Church life. The reduction of the Church to material, organizational, and legalistic preoccupations and concerns at the expense of religious and spiritual ones.... [O]ne becomes truly apprehensive about the future of our Church, whose leadership and members alike do not seem to realize the scope and depth of this crisis.²⁵²

In other words, Orthodox Christians, in his view, had become so distracted with the ‘things of this world’ that they had lost sight of their mission to the world as the witnesses to ‘God’s eternal Kingdom.’²⁵³

Schmemmann described an even more insidious problem at the core of secularism, which he believed if left unchecked could lead to disastrous consequences for Orthodox worship:

Secularism, I submit, is above all a *negation of worship*. I stress: – not of God’s existence, not of some kind of transcendence and therefore of some kind of religion. If secularism in theological terms is heresy, it is primarily a heresy about man. It is the negation of man as a worshiping being, as *homo adorans*: the one for whom worship is the essential act which both “posits” his humanity and fulfills it.²⁵⁴

Schmemmann felt that the secular worldview of modern man was problematic because it promoted a distorted view of humanity’s nature and purpose. He argued that the relegation of religion, particularly the primal act of worship itself, to only one portion of a person’s life had led to an imbalance, causing not only any number of individual neuroses but also an unparalleled kind of sickness in the entire cosmos. As a renowned specialist of ‘liturgical theology’ (a term which he coined), he resisted the pressures from those who suggested that he should try to modernize his Church’s worship. He wrote:

[W]e do not need any *new* worship that would somehow be more adequate to our new secular world. What we need is a rediscovery of the true meaning and power of worship, and this means of its cosmic, ecclesiological, and eschatological dimensions and content.... [O]nce it becomes again the source of an all-embracing world view and the power of living up to it – then and only then the unique antidote to “secularism” shall be found.²⁵⁵

Orthodox worship, according to Alexander Schmemmann, was important not as simply an aid to strengthen a person’s rational beliefs about God and faith, but as a source of power and a window into the true knowledge of the Divine. He clearly articulated what many Orthodox theologians have found to be problematic with secularism, especially with regard to its tremendous potential to negatively impact Orthodox worship.

THE RISE OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND PERSONAL FREEDOMS

Related to the notion of secularism and the secular worldview of modern man is the remarkable shift over the last two and a half centuries in society's understanding of man himself. The ways in which human persons think about themselves and relate to each other has changed drastically with modernity and there have been particular consequences from this for the Orthodox Church. Orthodox theology has always emphasized the sacredness of the human person. Stressing humility, the Orthodox see all persons as equal and important in the eyes of God. Within the church community, therefore, the emphasis is on how each person, whether clergy or laity, has a unique role and particular spiritual gifts as 'members of the (one) body of Christ.'

By extension, the Orthodox take a holistic approach to human activity, in that a person's actions are evaluated in terms of how they relate to other people and to the rest of God's creation. Therefore, unlike in Western Christianity where, particularly in the modern period, there is a great emphasis on personal sin, in Orthodox theology no sin of an individual is considered in isolation, as it is believed that all sin can have universal significance as well, since it can throw someone else's life and even the entire cosmos out of balance in some way. The Biblical phrase, "to whom much is given, much is required" is taken to heart, such that each member of the Church has a responsibility for sanctifying the entire world, including nature and history. This notion is ritualized, in fact, at every Divine Liturgy at which the priest, raising the bread and wine to the heavens, declares, "[we] offer thine own of thine own *on behalf of all and for all.*" The Orthodox understand this to mean that Christ offers himself for the life of the world and Christians, therefore, offer themselves – by the power of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit – in service to each person and every living thing in the creation.

The Orthodox Church acknowledges that this is a lofty goal, and there is a great degree of sympathy for human failings. Sin, *hamartīa* in Greek²⁵⁶, means ‘missing the mark’ and the Orthodox Church, particularly through its long history of monasticism has evolved a highly developed understanding of the human psyche, as well as the vices and virtues of human behavior. Mysticism, therefore, is not something only accessible to ascetics. The average Orthodox Christian integrates ascetic effort into the normal cycles of life and everyone is encouraged to strive for *theōsis* (deification), since the aim of every life should be union with God. The Orthodox speak of ‘entering creatively into the life of the Trinity’ in order to spread the love found there throughout the entire world. Again, this is a tall order, but the Orthodox are fond of saying that one ought at least be on the path. Salvation is seen as a continuum, a journey – ‘I was saved, I am being saved, and I will be saved.’²⁵⁷

All of these concepts are important to understand in order to appreciate the challenges for the Orthodox Church in relation to the rise of the individual and personal freedoms ushered in by modernity. One consequence has been that as Orthodox Christians have ‘modernized,’ the traditional familial and communal bonds underlying the Church have rapidly eroded, often leaving a void and a sense of loneliness in the hearts of individuals. By way of reaction, on one extreme, many have held on tenaciously to the cultural traditions of their particular ethnic community to fill the void. Others, often the youth, have left the Church altogether, so as to be unencumbered by its rules and obligations in order to find fulfillment in the various pleasures offered by modern life. The Church has tried to respond, with only limited success, by finding ways to ‘improve its image’ and relevancy, using pastoral methods to reach out to those who have felt disconnected from the community.

Orthodox theologians have also tried to identify the forces at work in society at large, in order to challenge certain notions within modern culture that may be out of line with the Orthodox understanding of personal freedom and responsibility. For example, Costa Carras has given some perspective on the increasing rhetoric associated with ‘individual rights’ and ‘freedom of expression’ by saying that:

[E]xternal constraints on human beings have now been lifted – except for small and shifting minorities – to a degree inconceivable in any previous period, but even the possibility of gradually acquiring internal freedom is widely questioned. This freedom from external restraint, the only worthwhile freedom in practice rather than theory for most modern libertarians, had led to an increase in altruism...however...has not resulted in that degree of personal engagement with others...that one would have anticipated.... Instead, an emphasis on increased consumption and satisfaction of the senses has become the dominant note in society.... [For example,] certain types of advertising, as also of sadistic and pornographic imagery, are defended as expressions of freedom of action, but are more accurately to be seen as attempts to profit from the enslavement of human fantasy....in the name of freedom of action for their initiators, [they] actually reduce the freedom of the recipients.²⁵⁸

This is a clear example of an Orthodox theologian attempting to defend his Church’s understanding of the sacredness of the each person, human relations and true freedom in the context of community, and love for one’s neighbor. Modernity has given Orthodox Christians new ways of expressing individual freedoms, but has also limited their ability to relate to each other and all human beings *as persons*, as it has tempted them to give themselves over to the vices of modern life.

TECHNOLOGY

A third area of modern life that is commonly identified by some Orthodox theologians as being problematic and challenging for the Orthodox Church is technology. No one would deny the many benefits from the discoveries of science, which have improved lives by reducing the ill effects of sickness and disease, enabled new possibilities for human communication, and increased human knowledge in any number of areas. What some Orthodox theologians have identified as problematic,

though, are the overall consequences of life in a technicalized society. They have argued that each new invention, mechanism, or product must tap into the natural and human resources of the planet. They claim that modern man has done so in blind faith, often with little (if any) consideration of the impact upon human beings, animals, or the earth. This point of view can be seen in the following comment of Alexander Men:

We human beings thought that technology, comfort and a life which would guarantee the best possible conditions of work and rest, would solve all problems. But the example of the highly developed countries has shown this to be an illusion. The example of these countries shows us vividly what moral, cultural and ecological dangers technical civilization is fraught with, and where satiety, 'ethical materialism,' and 'consumerism' will lead. Of course it's a good thing that people should be well fed and clothed, should have adequate housing, and be able to use modern technology in their daily lives. But to make of these things the only ideal is to diminish the purpose of life, and to lead people to the dead-end of materialism.²⁵⁹

Fr. Men points out the underlying philosophical assumptions about science and machines that were ushered into every day life by modernization, and shows how such thinking has had dire consequences in society. One wonders if in speaking of the "highly developed countries" he is subtly trying to argue that traditional Orthodox lands have maintained a higher standard of moral and ethical behavior than those (Western or Westernized) countries of the world that are thoroughly modern.

Another voice on the topic of the ill affects of unbridled technological development is Archbishop Anastasios (Yannoulatos). He gave the following warning about the misuses and abuses associated with technology to an audience at the International Interfaith Conference held in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 1974:

If we continue to abuse nature rather than "use" it, there is a danger that the development of our technology will lead us to terrifying feats of self-destruction. Christianity delivered humanity from the fear inherent in magical beliefs and from the deification of nature.... [It] also encouraged the development of science. In the end, however, modern humanity has lost any and all sense of the sacred and in fact has already arrived at the opposite extreme, gazing at nature with impious eyes that lack respect and are often

filled with hostile cynicism rather than love. We have thus become increasingly alienated from nature; we behave like robbers of nature, shutting ourselves away in our man-made hideouts. But nature, too, can retaliate. Some reconciliation between humanity and nature is urgently needed. It is time we understood that nature is something sacred.²⁶⁰

A quarter of a century later, Archbishop Anastasios' words seem to be a prophetic warning against the now much discussed and real consequences from global warming. Though his comments are clearly spoken out of love and concern generally for humanity and nature, they also give some indication of his concerns for the challenges posed to the Church because of the misuses of technology. He observes the changes that have taken place as a theological problem as well as a humanitarian one. His words challenge the Orthodox faithful to rediscover the sacramental nature of their traditions, as it organically connects humans with nature and balances human necessity and respect for the created order.

GLOBALIZATION

When Orthodox theologians speak about globalization they often present it in both positive and negative terms. As Metropolitan Paul (Yazigi) of Aleppo put it, “globalization is a two-edged sword: it can bring benefit or harm.” It can help to, “insure the rights of man and an honorable life to all people,” but it can also lead to, “exploitation on the level of tyranny,” when “profit controls the path of economy, then relationships will definitely be colored with deceit.”²⁶¹ The globalization of society has broadened the potential of the Church to fulfill its mission by spreading the Gospel message and performing good works throughout the world. It has also given Orthodox Christians and peoples of all cultural and religious backgrounds a greater opportunity to understand each other in the so-called “global village” that is modern life for many. While affirming this, Orthodox theologians have also been quick to point out as well that globalization, “seems to be in danger of turning into a

definite nightmare.... [It is] accelerating daily and...[its] final outcome is still uncertain.”²⁶²

Orthodox authors often point to the economic impact and related consequences of globalization when they speak of its negative aspects. For example, Emmanuel Clapsis wrote:

The staggering statistics of increased poverty and social inequality that the World Bank has provided us elevates social inequality as one of the central moral issues of our times. While it is difficult for a theologian or for the churches to make a judgment on matters of economics, it is important to insist upon the socially contested and historically open nature of all forms of political and economic ideologies, “globalization” foremost among them.... For the Orthodox Church, economic progress is morally justifiable only when all the members of the global community participate in it and benefit from it.... The [Orthodox Church and other] churches, through the World Council of Churches and through the witness of their specific traditions, participate in the search for alternative visions to economic globalization.²⁶³

Clapsis points to the increasing gap between the rich and the poor of the world brought about by the globalization of commerce, which benefits disproportionately wealthy and powerful nations (or even common unregulated, multinational corporations), often at the direct expense of those who are poor, powerless, and isolated. When Clapsis says that globalization is desirable only “when all the members of the global community participate in it and benefit from it,” he is making a generalization about morality and ethics and is not implying that Orthodoxy endorses one particular economic system over another. In fact, Orthodox theologians would be skeptical of any claims about an economic *system* that by design could guarantee a level playing field for trade and ensure economic equality throughout the world. Despite the numerous benefits of globalization, including increased opportunities for international cooperation and trade, many have noted that it has actually increased dehumanization and negative consequences associated with business transactions.

In the typical Orthodox fashion of trying to find hope in any dire situation, Metropolitan Paul of Aleppo argues that what appears to be the unstoppable force of globalization need not be seen as a completely undesirable trend. He asserts that if Orthodox Christians are open and allow the Holy Spirit to work through them, globalization can be a powerful tool through which to transform the world. He says:

Today globalization is in need of the spirit more than the machine. It needs to care for the big universal causes more than networks and economical organizations. We mean to focus and emphasize on the role of the Church and theology. Globalization is a deaf trend and its tools are dry machines that await the blow of the divine Spirit to create a “civilization.” The most important question is, “Who are they?” And from where are we to receive the prophets of the New Millenium as trumpets of the divine Word in the civilization of the machine? Where are these voices that we make man the lord of civilization and its goal, and not its servant in order not to impose a new cult: “The cause of the new machine”.... It is inevitable that economic globalization will bring with it a cultural globalization. Here lies our responsibility to make out of this universal culture a modern and human language through which the Spirit conquers over matter.²⁶⁴

Here we see an allusion to what some have called the “McDonaldization” of the world, in which “globalization leads to homogenization” and the “collapse of all local cultures into a global culture,” based in large part on the values of the modernized, Western, and capitalistic world.²⁶⁵ Though this is not directly implied by Metropolitan Paul – who himself seems to see positive potential through utilizing the “modern and human language” developing in global culture – there are some circles in Orthodox Christianity that are very concerned and quite vocal about the dangers of a homogeneous, global culture.

Addressing this fear, Emmanuel Clapsis, while acknowledging the impact of this concern on identity issues for Orthodox Christians living in the postmodern world, asserts that globalization is more complex and less insidious than it may seem.

He says:

[G]lobalization creates a network of cultures and does not lead to a single culture that embraces everyone on earth and replaces the diversity of cultural systems that have flourished up to now.... [It] is an uneven process, far more complex than can be grasped in the single story of the unilinear advance of Western culture.²⁶⁶

Clapsis' argument is similar to Metropolitan Paul's in that it encourages Orthodox Christians not to despair in the face of globalization, but rather to look for ways to utilize it for the good. He encourages Orthodox Christians to participate in the "movement of resistance against the perils of economic globalization" in order to "provide opportunities for the structural transformation of the world [not] in a fragmentary way, but... grounded in, and motivated by, a new vision of what it means to be a human person in a globalized world."²⁶⁷ Again, the emphasis is on finding one's identity, or rediscovering it in the case of the Orthodox Christian, in the postmodern context. As with the other theologians mentioned thus far, Clapsis seems to acknowledge there are resources to tap into for this within the theological, spiritual, and liturgical heritage of the Orthodox Church.

NATIONALISM

More than any other theme related to the causes and consequences associated with modernization, nationalism has been on the agenda of most Orthodox theologians as they discuss their Church, their identity, and their future. Since Orthodox Christianity claims to be universal, nationalism, at least in its modern incarnation, has been a particularly divisive force within Orthodoxy worldwide. John Meyendorff writes:

[The Orthodox Church] must face the challenge of the modern world. In order to make their message meaningful, the Orthodox must learn to live these problems *from inside*, not externally.... [H]istorical Orthodoxy, that is, the various nations which formerly made up or still make up the Orthodox world, have much to ask forgiveness for. Granted their history has been a particularly tragic one.... External factors...[such as foreign invasions and communism]

explain, perhaps, the present weakness of Eastern Christianity. But there are also other weaknesses for which the Orthodox have only themselves to blame, in particular, the bane of excessive nationalism which has resulted in the harmful isolation of Orthodox churches from each other. The future of the Orthodox Church and its spiritual influence is now clearly at stake....²⁶⁸

Meyendorff acknowledges that Orthodox Christians were in a sense swept away by modernity, particularly the notion of nationalism. He argues that by allowing themselves to be seduced by nationalism they have not only weakened the Church by dividing it, but also have cut themselves off from their greatest allies – each other – in the fight for survival under the pressures of the modern world. It is interesting to note that Meyendorff observes that the all too typical response of the Orthodox to the ‘crisis’ of modernity is to blame the “external factors” – such as Islam or the Muslim invasions – instead of taking a close look at themselves and whether they have been true to their religious heritage.

How did this happen, though, and why was nationalism such a compelling force within Orthodoxy? Though there were likely a number of factors, it is interesting that it seems it can be explained in part, and ironically so, from the way the Church had been so open historically to the various cultural, linguistic, and ‘national’ (in the pre-modern sense) customs that were represented among the ‘peoples’ who made up the universal Church.²⁶⁹ From the time of the early Church, through the Byzantine period, and up to the brink of the great period of transformation with modernity, there seemed generally a balance between the particularism of various ‘cultural expressions’ and the universality of the religion. There was an important shift, however, in the modern period that tipped the scales toward what would from then on be known as nationalism at the expense of the Church, and the faith generally. Several Orthodox theologians have noted that because of the way a number of the ‘Orthodox countries’ came into existence in the modern period, many Orthodox

Christians began treating their nationality and their religion as almost synonymous terms. For example, in the quotation below Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew comments on the trend and gives some insight into why it is so problematic:

The notion of “people of God” was confused with the nation, which considered itself as elect, vested with a quasi-messianic mission.... [T]hese ideas remained within the collective memory and gradually turned into obsessions....²⁷⁰

Nationalism, so long frustrated by centuries of subjection to more or less multi-national empires, now tried to appropriate Orthodoxy, to turn it into its instrument, to instill in it its hatreds, its fears, its phobias. Orthodoxy has often become the sign of belonging, a little bit like Judaism in the State of Israel. One can love the forests of one’s native land, the singing in its churches and the light of candles, without ever having read the Gospel. One can call oneself Orthodox (specifying also the nationality) without any awareness of being a Christian. One can even call oneself Orthodox while remaining an atheist!²⁷¹

In other words, Orthodoxy was taken captive by nationalism, though Orthodox Christians themselves were often willing hostages. The rapid transformations brought on by modernization in traditional Orthodox lands, struck fear and anxiety in the hearts of many Orthodox Christians. For this reason, according to Patriarch Bartholomew and others, they clung to what gave them comfort in troubled times. They jumped on the train of nationalism without questioning where it was going and this led to tragic results for the Church, which is still reeling from the rapid changes that seem to be chipping away at its foundations.

One particularly pressing question has been the relationship of Orthodoxy and democracy, which was mentioned briefly above. Following the fall of communism, more parts of the Orthodox world seemed to turn to some type of democracy in its modern form in order to address various issues with their political systems. This continuing trend has caused some to look to the Byzantine past for a paradigm to apply to current realities for the Church. Others, however, have looked more critically at historical relations between the Orthodox Church and the Byzantine state,

hoping to learn from the mistakes of the past in order to create a better future for Orthodox Christianity in the new millennium. As Aristotle Papanikolaou pointed out in his article on Orthodoxy and democracy, the former position has been argued by Stanely Harakas and the latter by Vigen Guroian.²⁷² Papanikolaou analyzed the two points of view in this way and then presented his own, slightly different proposal:

The fundamental flaw with Harakas's method is that it seems to imply that because *symphonia* was the model in the Byzantine past it should exist as the norm for Orthodox understandings of church-state relations in the present situation. There is no attempt to try to justify *symphonia* as being theologically normative. In this sense, the past, as Guroian argues, is not sufficient justification for guiding the Orthodox today and may even lead the Orthodox to continue their mistakes.... Guroian's rejection, however, of any notion of public morality ultimately leads him to sectarianism....²⁷³

[I]nsofar as the notion of a politically and religiously diverse community is the necessary result of the church as an eschatological community in the world, it is not a contradiction for the church to attempt to missionize the world and simultaneously recognize the need for a common good around which diverse groups unite to form a community.... In the end, the understanding of "church" in the Orthodox tradition as an eschatological community through the eucharistic worship demands engagement in both types of activities.²⁷⁴

Papanikolaou implies that too often the Orthodox have looked to the Byzantine past through rose-colored glasses and have not done enough critical analysis to properly apply the theological tradition of the Church in the modern context. Like Guroian, he suggests looking to the sacramental foundations of the Church for answers to the question of relations between Orthodox Christianity and democracy. Though these points seem valid and in line with some of the comments of theologians discussed already in this chapter, Papanikolaou's final conclusion that modern democratic forms of government are *necessarily* the "most consistent with [the Orthodox Church's] own theological principles," is much more questionable and open for debate.²⁷⁵

There has been much talk within the Church about how to respond to nationalism, since the nation-state principle of organization has now spread (often by force) throughout the globe. Some Orthodox theologians have said that there is plenty

of room within the Church for diversity and even though the modern notion of nationalism has been destructive in many ways, nationalism in a more generic sense need not be feared, They would say, in fact, that it has been beneficial at times for Orthodoxy. Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia made this point in his famous work, *The Orthodox Church*, when he said the following:

Certainly this close identification of Orthodoxy with the life of the people, and in particular the system of national Churches, has had unfortunate consequences.... [Orthodox Christians] have often confused the two and have made the Church serve the ends of national politics.... Nationalism has been the bane of Orthodoxy for the last ten centuries. Yet the integration of Church and people has in the end proved immensely beneficial. Christianity among the Slavs [for example] became in very truth the religion of the *whole* people, a popular religion in the best sense.²⁷⁶

Metropolitan Kallistos clarifies here that the roots of the national Churches – that is, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Romanian Orthodox Church, the Russian Orthodox Church, etc. – extend back to many centuries before the modern period. He also proposes through his example of the conversion of the Slavs to Christianity in the tenth century that an entire people could be transformed by religion. It seems that Metropolitan Kallistos, at least, (and one could point to numerous other examples) believes that religion and nationality can be compatible, as long as the former is not a slave of the latter. Still, the Orthodox Church continues to search for a way to resolve this among its people and within its own hierarchical structures.

ECCLESIOLOGY

There are at least three important questions that Orthodox Christians have had to face as they have addressed the challenges to the Church posed from secularism, individualism, modern technology, globalization, and nationalism. Each question has to do with recovering an authentic identity in this postmodern era. The remainder of this chapter will assert that an important component of each question for the Orthodox has to do with a rediscovery of their (historic and current) relationship with Islam and

Muslims. In order to work out their identity and move forward in a healthy way, Orthodox Christians must fully come to terms with Islam.²⁷⁷ The three key questions are: 1) What is the role of the Holy Spirit in terms of the evolution of the Church and the relationship between Orthodoxy Christianity and Islam?; 2) What is the role of the ecumenical patriarch – who is positioned in a predominantly Muslim country and does not have the backing from an Orthodox political leader – in the world today?; and 3) What is the continued relevance of the Byzantine model for church organization?

On the first question, John Meyendorff acknowledged in a presentation he gave to a primarily Orthodox and Roman Catholic audience at a colloquium in Italy in 1980, that the typical “Orthodox concern for continuity [with the past] easily transforms itself into frozen conservatism of almost anecdotal character” and that “blind fear of any change leads to a gradual drifting into sectarianism.”²⁷⁸ He proposed, therefore, that at least in the dialogue between Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy, Christians should look at the “role of the Holy Spirit in history, i.e., the issue of continuous revelation or doctrinal development.” He argued that the, “forms and structures of the Church can and should adapt themselves to the changing conditions of history,” and that based on this understanding Orthodox Christians could recognize the work of the Spirit within the Roman Catholic tradition. He cautioned, though, that, “historical change [ought to] be evaluated in terms of its *consistency* with tradition, and only secondarily in terms of its relevance to the needs of the historical moment when it occurs.”²⁷⁹ Though this is a very important observation and Meyendorff himself did write a key article on the relationship of Orthodoxy and Islam during the Byzantine period²⁸⁰, he did not do a sufficient job of applying his own logic about the work of the Holy Spirit in history to Islam and

relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims in the postmodern world. Hopefully the current generation of Orthodox theologians will take the lead of Archbishop Anastasios (Yannoulatos) and Metropolitan Georges (Khodr), as discussed in chapter two of this study, in extending the role of the Holy Spirit to apply to other religions and in particular to the historical relationship between Orthodox Christianity and Islam.

The question of the role of the ecumenical patriarch in today's world has been at the heart of the discussions on the renewal of Orthodox ecclesiology, which were fervently pursued during the twentieth century, but have yet to be fully resolved. Numerous Orthodox theologians – especially Georges Florovsky, Nicholas Aranasiev, John Meyendorff, Niko Nissiotis, John Zizioulas, John Erickson, and Thomas FitzGerald – have addressed the issue in their work on ecclesiology. After recognizing that Orthodoxy's theological tradition had uncritically adopted (especially in the eighteenth century) important aspects of Roman Catholic scholasticism – a trend that Georges Florovsky referred to as a *pseudomorphōsis*²⁸¹ – they then attempted to reframe leadership and authority in the Church by talking about 'eucharist ecclesiology.'²⁸² This was the idea that the identity of the Church is rooted in the eucharistic assembly, for in the words of Metropolitan Georges (Khodr), "The Church is not a society but rather a gathering."²⁸³ Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) wrote:

...the eucharistic nature of Ecclesiology.... [in which] the principle of the 'one' and the 'many' is fundamental [because].... There is a single Eucharist in the universal Church, and nevertheless this unique Eucharist is as the same time many Eucharists.... The one and the many exist simultaneously, just as they do in the very Being of God as Trinity and in the Person of Christ as a spiritual Being.... [though] the nature of the Eucharist points to the simultaneity of the local and the universal in ecclesiology....²⁸⁴

The eucharistic assembly reveals the Church as both local and universal. These simultaneous aspects are also played out in a very real way in the Church through the ministry of the bishop, particularly the ecumenical patriarch who is considered in the Orthodox Church to represent the first among equals among the primates, or ancient *patriarchates* of the Church.²⁸⁵

Orthodox theologians have identified a number of reasons why the Church today clearly needs the kind of leadership that can only be provided by the ecumenical patriarch. First and foremost, is the functional and symbolic role that his office brings to uniting the various national churches into the “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church,” which is proclaimed at each Divine Liturgy of the Orthodox Church. Without his leadership, it would be nearly impossible for Orthodox Christians to present a united witness in the ever-changing modern world, a world beset with serious challenges to the Church. The proof of this is the progress that has been made toward the convening of a forthcoming, and much anticipated, Great Council of all of the Orthodox Churches (and perhaps even Rome if the East and the West can somehow achieve reunion). The various Pan-Orthodox conferences and commissions convened in efforts to plan for a future Great Council would not have been possible without the direct leadership of the ecumenical patriarch. As one Orthodox theologian put it, the key functions of the ‘first bishop’ are to assure that “a constant consultation and conciliarity takes place between all Orthodox Churches” and that “ecclesiastical order...be secured.”²⁸⁶

It was one thing for the ecumenical patriarch to exercise this universal role in the Church with the power of the Byzantine Emperor – and in many ways by extension the Ottoman Caliph – behind him. It has been quite another for him to exercise his roles and responsibilities under the pressures and new challenges imposed

on him by modernity. Several Orthodox theologians have argued that the Church has in many ways had to make a paradigm shift in the way it thinks about its symbolic leader, the ecumenical patriarch, and, therefore, the way it thinks about itself. In other words, it has had to be in constant dialogue with itself, in terms of how it should understand its past, present, and future. One can see this type of critical analysis demonstrated by John Meyendorff as he evaluated the relationship of the ecumenical patriarch and the emperor during the Byzantine period:

[The] imperial Byzantine framework... involved positive and negative consequences. For example, on the negative side, one can refer to the cultural rebellion against Byzantium of the non-Greek speaking Christians of the Middle East – Egyptian Copts, Armenians, Syrians – which led into the monophysite schism. On the positive side, one must recognize the tremendous success of Byzantium in converting, educating and civilizing the Slavic nations of Eastern Europe, which are thus indebted to Byzantium not only for the content but also for the forms of their Orthodox culture.²⁸⁷

Meyendorff was one of the great proponents of the ecumenical patriarch as leader of the Church in the modern world, but he recognized that the patriarch's role would need to be redefined in some fashion to meet the current challenges faced by Orthodox Christianity. He recognized that there should be continuity with the positive aspects of the Byzantine legacy. At the same time, he also acknowledged that the realities of the modern period had in a way freed the Church from the confines of the Byzantine system, putting Orthodox Christians in a better position to learn from their past mistakes.

It seems that at least the current ecumenical patriarch, Bartholomew I, agrees that it is essential for the Church to discover a new and improved identity for his office, as well as a new definition of primacy. Based on a number of interviews and conversations with him on this topic, Oliver Clément summed up Patriarch Bartholomew's views in the following excerpt:

Constantinople's weakness on the material plane, its poverty, ensures its impartiality and, paradoxically, increases its prestige. The ecumenical patriarch has no pretensions to being a "universal bishop." He claims no dogmatic infallibility, no direct jurisdiction over all the faithful. He has no temporal powers. As a center of appeal whose aim is to preserve the faith and unity of all, his primacy consists not in power, but in a sacrificial offering of service, in imitation of the One who came not to be served but to serve.... His service is one of initiative, of coordination and presidency, always with the accord of sister Churches. An ever-changing form of creative self-offering, which, dare we say, must be earned, primacy derives from the very structures of the Church and is indispensable to ensure the unity and universality of Orthodoxy.... Finally, it offers recourse for communities in exceptional or dangerous circumstances.²⁸⁸

It is important to note that Clément's comment about the patriarchate's weakness today is a reference both to its lack of adequate financial support and its position in a predominantly Muslim country, under a secularized Turkish government that has been hostile at times (more so even than the Ottoman Caliphate) to its work and very existence.²⁸⁹ Clément does not assess these realities as signs of weakness, however. In fact, he argues that Patriarch Bartholomew's inward and outward humility have actually given him more credibility as a world leader, not only to Orthodox Christians, but also to other Christians, international organizations, the scientific community (he has been nicknamed the "Green Patriarch" because of his support of environmentalist causes), foreign governments, and those of other religious traditions. Patriarch Bartholomew has truly led by example, but not all Orthodox Christians have been willing to follow his lead. They have had difficulty with his openness to ecumenism and outspoken support of and engagement in inter-religious dialogue, especially with Islam. The concerns over the role of the ecumenical patriarch, therefore, appear not to reside within the current patriarch himself, since he seems to have a pretty clear understanding and vision of how he should aspire to lead and what he should strive to accomplish.

The third important question on ecclesiology for Orthodox Christians concerns the continued relevance of the Byzantine model for church organization. As was already discussed in chapter one, the Orthodox Church was able to continue to function, albeit under some measure of constraints, under the same ecclesiological framework for much of its history, even under Muslim rule. It was only with the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the twentieth century that the model of *symphonia* was significantly questioned. In many ways their, one might say forced, revisiting of the notion of *symphonia* has been at the heart of the identity crisis experienced by the Church and by Orthodox Christians around the world. Though in one sense the Orthodox Christians living in so called *diaspora*²⁹⁰ have had to define and redefine themselves daily, in the main the identity crisis has been felt most strongly by those Orthodox Christians around the Mediterranean who had once been under Ottoman rule. It was from this area that a number of new states and national churches formed, as various ethnic communities broke away from the Ottoman Empire during the modern period, or in the case of the Ecumenical Patriarchate had to renegotiate its universal function within the Church while at the same time learn to function as one of the religious leaders within the newly formed Turkish state.

The Balkan region in the southeastern part of Europe serves as a good example of the difficulties Orthodox Christians have had in forming a healthy self-concept, as the region has been transformed over the course of the past two centuries. As was mentioned in chapter one, beginning in the nineteenth century, the peoples of the Balkans won their independence from the Ottoman Empire and formed their own nations. In doing so, they established for themselves national churches based on the Byzantine concept of *symphonia* for church-state relations. Even though they drew upon this traditional ecclesiological framework as they built their new national

churches, in reality their identity was formed to a greater degree, and to some extent unknowingly, by the Western model of nationalism. In an introduction to a project in Bulgaria that studied identity and Muslim-Christian relations, Jorgen Nielsen wrote:

The Balkan region of Southeastern Europe is replete with the raw material of ethnic conflict. More than most parts of Europe it has been a region of human mobility and mixing throughout its history.... The regular and repeated mixing of population groups over the centuries and millennia, not to mention regular metamorphoses of one ethnic identity into another, makes any attempt at a “racial” analysis of the Balkans an absurdity.

But this was precisely what was placed on the political agenda during the 19th century as the region increasingly fought over before the Ottomans, Habsburgs and Romanovs, with the help of Britain, France, Italy, and Germany, began to absorb Central European concepts of nationhood. In the Balkans, in many other places, the introduction of the discourse of nation and the nation state stands as an almost impenetrable barrier in time. It acts somewhat like a polaroid filter by which all previous history is interpreted and mobilized for the absolute and exclusive use of the nation project in the present.

The tribal groupings of the Roman period become “proto-nations.” Communities which were defined by religion in the Ottoman period became “oppressed nations,” Bosnian Muslims have to be “really Croat” or “really Serb”.... All the events of the past, which had nothing to do with “nations,” are revived and become the weapons of a contemporary political game. The past becomes myth and thus becomes distorted present.²⁹¹

As Nielsen points out, Orthodox Christians – as well as other Christians and Muslims in the region – began to conceive of themselves first in terms of their religious and/or ethnic identities (Serbs, Bulgarians, Croats, Greeks, Turks, or Bosnians, Orthodox, Sunni Muslim, Roman Catholics, etc.) and only in a secondary sense by the way they were a part of any universal religious community. This changed their very concept of what it means to be an Orthodox Christian (of for that matter a Muslim), how they view their Church, and how they conceive of their relationship, both past and present, with their non-Orthodox (often Muslim) neighbors.

Returning to the question of ecclesiology as applied in the conditions described above, one has to ask whether the Byzantine model for church organization was indeed applied in the Balkans, as many Orthodox Christians believe? Or, by

contrast, was this too part of the national myths that were created, but in reality suffer from a severe disconnect with the past? Though the Balkan region has its own particularities, Orthodox Christians in other parts of the Mediterranean have in their own way been asking the same basic questions about the Byzantine legacy of *symphonia*. Is the Byzantine framework of church organization and church-state relations still tenable in this postmodern world? Is it desirable based on the application of Orthodox ecclesiological principles to today's realities? If so, to what extent has their national church lived up to the Byzantine ideal? How does democracy fit in and what form might it take? Now that the honeymoon period has worn off for the various national churches – and some have experienced in a particularly strong way the downside of nationalism through the bloody civil wars in Lebanon and the former Yugoslavia or the dire consequences of the political controversy over Cyprus – there are more questions than answers for Orthodox Christians.

It seems more important now than ever for the Orthodox Christians to do some soul-searching in order to rediscover their true identity and that of their Church. Because of the historical relationship that Orthodox Christians have had with Muslims and the way they collectively have traveled side-by-side into modernity, it seems key that Orthodox Christians come to terms with this reality as they move forward in their quest for a healthy self-concept in the postmodern age. If they neglect this important aspect of their past and present, their view of themselves will not be based on truth and love, and they will likely continue to suffer both individually and collectively from the psychoses and spiritual illnesses that plague modern man. This at least was the point Patriarch Bartholomew seems to have been making during an important

speech at an international conference when he quoted the famous psychologist Carl Jung, who said:

Among all my patients in the second half of life...every one of them fell ill because they had lost what the living religions of every age have given their followers; and not one of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook.²⁹²

He seems to have used this remark from Jung to convince his audience that it is essential for Orthodox Christians, Muslims, and others not to give in to the forces of modern life that would compel them to repress their religious outlook and history. According to the Patriarch, Orthodox Christians must work with those of other faiths, in particular Muslims because of their long-standing relationship between Orthodoxy and Islam, in order to “balance secular humanism and nationalism” and “temper the mindless pursuit of modernity” with “spiritual humanism and ecumenicity” by being “united in the spirit of the one God.” In his view, only this will bring the kind of spiritual healing described by Jung.

The final section of this chapter will include a more complete analysis of the ways in which an honest assessment of the relationship with Islam and Muslims is essential for Orthodox Christians in their quest for their identity for today and for future generations. It will also indicate *how* they could go about making this assessment, including ways in which they would benefit through dialogue with the Islamic traditions and with Muslims themselves. First, however, it will be useful to briefly examine how Muslims have experienced a very similar reality to Orthodox Christians in their attempts to rediscover themselves and their own religious heritage. Like the Orthodox, who have had their institutions and worldviews severely challenged by modernity, Muslims have experienced a parallel ‘crisis’ over the past few centuries. Moreover, they have in many instances responded to this crisis in similar ways, with comparable results to those of Orthodox Christians.

PARALLEL CRISIS IN ISLAM

This next section will build on the historical background information covered in chapter one. It is intended to be a very broad overview of the trends in Islamic thought and practice in the modern and postmodern periods based on a synthesis of information from a variety of accepted sources. The emphasis will be on how Muslims have responded to the various changes and circumstances in which they have found themselves over the past two or three centuries. In this sense, the following section argues nothing new, particularly in the field of Islamic Studies. What is new – at least in terms of what will be asserted – is the way in which the experiences of Muslims and Orthodox Christians are connected and, perhaps, derive from or are in response to the same realities that they have collectively faced in the modern and postmodern periods.

By summarizing some of the most noted works in Islamic Studies today, one could make certain generalities about the Muslim experience.²⁹³ Using *very* broad strokes to represent the entire history of Islam, it is possible to divide it into three major epochs: 1) the golden years – from the rise of Islam (in 622 CE) through to the end of the age of the *Rashidun* (the four ‘righteous’ caliphs, up to 661 CE), 2) the period of world dominance (from the seventh through the seventeenth centuries), and 3) the modern period (from the eighteenth century to the present). Within this, one could also add that there were two events that inaugurated major *crises* within the Islamic community (the *Ummah*): 1) the Mongol invasions in the thirteenth century and 2) the rise of the West, beginning in the eighteenth century (the latter being experienced most dramatically by Arab Muslims).

During the centuries that followed the first great crisis, Islam was able to recover in large part due to the ability of Muslims to convert their Mongol overlords

to Islam. Though Islam as a religion and a civilization was able to survive – and even thrive as it built up three great regional powers (the Safavi, Ottoman, and Mughal empires), which peaked in the sixteenth century – there were important consequences that would contribute to the degree of which it felt the second major crisis. The devastating blow of the Mongol invasions remained for generations in the historical memory of Muslims. The realization that a catastrophe of such magnitude could happen to the people of God caused at least some to be more introspective. The result was a tipping of the scales from what was once a synthesis and parity between ‘Shar’i consciousness’ (following Islamic law) and Sufism to a more prominent focus on the real and the here and now than on Sufi speculations.²⁹⁴ As one scholar of Islam put it, this “conservative spirit” was an important theme of the pre-modern age that had a great impact on how the people of the Muslim world responded to the realignments of power during the modern age.²⁹⁵

In a similar fashion to Orthodox Christians, as described in this chapter, Muslims experienced the modern period and the rise of the West as a kind of identity crisis. In their case it was the second great crisis of Islamic history. Here is how one Muslim scholar described the consequences of modernization:

Two almost distinct species of homo sapiens appear to be evolving.... [For example,] it would be difficult to explain to the proverbial Martian that those people living on the continent of Africa and those on that of north America belong to the same species.... The problem with [Western] civilization is the hole where the heart should be, the vacuum inside; there is no moral philosophy or set of principles that drives it. What gives it its dynamic energy is individualism, the desire to dominate, the sheer drive to acquire material items, to hoard. Every technological development must be gathered into your home; it is the obsession to out-buy, out-eat and out-sex the Joneses next door.... Such frenetic energy keeps [this] society moving, but all the evidence – presented by its own analysis – suggests dissatisfaction and despair.

For the African or Asian we met above, this [Western] civilization would, more likely than not, be seen as a kaleidoscopic jumble of caricatures and stereotypes.... [A]s it dazzles the African and Asian with images of plenty, of a cornucopia...it withholds access to them. These tantalizing images [of

Western civilization] are thus no more than dangerous illusions for the majority of the people on the planet. They cannot solve anything; but they can, through the envy and desire they spread, spoil a great deal of contentment, patience and balance – the virtues of traditional society which no longer have the power to soothe or mollify. [Therefore] much depends [for the future of the world] on those who can build bridges between the two civilizations.²⁹⁶

Notice here the echoes of the Orthodox theologians mentioned in this chapter in their analysis of the themes of secularism, individualism, personal freedom, technology, globalization, and (by contrast) traditional society and religion. Admittedly, this is just one quote from one individual, but it encapsulates the sentiments of many Muslims as they have looked with anxiety and despair at the state of affairs for themselves, their families, and their religious communities.²⁹⁷

It seems that Muslims today, much like Orthodox Christians, continue to be in the process of responding to the crisis of modernity, and the outcome of this for Islam, Muslims, and the rest of the world remains to be seen. One aspect of their history – at least in many parts of the Muslim world with the most notable exception in what is now Turkey – which differs from that of Orthodox Christians and, therefore, has colored their response is that they had to endure the ill effects of colonialism by Western governments. The colonial period and its aftermath caused, among other things, a dependence on Western expertise, upper class accommodation, a Westernized education system, and the demarcations of their nations through boundaries determined in large part on the interests of Western states. The consequences of colonialism, in their intensity and longevity, have differed greatly from one region to another. Suffice it to say, though, that the era left its mark and is still part of the discourse about the legacy of modernity and how Muslims should respond.

A theme that seems to be common among many Muslims is the notion that “Islam” is the answer to the pressures they feel from modernization. In other words, there is general agreement, at least over the last couple of generations, that Muslims can rediscover their identity, position, and purpose in the world today by looking to their own religious tradition. In practice, this has meant a number of things to different people, to the extent that while some have veered little from the traditions passed on to them from the previous generation, others have employed, in the words of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “completely non-Islamic categories of thought and action in the name of Islam and [have made] use of non-Islamic means to justify what they consider to be Islamic ends.”²⁹⁸

Though such categorization can be essentialist and misleading, it might be useful for this discussion to point out at least five general trends in Islamic thought that represent the variety of responses among Muslims to the modern age. First is the modernist who says that Islam must “modernize” to survive.²⁹⁹ This would include the Westernization of Islamic law, theology, schools, and political institutions. Second is the reformist who insists that Muslims must go back to the original teachings of the religions and bring the basic principles to modern Islam.³⁰⁰ The emphasis is on the restoration of Islamic law in order to modernize the religion without Westernizing it. Third is the revivalist who attempts to implement the ‘original teachings’ of the religion directly through a kind of cultural renewal in order to present an Islamic alternative to modernist acculturation.³⁰¹ This is a kind of grassroots revival en masse that would transform social order in Muslim society one person at a time. The revivalist can sometimes be puritanical with leanings toward extremism, but is nearly always rationalistic, despite the fact that some of the movements representing this trend are organized around the basic structure of the Sufi

orders. Fourth is the mahdist (from the messianic deliverer at the end of time known as the *Mahdi*) who during times of great change and fluctuation in power alignments uses eschatological expectations to spur action.³⁰² Charismatic leaders take advantage of periodic conditions of heightened expectations and claim to be the Mahdi (or at least hint that they might be the Mahdi or someone closely associated with him). And fifth is the revolutionist who is a radical supporter of political as well as social revolution in the name of Islam, such that Islam becomes an ideology, not just a religion, philosophy, or worldview.³⁰³ The ends – always considered “Islamic” – justify the means and even though those of this persuasion are often adamantly anti-Western, they base their methods on the “revolution,” a construct of European political philosophy.

One can see that there is a great degree of divergence within Islam in terms of the ways Muslims have responded to the philosophical assumptions of modernity and modernization, which acts upon them. This situation has presented a number of problems in Islam, not because the religion has a low tolerance for diversity, but rather because of the radical breakdown of traditional religious authorities and related institutions. As Richard Bulliet put it:

[T]he new religious authorities [that is, those who capitalized on the “media revolution” to “credibly cite Muhammad as their inspiration”]...³⁰⁴ [are] individuals whose religious credentials would have been laughed at in the eighteenth century. Thus ordinary Muslims are understandably uncertain as to where true authority lies.... New ways must be found to credential and empower religious authorities. Ordinary believers must be persuaded to follow the decisions of those authorities. And people with inadequate credentials must be accorded a lesser standing. Getting ordinary Muslims to accept a new authority structure, however, will depend on whether that structure is responsive to today’s moral, political, and social problems.³⁰⁵

In other words, much like Orthodox Christianity that has been going through an ecclesiological crisis, Islam has suffered a similar fate. Muslims are revisiting the significance of the *Ummah* and their relationship to it. They are asking what it means

to be a Muslim in today's world, as well as what is from Islam, or "Islamic," and what is not. They are looking for leaders who can give them some answers to these and similar questions.

On the question of nationalism, much like in Orthodox Christianity today, there is a tension in Islam between national and international expressions of the religion and how it should be played out in the world. Even though there is no concept of "Church" in Islam and no direct debate relating to "primacy," there is a parallel struggle to what is taking place in Orthodox Christianity in that there are those who are striving to assert themselves as leader(s) of the Muslim world. Individuals, governments, institutions, and organizations are all trying desperately, and simultaneously, to fill the leadership vacuum that was created when the office of caliphate (*Khilafah*) was abolished in 1924. One scholar explained it this way:

It is important to view the development of the institutions and organizations in the Muslim world against the background of their struggle for independence from the colonial powers and their search for an Ummah *identity*, especially after the fall of the Ottoman *Khilafah* in 1924. Muslims were conscious of the educational and social backwardness of their community and the decline of the spiritual and moral aspects of Muslims in the world. They discussed their problems at [the] national level and often took the opportunity to have discussions with other Muslims from various parts of the world in Makkah during the *Hajj*. Even small conferences were held with a political agenda. After the fall of the *Khilafah*, the urgency to find an alternative increased.³⁰⁶

Despite the fact that in the first quarter of the twentieth century the Caliph had very little real power or influence over Muslims throughout the world, the caliphate did at least serve a symbolic role as a unifying force for the *Ummah*. Though there was really no dramatic, universal outcry when Mustafa Kemal (later known as, Ataturk, 'father of the Turks') abolished the caliphate in 1924, over the years there has been a natural progression toward finding something or someone to fill the leadership role within the *Ummah*.

Another pressing question with the rise of nationalism, particularly after the Second World War, throughout what at one time could be considered the great 'Islamicate Civilization,' has been whether democracy, and the related notion of pluralism, can be considered Islamic.³⁰⁷ This, at least the pluralism piece, is germane to Muslim-Christian relations and inter-religious dialogue, because of the issues surrounding religious minorities in the number of relatively newly formed 'Islamic' nations. Though Islam has a long history of interaction with other religions – something mentioned in the Qur'an itself and covered in great detail in *shari'ah* – the modern notion of nationalism has forced Muslims to rediscover, reinterpret, and reapply their tradition's position on how to treat non-Muslims in their midst. Again, there has been a great variety of opinion on this topic, which has only highlighted the fact that Islam is struggling to find a new way of identifying and credentialing religious authorities that can provide a consistent position on these matters. As with the other issues discussed above, it comes down to finding one's identity, and that of the *Ummah*, in an age of homogenization and the decline of local cultures and this can only occur (at least in a healthy way) when one comes to terms with his or her neighbor.

ISLAM AND A NEW ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN IDENTITY IN THE WORLD

Orthodox Christians will likely, until the day that Christ returns in the eschaton, always feel a tension between living in this life and the life of the Kingdom of God, which is not yet fully realized. It is often said that they are called to work out their salvation while living between these two worlds. Summing up the thought of the famous Russian theologian, Sergius Bulgakov, on this point, Michael Plekon wrote:

The Church of her very nature is inclusive, universal, intended to encompass all human beings of all time, since all "belong to Christ's humanity."³⁰⁸ There are therefore no limits to the Church for she is defined by both the Incarnation

and Pentecost. But a Church of such heavenly beauty and glory, is also of space and time. This Church is brought down to earth, to specific locations...to the entire expanse of human history, to the structures of law, power, hierarchy.³⁰⁹ The Church cannot “be understood outside of history, deprived of flesh and blood, torn away from place and time.”³¹⁰ Yet the empirical, historical, institutional and canonical Church we experience will never perfectly coincide with the Church as divine-humanity, the former’s limits drawn humanly, relatively, imperfectly. There will always be a “Church outside the churches,” (*ecclesia extra ecclesias*).³¹¹

According to Bulgakov and Plekon, Orthodox Christians (and the Orthodox Church) must do everything in their power to reveal the divine spark in each person and each religion. They suggest this is an important aspect of their mission as Christians and as members of what they believe to be the, “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.” They point out that, after all, the individuals one encounters each day may very well be part of the Church of Christ in ‘eschatological’ terms.

If indeed both Orthodox Christians and Muslims (particularly those of Arab descent) have experienced in similar ways the modern period and the rise of the West as a kind of identity crisis, would it not seem that through working together they could more easily discover meaning, purpose, and a way forward through the continued challenges of life in this postmodern world? This has been the conclusion of a growing number of Orthodox theologians and leaders over the past few decades. For example, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who has been a strong supporter of and participant in Muslim-Christian dialogue, has taken a number of opportunities to point out the similarities of Orthodox Christians and Muslims in their quest to re-discover an identity:

We must recover our Orthodox faith and heritage and proclaim its virtues.... [W]e must mention the similar treatment [in the modern period] accorded our Muslim neighbors. They, too, have seen their faith dissected and their history disfigured. For this reason, the Ecumenical Patriarchate is a sponsor of “dialogue of loving truth” between Muslims and Orthodox Christians. We hope to put behind us what is unpleasant while putting forward the best values of humankind. We have a sacred duty, especially in light of our 540 years of coexistence in a predominantly Muslim milieu, to affirm the Christian gospel

that we must love God with all our heart and love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:37-39).³¹²

Patriarch Bartholomew identifies together the experiences of Orthodox Christians and Muslims in the modern period and encourages them to look to their shared past as neighbors for resources as they move forward into the future.

Professor Astérios Argyriou has also effectively argued that Orthodox Christians and Muslims should work together in light of their shared experiences of modernity. The following quotation from Professor Argyriou outlines some of the reasons for this, as well as the resulting temptations:

Orthodox [Christians] and Muslims feel as strangers in the contemporary technological civilization, in the construction of modern societies, and in the values that govern our so-called Western world. Historical reasons made it such that our communities did not participate in the construction of this new world that began to commence at the time of the Renaissance. Furthermore, we share the sentiment that this world was constructed at our expense by the exploitation, colonial or otherwise, of our human and natural resources. Also, we share the tendency to distrust the West (in the best case) or even to reject it completely (in the worst case)... [We mutually] endeavor to return to our sources, to revive and to reactualize our (generally idealized) past. This attitude does not signify however that we refuse to serve ourselves...of the acquisitions of the modern technological civilization (methods of transportation and communication, industrial products, arms, scientific knowledge, etc.)³¹³

Argyriou's comments point to the generally contradictory and often self-deceptive attitudes shared by both Orthodox Christians and Muslims in the world today. While on the one hand they rightly identify a number of things that emerged from the West that led to and continue to be the source of their internal crises, their attempts to rediscover their identities have often fallen short because they have not honestly confronted their past or present. Argyriou goes on to point out that because of this dysfunctional relationship with modernity, too often Orthodox Christians and Muslims have succumbed to the temptation of fundamentalism and, despite their common history and parallels, have aggressively attacked each other (both in words

and in literal bloodshed). He also shows, however, examples of a better way in which Muslims and Orthodox Christians have worked together constructively through dialogue and shared witness to God's truth and salvation for the world.³¹⁴

One can begin to see how Orthodox theologians and leaders have argued that dialogue with Islam and Muslims can benefit the Orthodox in their quest for rediscovered identity. Together with their Muslim brothers and sisters they say, 'We are in this together. We have experienced a lot of the same things in the modern period and have struggled with similar issues. Perhaps together we can find common answers and assist each other.' Though Orthodox Christians have noted that in many ways they have more in common with Muslims than the West in their experience of modernity, they have also not neglected to reach out to other Christians, of both the Western and Eastern traditions, over the last several decades. Indeed, as John Erickson has pointed out, the Orthodox participation in the ecumenical movement both resulted in and provided potential solutions to the increased identity crisis felt so strongly within the Orthodox Church. In a critical assessment of his own tradition he said:

In the 20th century, this *identity* has come into question. The most conspicuous and most controversial aspect of this 20th-century challenge to our perceived identity has been ecumenism.... [W]e sometimes have presented and interpreted the history of the Church in ways too simplistic and triumphalistic to be taken seriously today. They also raise some more fundamental questions. Have we unwittingly mistaken a derivative external identity for the Church's ultimate identity? Have we allowed her living tradition to be replaced by traditionalism, i.e., a self-satisfied attachment to received forms which no longer serve and express her organic continuity as the Spirit-filled Body of Christ? The two-fold dialogue in which we have engaged in the 20th century, with other Christians and with our own past, has indeed been unsettling.... But this two-fold dialogue must continue and indeed become bolder in the subjects which it decides to address.³¹⁵

Professor Erickson points out that the Orthodox have not done a good enough job of taking a self-critical look at their own history, practices, and attitudes. He concludes

that as a result, they have distorted the essence of the Church by attempting to freeze it in time, rather than encourage and participate with the life-giving and dynamic energies of the Holy Spirit. Professor Erickson suggests that in order for the Church to 'express her organic continuity as the Spirit-filled Body of Christ,' Orthodox Christians need to be in dialogue with the other Christian traditions. His conclusions are insightful and inspiring and Professor Erickson has demonstrated through his tireless efforts the fruits of ecumenism, both for the Orthodox and for their Roman Catholic and Protestant co-religionists. Does it not make sense, however, to speak of a three-fold dialogue instead of a two-fold dialogue? Orthodox Christians ought to be in dialogue with other Christians, yes. But is it not also appropriate for them to be in dialogue with their own past? It seems, from what has been discussed in the preceding pages of this study, that to complete the picture, especially for the 21st century, Orthodox Christians must be in dialogue with Islam and Muslims. In fact, because of their history with Islam and their continued co-existence in many parts of the Orthodox world with Muslims, it would be difficult for them to successfully engage their own past without having a full and honest appraisal of their relationship with Islam.

Orthodox writers of various sorts have almost unanimously condemned nationalism as a source of division, faction, and even heresy within the Church. Too often, however, it has been acceptable to place the blame for the rise of nationalism upon Islam instead of on the acceptance by the Orthodox themselves of Western concepts and related modern forms of political organization. This can be seen in the following comment from Basil Cousins, who in other regards is a respected scholar (especially of Russian Orthodoxy):

There is not the space to examine the reasons for ethnicity within Orthodoxy in general except to propose that the various ethnic Orthodox Churches evolved under the pressure of Islamic conquest. The result is that it is commonplace in the West to find separate Russian, Greek, Serbian, etc. Orthodox Churches in the same city.³¹⁶

Cousins' remarks about the impact of the Islamic conquests upon the Orthodox Church, are not that uncommon. There has often been a disconnect for Orthodox Christians in their assessment of the past as it pertains to relations with Islam and Muslims. In many ways, it is a prejudice that has been carried over from generation to generation, since the Orthodox first began to feel inspired and challenged by the modern notions of nationalism, individualism, and secularism.

This point was eloquently addressed by Tarek Mitri in a speech that he gave in the late 1990's. Breaking with status quo, he challenged Orthodox Christians (as well as Muslims) to take a critical look at themselves and their attitudes in order to discover their genesis. He asked them to think carefully about what had informed communal memory and challenged them to be more faithful to themselves and their true heritage:

It is not ancestral hatred that is the cause of wars, and the examples are many, but war causes hatred. Ancestral hatred is, more often than not, fabricated rather than inherited. It is in many ways a creation of modernity, and much less an expression of a continued history.... Hatred is inculcated as much, or even more, by a modern discourse than by memory. It is often stirred up by radio broadcasts, articles in the press and television programmes than inherited from parents. If the past does not meet the needs of the present, another one can always be invented.... [W]hen we observe the relationship between nationalism, ethnicism and religion, we see the latter functioning as a sort of diacritical mark. There are conflicts between communities that have a religious past, but the religious content is of no or little relevance. A religion in which people have little or no faith continues to define a community in which they have much faith.³¹⁷

With these words, which were part of his introductory remarks at a Muslim-Christian dialogue, Tarek Mitri sums up the challenges many Orthodox Christians and Muslims alike have faced as they have struggled to come to terms with their identity in the

modern and postmodern periods. Unknowingly, they have allowed themselves to be influenced by notions foreign to their traditions and sometimes even deliberately misleading information about their shared past. His conclusion is that the animosity often found between Orthodox Christians and Muslims, particularly in their traditional homelands, began in large part as the product of foreign invention – though Orthodox Christians and Muslims themselves in their respective communities have since perpetuated it.

Tarek Mitri's notion about a 'fabricated ancestral history' introduced in the modern period to portray the relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims as generally antagonistic, raises some interesting questions. For example, why have so many Orthodox Christians been willing to accept this distortion of their history? Also, why is Islam such a stumbling block for them today? Could it be that it is not so much because they have difficulty accepting the fact that their ancestors lived for centuries under the dominion of Islam, but more so because they have had difficulty accepting the fall of their glorious Byzantine civilization? As was demonstrated earlier in this chapter, Byzantium symbolizes much for the Orthodox, particularly in light of the fact that they are surrounded in their worship by Byzantine style (or at least Byzantine inspired) architecture, iconography, music, and even physical movements and gestures.³¹⁸ Perhaps part of their difficulty in moving on is coming to terms with their deep sense of loss and confusion in the modern period over the eclipse of their Byzantine civilization.

There is a certain finality about the effect of the modern world upon the Church that may be causing Orthodox Christians to question God in a new way, one very similar to the questioning of many Muslims in the face of modernity. However, instead of causing them to be more introspective in order to resolve a kind of spiritual

crisis, some have been reactive, looking for something and someone upon which to place blame. The result has been a certain amount of finger pointing at Muslims, making Islam the scapegoat for past and present problems of Eastern Christianity.³¹⁹ Though the Orthodox are known, especially in ecumenical circles, for their emphasis on the role and work of the Holy Spirit in the world, they have unfortunately not always applied this to their own history. Few Orthodox theologians in the modern period have discussed whether the very existence of Islam and its impact on Orthodoxy over the centuries may have been for a reason and could perhaps be understood as part of the divine economy through the work of the Holy Spirit.³²⁰ Perhaps it is no coincidence that Muslims and Orthodox Christians have found themselves to be neighbors and friends for so many centuries. If the Byzantine civilization was challenged by Islamic civilization and both, in the broadest sense, have now been challenged by Western civilization, what does it all mean? The basic question is a mysterious one: How has the Holy Spirit been at work over time? Related to this is the practical question: What should be the response of Christians (especially Orthodox Christians whose dogma underlines the significance of the Holy Spirit in the world) to all of this as they work synergistically with the Holy Spirit to bring about the will of God?

Based on what has been presented in this chapter about Orthodox Christians and Muslims in recent years, it seems that some of them share a basic cynicism about modernity and, though acknowledging certain benefits, have warned of the potential consequences of further modernization for humanity and the planet. Many of them also seem to agree that spiritual and psychological problems in the postmodern world can only be addressed through a rediscovery and reapplication of true religion, as inspired by the Orthodox Christian and Islamic traditions, as well as other world

religions in their traditional forms. This thinking has led some to bring to light the possibilities for Muslims and Orthodox Christians as they work together to solve key shared concerns, as well as critical issues of importance for everyone on the globe.

One example of this innovative way of thinking can be found in a question posed in an article from the year 2000 by Konstantinos Romanos. In his article, Romanos criticized the conservatism of thought in Byzantine culture, which in his view never lived up to the potential it inherited from Hellenic culture, but he also praised Islam:

Islam preaches the ‘middle course’ lying between the non-worldly transcendence (“My kingdom is not of this world” – Jesus) and its opposite, the unbounded, materialistic secularism.... The development of science during Islam’s ‘golden age’ is linked through a powerful realism to the assertion of the physical world as a positive expression of the spiritual reality.³²¹

For Romanos, Islamicate civilization, prior to its ultimate breakdown with modernization, presented a particularly appealing model, because it supported the implementation of the highest Hellenic ideals in a much fuller way than by either the Byzantine or Modern Civilizations. He went on to say:

[T]heoretical Islam is considered by many researchers as the last glorious chapter of science of the Hellenistic world and as the lawful heir of the late Hellenistic culture which it developed in a creative way. If one day, especially in the Mediterranean region, there is a fruitful dialogue between Orthodoxy and the Islam for peace and universality, beyond all fundamentalist fanaticisms and entrenchments, the vehicle of this dialogue cannot be other than the Hellenic Philosophical Culture, the only necessary and desirable mediation. In the opposite case, as common ground of the two religions will remain the Jewish prophetic tradition which will continue to encourage its descendants in the anti-dialogical stance of the zealot and of non-tolerance.³²²

Romanos suggests that it is essential that Orthodox Christians continue to be in dialogue with Muslims and to learn about true Islam in order for them to find their true identity in the “Hellenic Philosophical Culture,” a legacy shared by both Eastern Christianity and Islam. It seems that what Romanos has in mind here is not the modern concept of Greek nationalism that harkens back to Ancient Greece while

often completely ignoring Hellenized and Byzantine Christianity. Instead he is suggesting instead something similar to what the Orthodox theologian Georges Florovsky used to refer to as “Christian Hellenism” and the “patristic mind.” This is the trend of early Eastern Christians to fully appropriate the best of Greek philosophy with the traditions embedded in Christian scripture and practice.³²³ Similar to Florovsky’s concept of being in dialogue with the patristic period of Orthodox history in order to creatively address the issues and problems of today, Romanos encourages Orthodox Christians to be in dialogue with Muslims and have an awareness of past relations between the two religions in order for both Muslims and Christians to better face the challenges of life in the postmodern world.

Another Orthodox theologian to raise some interesting questions relating to Muslims and Christians creatively working together to address shared concerns is Metropolitan Georges (Khodr). As a Lebanese Christian leader, Metropolitan Georges has been at the forefront of the movement to bring together Christians of the various churches and denominations, as well as a pioneer in Muslim-Christian dialogue both in his own country and on the international level. He has also been an advocate for Arabism, that is the rediscovery of the glories of the language, history, and culture of all Arabs and those they influenced over the centuries. In a similar way to how one might be inclined to judge the Hellenistic tendency in Romanos at first glance, one might conclude that Metropolitan Georges is nothing more than an Arab nationalist like any other nation-loving patriot around the globe. However, on further examination of his writings it becomes clear that he has a deep religious motivation in his advocacy for Arabism and that this inward drive leads him straight to an encounter with Islam:

We must first understand that the Qur’an calls out to Christians. It implies a relationship of dialogue with them. A religious tradition truly faithful to the

spirit of Islam is inconceivable without a structure of dialogue with the indispensable academic instruments of today in every in-depth encounter. The work is not possible except in a climate of scientific objectivity, of kindness and humility, qualities to which Muslims are traditionally accustomed.³²⁴

Metropolitan Georges shows here his deep respect for the Qur'an and what he praises as its high values with regard to other religions, as it compels Muslims to be in dialogue with the Christians in their midst in the Middle East. In this light, he encourages Christians to respond in a positive and open-minded way as Muslims 'call out' to them, as they are commanded by God through the Holy Book. He also seems to be troubled *as an Arab* by those Muslims who today want to distort Islam and twist its history and teachings in order to support their (modern) ideology.

Metropolitan Georges argues for a rediscovery of traditional Islam by both Muslims and Christians, something that he seems to conclude will best happen when they are in dialogue with each other. Why does he – a pious and outspoken advocate for the Christian faith – care so much about rediscovering true Islam? The first answer is that, like a number of Arab Christians from various backgrounds, he acknowledges that both Christians and Muslims in the region share the historical legacy of their glorious Islamicate civilization that dominated the world for the better part of a millennium. Metropolitan Georges goes a bit further than this, however, to argue that for Orthodox Christians of Arab descent there is an internal reason to rediscover with Muslims their shared legacy of Arabism. He says:

[T]he essential importance of Arabism for Eastern Christianity is that the Arab factor can constitute a ferment of ecumenism in the region. To the degree that they [Arab Christians] are turned to their Syrian or Coptic patrimony to express themselves in an intelligible language, they have found an inspiration close to the Muslim sensibility. They have helped to recreate a non-Greek, non-Latin – by all means Middle Eastern – Christianity that is in search of its own identity, for the enrichment at the same time of the [entire] Christian world by creatively positioning themselves to dialogue with the diverse religions of the Arab continent after becoming interiorly free of all foreign debts.³²⁵

In other words, Metropolitan Georges suggests that as Christians Arabs rediscover their identity, alongside and in conjunction with the Muslims in their midst, they will become a unifying force, bringing fractured humanity together – Eastern and Western Christians, Muslims and Christians, and those of the diverse religious and cultural backgrounds which make up the modern Middle East. He concludes the ‘search for identity’ itself would be a liberating and cathartic experience of particular significance for both his fellow Arab Christians and Orthodox Christians worldwide. At first glance, Metropolitan Georges’ conclusions seem far too idealistic, especially in light of the complexity of real issues on the ground in many Middle Eastern nations. However, one must admit that both the quantity and quality of dialogues that have taken place between Orthodox Christians and Muslims over the past few decades, as was discussed in the previous chapter of this study, have been fruitful well beyond the expectations of many.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is a third person who has suggested some creative possibilities for Muslim-Christian relations in the postmodern world. Like Metropolitan Georges, he seems to suggest both a local and an international dimension:

Christians – and Orthodox Christians in particular... ally themselves with an authentic Islam to overcome modernity “from the inside,” through a new cultural transformation.... A new form of secularism, rooted in Islam, would place the accent both on the rights of God and the rights of man. It would not neglect the connection made by primitive Islam between the spiritual world and the profane, and it would rediscover the open, “pluralistic” character of the Umayyad period, which was so creative in art, thought, and science.... Contemporary Turkey seeks to find its place between God and man. It does so with difficulty and pain, but it provides a model for both the Islamic world and for Europe.³²⁶

It is interesting to note that what is proposed here is very similar to what has been put forward in various ways by a number of Muslim leaders as a response to modernity.

Could a return to an earlier model of Muslim rule – especially if it was true to the

principles first established in Medina (something Islamic scholars refer to as the ‘Medinan ideal’) – provide a viable alternative to modern notions of nationalism?³²⁷

Patriarch Bartholomew asks this question and it is interesting to note that as the ‘first among equals’ in the leadership of the Orthodox world he answers it in the affirmative.

Perhaps one can account for some of his enthusiasm for ‘Muslim rule’ (in the idealized sense) in light of his position within Turkey itself. Though Patriarch Bartholomew continues to have a significant amount of moral and spiritual influence in Orthodoxy, his ‘real power’ has been dramatically reduced, especially in his own country where the Patriarchate is threatened in various ways. He may also be indirectly encouraging Muslims to take less of a fundamentalist view of their history, role in society, and relations with non-Muslims living in their midst. Perhaps there is more to his comments, however. It seems he sees a number of advantages and possibilities with a return to an authentic (and not just metaphorical) Muslim rule, perhaps in large part because of the fact that Islam has a better record than Western civilization (and for that matter even historic Byzantine civilization) of ensuring justice, freedom, and pluralism in society. Patriarch Bartholomew seems to suggest as well in his remarks that working closely with Islam and Muslims to forge a better world might actually help the Orthodox with some of their own issues. Perhaps they could begin to find that elusive identity after which they have sought for so long and maybe, if they could in some way reduce the divisive consequences of nationalism within the Church, they would be able to recover the ‘ecumenical ideal’ that they lost at some point on the road toward modernity.

One final figure worth noting is Catholicos Aram I of the Armenian Orthodox Church, who served for two terms as moderator (1991-2006) for the World Council of

Churches. It was in this capacity that Catholicos Aram contributed in a very meaningful way to improving relations between Christians and Muslims. Having himself lived side-by-side with Muslims, he was particularly sensitive to the challenges and potentials that both religious communities face in the postmodern world. Though like many of the other theologians he was well aware of the unique affinities and common ground between Orthodox Christians and Muslims, Catholicos Aram made it clear that his intent was to build bridges between Muslims and Christians of all varieties, be they from the East or the West. Likewise, in order for them to mutually address the key issues facing their communities, he encouraged caution without extremism. He said:

Incompatibilities and contradictions between religious norms and traditions and the trends and values generated by globalization and secularism are sometimes enormous. We have reacted in different ways to this complex situation. A rejectionist approach is risky. We must be critical, but not aggressively reactionary. We must not pretend that we can solve all the problems, cope with all the challenges and grapple with all the questions facing our religions.³²⁸

Unlike those who would reject this current world completely, trying instead to recreate today some golden age of the past, Catholicos Aram emphasized the necessity of an honest and critical assessment of the past and present, as well as the possibilities for the future.

Catholicos Aram stressed that with the rise of fundamentalism, globalization, and violence on the world stage, the degree to which Muslims-Christians could come together in dialogue would be a determining factor in the ability of peoples of all faiths, as well as the non-religious, to choose life over all potential forms of death in the 21st century. He spoke of them “journeying together” to promote a “dialogue of life” in order to “secure a peaceful world” by “transforming its values:”

For many centuries, Christians and Muslims have been in constant contact with one another. Christian-Muslim relations have been marked by tolerance and tension as well as acceptance and rejection. The world today is calling us to engage in a *dialogue of life*.... [W]e must *journey together*.... [as] we are bound to live together by building bridges of interaction, by moving from inter-relation to collaboration and from collaboration to community-building, by transforming stereotypes into better understanding and mutual trust and by translating our joint declarations to common commitments and actions.³²⁹

One can see that Catholicos Aram feels strongly that Orthodox Christians – who have by far had the most experience living as neighbors and being in “constant contact” with Muslims since the rise of Islam – have a great responsibility to take the lead in Christian engagement with Islam. He calls them to work with the greatest diligence on building authentic “communities” with Muslims, putting behind them what was bad and building upon what was good with the relationship in the past. It could be argued that such a vision will not be achieved unless Orthodox Christians (and Muslims for that matter) can first see themselves for who they truly are – that complex mix of history, culture, traditions, and attitudes that have at least for many centuries now been worked out in relation to or in response to Islam. Catholicos Aram alludes to this himself when he goes on to say, “First and foremost, we must be honest with and critical of ourselves, and then honest and critical of each other. This is true dialogue.” It remains to be seen whether this will occur among Eastern Christians.

CONCLUSIONS

Catholicos Aram, Konstantinos Romanos, Metropolitan Georges, Patriarch Bartholomew, and others have suggested that much is at stake in how Orthodox Christians understand their identity and relate to Muslims. They have encouraged their fellow Orthodox Christians to take a hard look at themselves and their views about their Muslim neighbors. In chapter three it was noted that at least some

Orthodox Christians are breaking new ground by encouraging their faithful to ‘deepen their theological understanding’ and see Islam, in both its historical and modern expressions, as part of the divine economy for salvation. In light of what has been presented in this chapter, perhaps they should be asking as well how the Holy Spirit may be leading them, alongside their Muslim neighbors, to new paradigms for humanity in the areas of politics, economics, religious pluralism, human rights, ecological conservation, and social justice.

Orthodox Christians have been noting the similarities between their experiences and those of Muslims in the face of modernization. They have repeatedly raised concerns about the destructive aspects of modernization and the ways in which it has depleted their resources – spiritual and human, as well as natural. It seems the more Orthodox Christians engage in dialogue with Muslims the more they are realizing the degree to which their shared experiences over the last two hundred or so years have led to the creation of distorted images of themselves, their communities, and each other. Based on comments from Astérios Argyriou, Archbishop Anastasios, and others mentioned above it appears that at least several respected Orthodox theologians and hierarchs are shifting their thinking in order to, as Sergius Bulgakov put it, see a “Church outside the churches” so they together with their Muslim neighbors can feel empowered to present new and more positive models for future generations. They seem to be concerned that, unless they make this happen, Orthodox Christians and Muslims will continue to be stuck, re-circulating their distorted identities both of themselves and of each other.

As one of the leading Islamic thinkers of today has said, “A victim mentality is the starting point of failure.”³³⁰ It seems quite plausible that a significant way in which a kind of victim mentality has been perpetuated during the modern period and

up to the present day, is through what Tarek Mitri called an “ancestral history [that is] fabricated [by modern discourse] rather than inherited [by memory].” As he and others have argued, so often the animosity between Orthodox Christians and their Muslim neighbors, particularly in the modern Middle East, began as a product of foreign invention. The evidence seems to support this conclusion. Though perhaps unintentionally on the part of those who imagined them, Western constructs of the history of Muslim-Christian relations and of the Middle East - along with the imposition of its models of nationalism, ethnicism, and religion - initiated a process through which the mostly positive, shared experiences of generations past have faded in the collective memory of Orthodox Christians and Muslims. It would be fair to say, in fact, that Orthodox Christians and Muslims have at times been active and creative participants in the process of constructing this rather foreign and self-debasing interpretation of their own experiences. The extreme example of the destructive nationalist tendencies in the Balkans is a case in point. Yet, there are also more subtle ways in which Orthodox Christians may be passing forward unhealthy and distorted identity constructs of foreign origin. As has been pointed out, even the most respected and well-intentioned Orthodox thinkers – such as John Erickson and Basil Cousins – can be prone to perpetuating incomplete or inaccurate images of the past as they relate to relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims.

John Meyendorff, Patriarch Bartholomew, and Ataullah Siddiqui have shown (respectively) that one of the most common and clear examples of the way Orthodox and Muslim societies have allowed themselves to be influenced by modernity is through their acceptance of nationalism. As they have convincingly shown, the modern construction of the nation-state model in traditional Orthodox and Muslim lands has been a challenge because it is so different from the indigenous and historic

models for political organization in those parts of the world. Still, it seems this modern, and essentially Western, concept of nationalism has been embraced across traditional Orthodox and Muslim lands, despite the fact that in many cases it has severely weakened the universal vision and applications of the respective religious traditions and has also led at times to stark divisions among peoples on the basis of language and culture. As has been mentioned, this has led in some extreme cases to ethnic cleansing and other such horrors. As several of the figures analyzed in the preceding pages have indicated, however, much of what has been accepted by the past few generations is now being reconsidered. The *new* message is that Orthodox Christians and Muslims must emerge from their victim mentality to desist from continuing on the same old path that perpetuates falsehoods and distortions about their true heritage. It seems to go even further, in fact, to argue that they must do this in order to be in continuity with the *fullness* of faith as passed on from generation to generation in response to the divine calling. In other words, Orthodox Christians and Muslims must rediscover what is at the heart of their respected religious traditions in order to present a mutual, transformational vision for positive change to the world, as opposed to just reacting to it.

Returning once again to some of the statements of Catholicos Aram, one can find a proposed blueprint for constructing a vision and common course of action between Orthodox Christians and Muslims in the coming years. Based on the arguments presented above, his notion of a “dialogue of life” (ref. on page 181) as he titled the concept in a lecture he delivered several years ago, could be one of the most promising strategies put forward in recent years. His four recommendations – 1) building bridges of interaction, 2) moving from inter-relation to collaboration and from collaboration to team-building, 3) transforming stereotypes into improved

understanding and trust, and 4) translating joint declarations into common commitment and actions – if taken seriously by Muslims and Christians, could go a long way in helping them solve their respective identity crises in the postmodern age.

In the process of implementing these steps, it seems quite plausible that Orthodox Christians and Muslims may not only transform their present circumstances so as to envision a more attractive future for themselves and their children, but also recover certain significant aspects of their ancestral past. For example, more and more Muslims might have an awareness of how the key, formative aspects of the Islamic tradition were developed in response to and in dialogue with the Eastern Christians who accounted for the vast majority of inhabitants in the central portions of the Umayyad Empire. Orthodox Christians of that early era served as ministers for the Umayyad rulers, to the extent that, for a time, Greek was the official language of the Caliphal court, and Byzantine civilization contributed significantly to the emerging Islamicate civilization that eventually took its place in terms of influence in the oikoumene. Even among the Abbasid rulers, who shifted the center of the empire to Baghdad and absorbed more and more elements of the wisdom traditions of Persia and India, there was a continued interest and dialogue with Eastern Christians which greatly informed the thought and categories of the early masters of *kalam* (the term in the Islamic tradition that most closely approximates the Christian notion of theology). For their part, Orthodox Christians might more readily acknowledge that life under Muslim rule following the fall of Constantinople had its benefits and advantages. Notwithstanding the *dhimmi* regulations and their consequences, Orthodox Christians were able to continue their religious traditions, in the main, preserve (in principle) their Byzantine model of administration within the Church, and live for centuries in relative peace with their Muslim neighbors. As several of the above mentioned

authors have indicated by pointing to historic and present examples, neither Islam nor Muslims should be seen as enemies of Orthodox Christians – not now, nor in the historic past.

Much like Muhammad who purged error and polytheism from Mecca at the end of his life, Orthodox Christians and Muslims might ask themselves, “What changes of attitude, perception, and practices must take place in order for us to shatter the idols and false images we have created for ourselves – especially in relation to our brothers and sisters of the opposing tradition – and to authentically bring forward the truest and fullest expression of our faith in this postmodern age?” If it is true that Orthodox Christians and Muslims have similarly gone through a kind of identity crisis, from which they have yet to fully recover, it makes sense that they could help each other along the path to self-discovery and rejuvenation. One could argue, in fact, that they *must* work together if they are to be successful in reaching their respective goals, in fidelity to the core shared values of their religions. Indeed, the stakes were raised significantly with the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001 (as well as those later in Madrid, London, and elsewhere), which put Orthodox Christians and Muslims to the test. The aftermath to and the repercussions from the horrible events that took place then had the potential to have a significant impact on relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims at the beginning of the new century.

Chapter 5: Changing Attitudes Following the Events of 9/11?

[T]he present moment is marked by the pain that is felt by all humanity. Violence has spread beyond all imagination. Today, of course, we are speaking especially of terrorism, which must be emphatically condemned. But we also have to condemn the violence practiced by states against individuals and against other states and, above all, the violence done to the poor. We must show our solidarity with the oppressed who are seeking liberation by resisting the occupiers, and we must work to halt the massacre of the innocent in all the countries where children and old people, or any human beings, are dying gratuitously. Justice, not vengeance must be done.

In promoting this quest for justice, we must join with all men and women of good will, and especially with Muslims, eschewing thoughtless generalizations and primitive reactions. Let us preach harmony among the nations and do all in our power to avoid a clash of civilizations between Muslims and the West.³³¹

The sense of urgency in this message is striking. These words of Ignatius IV, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, spoken to Pope John Paul II echo the darkness felt so deeply in the hearts of many in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in the United States in on 11 September 2001. They represent a yearning to assuage “the pain...felt by all humanity” in the months following the series of events that occurred on and around that day, which hence has been encapsulated in the reference “September 11th” or simply “9/11.” The mood was so pervasive that many were turning to religious leaders, both from the East and the West, for answers to the questions that pressed on their hearts and minds: ‘Why did this happen? Who did it and what does it mean? Where will the violence strike next? Could this be only the beginning of great and bloody struggle between Muslims and the West? Where is God in all of this?’

Fortunately, religious leaders throughout the world, including Patriarch Ignatius, responded to these concerns – often pointing out that the questions themselves ought to be adjusted somewhat – and the healing process was able to

begin. However, in the atmosphere of the September 11th aftermath fear and anger led to cravings in some to lay blame and exact vengeance. For them, old prejudices and negative feelings were rekindled. Others, who feared that the consequences of hate crimes, racial profiling, and human rights violations would be worse than the carnage of the terrorist attacks themselves, chose to see 9/11 as an opportunity to promote peace and greater inter-religious cooperation, particularly between Christians and Muslims.³³² For them, it was a time for dialogue and united action. Of course, not everyone fit neatly into one of these two ideologically opposed camps. Many simply were waiting for something or someone to provide some answers and help them feel safe once again.

Many Orthodox Christians, particularly those living as minorities in primarily Muslim countries, felt the effects of the terrorist attacks of September 11th. The events of 9/11 had an impact on relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims in that it put them face-to-face and challenged them to examine anew their respective (and possibly shared) identity, history, and religious convictions. In terms of the relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims, one could argue that they entered into a phase after 9/11 that is different in substance from the previous period. With this in mind, this chapter will be concerned with the months and years after the terrorist attacks in the United States in the autumn of 2001. It will take a primarily chronological approach in order to capture to the fullest extent possible the context, intent, and meaning of the events, statements, and dialogues under examination. Though 9/11 itself, as well as what it still represents to the imagination, continues to loom as a dark shadow indicating what things have been and what they could be yet again, one should not assume that every statement or act is in some way a direct reaction to 9/11. Life has continued and other big events, positive and negative, have

come and gone, informing (along with the memory of 9/11) the attitudes and judgments of those engaged in dialogue, peace-building efforts, and the quest for justice. Therefore, every attempt will be made in this chapter to connect the various statements and events both chronologically and thematically in order to yield the most objective and fair assessment of the material at hand.

INITIAL REACTIONS TO 9/11

Two significant conferences in the autumn of 2001 - scheduled prior to but taking place just after the events of September 11th - included Orthodox Christian and Muslim leaders as key participants. One took place in Sarajevo and the other was held on the campus of the University of South Carolina (U.S.A.). Opening on 12 September 2001, the Sarajevo conference was titled, "Christians and Muslims in Europe: Responsibility and Religious Engagement in a Pluralistic Society." Its objectives were to: 1) identify the challenges shared by Muslims and Christians living in a highly secularized and pluralistic Europe, 2) purify the memories of Christians and Muslims vis-à-vis each other in order to help them better work together toward justice and peace for all, and 3) promote their common values so that their communities could actively contribute to the construction of a better society.³³³ The participants, most notably on the Orthodox side was Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana and all Albania, were clearly shaken by the September 11th attacks and felt compelled to make the following statement:

We are profoundly shocked by the tragic massacres in New York and Washington D.C., and we express our great pain and affliction for the hundreds of victims killed and injured. We offer condolences to their families and friends. We unanimously condemn this act of violence, as well as all destruction of human life, as a transgression of the will of God and a crime against humanity. Recognizing the potential for violence that resides within each one of us, we pray that this senseless act would not provoke indiscriminant reprisals. We commit ourselves, in the spirit of this conference,

to be instruments of dialogue, to contribute to the building of justice and peace, and to work toward reconciliation at the heart of our societies.³³⁴

What is interesting about this is the way in which 9/11 seemed to heighten the significance of the work of the conference and that of its Orthodox, Muslim, and other participants. Having watched before their eyes, as so many did on television screens throughout the world, the result of religious zealotry not kept in check by dialogue and peaceful human interaction, the participants seemed to be weighing the very real consequences of not acting on their stated goals and objectives. True to both the Christian and Islamic traditions, however, they condemned the evil while recognizing the propensity for evil even in themselves, as well as every person. They expressed their common prayer that *all* would refrain from senseless acts of revenge, based on generalizations about ethnic identity, race, or religion.

Just over one month from the completion of the inter-religious conference in Sarajevo, a second important conference took place on the campus of the University of South Carolina in the United States. The conference was titled, “Paths to the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East,” and though it followed the customary academic format, it was unique because of its subject, approach, and list of participants. Though others had previously suggested that the mystical traditions of Eastern Christianity and Islam should be seen as the most promising bridge for bringing together Christians and Muslims in this age,³³⁵ there had never been a gathering of scholars and religious leaders of this caliber to address the topic directly and in such depth.

As with the one in Sarajevo, the conference took place in the shadow of the September 11th terrorist attacks, so the reactions of participants to the events are in some ways as interesting and significant as the content of their presentations. For example, one of the Orthodox panelists - Father John Chryssavgis, scholar and former

Dean at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology - suggested that Orthodox Christians and Muslims engaged in dialogue, especially those in attendance at the conference, have an important role to play in combating all forms of hatred, extremism, and violence in the name of religion:

The events of September 11th cannot help but be at the center of this conference, and what this conference is all about.... The desert tradition tells me that I do not know whether I am doing more for my brother when I pray for him, or when I offer him a plate of beans.... God will continue to do His work in Heaven. We need to do our work here, to knock down barriers that we have set up, and that work, that activity, is not secular or merely political. It is deeply spiritual.³³⁶

Drawing from the monastic tradition of the East, Fr. Chryssavgis challenged his audience to practice hospitality and humility toward each other in order that they might successfully “knock down [the] barriers” that lie between them. Considering the tense environment in the United States in the weeks just after 9/11, such a goal was not an easy one to achieve, especially for religious leaders.

Bishop Kallistos Ware was another panelist to comment on the events of September 11th. As someone who had already written extensively on the subject of mysticism within in his tradition and as one of the most widely-read authors on Orthodoxy in the English speaking world, it is perhaps no surprise that his response was of a spiritual and pastoral nature:

When a tragedy happens such as occurred on September 11, one’s immediate reaction is to look for somebody to blame, and therefore to hate. That is a natural reaction, but it is also a very dangerous one. We fall into the trap of looking for someone responsible, a guilty person or group, whom we can then demonize and we think in terms of “them” and “us,” with a dichotomy and an opposition. But when a disaster such as happened on the 11th of September occurs, surely our true reaction should be to say, “I too am to blame. I too am responsible. I should not blame other people exclusively, but search my own heart.” Surely the meaning, or one of the meanings, of what happened on September 11 is that we should all repent. If I had led a life of greater love and trust, would it have been exactly the same? You may say, “Yes, it would,” but who knows, under the perspective of eternity, what all of us in this room have contributed in the world towards fear and alienation because of

our own narrowness? ...So I think we have to say that we are all responsible, and that we should all repent.³³⁷

Bishop Kallistos response to the September 11th tragedy is based on an important Orthodox theological affirmation. Orthodox Christians emphasize that they must work out their salvation in relation to each other, to those outside of the Church, the earth, and the entire cosmos. In the deepest sense, for the Orthodox there is really no such thing as individual sin, such that the consequence of a person's selfish acts are experienced by him or her alone. Bishop Kallistos applies this point to the abominable terrorist acts of 9/11 by pointing out that each person's shortcomings have an effect on the forces and events of history. Echoing the gospel admonition, 'Let the one of you without sin cast the first stone,' he suggests that instead of blaming the perpetrators of the attacks or those who initially set the idea in motion, one should think about how his or her 'missing the mark' (the literal sense of the word *sin* in Greek) had contributed in some way to these tragic events. Likewise, he is subtly encouraging Muslims and Christians to redouble their efforts to work toward better understanding, build greater bonds of friendship, and find common areas of service to God and humanity in order to make the world a better place for all.

Just one week after the notable *Paths to the Heart* conference in the United States, an even more momentous event took place in Europe. Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch met with the Pope six months after John Paul II had made his historic visit to Syria. The Churches of Antioch and Rome had already had significant contact, in part because of Patriarch Ignatius' openness to the Catholic world. But the Pope's visit to Antioch in 2001 and the much anticipated visit of Patriarch Ignatius to the Vatican in the same year were seen as a significant breakthrough in ecumenical dialogue between the Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church.

The Patriarch's much anticipated visit became even more significant, however, in the aftermath of September 11th. Patriarch Ignatius had already established himself as an outspoken advocate of Christian-Muslim dialogue. Respected widely in the Arab world, the Patriarch's friendly relationship with the Pope presented a vehicle through which the Vatican could reach out to Muslims and Arab Christians in one part of its several-pronged response to the 9/11 tragedy. For this reason, the Christian and secular media were particularly attentive to Patriarch Ignatius' statements during his visit to Italy. Already known for his candor and conviction the Patriarch did not disappoint. When asked during an interview whether Arab Christians are anxious over the world crisis caused by the events of 9/11, he said:

We share the fortune of our Muslim citizens. A Christian cannot give his blessing to violence or terrorism. We try to understand the reasons without justifying them. The image that the U.S. government projects, perhaps unconsciously, gives the impression that it seeks hegemony in the world. We hear talk about U.S. interests, but almost never about the United Nations. We think something must change. People go to war because there is an arms trade and poor distribution of wealth. Then there is the problem of dictatorships, often supported by the West, which, even before being a world danger, terrorize their own people. Terrorism must be suppressed wherever it is found, but the way of acting must change. For a long time there has been talk of the terrorism of the Iraqi regime, and this might be true, attributing responsibility to a specific individual. However, we then see that the planes strike everything and everyone except that individual. We fear that the same thing will happen in other countries.³³⁸

Much like Fr. John Chryssavgis and Bishop Kallistos Ware at the conference in the U.S., Patriarch Ignatius does not shy away from speaking the truth as he sees it for fear of appearing to be too political. He places his own flock in the same boat with his Muslim neighbors in terms of the potential danger of a backlash from the United States with response to 9/11. Taking the discussion above politics, he focuses on the spiritual and humanitarian problems at the source of the violence: 1) the continued hegemony of the West (particularly the U.S.) in the region, 2) the disparities between

the rich and the poor, 3) the propping up of dictators (in order to fuel a seemingly unquenchable thirst for oil and/or other natural resources), and 4) the unchallenged industrial-military complex of key Western nations and the resulting unbridled arms trade to and within Middle Eastern countries.

During his visit, Patriarch Ignatius proposed another way forward in which Orthodox Christian and Roman Catholic leaders could set the example for world leaders to follow. As a response to those who would want to place Islam and Christianity in opposition and are quick to point out that religious buildings have been attacked by Muslim terrorists, he suggested the following:

We must be able to distinguish between Islam and Muslim faithful, as well as Christianity and Christian faithful. Perhaps the remedy is knowledge. Islam should not be something foreign to Christians and vice versa. For example, in my patriarchate, Muslims and Christians together form one nation that is not, must not be, either a church or a mosque.... Instead of thinking of the Muslims who set fire to our churches, we think of those who ran to put it out. Violence is defeated by justice and love.³³⁹

Once again, the Patriarch avoids placing blame on Islam or Muslims for the upheavals in his region. He chooses instead to focus on the ways in which Christians and Muslims have found and will continue to find ways of working together, despite the destructive forces in the world whose malevolent acts threaten to pull the divinely created human community apart.

Addressing Pope John Paul II directly during the visit, the Patriarch continued with this theme, carefully avoiding any blaming of Muslims and humbly acknowledging that Christians too must guard themselves against the temptations of the troubled beginning to the twenty-first century:

Your Holiness,

The present troubles may last and bring yet more affliction. The churches are called to become more eloquent in their witness, more urgent and more effective. Our most ardent desire is to call together in prayer and fasting all those who wish to live as Christians according to the gospel, asking that God

may have mercy upon us and grant us strength to resist the power of evil which seems to be gaining an ever-greater hold on humanity.³⁴⁰

Patriarch Ignatius calls Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians to commit themselves to peace and courageously speak out against those who would seek retaliation for the September 11th attacks through indiscriminant violence toward Muslims, or anyone who might fit the racial and ethnic profile of the 9/11 terrorists. He acknowledges that the challenges are great, but that Christians in humility and through God's power, can find a way to lead humanity through this difficult time.

Perhaps the most significant of all initial reactions to 9/11 among world religious leaders was the "Brussels Declaration," which was issued as a result of a two-day interfaith conference on 19-20 December 2001 in Brussels, Belgium.³⁴¹ The gathering took place at the invitation of His All Holiness Bartholomew, the Ecumenical Patriarch, and Romano Prodi, the President of the European Commission, and was attended by eighty of the world's key Christian, Muslim, and Jewish leaders. A number of world leaders sent letters indicating their support of the effort. The list included: Pope Jean Paul II, President George Bush of the United States, King Muhammad VI of Morocco, Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan, Secretary General of the U.N. Kofi Annan, and Madame Nicole Fontaine, President of the European Parliament.

The Brussels Declaration reaffirmed the statement made in the preceding decade at similar gatherings such as the 1994 Bosphorus Declaration that "a crime committed in the name of religion is a crime against religion."³⁴² Likewise, the participants challenged the erroneous "clash of civilizations" theory on relations between Muslim and Western nations, first put forward by Samuel Huntington and later circulated, with their own permutations, by certain religious and political leaders, as well as academics in response to 9/11. The Brussels Declaration states:

We unanimously reject the assumption that religion contributes to an inevitable clash of civilizations. On the contrary we affirm the constructive and instructive role of religion in the dialogue among civilizations. We urge those who shape public opinion to avoid putting at risk the good relations and peaceful cooperation of all people through the projection of extremist religious views as representative of authentic religious belief.³⁴³

It is clear that these key religious leaders, with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the forefront, wanted to send a clear message that religion is a force for good in society and that it should not be dismissed as something that will inevitably lead to violence. They seemed to be calling on the media, certain politicians, and ‘the experts’ to desist from constructing artificial portrayals of the world’s religions, and especially Islam, based on the views expressed by a few extremists.

Patriarch Bartholomew set the tone for the entire conference through his opening address by showing how the sacred scriptures of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all support peace and do not promote violence. He also went on to identify several figures from the Orthodox tradition, most notably Saints John Chrysostom and Basil the Great, who through their words and actions, set an important foundation for peace among all peoples. After carefully setting out his evidence, the Patriarch made the following conclusion to conference participants:

Their example [i.e. the ‘wise leaders of history’] should inspire us. For we also have a role to play today to develop a mutual sincere respect and peaceful cooperation for the promotion of the peace of God – firstly peace in people’s hearts – in the world. The creative co-existence among believers of diverse religions, which existed in the past and continues to exist in our day in many countries (especially in the Middle East), constitutes a model that can be applied across the globe. We, the religious leaders, should place ourselves at the top of the effort to bring about peace and should not sit at the tails of the politicians. In addition, we should not hinder peace by preaching fanaticism and intolerance.³⁴⁴

Here we see Patriarch Bartholomew calling the religious leaders of the Abrahamic religious traditions to set a stellar example of tolerance, pluralism, dialogue, and peacemaking for rest of the world to follow. He suggests that it is up to them, not the

political leaders of nations, to combat the forces of fanaticism and intolerance strengthening around the globe.

The participants in the conference seemed to agree with the Patriarch's vision for moving forward. They affirmed his various calls for peace and tolerance and said that "in unity, solidarity, and love" they would commit themselves to:

[1] Engage educators, members of the media, policy-makers, and other individuals, as well as institutions of civil society in order to enhance understanding of religious communities and their beliefs...; [2] support ongoing and new inter-religious and cross-cultural initiatives, including youth initiatives in as many regions as possible throughout the world....; [3] continue our dialogue and encourage all efforts to promote collaboration among our three religions...; and [4] foster communication networks that promote the exchange of views and ideas on a regular basis.³⁴⁵

The goals were clear. They decided to take on the responsibility to correct misconceptions about each other's religions, which were even more prevalent following 9/11. They also re-committed themselves to dialogue and opening new areas for common service in order to model for the world a collaborative spirit, genuine respect for the other, and the efficacy of listening to each other's cares and concerns. It was likely not an easy task to bring together the Brussels Declaration so soon after 9/11, but the efforts of those gathered in Belgium at the invitation of Patriarch Bartholomew in December of 2001 gave hope to those stuck in a track of despair from the day of the attacks.

THE DIALOGUE CONTINUES

In addition to the various efforts and gatherings that essentially represented a response to the terrorist attacks on September 11th, it is worth pausing for a moment to consider the progress of at least one long-standing effort of dialogue between Orthodox Christians and Muslims. Chapter three mentioned that a series of colloquiums, inaugurated in 1986 and continuing steadily through the end of last

century, were held through a joint venture of the Al-Albeit Foundation (based in Amman, Jordan) and the Orthodox Center for the Ecumenical Patriarch (based in Chambesy-Geneva, Switzerland). The vision was to establish more permanent, organized channels for serious interaction and discussion on topics of mutual interest to Orthodox Christians and Muslims throughout the world. Each conference included a diverse group of participants, though a constant at each event was the presence of Metropolitan Damaskenos Papandreou of Switzerland (on the Christian side) and Prince Al-Hasan Bin Talal of Jordan (on the Muslim side).

At the turn of the century, Patriarch Bartholomew renewed his commitment to sponsor regular and significant Muslim-Christian Dialogue conferences. He shifted the responsibility for these efforts was shifted from the Orthodox Center for the Ecumenical Patriarch outside of Geneva to the Office of Inter-religious and Intercultural Relations of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Brussels and plans for the next conference were set in motion under the direction of Bishop Emmanuel of Reghion following the September 2000 visit of the Patriarch to the King of Bahrain, Shaikh Hamad bin-Isa Al Khalifa.

The tenth session of the Muslim-Christian Dialogue Conference was titled, 'The Role of Religion in Peaceful Coexistence,' and was held in Manama, Bahrain from 28-30 October 2002.³⁴⁶ The event included a diverse group of participants of "more than 150 religious leaders, scholars, government and non-profit organization representatives."³⁴⁷ Unlike the previous nine sessions in which the speakers were essentially Eastern Orthodox or Muslim scholars and clerics, the list of participants in this session included, "Muslims speakers from throughout the Muslim and Arab world and representatives of the Orthodox and Oriental Churches, the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches from Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and India."

During the nine working sessions over the three days of the conference, the participants came to an agreement on a number of principles that would foster peaceful coexistence simultaneously on the local, regional, and international levels.

Based on the principles they identified, they further made the following recommendations:

1. The need to launch a constructive dialogue among the faithful of all divine beliefs so as to bring about the cooperation essential for laying the bases of international peace and coexistence and ensuring the security and safety of individuals and communities.
2. Absence of conflict among civilizations, since all divine teachings aim to ensure mankind's happiness and to establish security and peace in the world.
3. The international community must define terrorism that targets civilians and innocent people who, horrified, see themselves and their property threatened.
4. Condemnation of occupation, usurpation of rights and property and violation of holy places, irrespective of the motives or justifications.
5. Forceful condemnation of the occupation of Palestinian territories and of all acts of aggression committed in Palestine and in other parts of the world and appeal to the international community to participate in a responsible and practical manner in implementing international resolutions.
6. The United Nations and the United Nations Security Council should be asked to intervene in a practical way to end political crises that lead to cruel wars in all countries.
7. International decision makers should intervene to end massacres of minorities in every country of the world in order to establish peace and security and ensure peaceful coexistence.
8. Heads of State should support integrated adjustment and development programmes that serve the interests of their citizens and should work to improve their quality of life.
9. Denunciation of discrimination in all its forms, affirmation of the need to respect the principles of human rights and call for greater cooperation between religions in order to ensure the peaceful coexistence of individuals and communities.³⁴⁸

It is interesting to note the overlap between the Brussels Declaration and the recommendations of this conference. In both it seems that Orthodox Christian and Muslim leaders (as well as Christians from other churches and certain Jewish leaders) are making a special effort to show that the acts of extremists do not reflect the values and teachings of their respective religions. They demonstrate the distinction between political and religious activism, in order to show how the ideologues have attempted to manipulate religion for their own aims. The outcomes of both gatherings include a

plea for increased and sustained inter-religious dialogues in order that Muslims, Christians, and those of other world religions may, as the Bahrain Declaration puts it:

[Heal] the traumatic experiences of the historical past...; dispel prejudices...; promote the idea of peace with freedom and social justice...; and emphasize religious principles, tolerance and mercy...to enable mankind to achieve happiness and to guarantee security, safety, and peaceful coexistence on Earth.³⁴⁹

These were lofty goals, and one has to wonder whether the religious leaders who gathered at these events will be able in the coming decades to convince their communities at home, along with the political and social leaders of their respective nations, to join them on this quest.

THE WAR DANCE: SHALL WE DANCE?

In the lead-up to the U.S. led war in Iraq, starting in March 2003, there was a great deal of discussion on the potential for war, the possible consequences, and the subject of armed conflict generally within the Orthodox Christian and Islamic traditions. The debates within Orthodox circles in many ways reflected the larger arguments being developed for and against the war effort (and warfare generally), on the relationship between religion and politics, and about what should be the sustained response to terrorism in the twenty-first century. The internal debates among Orthodox Christians included two specific questions that were discussed at length in chapter four: 1) What was, is, and should be our relationship with Islam? and 2) How does our answer to this question determine how we understand who we are and our place in this postmodern world? As Orthodox Christians, particularly in the North American context, reacted to the war dance that was building in the larger culture in 2002–early 2003, these two questions became especially important.

One of the reactions to these questions was to revive and/or intensify a trend that had been developing in the latter part of the twentieth century. A small but well

circulated body of books and articles began to emerge that claimed to take a fresh look at the prevailing view of Islam's treatment of Orthodox Christians over the centuries and its reputation for being a tolerant and peaceful religion, especially with regard to religious minorities within Islamdom. Probably the most notable figure in this genre is an author who publishes under the name Bat Ye'or. Though not an Orthodox Christian, in fact she is Jewish, her major work, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity Under Islam: From Jihad to Dhimmitude*, found some measure of acceptance in certain Orthodox circles.³⁵⁰ Ye'or uses the methodology and presuppositions of some Zionist writers who have written disparagingly about Islam's historic treatment of Jews and applies these same tools to construct a 'new' historical narrative about Islam's treatment of Eastern Christians.

As was argued in the previous chapter, the popularity of this type of writing among some Orthodox Christians stems from the way it seductively preys on their fears and insecurities about Muslims and uses a familiar modern filter to judge the history of Islam. Proponents of this way of thinking find that there is a certain finality about the effect of the modern world upon society and their Church that has caused them to be reactive, looking for something and someone upon which to place blame. The result has been a certain amount of finger pointing at Muslims, making Islam the scapegoat for past and present problems of Eastern Christianity. As with the scholarship of Ye'or, some of those of this persuasion have tended to take a blind eye to and/or practice 'proof-texting' with the extant sources in order to justify and promote a particular bias about Islam and Muslims.

It would be no surprise that following the tragedy of 9/11, in which the perpetrators claimed that their religion (Islam) motivated them to commit the heinous acts, there was an intensifying of the kind of thought and methods that formed the

basis of Bat Ye'or's work. Perhaps the best example of this genre of literature that began to appear more readily in the lead up to the U.S. lead war in Iraq was a book written by Serge Trifkovic, a journalist and Orthodox Christian. *The Sword of the Prophet: Islam, History, Theology, Impact on the World* was published in Boston by Regina Orthodox Press in the summer of 2002 and became a popular read among some clergy and laity, at least in North America, soon after its publication. It was also circulated piecemeal on *FrontPageMagazine.com* through a series of excerpts adapted by Robert Locke.³⁵¹ It is noteworthy that though Trifkovic only directly references Bat Ye'or a few times, his book seems to be largely grounded on several of the arguments and examples she used in the 1980s and 1990s.³⁵²

Serge Trifkovic's book begins by pointing out it was written in part as a response to the September 11th attacks. In the introduction of *The Sword of the Prophet*, Trifkovic says that:

The tragedy of September 11, 2001, and its aftermath have shown, yet again that *beliefs have consequences*; the centrality of Islam to the attacks is impossible to deny. Our opinion-formers, inflexible in their secular-liberal ideological assumptions, deny it nevertheless. They do not take religion seriously.... [Their] supposed distinction between "real Islam" and its violent aberrations were crudely ideological, based on their simple conviction that all faiths – having equal legal privileges – must in some sense be equally good, "true," and, hence, capable of celebrating all others in the spirit of tolerance. Such assertions cannot change reality. A problem *does* exist. Islam is not only a religious doctrine; it is also a self-contained world outlook, and way of life that claims the primary allegiance of all those calling themselves "Muslim."³⁵³

Trifkovic identifies his aim. He wants to correct the erroneous notion, as he sees it, that Islam is a "Religion of Peace and Tolerance," which he says has been dispensed by liberal academics, "Sunday-morning popular entertainers," and certain politicians. He goes on to say that he wrote the book to correct the misrepresentation of Islam, which has occurred from the, "trend of public commentary that tends, systematically, not to *understand* Islam but to construct a propagandistic version of it."³⁵⁴ Trifkovic's

evidence for such claims is severely lacking and, like Bat Ye'or, his methods are intellectually dishonest. Whether it is through 'proof-texting' by ripping from their contexts sections of the Qur'an, the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad, and Islamic jurisprudence in order to support a bias against Islam or by reconstructing a historical narrative based on distortions of events and figures to justify his claims about Muslims generally, Trifkovic creates a fantastical construct of Islam that has little to do with the religion or its adherents. He plays upon people's fears about what they do not understand by perpetuating generalized prejudices about Muslims, academics, politicians, and journalists.

Trifkovic presents himself as an intellectual and visionary who can understand the true meaning of Islam and see the only clear path to stop it from achieving its destructive goals. Claiming that Islam cannot tolerate any other religion or worldview, he promotes a hard line approach to what he says are two equally disturbing forces:

A new paradigm of Islam, immigration, and Western identity are needed.... All will be in vain unless murderous Islamic extremism, manifested on September 11, spells the end of another kind of extremism: the stubborn insistence of the ruling liberal establishment on treating each and every newcomer as equally malleable in the pot.³⁵⁵

He implies that neither Muslims, nor the liberals who befriend them, can be trusted by Americans, nor, by extension, any peace-loving peoples of the world. He apparently sees no problem with grouping all Muslims together and presenting Islam, not extremism per se, as the ultimate threat to peace across the globe.

Though Trifkovic apparently has no trouble with the way Samuel Huntington presents an essentialist version of Islam in his theory about the coming "clash of civilizations," he cannot tolerate it when Huntington does something similar with

Orthodox Christianity (Trifkovic's own religion). He seems quite concerned about what he perceives to be a Western bias against Orthodox Christianity:

We are dealing with a prejudice that is not easy to pin down. Is it the hostility toward Orthodox displayed by the "knowledge class" in the modern Western world? Is it the benign and not so benign neglect of Orthodox culture and nations by Western political and cultural elites.... [or] the facile treatment of Orthodoxy by academia and pluralistic theologians according to their on standards and values.... [or] is it even perhaps the mistaken understanding of many Orthodox themselves, whether laypeople or clergy, of the true nature and purpose of Orthodox? ...It is correct to say that all of these attitudes are involved at one level or another....³⁵⁶

Though he defends the "true nature and purpose of Orthodoxy" he neglects to mention the historic connection between Eastern Christianity and Islam, nor does he discuss the ways Orthodox Christians and Muslims, in at least certain parts of the Orthodox world, have demonstrated a certain degree of solidarity in the face of destructive aspects of modernization and its child Westernization. The most ironic aspect of his criticism is that the method he decries, in term of how Huntington and others have treated Orthodoxy, is virtually the same approach he himself uses to analyze Islam.

Serge Trifkovic's *The Sword of the Prophet*, as with Bat Ye'or's book, was popular among some Orthodox Christians possibly because it gave them more fuel with which to perpetuate vestiges of hatred toward Islam and Muslims that arose primarily during the creation of various 'Orthodox nation-states' in the modern period and has been passed on from generation to generation since that time. If this is true, then Trifkovic's book is more useful in terms of what it reveals about how certain Orthodox Christians understand themselves (their history, religion, and relations with non-Orthodox) in the postmodern age, than anything of value it may say about Islam.

Perhaps in reaction to writings such as those of Serve Trifkovic, the tension between Christianity and Islam and warfare generally was discussed by Orthodox

theologians with much intensity in the period between the September 11th terrorist attacks and the start of the U.S.-led war in Iraq. The topics of war and violence were not new ones in the first few years of this century.³⁵⁷ Rather, they were considered again in light of the fears and concerns following 9/11 and the debates about the proper course of action to deter further terrorist acts of such magnitude in any part of the globe. In the English-speaking Orthodox world, the debate on war even became the subject of an entire volume of the *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* in early part of 2003.³⁵⁸ The edition was given the subtitle, "Justifiable War?" and was anchored around a long article by Fr. Alexander Webster titled, "Justifiable War as a 'Lesser Good' in Eastern Orthodox Moral Tradition."³⁵⁹

The bulk of Fr. Webster's article was an outline of what he called, "The Orthodox Justifiable War Trajectory," in which he presented evidence from six textual sources: Holy Scripture, writings of the Church Fathers, canon law, hagiographic literature, devotional literature, and works of modern theologians and literary writers.³⁶⁰ His argument is that when warfare is in pursuit of a just cause, it should be considered "morally good," though perhaps a "lesser good." In Fr. Webster's view, the sources reveal that the Church had essentially accepted the engagement in war as a fact of life in this world and something through which those who conduct it properly should be considered "virtuous." The practical application of this conclusion is that Orthodox Christians of the early twentieth century, or at the very least Orthodox ethicists and enlisted men and women who are Orthodox Christians, could potentially see their involvement in the 'engagement' in Afghanistan and (imminently in) Iraq as a fulfillment of the will of God, since war itself could be considered something "good," albeit a "lesser good." On the personal level, Fr. Webster was no stranger to questions about engaging in and the ethics of war, since

he himself had served as a United States military chaplain. Ironically, perhaps, not long after his article was published in the *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, he was deployed to serve in the Middle East.

In the various responses to Fr. Webster's article, as one might expect, the authors expressed some agreement on certain points while disagreeing with a number of others. Certain responders were highly critical of Fr. Webster's methods and conclusions. For example, Jim Forest, Secretary of the Orthodox Peace Fellowship, found Webster's treatment of scripture on the use of violence to be quite narrow and questioned whether he really imagined, "Jesus [who failed to side with the Zealot opposition] sanctioning war and obliging his followers to take part in it."³⁶¹ Forest found a similar pattern in the way Fr. Webster drew selectively from the six textual sources and has this broader assessment of his conclusions. In his response, he points out that though soldiers themselves can be considered "heroic and patriotic," that does not mean (as he says Fr. Webster asserts) that there is any "moral credit" for "wars for the expansion of the empire, wars of national hubris, wars of manifest destiny, wars of ethnic cleansing, wars to gain valuable resources," and so forth. Forest's critique highlights the complexity of motives that lead to warfare and the perilous moral challenges this poses for Christians who, following the example of their Lord, are to be peacemakers in this world and are to love their enemies. His comments call into question the moral implications of declaring a "war on terror" and point to some of the dilemmas faced by Orthodox Christians in the post-9/11 environment in which the brutal acts of the terrorists were being matched primarily by further military aggression, continuing the spiral of violence.

Another author who took issue with Fr. Alexander Webster's case that warfare should be considered a "lesser good," is Fr. John Breck, a well-known Orthodox

ethicist and former professor at three Orthodox seminaries (on two continents), including St. Vladimir's Theological Seminary in New York. Fr. Breck's response was based primarily on his exegesis of scripture on the topics of violence and whether, in his words, "warfare, while at times justifiable, cannot reasonably be labeled 'good.'"³⁶² He did not find Fr. Webster's arguments compelling because he found them to be not well supported in the consensus of Christian scripture. After giving some analysis, he concluded that, "scripture never condones violence as a means to pursue social or political goals." He stated that warfare could be considered, under the best possible circumstances, a "necessary evil," never a "lesser good," as Fr. Webster suggested. To explain this, Fr. Breck pointed to the underlying context from which the debate on warfare within the Orthodox Church at that time had been generated. For example, he made this comment on the concerns about what Iraq might do with its alleged weapons of mass destruction (WMDs):

Recent attempts by the Bush administration to create a "just war" aura around its aggressive stance toward Iraq offer an instructive illustration of the moral ambiguity inherent in any policy of military aggression.... [W]hile the secretary of defense vehemently asserts during a news conference that this pending war "has nothing to do with oil!," at virtually the same moment another news program airs the equally vehement assertion by a chief oil company executive, "Of course it has to do with oil!" With the lack of clarity that marks our *motives*, there is little chance we will wield our own WMDs in a way that is either good or justifiable.³⁶³

Fr. Breck very clearly illustrates the difficulties presented in an age of nuclear bombs and other WMDs with not only identifying a morally justifiable motive for engaging in war, but also the major problems associated with the *methods* used to carry out such a war. He urges this fellow clergy and lay leaders to consider the costs upon the innocent victims of war, as well as the other political, social, and religious consequences.

As the United States government moved closer to its robust military campaign in Iraq, the generalized debate about warfare among Orthodox theologians in North America gave way to what had been bubbling under the surface – the religious implications and consequences of the proposed U.S. invasion, specifically upon Muslim-Christian relations. This was evidenced by a petition sponsored by the North American chapter of the Orthodox Peace Fellowship, which had 165 signatories from nine nations, including leading hierarchs, clergy, and laity. The document, titled, ‘A Plea for Peace from the Orthodox Peace Fellowship in North America,’ directly addressed those who would make the struggles of the day into an epic battle between Islam and Christianity *or* Islam and the West. It stated:

An attack on Iraq will be seen by many as an attack on all Arabic and Islamic states. America, despite the rhetoric, is perceived as seeing itself under attack by Islam. America helped install and maintain the despotic Shah of Iran, but withdrew its support when Iran became an Islamic republic (itself undemocratic in many ways). Now America is seen as the largely uncritical supporter of Israel, against the interests of Palestinians, both Muslim and Christian. Bombing Iraq will confirm these perceptions among Muslims.³⁶⁴

The plea of this large and significant list of Orthodox Christians, which incidentally included Fr. John Breck and Jim Forest (but not Fr. Alexander Webster) mentioned above, attempted to show that the conflict between the U.S. and Iraq had nothing to do with Islam. It also argued that the ignorance, fears, and distortions of the truth about Islam that had been so prevalent in the post-9/11 environment would only be perpetuated unless the United States government and the United Nations were “to follow diplomatic paths predicated on mercy, honesty, and justice, and to seek peacefully negotiated resolutions to the impasse in Iraq.” Though this plea, along with a number of others from Orthodox hierarchs and leaders from around the world,³⁶⁵ was not able to stop the war dance that led to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, it did indicate a renewed interest in engagement between Orthodox Christians and Muslims.

The assertion that Orthodox Christian leaders in general renewed their commitment to Muslim-Christian dialogue in the years following the 9/11 attacks and the start of the U.S. led war in Iraq is supported by their increased involvement in local, regional, and international inter-religious gatherings on common strategies for peace.

ATTEMPTS TO SECURE PEACE

During the period of spring 2003 through the summer of 2006, Orthodox Christians from around the world sponsored and/or participated in a number of significant inter-religious encounters with Muslims. Many of these events also included participants representing several of the world's other religious traditions. A number of these gatherings will be outlined in the following section in order to illustrate some general themes that emerged throughout the various efforts.

ON THE U.S.-LED WAR IN IRAQ

The first of these events took place on 27 and 28 May 2003, when the World Conference on Religion and Peace convened a gathering of religious leaders in Amman, Jordan in order to promote increased inter-religious understanding in Iraq. Conference participants included a number of Orthodox Christians, including Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky as Vice Moderator, as well as an Iraqi delegation consisting of Shi'i and Sunni Muslims *and* Syrian Orthodox, Armenian, Roman Catholic, and Chaldean Christians. In a news brief reported the following:

Conference participants appealed to the occupying powers to take up their responsibilities fully in order to provide safety to the Iraqi people. They appealed to the international community as a whole for the necessary humanitarian aid.... [The conference] opened new possibilities for interreligious understanding in Iraq. Indeed, all of the Iraqi participants strongly supported the formulation of an interreligious council in Iraq.³⁶⁶

The participants seemed to agree that a peaceful resolution in Iraq would best be facilitated by a joint effort on the part of Muslims and Christians in the region and

throughout the world. Believing that by joining together in one voice they could better appeal to the United States, Britain, Spain, and the other countries engaged in the Iraq War effort at that time, the participants hoped they could reduce the tremendous suffering of the Iraqi people because of the war.

In the autumn of the same year, another gathering between Muslims and Christians was convened in Germany at the Aachen International Conference on the theme, 'War and Peace: Faith and Cultures in Dialogue.'³⁶⁷ Illustrative of the Orthodox voices at the conference was a lecture presented by Metropolitan Paul (Yazigi) of Aleppo in a section that looked at the topic, 'Muslims and Christians: How Can We Live Together?' Metropolitan Paul wrestled with the question of how a person can believe that his religion is the fullest expression of God's revelation, while at the same time accept that those of other religions also possess divine truth and may be carrying out the will of God. He says, for example:

If Christianity considers itself as the vessel where rested all the plentitude of divine truth and revelation, it stands listening carefully to the divine echoes and messages from other religions and cultures, since they are potential carriers of divine and salutary truths.... [T]he responsibility of religions has increased nowadays, much more than before. Unfortunately, fundamentalism has developed these days in many places; problems of public order are being discussed with a religious spirit that reflects the refuse of the other.... The future of the world greatly depends on the openness of religions after a period of seclusion. An occasion like the one we are experiencing here is indeed a good initiative towards clearing any reserve between one another.³⁶⁸

Metropolitan Paul suggests that it is possible, based on their own authentic traditions, for Muslims and Christians to see God at work in the religion of the other. Much like the conference participants in Amman earlier in the year, he argues that Orthodox Christians and Muslims must work together to conquer the difficult problems of the day, in this case fundamentalism. Perhaps his own experiences as a Christian living alongside Muslims in his native Syria led him to these conclusions.

THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH AND IRAN

The idea that Orthodox Christians and Muslims must work together to face the significant challenges of the postmodern age had also been a subject of *some interest* in Russia Orthodox Church from the latter part of the twentieth century when a group of Orthodox Christians and Muslims met in Moscow in 2004. However, it would be difficult to make the case that Muslim-Christian dialogue was a *priority* in the Russian Church when the “Joint Russian-Iranian Theological Commission on ‘Islam-Orthodoxy’ Dialogue” convened its fourth of such sessions on 26-29 April 2004. An essay by Basil Cousins, a specialist on Russian Orthodoxy, published the same year as the conference, identified a rather ambiguous attitude within Russian Orthodoxy towards Islam, and inter-religious dialogue generally.³⁶⁹ On the one hand, he acknowledged at least “a ‘tacit agreement’ between Islam and the Russian Orthodox Church [from the period] when both were subjected to intense persecution by the anti-religious forces of atheistic Communism” that “may well have carried over into the post-Communist period.”³⁷⁰ On the other hand, he submitted that the Church had not openly embraced Islam and dialogue with Muslims, especially when compared with, for example, the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople.³⁷¹ He referenced a Geraldine Fagin report from 2001 identifying divergent views between Moscow and Constantinople on the subject of religious freedom. Fagin wrote that, “While Moscow is unenthusiastic about [it] and does not regard it as integral to Orthodox teaching, the Ecumenical Patriarchate embraces it as the supreme manifestation of a divine gift to humanity: free will.”³⁷²

This being said, one cannot deny that there has been a sustained dialogue between Russian Orthodoxy and at least certain Muslims from the end of the last through the first part of the current century. It is no secret that ‘high-ranking

representatives' of the Russian Orthodox Church and counterparts in the Islamic Republic of Iran's religious establishment have been meeting on a regular basis, beginning with their inaugural session in 1997 and roughly every couple of years thereafter. Because of the position and prestige of the Russian Orthodox Church as the largest of all the national Orthodox Churches worldwide, it would be useful to examine these encounters in some detail. The Moscow Times carried an article titled, 'Moslems, Orthodox Find Common Foe,' when the group held its second meeting in 1999 and the official website of the Moscow Patriarchate itself heralded the success of the third meeting in 2000.³⁷³ According to the official description given by the Russian Orthodox Church on these exchanges:

The Commission was set up in the result of the visits exchange between Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, and Aytolla Ali-Tashiri, Chairman of the Organization of Islamic Culture and Relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in 1996 and in 1997. The first meeting of the Commission was held in 1997.³⁷⁴

In addition to getting acquainted with each other and organizing the format for their encounters, the topics addressed in these meetings prior to the fourth session included peace, justice, and inter-religious dialogue in international relations.

Alternating locations between Moscow and Tehran, the fourth session in Moscow addressed the issue of globalization and its impact on religion. In this the first meeting following the terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001, along with several other significant terrorist incidents on other continents in the ensuing years, the Commission discussed the ways in which globalization had directly challenged religious morals, culture, and religious beliefs as they have been traditionally associated with Orthodox Christianity and Islam. They were critical not only of terrorist acts, but also of any reactions to them that would involve aggression and

exploitation, further escalating the cycle of violence and hatred. A report from the session stated:

Denouncing all kinds of terrorism and illegitimate use of force on the part of states as well as all forms of the use of force for the settlement of international problems the participants expressed their protest against using one-sided approaches to their settlement. The session participants unanimously denounced the abuse of religion for the justification of terrorist acts, aggression and violence against innocent people. The sides of the Dialogue are convinced that to efficiently fight against terrorism it is necessary to overcome the phenomena that cause poverty, crime, corruption, animosity and intolerance.³⁷⁵

The participants identified some of the key sources of the terrorist acts of recent years and, condemning the unilateralist and narrow responses of states to such acts (implying the U.S. war in Iraq and Israel's military incursions into Palestinian territories), the participants suggested a more peaceful and multifaceted approach.

Much as they had in their second session in 1999 during which they reportedly identified, "a common enemy: Western liberal secular society, which...aims to impose itself upon the rest of the world,"³⁷⁶ the Orthodox Christians and Muslims on the Commission pointed to the ill effects of westernization across the globe with respect to both of their religious traditions. They said in a joint statement that:

[G]lobalism is a process of westernization of the world... [We] flatly denounced the globalism project in terms of its imposing on other nations one standard of world outlook, culture and policy shared by an insignificant percentage of the world's population... [We emphasize] the need for moral and spiritual perfecting of mankind, stressing that with the presence in the modern world of social and humanitarian problems including murder, violence, "the culture of the naked" and debauchery, unjust use of force while solving regional and global problems, alcoholism, drug abuse, environment pollution, a serious attitude towards morals and spirituality can reduce the impact of these vices and install stability, protection of family values, children's, teenagers' and young people's rights, and their religious and moral upbringing.³⁷⁷

Though in this example and in some of the language from this and previous sessions one can perceive a more pronounced moral conservatism than one might find in other gatherings of Orthodox Christians and Muslims in recent years, the desire to come

together against the forces of modernization is clearly an often repeated and increasingly common theme in the post 9/11 period. As with the dialogue sessions in Amman and Aachen, the participants in the Joint Russian-Iranian Theological Commission argued that through dialogue at the national, regional and international level, Orthodox Christians and Muslims could change the bleak outlook for the future because their combined efforts could, “foster mutual understanding, peace, friendship and justice” throughout the world.

The same commission met for its fifth session on 27 February–4 March 2006 in Tehran. Continuing to examine the ways in which the shared spiritual legacy of their Orthodox Christian and Islamic traditions might lead to healing in the world, the topic of the 2006 gathering was on eschatology. This session marked what appears to be a greater endorsement of Muslim-Christian dialogue, at least in a more public way, by the head of the Russian Orthodox Church. Alexy II, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia gave the opening address to the Commission for the first time since the meetings began in 1997. His address was cautious but supportive of the work:

It is gratifying to see that religious and state leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran are active supporters of the dialogue between civilizations. Active cooperation between the followers of the two religions is promoted by similar understanding of many aspects of relations among religion, state and society and important role of religion in social processes, including attainment of civil accord on the basis of moral principles in society. We work together to consolidate peace and justice, to prevent and overcome interethnic conflicts and not to allow exploitation of religious feelings for kindling hatred. Our Church shares the conviction that a global conflict could be prevented and local conflicts could be settled only if all nations develop freely and all historically formed civilizations have unrestricted influence on the fortunes of the world. Our Church is willing to continue and develop dialogue with the Iranian religious leaders.³⁷⁸

Patriarch Alexy seems to be walking a fine line in his statements here to support the work of the Commission without scandalizing the more conservative elements in his church as described above. One has to wonder as well whether his words were

carefully chosen, with at least some input from government officials, in order not to negatively impact Russian's political balancing of relations with Iran and with the international community in the early part of 2006.

This public, at least tacit support of Muslim-Christian dialogue in the name of peace by the Russian Orthodox Church continued in 2006 when it sponsored an international inter-religious encounter on terrorism in Moscow on 3-5 July 2006. A press article on the event stated that the roughly 150 religious leaders from around the world (representing 49 countries) had gathered to adopt, "a declaration to serve as a reminder to the heads of state of the governments of the G8 at the time of their [upcoming] summit in St. Petersburg on 15-17 July," that "the religions can help to stop terrorism, sprung from tensions between civilizations where the 'religious factor' is not absent."³⁷⁹ Once again, Patriarch Alexy II played an important roll in the encounter by addressing participants in the inaugural session. He stated in his opening remarks that, "without a profound understanding by the nations of their [respective] religious traditions, it is not possible to effectively counter conflicts, violence, extremism, and terrorism." The result was a very strong statement by participants to the world community about the inappropriate mixing of religion and violence:

The utilization of religion to incite hatred or as a pretext for crimes against individuals, morals, and humanity constitutes one of the principle challenges of modern times.... [We declare that there should be] a permanent method for assuaging different interests and respecting the moral sensibilities, the way of life, and the different legal and political systems of the various national and religious traditions. The world should be multi-polar and pluralistic, to the satisfaction of all men and all nations, and not subject to the simplistic and lifeless ideological systems [promoted by a few].³⁸⁰

The statement showed not only a common voice among the leaders of a number of the world's religions – including Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Shinto, as well as Islam – but also a growing solidarity among the various Orthodox churches in

Romania, Georgia, the Czech Lands and Slovakia, the United States, France, Armenia, Egypt (Coptic Church), and Ethiopia.

THE MONOTHEISTIC TRADITIONS & A SHARED VISION FOR A NEW WORLD

Other Orthodox Christians looking to engage Muslims and secure peace in other parts of the world during the period of spring 2003 through the summer of 2006, participated in an inter-religious conference in Athens just before the start of the 2004 Olympic Games. The event was titled, 'Religion – Peace – Olympic Ideal,' and drew a number of important leaders of the Church to Amarousion Attica on 10th August 2004, including His Beatitude Petros VII, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and all Africa. In his message to participants, Patrirach Petros stated that:

[This] is not only an important spiritual event on account of the inter-religious participation of representatives of the Orthodox Churches, other Christian doctrines and the great religions, especially the Monotheistic ones, but it especially contributes to the preparation for the upcoming start to the Olympic Games in 2004 in Greece, where they have their historic beginning.... The obvious quest [for all the participants] remains the issue of peace, seeing that it is now evident that, through it, the Olympic ideal can extend to its proportionate dimensions by way of the contribution of the religious communities and their responsible leaders.³⁸¹

This is an example of an important leader of world Orthodoxy using the ideals of the Olympics to foster peace among the nations and the religions, especially between Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.³⁸² Though participation by Orthodox leaders in this event - and others preceding or in connection with the Olympic games³⁸³ - may not be the most notable example of positive engagement with Muslims specifically, their presence did send a strong message to the world in the post-9/11 era. It seems many of the leaders of the Orthodox world felt it important to show they were willing to reach out in peace and love to those of other religions. This was an important counterbalance to all of the rhetoric about a supposed clash of civilizations and a perceived increase in fear and hostility between Christians and Muslims.

In the spring of 2005 there were two noteworthy events in which Orthodox Christians and Muslims joined together to affirm their shared commitment to peace and to promote dialogue among the world's faith traditions, particularly Christianity and Islam. The first of these events was a conference that took place in early March in Amman, Jordan. This international conference, sponsored by the Orthodox Peoples' Unity Fund and Jordan's Orthodox Society, was titled, 'Prospects of Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Today's World.' It involved political, religious, and public leaders from the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Russia, the Balkans, and Central Asia and was held, from the Muslim side, under the auspices of King Abdullah II. One of the key themes of the conference was the shared responsibility of Orthodox Christians and Muslims to work together not only to build peace, but also to remind the world of the essential role of moral and spiritual values in resolving conflict and healing the brokenness that had led to and was caused by terrorism. For example, Valery Alexeyev, president of the Orthodox Peoples' Unity fund, highlighted, "the efforts being made by Middle East Orthodox organizations to maintain and strengthen peace (sic) in the region and rally the Orthodox Arabs around the idea of peace (sic), tolerance and equality of the followers of Christianity and Islam."³⁸⁴ Even certain political leaders present at the event were stirred by the mood of the conference. For example, the chairman of the Russian Duma's Committee for Public Associations and Religious Organizations, Sergei Popov, stated that, "All major religions denounce terrorism and violence. The recent developments all over the world have proven this. However, international efforts should be pooled to bolster the role played by the imperishable spiritual values."³⁸⁵ The conference was significant in that, unlike many such events, it brought together leaders in the public, political, and religious domains.

In doing so, it opened the possibility of addressing the root causes of terrorism and violence in society.

The second notable event in the spring of 2005 took place in Albania, where, after the fall of communism, the leaders of the key religious communities had been meeting and working together to rebuild their country. The fruit of these efforts came on 18 March 2005 when the four traditional religious communities in Albania – the Muslim community, the Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania, the Catholic Church, and the Bektashi community – issued their ‘Statement of Shared Moral Commitment.’ It is quite astonishing that, in just a few years following the almost 50 years of total prohibition of religious faith, practice, and assembly under the oppressive communist regime (arguably the most openly hostile to religion of any in the world in the twentieth century), religious life in Albania could be so strong. What is even more inspiring is that, in their weakness, these religious communities had enough courage and confidence to reach out to each other to address their shared concerns in Albania and in the region. Celebrating what God had brought them through, recognizing the sacrifices of those who had kept faith alive through the country’s darkest hour, the cosignatories proclaimed, “the period of repression is behind us and religious life can once again blossom in Albania in its various forms and retake its hereditary place in a democratic society.”³⁸⁶ They also committed themselves to taking a leadership role facing the many challenges associated with rebuilding their country. For example, in the statement they promised the following:

[We] pledge ourselves to continue the promotion of a “climate of peace” within our communities by stressing to our own officials that preaching must not cause religious hatred.... We will continue to educate all persons to understand and respect our different faith traditions in order to prevent ignorance and fear from fueling discrimination and violence. To this end, we must ensure that school curriculum and textbooks treat each religious tradition in an equal and open manner. We will continue to be open to cooperation with civic and social organizations to carry out common activities for which we

share a common concern. We will continue to cooperate through reciprocal meetings to maintain and promote inter-religious understanding in Albania and in the region. We will continue to pledge ourselves to find the means to provide assistance for all those who suffer in our society.³⁸⁷

Albanian religious leaders did not plan to take a passive role behind political leaders in addressing the problems in their society. They pledged to educate on tolerance not only within their religious institutions, but also to take the next step to ensure that the values of cooperation and pluralism were a standard feature all levels of education in Albania. They even went so far as to promise to provide services to anyone in need, regardless of religious affiliation. This pledge has borne out at least in the work of the Orthodox signatory, Anastasios, Archbishop of Tirana, Durrës, Elbasan, & all Albania. Archbishop Anastasios' educational, health, and social services programmes have been touted as a living example of interfaith cooperation for the benefit of all in Albania and beyond.³⁸⁸

PEACE AND TOLERANCE II

It has been mentioned throughout this chapter, that Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch of the Orthodox Church, has played a key role in providing leadership in the post-9/11 period. Archbishop Demitrios, Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church of America, spoke these words about the Ecumenical Patriarchate:

Patriarch Bartholomew has been at the forefront of organizing international inter-religious conferences to confront the evils of religious fanaticism and intolerance. He was among the first of the major world religious personalities to organize a meeting of religious leaders from Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faiths very soon after the tragic events of September 11, 2001.³⁸⁹

The reference here is to the meeting in Belgium that produced the aforementioned “Brussels Declaration.” In November of 2005 Patriarch Bartholomew again showed his leadership on the international stage by convening the second “Peace and Tolerance Conference” (the first having begun in Berne in 1992), this time on the

topic of, 'Dialogue and Understanding in Southeast Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia.'

In a statement that resulted from the deliberations, signed by Rabbi Arthur Schneier (Jewish), Sheikhu-Islam Allahshukur Pashazadeh (Muslim), and Walter Cardinal Kasper (Catholic), as well as Patriarch Bartholomew, the participants in the Peace and Tolerance II Conference reaffirmed their earlier statement that, "A crime committed in the name of religion is a crime against religion."³⁹⁰ They acknowledged that though through their efforts and other circumstances certain conflicts had diminished, they still had much work ahead of them in support of peace and tolerance throughout the world. Section II of the statement reads:

While most of the deadly conflicts that raged then have ceased, unfortunately there is still distrust, suspicion, the threat of harm, as well as intermittent violence in the regions represented. It is our aim, as religious leaders of our countries, to mitigate against those dangerous paths; to heal painful memories; and encourage all to exhibit in their actions the spirit of 'live and let live'.... The scourge of international terrorism that defiles the tenets of morality of our monotheistic religions, has intensified since 1994. We condemn those who engage in such heinous crimes as lawless murderers and call upon all religious leaders to speak out forcefully against them.³⁹¹

The references to conflicts taking place in the early to mid-1990s were, "the crimes against humanity...in Bosnia, in Armenia/Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Tajikistan."³⁹²

Patriarch Bartholomew and the other signatories seem to imply that the violence and hatred of a regional character at the end of the twentieth century had been replaced by international terrorism networks and plots on a global scale at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Similar to the inter-religious approach taken in Albania, the signatories of the Peace and Tolerance II document asked all people to reach out beyond the boundaries of their religious communities to care for all suffering individuals with these words: "We ask the religious communities to nurture and assist the suffering children, sick and aged, no matter what faith they profess, to help them

find spiritual, psychological and physical healing.” Likewise, they stated that they “resolutely reject the use of language that incites people to violence... [and] encourage religious leaders to work with the political leadership in their respective countries to promote peace, justice, human and religious rights.” Once again, this is an example of the leadership of an Orthodox hierarch, in cooperation with those of other religious traditions (nearly always inclusive of Islam), to send a clear message to his flock and to the world that Orthodox Christianity is engaged in the problems faced by all humanity. Patriarch Bartholomew, and others like him, seems to be concerned that Orthodoxy *not* be presented as a closed, self-conscious, and insecure religion that cannot affirm the work of the Holy Spirit outside the boundaries of the Church.

ISRAEL'S OFFENSIVE INTO LEBANON

Not unlike Patriarch Bartholomew, other Orthodox hierarchs have courageously stood for justice in the political mire. This was certainly the case in the summer of 2006, when a group composed of American Middle-Eastern Christians, Middle Eastern Christians, Muslim religious leaders from the United States and the Middle East, and a representative from the Druze Council of America met on 3 August 2006 met to address a crisis in Israel-Palestine. (A bombing and ground offensive of the Israeli government into Lebanon had killed more than 900 Lebanese, over one third of which were children, and displaced close to one million people from their homes.³⁹³) Though most of those present were part of the Standing Conference of American Middle-Eastern Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders, this special session was convened to issue a resolution and express solidarity. Led by Metropolitan Phillip (Saliba), Primate of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, the group called for an “immediate and unconditional cease fire,” the “exchange of prisoners between Lebanon and Israel,” an increased

role of the international community to give “humanitarian assistance to those who are suffering” and “help the hundreds of thousands of displaced Lebanese,” and the “implementation of the UN resolutions that address occupied territories in Lebanon and the entire region.”³⁹⁴

Many of the participants had joined with the Middle East Council of Churches on previous occasions to address the indiscretions and offenses of the Israeli government that had caused so much physical and psychological damage to the Muslim and Christian communities in Israel and the surrounding countries. As with previous resolutions, the signatories of this 2006 statement seem to carefully delineate between their condemnation of the actions of the Israeli government and their support of Israeli Jews. Lest their words be misinterpreted to mean a disparaging comment on Judaism generally or Israeli Jews in particular, the participants declared that they, “[deplore] the killing of any human being, and reiterate that all killing is against our [*Christian, Muslim, and Jewish*] religious beliefs.”³⁹⁵ Though Israel did eventually cease the incursions into Lebanon, it is difficult to say the degree to which this resolution may have influenced the decision of Israeli leaders to withdraw.

GREECE: A CASE STUDY IN OPPOSING VOICES IN THE CHURCH

While many Orthodox Christians were increasingly joining with Muslims to promote mutual understanding and to work together toward peace, there was also a renewal of a call among other Orthodox Christians for the cessation of ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue altogether. There has for centuries been a natural tension within the worldwide Orthodox community between those who are generous towards other religions, acknowledging the role of the Holy Spirit wherever it may or may not be seen, and those concerned about carefully defining and protecting the boundaries of the Church. This natural tension, which on its surface and when kept in balance

could be considered something healthy for the Church, has at times throughout the centuries become problematic and destructive. It could be argued that the tragic events of 11 September 2001 and their aftermath, which spilled over in a variety of ways into many parts of the world, led to one of those periods of unhealthy imbalance and polarization between these two long-standing perspectives within the Church. To be sure, there had been steady opposition to the participation of Orthodox Christians in ecumenical and inter-religious activities many years prior to 9/11, as discussed in the previous chapter. However, 9/11 in the broadest sense seemed to set aflame latent attitudes and fears about Islam and Muslims that had been smoldering in the hearts of individuals and communities. It seems that, for certain people within the Church, it did not take much convincing that the more cautious narrow perspective of Orthodoxy would be the only way to assure a secure future for themselves and their Orthodox Church. Others within the Orthodox world are still struggling with what to make of 9/11 and, by extension, Islam. Suffice it to say that 9/11 has sparked a number of debates which, because of fear of the perceived or real threat of international terrorism, have had a polarizing affect among Orthodox Christians (both with each other and with those outside the Church).

The two poles of this debate seem to be particularly evident within the Orthodox Church of Greece. At both the grassroots level and in the upper echelon of church leadership one can find those who strongly support engagement in ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue, as well as those who are passionately against it. Though much of this chapter thus far has focused on the former trend, it would be useful also to examine the latter, which has been on the rise in recent years. Perhaps the strongest evidence supporting the assertion that there is a growing trend of anti-ecumenism (for lack of a better term, and inclusive here of opposition to inter-religious dialogue)

within the Orthodox Church of Greece is a significant conference that took place in Thessaloniki from 20-24 September 2004. Though sponsored and organized by the School of Pastoral Theology at The Aristotelian University, the conference was inter-Orthodox and international, meaning its participants (around 65 in all) came from other Orthodox Churches, as well as the Church of Greece, and included metropolitans, bishops, priests, theologians, monks, and interested laypersons of all sorts. Though only one conference, the event showed just how far a particular perspective had spread throughout the Church of Greece, and to some extent (if the handful of non-Greek participants is any indication), in Eastern Europe, Africa, and North America.

The conference organizers created a summary with “findings” from the proceedings and titled the document, ‘Conclusions of the Inter-Orthodox Theological Conference: “Ecumenism: Origins – Expectations – Disenchantment.”’ The document was translated into English by Fr. Peter Heers and posted on-line.³⁹⁶ There were no signatories to these statements, making it is difficult to determine to what degree one can consider them the consensus of those in attendance, as opposed to the views of the organizers or editors themselves. However, it can be assumed that the general attitudes conveyed in them were shared by many of the participants. The overall conclusion to the event is stated quite clearly at the end of the document:

[O]ut of love we reject ecumenism, for we wish to offer to the heterodox and to non-Christians that which the Lord has so richly granted to all of us within His Holy Orthodox Church: namely the possibility of becoming and being members of His Body.³⁹⁷

The message is that ecumenism is at best unhelpful to the Orthodox cause and at worst a heresy. The body of the document reveals an even stronger, more negative tone from the participants, and gives a fuller appreciation of their perspective on the non-Orthodox and those in the Church who would engage them in dialogue. Perhaps

the harshest language appears in relation to what they refer to as “inter-religious syncretism:”

Ecumenism, after the success it has realized in inter-Christian dialogues...has moved on to the next objective of the “New Age”: inter-religious unity. Here one encounters promotions of the truly demonic idea that Christ is not the only path to salvation, the life, light and truth.... Inter-religious gatherings and dialogues, more frequently and widely supported by Christian leaders, including some Orthodox, have lead to an intolerable syncretism; they constitute a negation of the Gospel and an insult to the Holy Martyrs and Confessors of the faith....³⁹⁸

This is a clear contrast from the notion presented by Metropolitan Georges (Khodr) – a figure mentioned numerous times in preceding chapters - and proposed similarly by others, that Orthodox Christians should endeavor to, “follow the tracks of Christ perceptible in the shadows of other religions.”³⁹⁹ Simply put, these anti-ecumenists find inter-religious efforts quite objectionable and with only one end – the obscuration of the truth about Christ and the one, true (Orthodox) Church. They suggest as a solution to the “heresies” (which is the term used repeatedly in the document) of ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue, among other things are two key proposals: 1) complete withdrawal of the Orthodox churches from the World Council of Churches and 2) excommunication for those Orthodox Christians (especially church leaders) who will not desist from involvement in ecumenism and dialogue with non-Christians. The document says this on the latter subject:

[We propose] in the event that they continue to participate in, and lend support to, the pan-heresy of Ecumenism – both inter-christian and inter-religious – the obligatory salvific, canonical and patristic course for the faithful, clergy and laity, is excommunication: in other words, ceasing to commemorate bishops, who are co-responsible for, and co-communicants with, heresy and delusion.⁴⁰⁰

In other words, those who know the truth about ecumenism must out of love for those engaged in “heresy and delusion” and for the sake of the Church excommunicate their

brothers and sisters in Christ if they will not listen to reason and change their ways. They argue here that the Church itself gives them no other choice.

If one accepts that the 2004 conference in Thessaloniki against ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue is representative of one pole in the debate about Islam within the Church of Greece, the other pole could best be symbolized by Volos, a city about 215 km south of Thessaloniki situated on the Pagasetic Gulf. Volos and the entire Diocese of Dimitrias has become a self-proclaimed “international meeting point of encounter and dialogue.” The Academy of Theological Studies has offered a summer seminar and a winter programme of lectures every year since 2000.⁴⁰¹ Presented as “cutting-edge scholarly conferences,” the Academy has put together an impressive and international list of presenters over its relatively short lifespan. It has also covered a wide array of topics through the conferences, which are generally accompanied by parallel events such as seminars, workshops, congresses, and round tables.

Among the activities associated with Volos in recent years, two are particularly germane to the question of relations between Orthodox Christianity and Islam. The first was a round table in conjunction with the theme for the academic year 2000-2001, “Orthodoxy and Modernity.” The round table took place on 12 November 2001 and addressed the topic, “Islam and Fundamentalism – Orthodoxy and Globalization.”⁴⁰² Participants included the Metropolitan of Demetrias, the (now) Minister of Culture and Acting Foreign Minister of Lebanon, a member of Parliament in Greece, academics from several well-known universities, and an editor of a regional newspaper who coordinated the event. The lectures were published in 2004 in a volume titled, *Islam & Fundamentalism – Orthodox Christianity and Globalization*.⁴⁰³ This collection represents a comparative, but also introspective

analysis on how Orthodox Christians and Muslims have been on both very similar and parallel tracks in their encounter with modernity, with which they still have a number of unresolved issues.⁴⁰⁴ In addition to the anchor article by Metropolitan Ignatius (from which the volume itself received its title), Marios Begzos outlines the rise of political Islam within the Muslim community and Nick Mouzele (London School of Economics) looks at urbanization and the issues it presents for Orthodoxy. (Also included are articles by Tarek Mitri, Andreas Andrianopoulos, Pantelis Kalaitzidi [Director of Volos Academy for Theological Studies], Giorgou Karampelia, and Demitri Mpekriake.)

The round table set the stage for a much more significant event in Volos several years later. The entire winter lecture series at the Academy of Theological Studies in Volos for the academic year 2006-2007 was devoted to the topic, “Orthodox Christianity and Islam – Islam in Europe.”⁴⁰⁵ The following statement from the opening comments in the programme book for that year show the degree to which Volos represents the opposite pole from that of the aforementioned anti-ecumenism conference:

The knowledge of Islam can well assist us in reaching a mutual understanding of, and a respect for, cultural and religious otherness, in all amounting to a level of spiritual maturity on the basis of which the Church is called to carry out her work and her mission. It is our duty therefore to overcome past confrontations, so as to enable ourselves to work for a brighter future for both sides, a future marked by understanding and mutual acceptance. Such a noble aim presupposes, of course, a sincere commitment to serious and sober scholarly dialogue, far from defensive apologies and self-righteous rhetoric.⁴⁰⁶

Clearly the organizers of this academic programme did not fear engaging with Muslims through dialogue, nor were they concerned that such interaction might in some way weaken or diminish the Church. By contrast, they assert that the journey toward mutual understanding and a greater respect for the ‘religious other’ is not only

a worthwhile endeavor, but also a sign of the spiritual maturity of those willing to embark upon the quest.

The conference organizers set up a series of lectures and events involving an international grouping of Muslim and Orthodox Christian scholars and religious leaders. The basic aim in these sessions was to explore a series of questions that the Academy had identified as being critical to dialogue between Orthodox Christians and Muslims at this juncture in history. The questions were as follows:

What were the relations and contacts between Orthodox Christianity and Islam, Hesychasm and Sufism? What is the place of hermeneutics in these two great spiritual traditions? What were their mutual osmoses and the interactions? How can we heal the memories of past conflicts and how can we change into a wealth and a blessing of God the given present co-existence of Christians and Muslims? Also, are we to assume that Orthodox Christianity and Islam are only entitled to a pre-modern past or can they perhaps make serious claims for a modern and post-modern present and future? What could be the advisable treatment of fundamentalisms at both sides? Does Europe, finally, constitute a closed Christian club or should it be properly envisioned as a multicultural and multireligious political entity?⁴⁰⁷

Building upon the foundation laid by the round table several years before, this programme established a compelling framework for serious dialogue on some of the key issues faced by Orthodox Christians and Muslims today. For example, the previous chapter of this writing delved into the problems both communities face in terms of finding their identity in this postmodern age. Several of the seminars in Volos got to the heart of this question of identity by attempting to build a bridge for Orthodox Christians and Muslims between their respective narratives of the past and a common vision for their future.

In many ways, the Academy's year of programming on the topic of "Orthodox Christianity and Islam – Islam in Europe" seemed to be presented as a remedy to much of the misinformation and damaging attacks on Islam presented by the opposing side in the battle for the hearts and minds of their compatriots with regard to Muslims.

The organizers of the events point out that Orthodox Christians and Muslims must remember that their historical trajectory together has been filled with “a mixture of mutual confrontations *and* understanding.” They make the following plea to those who may be uncertain about Islam:

In a world where the trumpets of war, terrorism and conflicts are usually covered with dangerous and self-serving religious rhetoric, which in turn erects religious and metaphysical walls among peoples, there also emerges from the critical conscience of the alert and informed faithful the need to build venues of inter-religious communication and understanding, especially among those who declare, and want to be, “children of Abraham”. In contrast to those who make an ideology out of the Conflict of religions and cultures, and most certainly against politicians with militant proclivities eager to declare new crusades, theology owes to insist unwaveringly on the need for increased dialogue based on love, respect and the acceptance of religious and cultural otherness, through serious and honest theological discussion.⁴⁰⁸

Here we see a compelling illustration of the way religion is so often eclipsed by or used as an external mask for ideology. It is interesting to think about how even the notion of such theories as the “clash of civilizations” can easily become an ideology and that those who live by it think and act in much the same way as the very “fundamentalists” they are so fond of criticizing.

2007 AND BEYOND: RENEWED COMMITMENT TO DIALOGUE AND THE SYNAXIS OF THE PRIMATES OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCHES

In the fall of 2006, many Muslims throughout the world were outraged by statements made by Pope Benedict XVI in a speech he presented at the University of Regensburg. The Pope quoted a 14th-century Byzantine emperor who had labeled some key actions of the Prophet Muhammad as “evil and inhuman.” The subtle implication of his remarks was that he too believed this about Islam’s revered Prophet and, by extension, questioned the basic foundation of the religion. Though he later apologized and attempted to clarify the intended meaning of his statements, the damage had been done. Several Muslims were so outraged that they called for the

death of the Pope, as was the case with a Somali imam. In a direct response to this threatening language, Archbishop Christodoulos, head of the Orthodox Church of Greece, sparked more fury in the Muslim world with his own inflammatory statements about Islam. In one of his sermons he said, “Many Christians on the Black Continent (Africa) suffer from fanatic Islamists. The example of Roman Catholic monks who were slaughtered last year...because they wore the cross and believed in our crucified Lord is still recent.”⁴⁰⁹ In light of these comments from Pope Benedict and Archbishop Christodoulos, as well as a few others (such as Lord Carey, the former Archbishop of Canterbury), the fall of 2006 was a trying moment in the recent history of relations between Christianity and Islam.

With terrorist attacks continuing (showing the resilience of the ever increasing global extremist networks), armed conflicts persisting in the Middle East, and the war of words escalating between certain Christian and Muslim leaders, the progress that had been made toward peace over the previous few years seemed to be slipping away. Still, there were those from both Christian and the Muslim communities who refused to stand by and let this happen. One of the strongest examples of this among Orthodox Christian leaders was His Beatitude Ignatius IV (Hazim), Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and all the East. Patriarch Ignatius had been for many years at the forefront of the efforts to improve relations between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches. He and the previous Pope, John Paul II, had taken great strides together to increase their bond of friendship and to remove some of the barriers that had divided the Christian Church for centuries. Perhaps emboldened by this elevated level of trust that had been built up with Rome, the Patriarch spoke quite pointedly to Pope Benedict about his poor choice of words about Islam. He expressed concern about the potential consequences and admonished the Pope by saying:

We have followed with extreme anxiety your statements and the angry reactions that accompanied them over the course of the last days.... [Eastern Christians] have knowledge, experience and understanding of Christianity and Islam together, for they have been in a state of coexistence, cooperation and harmony from the beginning of the Islamic mission until now. We have established the best of relationships, built on respect for religions and for everyone's freedom to practice rites as he wishes and according to his belief in the teachings of his religion and the principles of his divine law.... We are hoping that you may take part in raising the essence of religions from the field of dialogues, intellectual efforts and citations that have been effaced by time, and that there may be a complete rapprochement of these doctrinal fixed points of the religions from a contemporary perspective, and not from the perspective of the Middle Ages. We assert that religion is not so much for the practice of intellectual and philosophical refinement as it is for living and coexisting in love, so far as this harmonizes with beliefs, divine laws, and rites.⁴¹⁰

There are three noteworthy points in this quotation. First, Patriarch Ignatius reminds the Pope that from the rise of Islam to the present day there has been an unbroken bond of tolerance and respect between most Orthodox Christians and Muslims in the lands that gave birth to both of these great religions. Second, he asserts that the polemics that marked much of the extant Byzantine literature on Islam from the Middle Ages do not in any way diminish the potential for more positive and constructive interaction between Christians and Muslims today. Finally, the Patriarch challenges the Pope to think of religion not as something to divide human beings, but rather that power, which beyond all logical explanation enables persons and communities to forgive past mistakes, live at peace in the present, and envision a harmonious future together in the fullness of the Divine love.

Among Muslims, there were also those who refused to let peace and love between Muslims and Christians slip away into the cloud of anger that seemed to be growing in both communities following the Pope Benedict's now infamous speech. In October of 2006, 36 Muslim scholars wrote what they called an "Open Letter to the Pope" to address his controversial remarks. One year later on the occasion of *Eid al-Fitr*, 138 Muslim scholars and leaders sent another 'Open Letter,' this time to all of

the world's major Christian leaders, who were addressed by name, and a statement that they called, "A Common Word Between Us and You."⁴¹¹ This document, which was distributed in hard copy as well as through an interactive website, was facilitated through Jordan's Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought and was intended to highlight key areas of commonality and possibilities for rapprochement between the two religions.⁴¹²

The institute's website also created a website to provide Muslims the opportunity to express their agreement with the statement and for Christian leaders to post their replies. Since October 2007, a number of Orthodox hierarchs have taken advantage of this opportunity, responding to Muslims and identifying what they envision as the most fruitful path forward for Muslim-Christian relations. Below are just a few of the more prominent examples. His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia, Armenian Orthodox Church stated that:

[A] strong commitment to living together would help us to destroy the walls of prejudice, reassert each religion's integrity, and generate mutual accountability and common responsibility. What sort of community shall we build together? In addition to their theological teachings our two religions have the rich experience and inner potential to transform mere coexistence into a broader community of shared values, interactive diversity, common participation and mutual trust.⁴¹³

In many ways Catholicos Aram's words echo those of Patriarch Ignatius, except that he challenges Muslims and Christians alike to go beyond coexistence so that they can reshape their societies.

Of equal significance was the statement of Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia. Among the number of items he addressed in his response was the assertion by some that engaging in inter-religious dialogue can weaken one's own religious tradition. He wrote:

Some people among both Christians and Muslims have expressed fears that the development of interreligious dialogue may lead to the religious

syncretism, a review of the doctrines and obliterated borders between religious traditions. Time has shown however that a reasonable system of cooperation between religions helps to preserve and emphasize the unique nature and identity of each of them.

This was a significant comment for Patriarch Alexy to make in such a public way in that it identified one of the key challenges to interreligious dialogue in world Orthodoxy. Apparently, some fear that Orthodoxy's fidelity to the "true faith" might in some way be tarnished or that its liturgical rites might be corrupted through interaction with Muslims. This concern was addressed directly by the late Patriarch Alexy, who led the world's largest (national) Orthodox church for many years. As has been the case in the Orthodox Church of Greece, Russian Orthodoxy also has within it those who are passionately opposed to ecumenism or inter-religious dialogue.⁴¹⁴ The Patriarch was interested in taking bold steps to combat such attitudes within his church.

One final example worth mentioning from the reactions of Orthodox Christians to the Muslim Open Letter, came from Archbishop Chrisostomos of Cyprus. Despite the intense, now long-standing, battle with Turkey over the island of Cyprus itself, which has contributed to the common prejudice of many Cypriots toward Muslims, the Archbishop spoke optimistically about the potential of Muslim-Christian relations. He said:

The long, for centuries, coexistence of Eastern Christianity with Islam has created among others, a common cultural ground and the study and rise of it is possible to lead to a common effort for peace. We mention indicatively the fields of architecture, music, adoration and monasticism.⁴¹⁵

Archbishop Chrisostomos identified four specific areas here that could lead to promising results for Muslims and Christians interested in dialogue and improving their relations with each other. These, he argued, are of special significance for

Orthodox Christians and part of the “common cultural ground” and historical legacy of both Orthodox Christians and Muslims.

The positive responses expressed by Catholicos Aram, Patriarch Alexy, Archbishop Chrisostomos, and others to the Open Letter from Muslims were met as well with action by Orthodox Christians during 2007-2008. This was particularly the case in the Middle East, where existing contacts and networks between Orthodox Christians and Muslims were ever strengthening and increasing their scope, and was perhaps most evident among the youth. For example, the Middle East region of the World Christian Student Federation – which included representatives from Orthodox Youth Movements in Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon – had already been holding an annual Muslim-Christian dialogue conference. In May of 2007, however, they combined their efforts with the Royal Institute of Inter-Faith Studies, the Jordanian Interfaith Coexistence Research Center, and the World Conference on Religions for Peace to produce a youth consultation on the topic of, “Pluralism and Fanaticism.” Fifty young people from Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, and Sudan participated in the event.⁴¹⁶

A second example of action by Orthodox Christians to improve relations with Muslims and to better work with them on joint concerns took place in Amman during June of 2008. Though actually a gathering of Christians, which included 130 representatives from six continents, the items discussed promised to potentially be of great significance in the lives of both Muslims and Christians in Palestine and Israel, as well as Israeli Jews. This international conference called, “Churches Together for Peace and Justice in the Middle East,” was convened by the World Council of Churches with the goal of taking stock of the “prospects for peace in Israel and Palestine.”⁴¹⁷ The conference was also intended as a means to launch a new “inter-

church advocacy initiative,” known as the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum, which was created to help Christians, “cooperate more closely in advocacy for peace and justice in the Middle East.”

The Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories for over 40 years, along with the violence and hatred that had emerged as a result, was identified as one of the key reasons for the decline of a Christian presence in the region. Though Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia, General Secretary for the WCC, noted at the event that it is important for Christians to address the “real concerns about growing anti-Semitism,” one of the key goals of the advocacy forum was to work toward ending the occupation.⁴¹⁸ On this point one of the key Orthodox participants, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem and All Palestine Theophilos III, emphasized the importance of dialogue, not only among Christian denominations, but also between Christians and those of other faiths.⁴¹⁹ Though he acknowledged that the longstanding Israeli-Palestinian conflict had caused severe “violence, aggression, hatred and bigotry, which produce unrest and insecurity,” he also suggested that “the conflict and hatred can be turned into durable and just peace.” While he emphasized the potential role of the churches in this through the new advocacy initiative, Patriarch Theophilos seemed to be implying as well that strengthening Muslim-Christian relations in the region would also strengthen the Muslim and Christian communities in the face of Israeli occupation. Though Patriarch Theophilos and other Christian leaders in the region find promise in a multilateral approach between Jews, Christians, and Muslims, the subtle theme throughout the conference and the advocacy initiative seemed to be that the shared experiences and conditions in which Christians and Muslims find themselves in Israel and Palestine point to a natural affinity between them and the potential for greater results through dialogue and united action.

One final example during 2007-2008 to indicate that Orthodox Christians in the Middle East had strengthened their resolve to build upon and increase the scope of existing networks between themselves and their Muslim neighbors was a series of meetings held in Syria during April 2008. In the face of increased pressures following 9/11 and the influx of refugees from Lebanon during the 2006 war, Christian and Islamic leaders in Syria had worked so well together that an international delegation of Christians had come to the country to learn from them. Summarizing some of the reasons for Syria's long history of Christians and Muslims living together in peace and advising delegates on what they could do to promote this in their own countries, Patriarch Ignatius IV (Hazim) said the following:

Islam cannot be studied like grammar.... We have to see the real people and share with them. Muslims are sharing with you by living in your countries. Why do you ignore them? ...I believe in acts of love. Receiving people with love will not solve all problems immediately. But the next generation will harvest the fruits of loving.⁴²⁰

Here, once again, Patriarch Ignatius was in the forefront of those who would promote dialogue and cooperation between Christians and Muslims. Despite some of the setbacks caused by the events of 9/11, further attacks by terrorists in other parts of the world, and increased militarization in the Middle East, the patriarch seemed not to be deterred from his goal to bring greater peace and fellowship to Christians and Muslims. With his experience in living with Muslims and being a strong advocate for dialogue for several decades, Patriarch Ignatius had the wisdom and the ability to view progress from the perspective of the long term. As he said, it is important to plant seeds of love now so that the fruits may actually be realized in the years to come. Patriarch Ignatius' long-range vision and personal example of engagement with Muslims are truly extraordinary and have yielded much fruit during his own lifetime. Countless persons, both Muslim and Christian, have been influenced,

inspired, and encouraged by Patriarch Ignatius to pursue the challenging and sometimes troublesome road of dialogue and interfaith encounter.

There have been a number of signs indicating that Orthodox Christians have renewed their efforts to dialogue with Muslims over the past few years. The positive responses to the “Open Letter” from Muslim leaders as well as various actions through involvement in shared concerns with Muslims are just some of the examples of this throughout the Orthodox world. However, there was a watershed moment within the Orthodox Church in 2008 in terms of its commitment to interreligious dialogue and common action with those of other faiths. On 9 October of that year, Patriarch Bartholomew convened a four-day meeting at the Ecumenical Patriarchate with 14 Orthodox primates and their representatives from around the world to discuss a number of pressing issues, reestablish a common set of principles and goals for the twenty-first century, and promote greater unity within the Church and *via à vis* the Church and the outside world. This event, which marked the fifth time that such a Synaxis had taken place since 1990, was an opportunity for Orthodox leaders to show their unity as a Church and was part of the efforts over the course of many years leading to a forthcoming Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church, discussed at some length in chapter two. Among the issues discussed at this synaxis of Orthodox primates was their agreement on the need “to strengthen by means of further theological support the decisions taken on a Pan-Orthodox level regarding participation of the Orthodox Church in theological dialogues with the non-Orthodox [i.e. with other Christian confessions and those of other religions].”⁴²¹ Interreligious dialogue - and relations generally - between Orthodox Christians and those of other religions were, therefore, identified as justifications, among other things, for the 2008 Synaxis itself.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew took great care in his opening remarks to model the spirit of unity that was to pervade the entire gathering. With regard to interreligious relations, he spoke the following to his brother bishops:

Orthodox theology cannot today be developed or expounded without dialogue with modern currents of philosophical thought and social dynamics, as well as with various forms of art and culture of our times. In this regard, the message and overall word of Orthodoxy cannot be aggressive, as it often unfortunately is; for this is of no benefit at all. Rather, it must be dialectical, dialogical and reconciliatory. We must first understand other people and discern their deeper concerns; for, even behind disbelief, there lies concealed the search for the true God.... The Church cannot – indeed, it must not – in any way nurture religious fanaticism, whether consciously or subconsciously. When zeal becomes fanaticism, it deviates from the nature of the Church. By contrast, we must develop initiatives of reconciliation wherever conflicts among people either loom or erupt. Inter-Christian and inter-religious dialogue is the very least of our obligations; and it is one that we must surely fulfill.⁴²²

In other words, the engagement of the Church in inter-Christian and interreligious dialogue should be seen as a starting point, or an opening to the broader opportunities Orthodox Christians may have to be “dialectical, dialogical, and reconciliatory” with those around them, be they friend or foe. He encouraged participants to enter the Synaxis with this spirit of openness and charity.

Apparently, this admonition struck a cord with all of the other Orthodox patriarchs at the Synaxis. After their several days of discussion on all of the matters before them, in their final statement from the event, they made these conclusions with regard what Orthodoxy’s relationship should be with other religions:

As Primates and Representatives of the Most Holy Orthodox Churches...we proclaim from the See of the First-throne among the Churches and we re-affirm...our desire to continue, despite any difficulties, the theological dialogues with other Christians, as well as the interreligious dialogues, especially with Judaism and Islam, given that dialogue constitutes the only way of solving differences among people, especially in a time like today, when every kind of division, including those in the name of religion, threaten people’s peace and unity.⁴²³

Through these words, the leaders of the world’s Orthodox Churches reaffirmed the importance of theological dialogues with those of other religions, particularly Judaism

and Islam. They encouraged all Orthodox Christians not to give in to those forces within their “autocephalous churches” that would try to keep them from joining with Jews and Muslims in dialogue, but to face head-on the issues between them, as well as those that they collectively face in an age when peace, unity, and religion itself (i.e. all world religions) are being threatened.

CONCLUSIONS

Though the statements on interreligious dialogue from the October 2008 Synaxis of the Heads of all Orthodox Churches may have reflected the most up-to-date “Orthodox position” on Islam and Muslim-Christian dialogue, it remains to be seen whether and when a Holy and Great Council will occur and if the participants will more fully express the “mind of the Church” on this matter. However, if the evidence presented in this chapter is any indication, Orthodox Christians, in the main, will continue to engage in dialogue and common action with Muslims and those of other religions. It does not seem that the tragedies of 9/11, or similar ones occurring since 2001, have proved to be an impediment to these efforts. In fact, it appears that the terrorist attacks have had the positive effect of increasing the dialogue within the Church about its engagement generally with the outside world. Whereas in the pre-9/11 period, much of the dialogue between Orthodox Christians and Muslims occurred in the context of the World Council of Churches and certain local and regional partnerships, in the years after the September 11th terrorist attacks dialogue efforts expanded into numerous other international and local contexts. Events such as the one leading to the “Brussels Declaration,” where Orthodox Christians and Muslims were prominent participants, drew the attention of key world leaders. There are also the examples of the interfaith conference prior to the start of the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, the ‘Peace and Tolerance’ event of 2005, and the 2006

conference in Jordan on the ‘Prospects of Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Today’s World.’

The question remains, however, whether September 11th actually changed relations and dialogue between Orthodox Christians and Muslims. The increased number of dialogues between them (which were sometimes expanded to include those of other religions, most commonly Judaism) and their general efforts to foster and restore peace could be seen as a natural and temporary reaction to terrorism on a grand (and truly international) scale. Did these events in any way shift or fundamentally change the views of Orthodox Christians toward Muslims or have any impact on the dialogue between them? In terms of the views of Orthodox Christians towards Islam, 9/11 seems to have had little impact among those individuals who have been leaders in dialogue efforts with Muslims over the last few decades. In fact, it only seems to have strengthened their resolve to look beyond the religious differences and reach out to Muslims as fellow human persons of faith in the one true God. As was mentioned in this chapter, on two occasions during the post-9/11 period Patriarch Ignatius IV (Hazim) – a pioneer in the field of Muslim-Christian dialogue – made just this point by speaking of the responsibility of Christians to reach out in love to their Muslim neighbors. He spoke of Orthodox Christians and Muslims “living and coexisting in love” and encouraged them to “receive each other in love” in order that “the next generation will harvest the fruits of loving.” This is consistent with his earlier writings, as well as the thought of others mentioned in this study who have been actively engaged over the long term in Muslim-Christian dialogue (such as Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Georges [Khodr], and Archbishop Anastasios [Yannoulatos]).

In comparing the statements about Islam and the content of the dialogues that took place in the post-9/11 period with those covered in previous chapters of this study, it could be argued that there has been a subtle shift among Orthodox Christians in terms of their focus. It seems that there may be a greater emphasis and awareness of the dangers of religious fundamentalism not only outside of their own tradition (such as the thought and acts of Islamic terrorists or similar extremists from any other of the great world religions), but also among their fellow Orthodox Christians. One can detect, in the years following the 9/11 attacks, an increasingly self-critical tone in the comments of some Orthodox theologians who speak of any tendency toward religious extremism within their church. An example of this can be found in the speech by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew quoted toward the end of this chapter in which he encourages his fellow bishops to root out “religious fanaticism [within the Church], whether consciously or subconsciously” and to consider inter-Christian and inter-religious dialogue as “the very least of [their] obligations.” Similarly, the 2005 ‘Statement of Shared Moral Commitment,’ penned by Archbishop Anastasios’ and other leaders of the religious traditions in Albania, reveals a sincere desire to eradicate religious hatred and discrimination propagated through religious education programs and curricula, as well as through preaching from the pulpits and minbars of churches and mosques throughout the country.

The Orthodox Christians mentioned in the preceding pages have also included with increasing frequency an appeal to peace in their speeches and writings. With few exceptions, notably Fr. Webster’s discussion of what he called “The Orthodox Justifiable War Trajectory” and the 2004 theological conference in Thessaloniki on “Ecumenism: Origins – Expectations – Disenchantment,” the theme of establishing (or reestablishing) *peace* in their societies and throughout the world seems to be

present in nearly all of the representative materials from the post-9/11 period regarding relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims. Perhaps in this sense one can say that, in reaction to 9/11, the Orthodox theologians and leaders engaged in dialogue with Muslims have articulated themselves and their convictions in a slightly different manner in order to show to themselves, their partners in dialogue, and the world that they support efforts towards peace, *not* war. As a matter of survival and what might be expected from world religious leaders during times of crisis, war, and increased religious fanaticism, key Orthodox hierarchs and theologians continued to acknowledge that the future of their Church may in some measure depend upon their ability to live in peace with their Muslim neighbors and to work with them to alleviate suffering and despair across the globe.

Outside of the points mentioned above, the thought and action of Orthodox Christians during the post-9/11 period does not appear to be a departure from the basic notions found in earlier writings from Orthodox theologians on Islam and Orthodox Christian-Muslim dialogue. After several decades in dialogue with Muslims and with more and more Orthodox leaders participating in such efforts, there seems to be less of an overt need to continually justify why Orthodox Christians should engage in common work with Muslims and even less how Islam, in its historic and current manifestations, functions in relation to the divine economy and the salvation of the world. In this sense, one rarely finds in the literature since 9/11 the kind of elaborate theological arguments on Christology and Pneumatology vis à vis Islam that were presented in the 70s and 80s from individuals like Metropolitan Georges and Archbishop Anastasios (see chapter three). The points made then seem to be taken for granted today by those who are engaged in interfaith dialogue and shared action with those of other religions, especially Muslims.

One final observation of the post-9/11 period is an increase in the prominence of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, both inside and outside of the Church. It is not clear whether his influence has in any way increased as a result of the events and aftermath of 9/11. However, each year he furthers with greater degrees of success his long-recognized goal of increased dialogue and mutual cooperation between Orthodox Christians and Muslims (as well as those of other religions). This can be seen in his leadership among inter-religious and inter-Christian groups, before European and international organizations, and, most notably, in relation to the worldwide Orthodox Christian community. Bringing the primates and representatives of the Orthodox Churches together at the 2008 Synaxis, Patriarch Bartholomew, along with the other participants, reaffirmed the conviction that the participation of Orthodox Christians in dialogue with Muslims (and others) must continue because this “constitutes the only way of solving differences among people.”

Conclusion

In the present age, it is essential for Orthodox Christians to nurture positive relationships with Muslims. Though the task may not be effortless, the fruit of friendship between the two religions can lead to favorable outcomes for Orthodox Christians, Muslims, and the rest of the world. Propitious relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims are possible, necessary, and beneficial. The preceding chapters demonstrate that in recent years Orthodox Christians have taken strides to rediscover and assert the positive role that their relationship with Muslims has played over the years, as well as its significance in particular for the Orthodox Church in the years to come. Chapter one outlined the ways in which relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims have become increasingly complex over the past few centuries because of the consequences of modernization. Internal and external forces have presented new challenges to their ability to understand each other and live in peace as neighbors and friends. Chapter two showed, however, that there remains a strong theological basis in the Orthodox tradition for a positive assessment of Islam and engagement in interreligious dialogue with Muslims in this postmodern age. Key Orthodox theologians have been rediscovering the open attitudes towards other religions held by great theologians of earlier centuries and have been expanding the scope of the saving work of Christ and the active presence of the Holy Spirit to include Islam and their Muslim neighbors. Chapter three identified numerous declarations and dialogues through which Orthodox Christians have demonstrated through word and deed their commitment to this aspect of their theology and the underlying religious principles upon which it depends. It was noted that, especially through their efforts in the World Council of Churches and the partnership between the Aal al-Bayt Institute and the Orthodox Center for the Ecumenical Patriarch,

Orthodox Christians have presented Islam as part of the divine economy for salvation. They have also seen their Muslim neighbors not just as friends but as teachers through which, by the Holy Spirit, divine wisdom can be obtained. Chapter four examined the ways in which Orthodox Christians have been reevaluating the place of their religious heritage in their *identity* amidst the challenges and potentials of the postmodern world. It showed as well that Muslims have experienced many of the same issues relating to identity and have responded in similar ways with comparable results. It further demonstrated how an honest assessment of past and present relations with Muslims could be beneficial for Orthodox Christians on the question of identity for today and for future generations. Finally, chapter five considered the potential impact of the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 and their effect on Orthodox Christian-Muslim relations and Orthodox views on Islam and dialogue. The evidence suggested there has been an increase in the quantity and quality of participation of Orthodox Christians in dialogue with Muslims during the post-9/11 period. Another observation was that there seem to be a growing number of Orthodox theologians who speak of their Church with a self-critical eye in terms of any tendency among their co-religionists to give into the temptation of religious fundamentalism, with its numerous destructive consequences.

Through an analysis of the wide range of statements on Islam by various authors and leaders within the Church, these chapters have shown that it is possible to speak of an Orthodox 'position' on Islam and relations with Muslims. Though these seem poised to be on the agenda for the much anticipated, though for decades elusive, Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church, there is a detectable and growing consensus on the issues associated with relations between Orthodoxy and other religions. Specifically, by creatively applying traditional concepts of christology and

pneumatology, key Orthodox theologians have posited Islam as part of the divine economy for salvation and have publicly endorsed (and even directly participated in) Muslim-Christian dialogue over the past three decades. It is important to note that these – that is, the traditional Christian views on the Trinity and the two natures of Christ (divine and human) – are paradoxically the key area of thought which, at least from the Muslim perspective, have divided Christians and Muslims over the centuries. This specific (and ever-expanding) group of Orthodox theologians have reconfigured theological reflection on Islam and re-established an historical account of Orthodox Christian-Muslim relations that more accurately represents the nature and character of past historical encounters, present engagements, and future possibilities. By doing so, they are not only righting the wrongs of some of their more recent ancestors, but are also asserting that Orthodoxy is engaged in the problems faced by all humanity and that it is an open, self-aware, and secure religion that can affirm the work of the Holy Spirit outside the boundaries of the Church. The evidence indicates it is likely that this trend will continue and even increase in the years ahead, despite the fact that there remain voices within the Church that speak against such an open exchange with those of other traditions. For a growing number of Orthodox theologians the journey toward mutual understanding and greater respect for the ‘religious other’ is considered to be not only a worthwhile endeavor, but also a sign of the spiritual maturity of those willing to embark upon the quest.

The research throughout this work, therefore, shows two significant themes that emerge repeatedly for those involved in the area of Orthodox Christian-Muslim dialogue. The first is Islam’s generally positive treatment of the “people of the book” – especially Orthodox Christians, who as close neighbors and friends of Muslims from the beginning, can most appropriately fall under the Qur’anic epithet of those

“nearest in affection” (Sura 5.82) – from the rise of Islam to the present day in several Muslim majority countries. Though there were certainly examples throughout the centuries when the reality did not live up to the ideal, Orthodox Christians enjoyed relatively peaceful and prosperous lives under Muslim rule. Only as a consequence of and reaction to modernity did some Orthodox Christians begin to view this history differently. Some Orthodox Christians even began to take on the kind of Crusading ethos and mentality that had often plagued relations between Western Christians and Muslims since the Middle Ages.⁴²⁴ Responding to this trend, several Orthodox theologians mentioned in this study have urged their faithful to avoid theories such as Samuel Huntington’s “clash of civilizations,” which can (and *have* so often in the West) become ideologies unto themselves, much in the same way that those who espouse them have criticized “fundamentalists” of turning religion into ideology. The second common theme, related to the first, is the assertion that a positive relationship with Muslims (and Islam in a general sense) is an essential aspect of the Orthodox Christians’ historical past, present identity, and future aspirations. Orthodox Christians have for too long listened to those who would turn historical relations between their ancestors and Muslims into a caricature of hatred, competition, and intolerance. In order to fully come to terms with who they are in the present, they must rediscover a more accurate and positive conception of the relationship between Orthodox Christianity and Islam. As Patriarch Bartholomew has said, Orthodox Christians “must be dialectical, dialogical, and reconciliatory” so their “zeal” does not become “fanaticism,” which deviates from the true “nature of the Church.”⁴²⁵ This is essential if they (alongside Muslims and those of other faiths) have any hope of solving their many identity issues in an age that is increasingly hostile toward religion

and profound and traditional forms of spirituality that have fed the human soul for a millennium.

It is important to note at this point the possibility of making some distinctions between the nature of the interactions between Orthodox Christians and Sunni Muslims and those between Orthodox Christians and Shi'i Muslims. Since current estimates indicate that Sunnis comprise 85-87% of all Muslims, it is not surprising that the majority of the Orthodox Christian-Muslim encounters examined in this work have involved Sunni Muslims. The common issues faced by questions of authority within the Sunni and Eastern Orthodox world, as well as a few of this author's own conclusions in these areas, should be understood within this context. This study also examined, however, the distinctive character of recent dialogues between the Russian Orthodox Church and religious leaders from Iran, which represents the vast majority of the world's entire Shi'ite population today and the center of Twelver Shi'ism (aka the Imamis). Within the nation-states of Russian and Iran, one could argue that there are significant parallels between the way the official religious establishments are connected to the centralized political power-structures within each country, able to influence change within key social and political institutions, perceived by their respective religious communities, and representative of more traditional views on a number of social issues (along with an active agenda for change in these areas), at least when compared to certain other regions of the world where Orthodox Christians and Muslims have lived side-by-side, historically and/or in the present day.

Though this is noteworthy and may warrant further research, it is important not to make too much of the Sunni-Shi'i distinctions with regard to their relations with Orthodox Christians in recent years. One thinks, for example, of the well-respected and internationally acclaimed scholar of Islam, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, who

along with his contributions in a number of areas has figured prominently in Orthodox Christian-Muslim encounters in recent years. Though Nasr is himself a Shi'ite (originally from Iran, though now in the U.S.) and part of his scholarship has focused on Shi'ite thought, one would have to conclude based on the analysis of his works in this study that his contributions are significant to Orthodox Christian-Muslim dialogue in general terms than with anything relating specifically to Shi'i Muslim-Orthodox Christian relations. One does not see the preoccupation with themes reflected in certain conservative social agendas, which have at times characterized the official dialogues between the Russian Orthodox Church and high-ranking religious leaders from Iran. There is one area of his inquiry that one could argue is motivated by a historically Shi'ite tendency toward mysticism and that is the parallels between Sufism (the Islamic mystical tradition) and hesychasm (Orthodox Christianity's most well know form of mysticism). Though an essential aspect of the Sunni tradition as well, Sufism has undergone a number of attacks from a variety of sources during the modern age and only within the past few decades seems to be re-establishing its role within the broader Islamic experience (notwithstanding continuous and serious challenges to its existence). This study has identified the theme of mysticism in Nasr's articles on Orthodox Christian-Muslim relations more than once between the years 1986-2002. It is surprising, perhaps, that in light of the profound heritage of the mystical tradition within their respective countries and religions (for example, the hesychast revival in Russia in the 19th century and the sheer vastness of Sufi masters and poets who came out of Persia from early to modern times), the official dialogues between Russia and Iran, unlike Seyyed Hossein Nasr's work, have paid little attention thus far to the topic.

This investigation into Orthodox Christian thought has revealed that modernity can properly be understood as *both* friend and foe. A theme developed throughout each chapter, the latter two in particular, is that modernity, the rise of the West, and modernization across the globe introduced a new strain upon the traditional relationships between Orthodox Christians and Muslims. For example, the imposition of the nation-state as the new and now only acceptable form of socio-political organization led to some significant consequences for both religious communities. The rise of Orthodox nations has challenged the pan-Orthodoxy sentiment, confused catholicity with patriotism, and tempted some into hatred and violence toward any non-Orthodox minorities in their midst. Similar trends can be detected in Muslim communities across the globe. This has led not only to elevated tensions between Islam and the West, but also increasingly complicated relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims and between Orthodox Christians and the West.

Despite these challenges, modernity has also provided Orthodox Christians and Muslims an unprecedented opportunity to understand what the relationship between them was, is, and can become. The postmodern age, in fact, presents a way to transcend the pitfalls, fallacies, errors, etc. of the modern period, so that Orthodox Christians and Muslims can rediscover and build upon the highpoints of their shared past in order to imagine a better future for themselves and all mankind. For their continued success, this will need to be at the center of any future dialogue between Orthodox Christians and Muslims. Modernity and modernization have left such an imprint upon Christians in the West that they have often responded to modern life either through “non-worldly transcendence” or “unbounded, materialistic secularism.”⁴²⁶ These characteristic and extreme responses can be seen in numerous theological writings, in the debates on various “issues” of modern life that have

caused deep divisions in the Catholic Church and several Protestant denominations, and in Muslim-Christian dialogue in which Roman Catholics and/or Protestants have been the Christians partners. Certainly, Orthodoxy has not been immune to such extreme responses and it too has its forms of fundamentalism. As this study has shown, however, that Orthodox Christian-Muslim dialogue has taken a somewhat different path and form. Because of their shared history in the pre-modern period and similar experiences and responses to modernization during the modern and post-modern periods, Orthodox Christians and Muslims have been in a somewhat unique position and will continue to be for the foreseeable future. If the Orthodox partners in the dialogue can continue to appreciate Islam's vision for a 'just society' for all people (through authentic and peaceful Islamic rule [i.e. the 'Medinan ideal' discussed in chapter four]) and the Muslim partners can strive to better understand how the Christian notion of Trinity is not tritheism and work out better protections for religious minorities in Muslim majority countries, they can greatly benefit the wider relations between the two faiths.⁴²⁷ Together, through dialogue and collaboration, they have the potential to, in the words of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, "overcome modernity 'from the inside'" to present a new paradigm of secularism that respects God and man and does a better job of ensuring justice, freedom, and pluralism around the world.

Coming to terms with their past has helped many Orthodox Christians have a better understanding of the role of their Church in the modern and postmodern periods. It has also given them the opportunity to better understand the reactions of their fellow Orthodox Christians to modernity and the many changes in the day-to-day rhythm of their lives over the past several decades. One area of concern among Orthodox theologians and leaders relates to the troubling trend within their churches

that is similar to what is termed “fundamentalism” in Western Christianity. While this label has been applied as well (and quite awkwardly at times) to Islam by Western journalists and writers, there has, to date, been no adequate study devoted specifically to the theme of Orthodox fundamentalism. This work has identified evidence of the trend of fundamentalism within the Orthodox Church, and the possible reasons for its growing appeal in certain circles. It was noted that the increased dialogue with Muslims by some Orthodox Christians over the past few decades may have inadvertently elevated anxiety levels for other Orthodox Christians, pushing the latter toward a similar ideology to that held by so many fundamentalists around the globe and across many of the world’s religions. This does not mean, however, that Orthodox Christian-Muslim dialogue should be brought to an end. Rather, it shows the need for future research on Orthodox fundamentalism – its triggers, how it functions within the community, the consequence, and so forth. Such research could examine the ways in which the words, actions, and motivations of those Orthodox Christians who wage frequent intellectual (and sometimes physical) attacks on Muslims and their religion have been misguided and have left these individuals far short of their intended goals.

Another interesting follow-up to this work would be to investigate thematic areas in which some of the solutions brought forward from Orthodox Christian-Muslim dialogue might help Western Christians resolve some key questions that have occupied their theological inquiry, as well as improve relations between Eastern and Western Christians and between Muslims and the West. Numerous Western theologians have pointed to the spiritual crisis of modern man and have embarked on a frenetic search to find from their own sources (and to some extent those of others) something to fill the void in the hearts of many men and women today, even

congregants of their own churches. Perhaps Orthodox Christians and Muslims could share something useful in this regard from their collective and communal experiences. One thinks especially of the inquiries of some into the shared history and potential of their mystical traditions, respectively Hesychasm and Sufism, to bring about spiritual renewal to modern man and serve as a basis for fruitful dialogue between Orthodox Christians and Muslims.⁴²⁸ This deserves further investigation in the coming years, both from the point of view of scholars and practitioners of these traditions. What Orthodox Christians and Muslims have considered together through dialogue on the topics of globalization, secularism, Church-state relations, pluralism, and mission could also yield some fresh perspectives on a number of the theological and moral dilemmas with which Western Christians have struggled in recent years, as well as in the general area of Muslim-Christian relations.

Finally, since this study has given a comprehensive treatment of Orthodox Christian-Muslim relations in recent years, it points to the need for further research into relations between Muslims and other Eastern Christians communities – such as the Oriental Orthodox Churches (the Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopian, and Syrian Orthodox), the Church of the East, and the Eastern Catholic Church. Such scholarship would not only yield some very useful information, but might augment and/or serve as a corrective to the general thesis and various arguments presented in this study. Even within the Orthodox Christian churches, there may well be important regional and even local peculiarities with regard to relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims and dialogue between them.

The potential for further development in the area of Orthodox Christian-Muslim relations - as well as positive outcomes from continued dialogue between the practitioners of the two religions - is endless. There is every indication that those

Orthodox Christians already involved in this work will continue and even increase their efforts in the years ahead. Their success, however, will in large part depend on their ability to persuade others within their Church that Islam is not the enemy and that engaged and healthy relations with Muslims will deeply enrich their experience as Orthodox Christians.

Notes

¹ William Dalrymple, *From the Holy Mountain: A Journey Among the Christians of the Middle East* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1998), 304

² Though 1054 CE is the tradition date of the so-called “Great Schism” between Rome and the Eastern Orthodox, others have acknowledged the significance of the sack of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade in 1204. Others have pointed out that among the four Eastern Patriarchates, the Church of Antioch (or at least some of the bishops during certain periods) remained on fairly good terms with the Pope until the year 1724. For a succinct discussion of this latter point see David Mellings entry for “Rome” in the *Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity*, eds. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 413-20.

³ ‘Muslim-Christian studies’ was introduced by Willem Bijlefeld as a term to describe the emerging field of scholarship that encompasses a variety of specializations associated with Muslim-Christian relations and dialogue. See, ‘Christian-Muslim Studies, Islamic Studies, and the Future of Christian-Muslim Encounter’ in, *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, Y.Y. Haddad and W.Z. Haddad, eds. (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 1995), 13-14.

⁴ ‘The Importance of Orthodox Christian-Muslim Dialogue,’ *Orthodox Christians and Muslims*, N.M. Vapouris, ed. (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1986), 10-11.

⁵ Dalrymple, 304

⁶ *Ibid*, 168.

⁷ Steven Runciman, *The Fall of Constantinople 1453* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 86-143 gives an account of the events from the first day of the attack on Easter Monday to the day victory was finally declared by Sultan Mehmet II about eight weeks later. On the Ottoman incursions in Byzantine Asia Minor prior to the fall of Constantinople and the general Islamization of the region, see Speros Vryonis, Jr., *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

⁸ See Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, v. 2 (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1974), 532-571, who coins the helpful term “Islamdom” and uses it throughout all three volumes of this magisterial work. He defines Islamdom as, “the society in which the Muslims and their faith are recognized as prevalent and socially dominant, in one sense or another – a society in which, of course, non-Muslims have always formed an integral, if subordinate, element, as have Jews in Christendom. It does not refer to an area as such, but to a complex of social relations, which, to be sure, is territorially more or less well-defined.” (*The Venture of Islam*, v. 1, p. 58)

⁹ Steven Runciman, “‘Rum Milleti’”: The Orthodox Communities Under the Ottoman Sultans,’ in John J. Yiannias, ed., *the Byzantine Tradition After the Fall of Constantinople* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press), 2.

¹⁰ Though thousands of Christians fled Constantinople after the Ottoman invasion, over time many returned and the city was repopulated to the extent that Istanbul, as it was now called, became the largest city in the world. See Youssef Courbage and Philippe Fargues, *Chrétiens et Juifs dans l’Islam arabe et turc* (Paris: Fayard, 1992), 204-5.

¹¹ On the imperial ambitions of Mehmed II, see Speros Vryonis, ‘The Byzantine Patriarchate and Turkish Islam,’ *Byzantino-Slavica*, LVII (1996), 72, Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1600: The Structure of Power* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), and Halil Inalick, ‘Mehmed the Conqueror (1432-1481) and his Time,’ *Speculum*, XXXV (1960).

¹² See Steven Runciman’s classic work, *The Great Church in Captivity: A Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the Eve of the Turkish Conquest to the Greek War of Independence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968). For a slightly different treatment on the “millet system” see Benjamin Braude in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds. (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1982), 69-88.

¹³ Courbage and Fargues, *Chrétiens et Juifs*, 22-23, make the point that often when there were conversions from Christianity to Islam, however, it had to do with the avoidance of the burden of having to pay special taxes.

¹⁴ As Anthony O’Mahony points out in *The Christian Communities of Jerusalem and the Holy Land: Studies in History, Religion and Politics* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), 6, that eight years after the Ottomans conquered Constantinople, a separate millet was established for the Armenian Orthodox. The millet included not only Armenians, but also the Latins, Jacobites, Nestorians, and Copts.

¹⁵ On of the most detailed treatments of the legal rights, privileges, and responsibilities of the Ecumenical Patriarch during this period is N.J. Pantazopoulos, *Church and Law in the Balkan Peninsula During the Ottoman Rule* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1967), 18-29.

¹⁶ On the role of Arab Christians as traders during the Ottoman period, see Kenneth Cragg, *The Arab Christian: A History in the Middle East* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 121-128.

- ¹⁷ Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity*, 208.
- ¹⁸ Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, v. 3 (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1974), 102.
- ¹⁹ John Meyendorff, *The Orthodox Church: Its Past and Its Role in the World Today*, 4th rev. ed. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), 79-81.
- ²⁰ Runciman, "Rum Milleti," 9-13.
- ²¹ Meyendorff, 82.
- ²² Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 90-93.
- ²³ See Meyendorff's discussion of Cyril Loukaris, Peter Moghila, and Dositheus of Jerusalem in, *The Orthodox Church*, 83-89.
- ²⁴ One can find evidence of this notion from at least the eleventh century when the Turks began to encroach upon Byzantine territory. See Speros Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 426-7.
- ²⁵ On the impact of Byzantium in the thought of Orthodox Christians up to the present day, see the final three chapters of John Meyendorff, *The Byzantine Legacy in the Orthodox Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1982). Meyendorff's presentations on the topics of charismatic leadership, ecclesiastical regionalism, and the role of the Ecumenical Patriarchate are as relevant today as they were when the work was first published.
- ²⁶ See the discussion of Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, v. 3, 176-179. Hodgson frequently uses the term, "Great Western Transmutation," which he coined to illustrate that the changes beginning at the end of the eighteenth century were, "...constitutive: [as] they altered not merely particular social and cultural traits but some of the most elementary presuppositions of any subsequent human social and cultural development." (179) Some social scientists have pointed to the shift in economics as the decisive factor that distinguishes between the pre-modern and modern world. See, for example, John H. Bodley, *The Power of Scale: A Global History Approach*, (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2003), 10-11, who talks about the transition from the "imperial world" to what he calls the, "commercial world [with] global-scale culture commercialization...[which concentrates] social power by coopting the humanization and politicalization process to produce and maintain for-profit enterprises." See also R.T. Robertson, *The Making of the Modern World: An Introductory History* (London: Zed Books, 1986), 23.
- ²⁷ Many of the ideas developed in this section were inspired, if not directly borrowed from, a chapter in Marshall Hodgson's, *The Venture of Islam*, v. 3, 176-222, titled, "The Impact of the Great Western Transmutation: The Generation of 1789."
- ²⁸ *Ibid*, 176.
- ²⁹ For a thorough treatment of the philosophers and scientists of the modern period see Eugene Weber, *A Modern History of Europe: Men, Cultures, and Societies from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, Inc., 1971), 340-778.
- ³⁰ Robertson, *The Making of the Modern World*, 1.
- ³¹ For a concise overview of the philosophy that formed the basis of the colonial enterprise, see H.L. Wesseling, *The European Colonial Empires 1815-1919*, Diane Webb, tr. (Harlow, U.K.: Pearson, 2004), 13-73.
- ³² Bert F. Breiner and Christian W. Troll, 'Christianity and Islam,' in John Esposito, ed., *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 282.
- ³³ Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, v. 3, 236. Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1789-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 55 and Robert M. Haddad, *Syrian Christians in Muslim Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 72-79 point out the ways in which missionaries shifted their attention from Muslims to Eastern Christians once it was clear that despite all their efforts they were having little success in converting Muslims to Christianity. Michael Oleska, *Orthodox Alaska* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), illustrates the degree to which American Protestant missionaries, which he contrasts with the approach of Russian Orthodox missionaries, were equally interested in converting the Alaskan tribes to Christianity and instilling them with modern values and modes of thought.
- ³⁴ Karen Armstrong, *Holy War: The Crusades and Their Impact on Today's World*, 3rd ed. (New York: Anchor Books, 2001), 499-500.
- ³⁵ Kemal H. Karpat, "Millets and Nationality: The Roots of the Incongruity of Nation and State in the Post-Ottoman Era," in Braude and Lewis, 152.
- ³⁶ *Ibid*, 152.
- ³⁷ *Ibid*, 154.
- ³⁸ Steven Runciman, *The Orthodox Churches and the Secular State* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1971), 41.
- ³⁹ On the impact of this protégé status as well as the consequences of "uniatism" for Muslim-Christian relations and intra-Christian relations see Cragg, 121-128 and Haddad, 72-86.
- ⁴⁰ Richard Clogg, "Anti-clericalism in per-independence Greece, c. 1750-1821," *The Orthodox Churches and the West*, Derek Baker, ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1976), 258-260.

- ⁴¹ Karpat, 165.
- ⁴² Robert R. Palmer, *A History of the Modern World*, 5th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 503.
- ⁴³ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).
- ⁴⁴ Karpat, "Millets and Nationality," 141.
- ⁴⁵ Runciman, *The Orthodox Churches and the Secular State*, 41 and Karpat, 160-162.
- ⁴⁶ Karpat, 166.
- ⁴⁷ Pedro Ramet makes the case that the different patterns of church-state relations in the Balkans are based on the degree to which the national church figured in the state-building process, the amount of "co-optation" that occurred, and the propensity toward opposition among either the religious or political establishment. See Ramet, "Autocephaly and National Identity in Church-State Relations in Eastern Christianity: An Introduction," *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, Pedro Ramet, ed. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1988), 3-19.
- ⁴⁸ Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 4th printing (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 91.
- ⁴⁹ Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, v. 3, 272.
- ⁵⁰ Antoine Makdissi, "Les Chrétiens et la renaissance arabe," *Islamochristiana*, v. 14 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabi e d'Islamistica, 1988), 37-126. See also Haddad, 87-98.
- ⁵¹ Though the work is now quite dated, Hamilton A.R. Gibb, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 245-258, includes a concise summary that is still useful on the Arabic literary florescence of the nineteenth century.
- ⁵² Hourani, vi.
- ⁵³ Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (New York: MJF Books, 1991), 309. On the role of Palestinian Christians, particularly Eastern Orthodox Christians, in the Palestinian national movement, see Y. Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918-1929* (London: Frank Cass and Co. Limited, 1974), 293-303.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 315.
- ⁵⁵ On Zia Gökalp, see Niyazi Berkes, ed. & tr., *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: Selected Essays of Zia Gökalp*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).
- ⁵⁶ On the Armenian Genocide, see Vahakn N. Dardarian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995).
- ⁵⁷ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 200.
- ⁵⁸ Alexis Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations: 1918-1974* (Athens: Center for Asia Minor Studies, 1983), 147-154 and 196-203.
- ⁵⁹ The most thorough treatment of the conditions through which Christians lived and survived in Russian under communism, see Dimitry Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime 1917-82*, 2 vols. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988).
- ⁶⁰ Lebanon was established in 1943, Syria and Jordan in 1946.
- ⁶¹ Runciman, *The Orthodox Churches and the Secular State*, 68-76.
- ⁶² For a general account of Islam during the Soviet period, see Yaacov Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union: from the Second World War to Gorbachev* (London: C. Hurst, 2000).
- ⁶³ On the challenges posed to Arab Muslims as a result of the changes during this period, see Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, 93-113. For the impact of the nation of Israel upon Palestinian Christians, see Anthony O'Mahony, "The Christian communities of Jerusalem and the Holy Land: A Historical and Political Survey," *The Christian Communities of Jerusalem and the Holy Land: Studies in History, Religion, and Politics*, A. O'Mahony, ed. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), 23-29. See also, Alisa Rubin Peled, "The Crystallization of an Israeli Policy Towards Muslims and Christian Holy Places," *The Muslim World*, 84 (1994), 95-126.
- ⁶⁴ On the movement of peoples from the 1950s-1970s, see Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 427-428.
- ⁶⁵ This has created a number of challenging political dilemmas for Christians of the Middle East, who are in the minority in their countries. For example, in Israel, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate has had to please both its Muslim and Jewish neighbors in order to survive as its numbers have continued to dwindle in recent years. See Sotiris Roussos, "The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and Community of Jerusalem: Church, State and Identity," in O'Mahony, 38-56.
- ⁶⁶ Ware, 127-128.
- ⁶⁷ Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby have put together probably the most extensive treatment to date on the subject of "fundamentalism" in five volumes of articles they collected and published from 1991-1995. Of particular interest to this discussion is their *Fundamentalism Observed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).
- ⁶⁸ For an excellent analysis of this trend see Abdulaziz Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 52-58.
- ⁶⁹ Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 368-369.

⁷⁰ For a general response to this issue, see Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada, 'Orthodox Fundamentalism,' *The Orthodox Church*, 39, n. 5/6 (2003).

⁷¹ The issue of "proselytism" has been a primary theme associated with the difficulties of Orthodox participation in the World Council of Churches. See the Thessaloniki Statement of May 1998, available at <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/who/morges-06-e.html>; accessed 26 March 2006. For an interesting proposal on how to address the concept of proselytism as an obstacle to Christian unity see, Lawrence A. Uzzell, 'Don't Call it Proselytism,' *First Things*, 146 (October 2004), 14-16.

⁷² For a basic outline of the challenges of the Orthodox Church toward the ecumenical movement see Meyendorff, *The Orthodox Church*, 197-205.

⁷³ This was a term developed by Georges Florovsky in his classic work, *Bible, Church, Tradition* in *Collected Works*, v. 1 (Belmont, MA: Norland, 1972).

⁷⁴ One can find this concept throughout much of Schmemmann's writings, including *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988), *For the Life of the World* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, rev. ed., 1973), *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, trans. Asheleigh Moorhouse (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2nd ed., 1975), *Of Water and the Spirit* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974), and *Ultimate Questions: An Anthology of Modern Russian Religious Thought* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1965).

⁷⁵ In addition to Georges Florovsky and Alexander Schemann, other theologians that would fall into this unofficial group would be Vladimir Lossky (*The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* [Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1976] and *In the Image and Likeness of God* [Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985]), Dimitru Staniloae (*The Experience of God*, v. 1-2, trans. R. Barringer & I. Ionita [Boston: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1998 & 2000] and *Theology of the Church*, trans. Robert Barringer [Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980]), and John Zizioulas (*Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*, [Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985]).

⁷⁶ See for example the works of Martin Lings (*Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* [London: Islamic Texts Society, 1988]), Frithjof Schuon (*Understanding Islam* [Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom Books, 1994]), and Seyyed Hossein Nasr (*The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity* [San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002] and *Ideals and Realities of Islam* [Chicago: ABC International, 2001]).

⁷⁷ See for example Metropolitan George Khodr's e-article, 'Americans: Judges of the Earth?' *An Nahar* (Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of Byblos and Botrys) at <http://www.ortmlb.org.lb/articles.htm>; accessed 26 March 2006.

⁷⁸ *The Life of Moses*, II, 163-164; J.P. Migne, ed. *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Graeca* [PG], 44, (Paris, 1844-1864), 376C-377B; English translation of text taken from John Meyendorff, *St. Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 35-38.

⁷⁹ For a succinct discussion on these concepts, see the entries for "apophatic theology" and "deification" in K. Parry, D.J. Melling, D. Brady, S.H. Griffith, & J.F. Healey, eds., *The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity* (Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1999).

⁸⁰ For a summary of Palamas' definition of what became the Orthodox doctrine on the 'essence and energy,' see John Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 202-227.

⁸¹ From the foreword of John Garvey's, *Seeds of the Word* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2005), p. 12.

⁸² For a historical summary see, *Episkepsis*, no. 15 (Chambesy, Switzerland: Centre Orthodoxe du Patriarcat OEcumenique, 1977), 7-9.

⁸³ Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, Patriarch Petros VII(†) of Alexandria, Patriarch Pavle of Serbia, Patriarch Ignatius of Antioch, Archbishop Anastasios (Yannoulatos) of Albania, Metropolitan George Khodr of Lebanon, Nicholas Arseniev, Ioannes Karmires, Alexander Men, Olivier Clément, Alexandros Kariotoglou, Daniel Sahas, Theodore Pulcini, Tarek Mitri, and John Garvey are just a few of the individuals who have written or spoken on the relationship between Orthodox Christianity and other religions.

⁸⁴ *Facing the World: Orthodox Christian Essays on Global Concerns* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2003), 140-1.

⁸⁵ Metropolitan George Khodr, 'Christianity in a Pluralistic World – The Economy of the Spirit,' *Sobornost*, series 6, no. 3 (London: Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, 1971), 167. The article originally appeared in *The Ecumenical Review*, v. 23 (1971), 118-128.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 167.

⁸⁷ 'The Universality of Salvation in Christ,' *Praktika tis Akadimias Athinon* V. 55 (Athens, 1981), pp. 261-289. Translated to English by Archbishop Anastasios (Yannoulatos) and quoted in his, 'Orthodox Relations with Other Religions,' *Sourozh*, no. 86 (London: Russian Diocese of Sourozh, 2001), 14.

⁸⁸ 'Orthodox Relations with Other Religions,' 13.

⁸⁹ Quoted from an unpublished article by Andrew M. Sharp titled, 'Dialogue: An Essential Aspect of Mission in the Islamic Context.'

- ⁹⁰ ‘Orthodox Relations with Other Religions,’ 6-11.
- ⁹¹ Ibid, 7.
- ⁹² Ibid, 6.
- ⁹³ This is a term borrowed from Hugh Goddard, *A History of Christian-Muslim Relations* (Chicago: New Amsterdam Books, 2001), 9, as it seems to capture well Archbishop Anastasios’ description of the early Christian fathers.
- ⁹⁴ Though not relevant to this subject at hand in this chapter, Archbishop Anastasios’ article goes on to give a brief summary of developments from the sixteenth century to the end of the twentieth century.
- ⁹⁵ ‘Orthodox Relations with Other Religions,’ 8-9.
- ⁹⁶ He mentions Manuel II Paleologos, Gregory Palamas, Joseph Vryennios, and Gennadios Scholarios. There have been a growing number of works written on these and other figures from the late Byzantine era. See for example: 1) Daniel Sahas, ‘Gregory Palamas (1296-1360) on Islam,’ *The Muslim World*, 73.1 (Hartford, CT: Hartford Seminary Press, 1983), 1-21, 2) Archbishop Anastasios (Yannoulatos), ‘Byzantine and Contemporary Greek Orthodox Approaches to Islam,’ *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 33:4 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 512-527, for a discussion on the emperors Gennadios Scholarios and John Cantacuzenus, and 3) A.T. Khoury, *Les théologiens byzantins et l’Islam, Textes et auteurs VIIIe-XIIIe s.* (Louvain: Editions Nauwelaerts, 1969) and *Der theologische Streit der Byzantiner mit dem Islam* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1969).
- ⁹⁷ ‘Orthodox Relations with Other Religions,’ 7.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid, 15.
- ⁹⁹ ‘Dva ponimaniya khristianstva’ in A. Men’s, *Radostnaya vest’* (Moscow: Vita-tsentr, 1992), 309-318. English translation from Elizabeth Roberts and Ann Shukman, eds., *Christianity for the Twenty-First Century: The Prophetic Writings of Alexander Men* (New York: Continuum, 1996), 159-160.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Seeds of the Word*, 97.
- ¹⁰¹ ‘Christianity in a Pluralistic World,’ 168-170.
- ¹⁰² *Second Apology* 13, PG 6.468A; English translation of text taken from Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Fathers down to A.D. 325* [ANF], v. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publ., 1994), 193.
- ¹⁰³ *First Apology* 46, PG 6:39BC (trans. ANF, v. 1, 178).
- ¹⁰⁴ Mohamed Talbi & Olivier Clément, *Un respect têtù* (Paris: Nouvelle Cité, 1989), 285-6.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Seeds of the Word*, 86.
- ¹⁰⁶ PG 8.184A (trans. ANF, v. 2, 193).
- ¹⁰⁷ PG 8.728A (trans. ANF, v. 2, 305).
- ¹⁰⁸ ‘Le Christianism, l’Islam, et l’Arabité,’ *Contacts*, n. 110 (Paris, 1980), 107.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Revelation of Life Eternal* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1982), 41-42.
- ¹¹⁰ *Against Celsus* 6.47, PG 11.1372 (trans. ANF, v. 4, 595).
- ¹¹¹ ‘Orthodox Relations with Other Religions,’ 7-8.
- ¹¹² *Church History* 1.2.6, PG 20.57A. English translation of text taken from Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, v. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publ., 1999), 83.
- ¹¹³ ‘Orthodox Relations with Other Religions,’ 8.
- ¹¹⁴ Other sources include Irenaeus of Lyons, Gregory the Nazianzen, Basil of Caesarea, and Monk Olympius of the Desert.
- ¹¹⁵ For a summary of the major events and activities sponsored by the World Council of Churches on inter-religious dialogue, including some information about the involvement of Metropolitan Georges and Archbishop Anastasios, see Stuart E. Brown, *Meeting in Faith: Twenty Years of Christian-Muslim Conversations Sponsored by the World Council of Churches* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1989) and Jutta Sperber, *Christians and Muslims: The Dialogue Activities of the World Council of Churches and their Theological Foundation* (Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000). Both include information about inter-religious dialogue in general (Christianity vis à vis various world religions), as well as the specific question of Muslim-Christian relations.
- ¹¹⁶ These two churchmen have put forward their views through their comments during a number of international meetings of and/or sponsored by the World Council of Churches. They have also each written articles on the topic. Metropolitan Georges’ groundbreaking article, ‘Christianity in a Pluralistic World – The Economy of the Spirit’ (see note #8 above), was well received, according to Sperber (p. 220), when it was first introduced at the 1971 meeting of the WCC Central Committee in Addis Ababa. The article is still referenced in ecumenical circles and has been reprinted on more than one occasion, most recently in *Sourozh* 53 (London: Russian Diocese of Sourozh, 1993), 9-18. Archbishop Anastasios’ (the Bishop Anastasios of Androussa) key article was originally titled, ‘Emerging Perspectives on the Relationships of Christians to People of Others Faith – an Eastern Orthodox Contribution,’ *International Review of Mission* 77 (Geneva, 1988), 332-346. The article has been reworked and reprinted more than once, to include: ‘How Christianity Addresses Other Religions’ (in Greek), *Greek Educational Encyclopedia* 21 (*Religions*), 423-427; ‘Facing People of Other Faiths, From an Orthodox Point of View,’ *The Greek Orthodox Theological*

Review 38 (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1993), 131-152; and, most recently, 'A Theological Approach to Understanding Other Religions,' in his *Facing the World* (see note #7 above), 127-153.

Archbishop Anastasios' article, 'Towards a *koinonia agapes*,' Samartha, S.J., ed., *Towards World Community, The Colombo Papers* (Geneva, WCC Publications, 1975), 47-63, has also been influential in ecumenical circles.

¹¹⁷ Sperber, 220.

¹¹⁸ 'Christianity in a Pluralistic World,' 169.

¹¹⁹ See John Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 57-85, as well as the introduction in Irenaeus of Lyons, *On the Apostolic Preaching*, John Behr, tr. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997).

¹²⁰ 'Christianity in a Pluralistic World,' 170.

¹²¹ Ibid, 172.

¹²² Ibid, 174.

¹²³ *Facing the World*, 145. Fr. John Garvey points out that the Orthodox have also, at various times and places, held a kind of Christology of exclusivity, based on Cyprian of Carthage's assertion that "outside the Church there is no salvation" (*On the Unity of the Church*). As Garvey puts it, though Cyprian's statement was made, "in reaction to a particular schism in the Church...[this idea] that those who are not members of the visible Church have not part in the truth – has had a profound influence in Orthodoxy and beyond it." (*Seeds of the Word*, 88). Both Archbishop Anastasios and Metropolitan Georges, of course, would argue that this view is held by only a minority of Orthodox Christians and is not in line with the consensus of the Father of the Church.

¹²⁴ *Facing the World*, 147.

¹²⁵ For a succinct presentation of the Orthodox understanding of salvation, see Theodore Bobosh, *Am I Saved? Scriptural Thoughts on Salvation* (Minneapolis: Light and Life Publishing, 1984). Fr. Bobosh points out that the Eastern Christian thinks of salvation as a continuum and might say, "I am saved (from Christ's incarnation), I am being saved (theosis), and I will be saved (from the recapitulation of things in Christ at his second coming)."

¹²⁶ *On the Incarnation*, 54. The same idea is found throughout the writings of the Eastern Fathers of the Church, including Clement of Alexandria, Maximus the Confessor, Symeon the New Theologian, and Gregory Palamas.

¹²⁷ *Facing the World*, 139.

¹²⁸ See Boris Bobrinsky's chapter on the *filioque* controversy in *The Mystery of the Trinity: Trinitarian Experience and Vision in the Biblical and Patristic Tradition*, Anthony Gythiel, tr. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1999), 279-294.

¹²⁹ This is a reference to the "Trisagion Prayer," which is recited before almost all Orthodox services and goes as follows: *O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, who art everywhere and fillest all things, treasury of blessing and giver of life, come and abide in us and cleanse us from every impurity and save our souls, O Thou who art good and lovest mankind.* For a description and analysis of this prayer see, Olivier Clément, *Three Prayers: Our Father, O Heavenly King, and The Prayer of St. Ephrem*, Michael Breck, tr. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000), 42-64.

¹³⁰ 'Christianity in a Pluralistic World,' 172.

¹³¹ Ibid, 173.

¹³² Sperber, 221.

¹³³ See Olivier Clément, *Conversations with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I*, Paul Meyendorff, tr. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997), 206.

¹³⁴ Sperber, 221-2.

¹³⁵ Goddard, 156.

¹³⁶ From the earlier version, 'Facing People of Other Faiths, From an Orthodox Point of View,' 148. In a more recent revision (*Facing the World*, 148), he changed the phrasing slightly to read, "Together with the 'economy of the Word,' the Orthodox East looks ahead, full of expectation and humble anticipation, toward the 'economy of the Spirit.'"

¹³⁷ Ibid, 149.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 149.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 149-50.

¹⁴⁰ Quoted and referenced in Sperber, 231.

¹⁴¹ Quoted by Jean Christian Stromberg on page 427 of his article, 'Witness in a Pluralistic World: Report on a Mission/Dialogue Consultations,' *International Review of Mission* 78 (Geneva, 1988), 412-436. Cf. Sperber, 233.

¹⁴² Ibid, 233.

¹⁴³ See his article titled, 'Towards a "koinonia agapes,"' in Samartha, S., ed., *Towards World Community, the Colombo Papers* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1975), 47-63.

¹⁴⁴ See Lars Thunberg's discussion of this idea in Maximus in *Man and the Cosmos: The Vision of St. Maximus the Confessor* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 51-76. Cf. Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1975), 81.

¹⁴⁵ 'Towards a "koinonia agapes,"' 62. Also quoted and analyzed in Sperber, 273.

¹⁴⁶ 'Dialogue avec l'Islam,' *Contacts*, n. 66 (Paris, 1969), 168-9.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 169. See also Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's praise of Metropolitan Georges' views on this point in Olivier Clément's, *Conversations with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I*, 208-209.

¹⁴⁸ 'Byzantine and contemporary Greek Orthodox Approaches to Islam.' See note 19 above.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 522-3. It is interesting to note that in the foreword to Archbishop Anastasios' book (in Greek), *Islam: Threskeiologike episkopesis* (Athens: Poreuthentes, 1975), he laments the fact that there had been [prior to the publication of his book] so little attention given in modern Greece to serious study of Islam. He says on page 9, "Despite the vital importance which Islam has had in the historical evolution of the Greek world, and despite the fact that the Greeks have lived next to, or in the midst of, Moslem population for centuries, no synthetic informative study on Islam has been published in the Greek language....which is remarkable for as the religion of a minority within the boundaries of the Greek state no less than as the religion of our neighbors, be they our friends or opponents, Islam has remained vitally important as a factor immediately influencing their behavior and mentality."

¹⁵⁰ 'Byzantine and contemporary Greek Orthodox Approaches to Islam,' 524.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 527.

¹⁵² The Greek historian and theologian Alexandros Kariotoglou devoted an entire section of his book on Orthodoxy and Islam to a presentation and analysis of Sufism. See *Orthodoxia kai Islam* (Athens: Exdoseis Domos, 1994), 27-34 (in Greek).

¹⁵³ 'The Current Situation of Islam: Conflict and Light,' *Sourozh*, no. 86 (London: Russian Diocese of Sourozh, 2001), 34.

¹⁵⁴ Nassir El-Din El-Assad, *The Educational System in Islam and Christianity: Proceeding of the Muslim-Christian Consultation in Amman, Jordan* (Amman: Al Albait Foundation, 1997), 55.

¹⁵⁵ There was a conference a few years ago that looked specifically at the connections between Sufism and the mystical tradition of the Orthodox Church. Presenters included no less than the well-known Orthodox theologian from Oxford Bishop Kallistos Ware. For the collection of articles, see James Cutsinger, ed., *Paths to the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, Inc., 2002). Daniel Sahas has also been an advocate of mysticism as a possible bridge between the two religions. At the end of an article titled, 'What an Infidel Saw that a Faithful Did Not: Gregory Dekapolites (d. 842) and Islam,' *Orthodox Christians and Muslims*, N.M. Vaporis, ed. (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1986), 67, he concludes, "[D]ialogue, in the context, or through the means, of worship, existential religious experience and mysticism – that is, meeting of the hearts within the context of a mutual encounter with the divine – does bear fruit."

¹⁵⁶ 'Understanding Islam,' *In Communion* 10 (1997), 22. Accessed on-line at http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/jim_forest/Islam.htm on 15 March 2007.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁵⁸ Among the many theologians one could list would be Georges Florovsky, Vladimir Lossky, John Meyendorff, John Romanides, Alexander Schmemman, Dimitru Staniloae, and Christos Yannaras.

¹⁵⁹ The honorary doctorate was jointly conferred in 1998 by the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, School of Juridical, Economic and Political Sciences and by all of the departments of the Philosophical School. The paper delivered by Archbishop Anastasios was titled, "Globalization and Religious Experience," and was translated by Pavlos Gottfried and reprinted in *Facing the World*, 179-199.

¹⁶⁰ Ataullah Siddiqui, Mohamed Talbi, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Abdulaziz Sachedina, Ingrid Mattson, Ibrahim Abu-Rabi, and Samira Fayyad Khawaldeh serve as just a few of the many examples in recent years of Muslims who have engaged in research and activities associated with Muslim-Christian relations. A more recent example of Muslims reaching out to Christians comes in the form of the what has been called, "An Open Letter and Call from Muslim Religious Leaders [to Christian Leaders Worldwide]." Issued on Eid al-Fitr this year (13 October 2007 C.E.) this letter was sent from 38 of the world's leading Muslim scholars to Pope Benedict XVI, all the primates of the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches, leaders of the various Eastern (and Eastern Rite Catholic) Churches, and the heads of the major Protestant denominations. It was an invitation and a call to all Muslims and Christians to build upon, "the basis...[of the] peace and understanding [that] already exists," between Christians and Muslims. Accessed on-line at: http://media.mgnetwork.com/ric/pdfs/20071012_muslim_letter.pdf on 16 October 2007.

¹⁶¹ Patriarch Pavle of Serbia is an excellent example of someone who was voice of reason and peace in the midst of the brutality and inhumanity of civil war. See, 'Several statements, prayers and appeals of Patriarch Pavle,' *In Communion*. Accessed on-line at <http://incommunion.org/articles/resources/several-statements-prayers-and-appeals-of-patriarch-pavle> on 8 October 2007.

¹⁶² Georges Florovsky, Archbishop Iakovos (Coucouzis), Ion Bria, John Meyendorff, John Romanides, and others have held positions in the governing bodies of the World Council of Churches. Nikos Nissiotis was the director for a time of the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, now headed by another Orthodox Christian, Fr. Dr. Ioan Sauca. Others, such as Georges Lemopoulos, have served in important positions on staff with the World Council of Churches. For a general list (though only up to 1992) of contributors to programs, projects, or publications of the WCC see G. Limouris, *Orthodox Visions of Ecumenism*, 278-283.

¹⁶³ An example would be the Ecumenical Patriarchate's participation in an international inter-religious symposium sponsored by the Vatican on 24-29 October 1999. See *Episkepsis*, no. 575 (Chambesy, Switzerland: Centre Orthodoxe du Patriarcat OEcumenique, 1999), 17-19.

¹⁶⁴ *Episkepsis*, no. 369, p. 19 (Greek version). This English translation is taken from, *The Contribution of Orthodox Ecumenists to the Interfaith Venture and Their Responsibility for It*, Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna and Hiermonk Patapios, trs. (Etna, California: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2000), 29-30.

¹⁶⁵ The list of participants (and signatories to the, "Message of the Orthodox Primates," resulting from the symposium) included Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Patriarch Parthenios of Alexandria, Patriarch Ignatios IV of Antioch, Patriarch Pavle of Serbia, Patriarch Teoctist of Bucharest, Metropolitan Gelasios (representing Patriarch Maximos of Sofia), Bishop Abraham (representing Archbishop Elias of Georgia), Archbishop Chrysostomos of Cyprus, Archbishop Seraphim of Greece, Archbishop Anastasios of Albania, Archbishop Dorotheos of Czech and Slovakia, and Archbishop John of Finland.

¹⁶⁶ "Message of the Primates of the Orthodox Churches on the island of Patmos, first international symposium, September 26, 1995," in, *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I*, John Chryssavgis, ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2003).

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 163.

¹⁶⁸ Paragraph 4 of, "Muslims and Christians Together for Jerusalem's Sake," the official statement that came at the gathering for *The Jerusalem Appeal* that took place in Beirut, Lebanon on 14-16 June 1996. Accessed on-line at <http://www.palestine-net.com/misc/japp.txt> on 18 May 2007. See also: <http://www.angelfire.com/ky3/abeer/jersulam.htm> (accessed 1 April 2008).

¹⁶⁹ *Episkepsis*, no. 579 (2000), 6.

¹⁷⁰ See for example Karen Armstrong's book, *The Battle for God* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), which examines the impact of "fundamentalism" on all three of the Abrahamic religions, the term commonly used these days by religious scholars to refer collectively to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

¹⁷¹ "And the Word Became Flesh and Dwelt Among Us, Full of Grace and Truth: A Pastoral Letter on the Occasion of the Third Christian Millennium," published in *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 46:1-4 (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001), 198-9.

¹⁷² One could also easily add Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch here as he too has lived and worked positively with Muslims for many years, actively participating in dialogues. Because of space considerations and since a number of his important public statements have taken place following and in reaction to the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001, he will be discussed instead in chapter five.

¹⁷³ From a statement made in May of 1982 and quoted in *Orthodoxos Typos*, No. 854 (Athens).

¹⁷⁴ See for example Nicetas of Byzantium in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, 105.

¹⁷⁵ The interview is edited and printed in, *You Shall Be My Witnesses: Mission Stories from the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches*, George Lemopoulos, ed. (Katerini, Greece: Tertios Publications, 1993), 19-20.

¹⁷⁶ Accessed on-line at <http://www.afridaworld.net/synod/parthenios.htm> on 17 May 2007.

¹⁷⁷ For an account of his childhood and early years see Olivier Clement, *Conversations with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I*, Paul Meyendorff, tr. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997), 33-35.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 37-40.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 41-2. See also Gregorios D. Ziakas, 'The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Dialogue with Islam,' *Phanari: 400 Chronia* (Istanbul: Ecumenical Patriarchate, 2001), 714-15.

¹⁸⁰ Clement, 49 and Ziakas, 720.

¹⁸¹ *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer*, 97. The book is a collection of Patriarch Bartholomew I's addresses, statements, and interviews and this particular quotation comes from an address delivered at the British Museum in London.

¹⁸² "Fundamentalism and Faith," *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer*, 134-138.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, 139.

¹⁸⁴ In addition to the more sustained meetings in faith represented by the work of the WCC and the combined effort of the Al-Albeit Foundation and the Orthodox Center for the Ecumenical Patriarch, there have been other efforts to bring Christian and Muslim leaders together for the purpose of dialogue and theological reflection. These conferences and meetings, though including participants from various countries, have typically been singular or two-time events of mostly regional significance. Examples include gatherings sponsored by the Conference of European Churches (Gatherings in 1978, 1984, and 1990), Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Seminary (Symposium of Orthodox Christianity and Islam – 1986), Ecumenical Patriarch

Bartholomew I (Peace and Tolerance – 1994), and the University of South Carolina (Paths to the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East – 2001).

¹⁸⁵ Fr. Georges Florovsky was in fact one of the keynote speakers at the WCC's first assembly in Amsterdam in 1948. See, 'Determinations and Distinctions: Ecumenical Aims and Doubts,' *Sobornost* 4.3 (1948), 126-132 for the text of his address. See also note #4 above.

¹⁸⁶ Thomas FitzGerald, 'Orthodox Theology and Ecumenical Witness: An Introduction to the Major Themes,' *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, v. 42, no. 3-4 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 339-361.

¹⁸⁷ A summary of various views at the beginning of that decade on 'the ecclesial nature of other Christian churches' can be found in Emmanuel Clapsis, 'The Boundaries of the Church: An Orthodox Debate,' *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 35:2 (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Seminary Press, 1990), 113-127.

¹⁸⁸ For a brief overview of some of the concerns of Orthodox Churches with the WCC see, Aram I, 'The Orthodox Churches and the WCC,' in *For a Church Beyond its Walls* (Antelias, Lebanon: Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, 2007), 221-7. A more in depth discussion of Orthodox – WCC relations in the latter part of the century can be found in A.M. Agaard and P. Bouteneff, *Beyond the East-West Divide: The WCC and 'the Orthodox Problem'*, (Geneva: WCC, 2001).

¹⁸⁹ The final report from 2002 of the Special Commission on the Orthodox Participation in the WCC is posted on the Council's website at: <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/porto-alegre-2006/3-preparatory-and-background-documents/final-report-of-the-special-commission-on-orthodox-participation-in-the-wcc.html> (accessed 26 March 2008).

¹⁹⁰ See Olivier Clement's, 'Le patriarcat oecuménique au service de l'unité orthodoxe et de l'unité chrétienne,' *Service Orthodoxe de Press*, supplement to n. 236, March 1999 (Paris). Posted on-line on various websites such as: <http://www.orthodoxa.org/FR/patriarcat/documents/patriarcatservice.htm> (accessed 24 March 2008). Factor #3 was heightened by the openness and efforts toward reunion at the end of the century by both Pope John Paul II and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I.

¹⁹¹ Quoted from the introduction to, *The Contribution of Orthodox Ecumenists*, 9 (see note #6 above). The website is <http://www.ctosonline.org> (accessed 26 March 2008).

¹⁹² A short biography of Metropolitan Georges can be found on his Archdiocese's website: <http://www.ortmtlb.org.lb/aplet4/metropolitan.htm> (accessed 27 March 2008). See also a short bio in *The Orthodox Church*, v. 43, n. 5 (Syosset, NY, 2007), 5.

¹⁹³ His initial teaching post, at Lebanese University, was as professor of Arab Culture. See biography cited in note above.

¹⁹⁴ For example, David Kerr noted that when Dr. Subhi Saleh (a Muslim) and Metropolitan Georges were unable at the last minute to attend a consultation on Christian Mission and Islamic Da'wah in 1976, it was, 'a sorely-felt loss to the conference.' He went on to say that, 'the conference ached from the absence of the Lebanese voice, and particularly the voices of the two Lebanese we had wanted to hear.' *Meeting in Faith: Twenty Years of Christian-Muslim Conversations Sponsored by the World Council of Churches*, compiled by Stuart Brown (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1989), 80.

¹⁹⁵ On his early contributions, see Jutta Sperber, *Christians and Muslims: The Dialogue Activities of the World Council of Churches and their Theological Foundation* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 84 & 220-222.

¹⁹⁶ *The Ecumenical Review*, v. 23 (1971), 118-128.

¹⁹⁷ 'The Church as the Privileged Witness of God,' *Martyria and Mission: The Witness of the Orthodox Churches Today*, Ian Bria, ed. (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1980), 35 and earlier in *Orthodox Youth and the Ecumenical Movement*, N. Mihaita, ed. (Geneva: WSCF Books, No. 4, 1978).

¹⁹⁸ Sperber, 324.

¹⁹⁹ 'An Orthodox Perspective of Inter-religious Dialogue,' *Current Dialogue*, 19 (1991), 25 & 27.

²⁰⁰ *Christians and Muslims: Pressures and potential in a post-9/11 world* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), 137.

²⁰¹ Sperber argues (346) that it is precisely the reason why Muslims have preferred the Roman Catholic Church over the WCC as a partner in dialogue, particularly during the papacy of John Paul II, who was a strong advocate for inter-religious dialogue and even went so far toward the end of his time as Pope to ask forgiveness for the Rome's involvement in the Crusades.

²⁰² The report from this meeting is in Brown, *Meeting in Faith*, 156-169. The statement from Metropolitan Georges is quoted in Sperber, 231.

²⁰³ It should be noted that he has also been a prominent figure in the work of the Middle East Council of Churches, which has forged many positive relationships with Muslims on the local and regional levels.

²⁰⁴ He joined the WCC's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism in 1963, at age 34, and became such a well respected missiologist that he was elected moderator of the Commission in 1984, serving in that capacity until 1991. In that same year (1991) he was elected Archbishop of Albania, an office which he still holds today. A general biography of Archbishop Anastasios can be found at the Church of Albania's

website at: <http://www.orthodoxalbania.org/English/Archbishop/Archbishop%20Page.htm> (assessed 30 March 2008).

²⁰⁵ Ibid, under link: 'The Beginning.'

²⁰⁶ Ibid, under link: 'The 1960's.'

²⁰⁷ 'Christian Approaches to Other Religions in the Early Centuries,' in Box V of papers from the WCC's Sub-Unit on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies (quoted in Sperber, 413, note 4).

²⁰⁸ The general report on this dialogue, *Colombo, Sri Lanka, April 1974: Towards World Community*, is reprinted in Brown, 30-48. Archbishop Anastasios' address was titled, 'Towards a "koinonia agapes,"' in Samartha, S., ed., *Towards World Community, the Colombo Papers* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1975), 47-63 and was discussed in the last chapter.

²⁰⁹ 'Emerging Perspectives on the Relationships of Christians to People of Other Faith: An Eastern Orthodox Contribution,' *International Review of Mission*, 77 (Geneva, 1988), 332.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 344.

²¹¹ Ibid, 345.

²¹² Ibid, 346.

²¹³ On the first consultation in Baar, see Sperber, 237-241.

²¹⁴ 'Understanding and Witnessing to Christian in a Pluralistic World: An Orthodox Perspective,' *Current Dialogue*, 26 (Geneva, June 1994), 43.

²¹⁵ Ibid, 45.

²¹⁶ Ibid, 47.

²¹⁷ Ibid, 49.

²¹⁸ Of the increasing number of articles and books written on Orthodox missiology, one of the most engaging is Michael Oleska's *Orthodox Alaska: A Theology of Mission* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993), because of the way it combines theory and narrative in the real life account of how the Orthodox missionaries brought their faith to the shores of North America.

²¹⁹ Tarek Mitri was a participant in the 1979 dialogue meeting in Mombasa, Kenya (see *Christian Presence and Witness in Relation to Muslim Neighbours*, John Taylor, ed. [WCC, 1979]). He also wrote an article titled, 'The Church Does Not Exist for Itself,' in *International Review of Mission*, v. 75, n. 300 (WCC, October 1986) and a year later (21-24 November 1987) presented a paper to the Christian-Muslim Consultation in Amman, Jordan (see 'Prospects for Christian-Muslim Coexistence in Islamic Countries,' *Current Dialogue*, 14 [Geneva, June 1988]), 36-44.

²²⁰ On the WCC's transition from Stuart Brown to Tarek Mitri, see Sperber, 75.

²²¹ 'Prospects for Christian-Muslim Coexistence in Islamic Countries,' 41.

²²² Ibid, 40-42.

²²³ 'An Observatory of Christian-Muslim Relations in Lebanon,' *CD*, 31 (Geneva, December 1997), 44.

²²⁴ See his paper, 'Christian-Muslim Relations: Apprehensions and Possible Convergences,' in *World Council of Churches/Dialogue with People of Living Faiths, The Challenge of Pluralism: Papers from the Meeting of the Dialogue Working Group, Casablanca/Morocco* (Geneva, 1989), 65-67. Referenced and analyzed in Sperber, 79, 104, 106, & 117.

²²⁵ *Religion, Law and Society: A Christian-Muslim Discussion*, Tarek Mitri, ed. (Geneva, 1995), ix.

²²⁶ Ibid, xiv-xv.

²²⁷ 'A Christian-Muslim Consultation on 'Religion and Human Rights.' *Current Dialogue*, 27 (December 1994), 15.

²²⁸ 'Patient Dialogue, Urgent Dialogue,' *Current Dialogue*, 28 (July 1995), 22.

²²⁹ Ibid, 22.

²³⁰ Two important presentations by Tarek Mitri appeared in issue 33 of *Current Dialogue* in July of 1999: 'Religious plurality in the context of Globalization: Introductory Reflections' and 'Minority Rights in a Christian-Muslim Perspective.' The issue focused on inter-religious contributions on the Harare Assembly theme, 'Turn to God -- Rejoice in Hope.' (From: <http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/cd33-16.html> accessed 22 March 2008.)

²³¹ 'Religious plurality in the context of Globalization: Introductory Reflections,' 2.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ 'Minority Rights in a Christian-Muslim Perspective,' 2.

²³⁴ From his address during the closing session of the seventh consultation of this joint venture, which appeared in, *The Education System in Islam and Christianity* (Amman: Royal Academy of Islamic Civilization Research, 1997), 137.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ The comments in the last column are a composite of the general descriptions given by Ziakas and Papademetriou, some summary material about the first six consultations embedded in a speech by Metropolitan Damaskenos at the seventh (see note above), as well as this author's own analysis of the significance of the events.

²³⁷ *Episkepsis*, no. 368 (1986), 13.

- ²³⁸ *Episkepsis*, no. 411 (1989), 5.
- ²³⁹ *Episkepsis*, no. 426 (1989), 9.
- ²⁴⁰ *Episkepsis*, no. 494 (1993), 15-16.
- ²⁴¹ From his closing address at the seventh consultation, as recorded in, *The Education System in Islam and Christianity*, 139.
- ²⁴² *Episkepsis*, no. 545 (1997), 13.
- ²⁴³ *Episkepsis*, no. 563 (1998), 15.
- ²⁴⁴ Alexander Men, 'The Christian Hope: 'Karabakh' or Bethlehem,' in *Christianity for the Twenty-First Century: The Prophetic Writings of Alexander Men*, Elizabeth Roberts and Ann Shukman, eds. (New York: Continuum, 1996), 175-8. For a discussion on the fruit of the movement started by Fr. Alexander Men in Russia, specifically in the areas of inter-Christian and inter-religious dialogue see Basil Cousins, 'Russian Orthodoxy: Contemporary Challenges in Society, Interreligious Encounters and Mission,' in *World Christianity: politics, theology, dialogues*, Anthony O'Mahony and Michael Kirwan, eds. (London: Fox Communications and Publications, 2004), 327.
- ²⁴⁵ See Marshall Hodgson's generalized discussion of these and other so called, "moral dimensions of technicalism," in *The Venture of Islam*, v. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 187-92.
- ²⁴⁶ *Mnemosyne and the Children of Memory*, printed in *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I*, John Chryssavgis, ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2003), 96.
- ²⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 94.
- ²⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 95.
- ²⁴⁹ *The Byzantine Legacy in the Orthodox Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1982), 251.
- ²⁵⁰ *Mnemosyne and the Children of Memory*, 95.
- ²⁵¹ 'Byzantium, Orthodoxy, and Democracy,' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, v. 71, no. 1 (Atlanta: Oxford University Press, 2003), 83-4.
- ²⁵² *Great Lent*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1969), 109-10 (in forth printing [1990]).
- ²⁵³ *Ibid*, 133.
- ²⁵⁴ *For the Life of the World*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1963), 118 (in forth printing [1988]).
- ²⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 134.
- ²⁵⁶ Hamartia is from *hamartanein*, literally translated as, "to miss the mark, err." This notion has been discussed extensively over the centuries of Orthodox tradition, particularly in the theological, monastic, and spiritual texts.
- ²⁵⁷ See Theodore Bobosh, *Am I Saved? Scriptural Thoughts on Salvation* (Minneapolis: Light and Life Publishing, 1984).
- ²⁵⁸ 'The Holy Trinity, the Church and Politics in a Secular World,' in *Living Orthodoxy in the Modern World: Orthodox Christianity and Society*, Andrew Walker and Costa Carras, eds. (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2003), 37.
- ²⁵⁹ 'The Christian Hope: 'Karabakh' or Bethlehem,' 175.
- ²⁶⁰ *Facing the World: Orthodox Christian Essays on Global Concerns* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2003), 37.
- ²⁶¹ From page 5 of an article titled, 'Globalization,' as translated by Bassam A. Nassif and posted on-line at: <http://www.balamand.edu.lb/theology/globalization.htm>. Accessed on 5 May 2007.
- ²⁶² Archbishop Anastasios, 'Globalization and Religious Experience,' as printed in *Facing the World*, 179.
- ²⁶³ 'The Challenge of a Global World,' in *The Orthodox Churches in a Pluralistic World: An Ecumenical Conversation* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2004), 61-2.
- ²⁶⁴ 'Globalization,' 9.
- ²⁶⁵ *Clapsis*, 55.
- ²⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 56-7.
- ²⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 63.
- ²⁶⁸ *The Orthodox Church: Its Past and Its Role in the World Today*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996 [forth revised edition]), 208-9.
- ²⁶⁹ For examples of the way that the Orthodox Christianity was able to "bless the culture" as the faith spread into new lands see, Anthony-Emil N. Tachiaos, *Cyril and Methodius of Theosalonica: The Acculturation of the Slavs* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001) and Michael Oleksa, *Orthodox Alaska: A Theology of Mission* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1992).
- ²⁷⁰ Olivier Clément, *Conversations with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I*, Paul Meyendorff, tr. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997), 138.
- ²⁷¹ *Ibid*, 140-41.

²⁷² Both Harakas and Guroian are well-respected Orthodox theologians who have been pioneers in the field of Orthodox Christian ethics. Church-state relations and the question of democracy represent only a portion of the large variety of topics they have addressed in their numerous books and articles.

²⁷³ 'Byzantium, Orthodoxy, and Democracy,' 90-1.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 94-5.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 95.

²⁷⁶ Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (London: Penguin Books, 1997 [first printed in 1963]), 77. Ware, now known as His Excellency, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia also acknowledges that there have been advantages to nationalism for the Orthodox Church, particularly under the circumstances in which it found itself in various parts of the world in the modern period.

²⁷⁷ Of course, Orthodox Christians must at the same time resolve their relationship to the West and its values.

²⁷⁸ 'Ecclesiastical Regionalism: Structures of Communion or Cover for Separatism,' reprinted in, *The Byzantine Legacy in the Orthodox Church*, 231.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 230-1.

²⁸⁰ 'The Relations between Byzantium and the Arabs,' *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Press, 1963), 115-132.

²⁸¹ See his classic work, *Bible, Church, Tradition* in *Collected Works*, v. 1 (Belmont, MA: Norland, 1972).

²⁸² A term coined by Nicolas Afanassieff in his now famous article in Orthodox circles, 'The Church Which Presides in Love,' *The Primacy of Peter in the Orthodox Church*, John Meyendorff et. al, eds. (London: Faith Press, 1963), 57-111. The concept was further developed and refined especially by Alexander Schmemmann and John Zizioulas.

²⁸³ 'The Church as the Privileged Witness of God,' in *Martyria and Mission: The Witness of the Orthodox Churches Today*, Ian Bria, ed. (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1980), 34.

²⁸⁴ 'Primacy in the Church: An Orthodox Approach,' *Sourozh*, no. 84 (London: Russian Diocese of Sourozh, 2001), 6-7.

²⁸⁵ In the Roman Empire, the model for ecclesial organization was built around a *pentarchy* of patriarchs from the Churches of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, among which the Bishop of Rome was considered to be the 'first-among-equals.' Following the 11th-century schism between the Church of Rome and the other patriarchates – which occurred in part because of Rome's assertions of universal jurisdiction over the internal affairs of the other churches – the primacy within the Orthodox Church fell upon the Patriarch of Constantinople, hence the title 'Ecumenical Patriarch.' From the Orthodox standpoint, once unity is restored between the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity, the Pope of Rome would resume its spot as 'first-among-equals' in the ancient pentarchy.

²⁸⁶ John Meyendorff, 'The Ecumenical Patriarchate, Yesterday and Today,' 'Ecclesiastical Regionalism: Structures of Communion or Cover for Separatism,' reprinted in, *The Byzantine Legacy in the Orthodox Church*, 254.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 251.

²⁸⁸ *Conversations with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I*, 31-2.

²⁸⁹ The best example of this was the closing in 1971 of the patriarchate's theological school on the island of Halki, close to Istanbul. Despite repeated pleas to the Turkish government, both directly from the patriarch and through the intervention of foreign governments and international organizations, Halki remains closed to this day.

²⁹⁰ Diaspora is a term that has been used among the Orthodox to refer to those who have immigrated to parts of the world that are outside of historically Orthodox lands. It has become somewhat of a loaded term over the past few decades because of the way it has been used in the controversies surrounding the granting of autocephaly (self-rule) to those who live in these so called 'new lands' for the Orthodox Church.

²⁹¹ *Relations of Compatibility and Incompatibility Between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria*, Antonia Zhelyazkova, Jogen Nielsen, and Jilles Kepell, eds. (Sofia: International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations' Foundation, 1995), xviii-xix.

²⁹² Taken from Patriarch Bartholomew's address to the Conference on Peace and Tolerance – which he organized and held in Istanbul in 1994 – as printed in *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer*, 114.

²⁹³ I have relied heavily on the following sources, which I have used in the courses I have taught on Islam: Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), Reza Aslan, *No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam* (New York: Random House, 2005), Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 3 vols. (Cf. note 2 above), Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islam: Religion, History, and Civilization* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam: An Introduction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), and Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in the Modern History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

²⁹⁴ Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, v. 1, 400-2

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, v. 3, 3.

²⁹⁶ Akbar Ahmed, *Postmodernism and Islam* (London: Routledge, 1996 [forth printing]), 108-9.

- ²⁹⁷ Again one thinks of the basic presentations and analysis given for the modern period in the works by Nasr, Aslan, and Schimmel. (See note above.)
- ²⁹⁸ Nasr, 176-7.
- ²⁹⁹ Figures falling into this category would include Rifaa al-Tahtawi, Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi, and Mehmet Zia Gokalp.
- ³⁰⁰ This would include figures such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh, and Muhammad Iqbal.
- ³⁰¹ Those representative of this trend include Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Hasan al-Banna, and Sayyid Qutb.
- ³⁰² Uthman Dan Fodio, Muhammad Ahmad ibn Abd Allah, Sayyid Ali Muhammad Shirazi (leader of movement known as Babism), Mirza Husayn Ali Nuri (aka Baha Allah, founder of Bahai faith), and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini can all be associated with the Mahdist trend in that they either appealed to expectations surrounding the Mahdi, associated themselves in some way with him, and/or claimed directly to be the Mahdi.
- ³⁰³ In addition to Ayatollah Khomeini and Sayyid Qutb, whom though mention already in reference to other trends would fall in this camp as well, groups like the Taliban, and various others in places like Lebanon, Palestine, Kashmir, and Chechnya could all be considered revolutionists.
- ³⁰⁴ *The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 92.
- ³⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 150.
- ³⁰⁶ Atallah Siddiqui, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the Twentieth Century* (London: Macmillan Press, 1997), 173.
- ³⁰⁷ See Abdulaziz Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). It is also interesting to note that at least two Orthodox scholars have written articles on the same topic, though instead on the relationship between Orthodox Christianity and democracy and pluralism: Aristotle Papanikolaou, 'Byzantium, Orthodoxy, and Democracy' (see note 7 above) and Elizabeth Prodromou, 'Orthodox Christianity and the Pluralism: Moving beyond Ambivalence,' in *The Orthodox Churches in a Pluralistic World*, 22-46.
- ³⁰⁸ In this excerpt, Plekon references in several passages from Bulgakov's *The Bride of the Lamb*, Boris Jakim, tr. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 266.
- ³⁰⁹ *The Bride of the Lamb*, 268-70.
- ³¹⁰ *Ibid*, 270.
- ³¹¹ Michael Plekon, 'Still by Jacob's Well: Sergius Bulgakov's Vision of the Church,' *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, v. 49, no. 1-2 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2005), 138-9.
- ³¹² *Mnemosyne and the Children of Memory*, 96.
- ³¹³ 'La situation du dialogue Islamo-chrétien dans le monde Orthodoxe et en Grèce,' in *Islam and Christianity: Mutual Perceptions Since the Mid-20th Century*, Jacques Waardenburg, ed. (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 98-9.
- ³¹⁴ Argyriou mentions the work in this area of Patriarch Ignatius IV, Metropolitan Georges (Khodr), Tarek Mitri, Georges Nahas, Archbishop Anastasios (Yannoulatos), Grigoris Ziakas, Nikos Zacharopoulos, and others.
- ³¹⁵ 'The Formation of Orthodox Ecclesial Identity,' *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, v. 42, no. 3-4 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 312-13.
- ³¹⁶ 'Russian Orthodoxy: Contemporary Challenges in Society,' 325.
- ³¹⁷ Tarek Mitri, 'Religious Plurality in the Context of Globalization: Introductory Reflections,' *Current Dialogue*, 33 (Geneva, July 1999), 1. Posted at <http://wcc-org/wccwhat/interreligious/cd33-09.html> and accessed on 22 March 2008.
- ³¹⁸ Interestingly, William Dalrymple noted the similarities between the prostrations of Eastern Christians during certain prayers with those of Muslims during their five daily prayers. *From the Holy Mountain*, 304.
- ³¹⁹ Probably the most egregious example of this is, interestingly enough, by a Jewish author who publishes under the name Bat Ye'or. Though not an Orthodox Christian, her major work, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity Under Islam: From Jihad to Dhimmitude* (Madison, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996), has found some measure of acceptance in certain Orthodox circles. Its popularity stems from the fact that it tells people what they want to hear by judging the history of Islam through a modern filter and an anti-Islamic bias.
- ³²⁰ Metropolitan Georges (Khodr), Archbishop Anastasios (Yannoulatos), and John Meyendorff are notable exceptions. See their respective, key articles: 'Christianity in a Pluralistic World – The Economy of the Spirit,' *The Ecumenical Review*, v. 23 (1971), 118-128; 'Emerging Perspectives on the Relationships of Christians to People of Others Faith – an Eastern Orthodox Contribution,' *International Review of Mission* 77 (Geneva, 1988), 332-346; 'Ecclesiastical Regionalism: Structures of Communion or Cover for Separatism,' reprinted in, *The Byzantine Legacy in the Orthodox Church*, 217-233.
- ³²¹ 'Hellenic Culture – Orthodoxy – Islam,' *Graeco-Arabica*, v. 7-8 (Athens: Association for Greek and Arabic Studies, 2000), 463-4.

³²² Ibid, 464.

³²³ See George Florovsky, *Collected Works*, v. 1-3 (Belmont, MA: Norland, 1972-76).

³²⁴ 'Le Christianisme, l'Islam, et l'Arabité,' *Contacts*, n. 110 (Paris, 1980), 98.

³²⁵ Ibid, 98-9.

³²⁶ *Conversations with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I*, 210.

³²⁷ It should be noted that much of the supposed 'Medinan ideal' was completely lost on the Umayyad rulers (or rather intentionally ignored) who are considered by most Muslims to have been ungodly, worldly, and self-serving Arab monarchs.

³²⁸ This was taken from an opening address titled, 'Challenges Facing Christian-Muslim Dialogue,' and delivered by Aram I at the WCC's International Conference on Christian-Muslim Dialogue held in Geneva, Switzerland in October 2002. Printed in, *For a Church Beyond its Walls* (Antelias, Lebanon: Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, 2007), 260-6.

³²⁹ Ibid, 265.

³³⁰ A quotation from the plenary address of Tariq Ramada at the 2009 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, "Contemporary Islam: The Meaning and the Need of a Radical Reform," (8 November 2009, Montreal).

³³¹ Excerpts from an address by Ignatius IV, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and all the East during a meeting between His Beatitude (Ignatius IV) and Pope John Paul II at the Vatican on 22 October 2001.

Accessed on-line at <http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/behindthenews/us113.html> on 4 February 2009.

³³² See for example the initiative, "Visions for peace – Voices of faith" jointly sponsored by the World Council of Churches, Action by Churches Together, and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance. The website is: <http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/behindthenews/calls.html> (first accessed on 20 May 2002).

³³³ *Episkepsis*, no. 600 (Chambesy, Switzerland: Centre Orthodoxe du Patriarcat OEcumenique, 2001), 9.

³³⁴ Ibid, 10.

³³⁵ See for example Daniel Sahas, 'Captivity and Dialogue: Gregory Palamas (1296-1360) and the Muslims,' *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 25 (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Seminary Press, 1980), 409-436 and Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 'The Prayer of the Heart is Hesychasm and Sufism,' *Orthodox Christians and Muslims*, N.M. Vapouris, ed. (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1986), 195-203. Nasr even quotes an earlier figure who pointed to the role of mysticism in bringing about better relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslim. According to Nasr (203), the middle of the twentieth century the famous Catholic theologian and Islamicist said, "It is too late for conferences; the only thing that matters now is the prayer of the heart."

³³⁶ *Paths to the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East*, James Cutsinger, ed., (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, Inc., 2002), 276.

³³⁷ Ibid, 272-3.

³³⁸ This was from an interview conducted by ZENIT during his stay at the ecumenical monastery of Bose, Italy. The article was titled, 'On Ecumenism, Islam and the U.S. Image Abroad: Interview with Patriarch Ignatius IV Hazim of Antioch,' and was accessed on-line at <http://www.zenit.org/article-2750?l=english> on 2 February 2009.

³³⁹ Taken from the same on-line ZENIT article.

³⁴⁰ From the "Visions for peace – Voices of faith" website in an article titled, 'Church statements and actions: Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and all the East.' Accessed on-line on 4 February 2009 at <http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/behindthenews/us113.html>.

³⁴¹ For a summary of the event, see the CNN article, 'Religious Heads Condemn Terror.' Accessed on-line at <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/europe/12/20/brussels.interfaith/index.html> on 19 April 2007.

³⁴² The text of the so-called "Brussels Declaration," which is actually titled, 'The Peace of God in the World,' can be found on-line at a number of websites, including that of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Accessed on-line at <http://www.goarch.org/en/special/usvisit2002/holiness/speeches/brussels.asp> on 19 April 2007.

³⁴³ Ibid, point #8.

³⁴⁴ *Episkepsis*, no. 603, 11.

³⁴⁵ An excerpt from 'The Peace of God in the World.' See note 14.

³⁴⁶ It is interesting to note that in the same month as this conference there was another international gathering of and scholars, theologians, and Orthodox leaders on the campus of the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology (Boston, U.S.A.) on the topic of 'Orthodox Churches in a Pluralistic World: An Ecumenical Conversation.' That conference touched on some similar themes to the Muslim-Christian Dialogue Conference in Bahrain, but took a closer look at the issues of pluralism, globalization, human rights, violence, forgiveness and reconciliation, ethnic conflicts, nationalism, and mission specifically from the Orthodox Christian vantage point. The papers were published in, *The Orthodox Churches in a Pluralistic World: An Ecumenical Conversation*, E. Clapsis, ed. (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2004).

³⁴⁷ See the summary of the event as outlined in an article by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America titled, 'Ecumenical Patriarch Sponsors Islamic-Christian Conference in Kingdom of Bahrain.' Accessed on-line at <http://www.goarch.org/news/goa.news789> on 2 February 2009.

³⁴⁸ Taken from the Final Report and Recommendations, including the so-called "Bahrain Declaration," from the tenth session of the Muslim-Christian Dialogue Conference as it was presented to the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10 January 2003. Accessed on-line on 6 February 2009 at <http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/88a7e01fb91c57b785256cb600534989!OpenDocument>.

³⁴⁹ Ibid, Annex II to the Final Report and Recommendations.

³⁵⁰ The book was published by Fairleigh Dickinson University Press (Madison, New Jersey) in 1996. Other similar works by the same author include *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians Under Islam* (London: AUP, 1985) and *Le Dhimmi: Profil de l'opprimé en Orient et en Afrique du Nord depuis la conquête arabe* (Paris: Editions Anthropos, 1980).

³⁵¹ Accessed on-line at <http://www.frontpagemag.com> on 10 January 2005.

³⁵² An example of this would be his heavy reliance on Ye'or's argument that there has been a "globalizing trend" among scholars to distort the truth by asserting that Islam has generally been a very tolerant religion and by claiming that the "protected peoples" (ahl al-dhimma) throughout history "benefited from a privileged status." Just like Ye'or, who asserted that such a "benevolent tolerance" of the subjugated peoples "has never in fact been experienced by any people, at any period, anywhere in the (Islamic) world," Trifkovic uses many of the same examples to make a very similar conclusion. A second example of Trifkovic's borrowing from Ye'or is the way he uses the genocide of Armenians – as well as the killing and mistreatment of other Eastern Christians – by the secularized Turks as primary support for his conclusion that Islam's aim is to take over the world by force. In his words, "Islam, a religion of the desert, has created jihad and remains defined by jihad, its most important concept for the rest of the world" (141). Like, Ye'or he does little to contextualize the notion of "jihad" by times, place, individual, etc., nor does he give any sense of the diversity of opinion on "jihad" represented by such extremes as the Wahhabis and the Sufis.

³⁵³ *The Sword of the Prophet*, 7.

³⁵⁴ Ibid, 8.

³⁵⁵ Ibid, 296.

³⁵⁶ Ibid, 130.

³⁵⁷ One thinks for example of the numerous writings that have emerged directly from or related to the Orthodox Peace Fellowship and the leader of that movement, Jim Forest. Other examples include: *Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation: Insights From Orthodoxy*, Gennadios Limouris, ed. (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990); Stanley Harakas, 'The Morality of War,' in *Orthodox Synthesis: The Unity of Theological Thought*, Joseph Allen, ed. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1981); and Alexander Webster, *The Pacifist Option: The Moral Argument Against War in Eastern Orthodox Theology* (San Francisco: International Scholars Publications, 1998).

³⁵⁸ *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, v. 47, no. 1 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003).

³⁵⁹ Alexander Webster's article appears on pages 3-57 of the volume.

³⁶⁰ Ibid, 8-51.

³⁶¹ 'Justifiable War: Response #2,' in the same volume, 65.

³⁶² "'Justifiable War': Lesser Good or Lesser Evil?' in the same volume, 100.

³⁶³ Ibid, 100-1.

³⁶⁴ Dated 19 March 2003. Accessed on-line at <http://incommunion.org/articles/news-reports/iraq-appeal> on 11 February 2009.

³⁶⁵ The website of the Orthodox Peace Fellowship (<http://incommunion.org/articles/news-reports/iraq-appeal>) and the "Visions for peace – Voices of faith" initiative's site (<http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/behindthenews/calls.html>), at least as of 11 February 2009, show the multiple pleas from Orthodox hierarchs around the world that were sent to the U.S. government in an attempt to dissuade it from invading Iraq.

³⁶⁶ 'Seeking interreligious understanding in Iraq,' *The Orthodox Church*, v. 30, n. 5/6 (Syosset, NY: Orthodox Church in America), 2.

³⁶⁷ The event was organized by the Saint Egidio Community and took place on 7-9 September 2003.

³⁶⁸ 'Symphony and Heterophony among Religions: Demarcation Line between Religiosity and Fundamentalism,' 5-6. Accessed on-line at http://www.alepporthodox.org/02-en/02-metropolitan/writings/eng_religiosity%20&%20fondamentalism.pdf (from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Aleppo's website) on 17 May 2007.

³⁶⁹ 'The Russian Orthodox Church, Tartar Christians and Islam,' in *Eastern Christianity: Studies in Modern History, Religion and Politics*, Anthony O'Mahony, ed. (London: Fox Communications and Publications, 2004), 338-371.

³⁷⁰ Ibid, 366.

- ³⁷¹ He notes on page 367 the difficulties encountered “by a very wide range of different religious organizations ranging from the Russian Orthodox abroad [a branch of Russian Orthodoxy that at one point during the Communist era split with the ‘official Church’] to the Muslims, not to mention Roman Catholics.”
- ³⁷² ‘Analysis of Religious Organizations in the Russian Federation,’ *Keston News Service*, April Issue 4 (Oxford and Moscow, 2001), 11 as quoted in Cousins, 367.
- ³⁷³ The Moscow Times article, ‘Muslims, Orthodox Find Common Foe,’ written by Andrei Zolotov Jr. and published on 8 June 1999, was assessed on-line at <http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=234881> on 10 April 2005. Though this author was unable to directly access the article on the Moscow Patriarchate’s website, it is referenced on quoted on page 169 of Peter Riddell’s, *Christians and Muslims: Pressures and potential in a post-9/11 world* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004).
- ³⁷⁴ From the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate as referenced in a web article titled, ‘Patriarch Alexy sends greets the participants in the 5th session of the Joint Theological Commission on “Islam-Orthodoxy” Dialogue.’ Accessed on-line at http://www.mospat.ru/prv/site/tml/_styles.css on 15 February 2009.
- ³⁷⁵ Taken from a World of Russia web article titled, ‘The 4th Session of the Russian-Iranian Commission on the “Islam-Orthodoxy” Dialogue in Moscow.’ Accessed on-line at <http://en.mirros.ru/religion/iran> on 15 February 2009.
- ³⁷⁶ ‘Muslims, Orthodox Find Common Foe,’ 1.
- ³⁷⁷ ‘The 4th Session of the Russian-Iranian Commission on the “Islam-Orthodoxy” Dialogue in Moscow.’ Accessed at <http://en.mirros.ru/religion/iran> on 15 February 2009.
- ³⁷⁸ Again from the Department for External Church Relations web article on the 5th session. (See n. 46 above.)
- ³⁷⁹ ‘Moscou: Rencontre interreligieuse contre le terrorisme.’ Accessed at <http://www.orthodoxpress.com/nouvelles.php3?page=52> on 17 July 2006.
- ³⁸⁰ Ibid, 2.
- ³⁸¹ ‘Message from His Beatitude Petros VII, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa at the State of the Interreligious Conference Entitled: “Religion – Peace – Olympic Ideal.’ Accessed on-line at on <http://www.greekorthodox-alexandria.org/oldsite/Articles/Athens2004EN.htm> 8 May 2009 from the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria’s website.
- ³⁸² Tragically, Patriarch Petros and those with him died just one month later in a fatal helicopter crash on his way to Mount Athos.
- ³⁸³ One example would be the congress on 2-3 July 2004 titled, ‘Religion and the Olympic Games,’ organized by the Orthodox Center of the Ecumenical Patriarch. Patriarch Bartholomew himself spoke at the conference. Portions of his address can be found in *Episkepsis*, no. 638, 14-18. Though occurring some months after the Olympics and of a more regional character, another example would be the inter-religious gathering in Geneva on the occasion of the 38th World Day for Peace, 25 January 2005. In addition to Hafid Ouardiri a known imam at a Geneva mosque, Metropolitan Jeremiah of Switzerland was one of the key speakers at the event, which was held very close to the U.N.’s Palais des Nations. See *Episkepsis*, no. 645 (9-12) for a description and excerpts of the speeches.
- ³⁸⁴ Taken from Margarita Kislova’s description in her RIA Novosti article, ‘Christian-Muslim Dialogue at Conference in Jordan.’ Accessed on 3 March 2005 through the listserv of the Orthodox Peace Fellowship.
- ³⁸⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁸⁶ Accessed on-line from the website of the Albanian Orthodox Church at <http://www.orthodoxalbania.org/English/News%20and%20Publications/News1.htm> on 17 April 2007.
- ³⁸⁷ Ibid, 2.
- ³⁸⁸ For a description of the Albanian Orthodox Church’s many programs, along with the stories of those who have come from abroad just to be a part of the Archbishop’s work, see the web page of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center at www.ocmc.org. See also the cover story on Archbishop Anastasios in the 27 July 2003 edition of *Parade Magazine*, the popular and widely circulated American newspaper supplement: Nicholas Gage, ‘He Gave His Country Hope: The Story of Archbishop Anastasios Yannoulatos (New York, Parade Publications).
- ³⁸⁹ ‘The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople: A Ministry of Reconciliation,’ 3. Accessed on-line at www.achons.org/news/detail.asp?id=109 on 11 May 2006. The speech was delivered on the occasion of Archbishop Demetrios’ receiving of an Honorary Doctor’s Degree in Humanities from Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut.
- ³⁹⁰ Accessed at the Appeal of Conscience Foundation website (www.appealofconscience.org) on 2 February 2009.
- ³⁹¹ Ibid.
- ³⁹² From section one of the signed statement that emerged from the first Conference on Peace and Tolerance. Also accessed at the Appeal of Conscience Foundation website (www.appealofconscience.org) on 2 February 2009.

- ³⁹³ Statistics may be low as they were taken from a web article written prior to the conclusion of the Israeli offensive. The article was from *Orthodox Christian News* (volume 8, number 48 [August 9, 2006]) – a publication of the Orthodox Christian Laity (assessed from their website, www.ocl.org, on 12 August 2006) – titled, ‘Standing Conference of American Middle Eastern Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders Convenes in an Emergency Session and Issues a Resolution.’
- ³⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 1-2.
- ³⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 2. Emphasis added.
- ³⁹⁶ Accessed on-line at www.orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/thess_conclusions.aspx on 19 June 2007.
- ³⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 16.
- ³⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 13.
- ³⁹⁹ ‘Christianity in a Pluralistic World – The Economy of the Spirit,’ Sobornost, series 6, no. 3 (London: Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, 1971), 174. See chapter two for a full discussion of Metropolitan Georges views on other religions.
- ⁴⁰⁰ ‘Conclusions of the Inter-Orthodox Theological Conference: “Ecumenism: Origins – Expectations – Disenchantment,”’ 15.
- ⁴⁰¹ For a general overview of the Academy see: <http://www.imd.gr/html/en/section02/academy/general.htm> (accessed 11 April 2009).
- ⁴⁰² A brief description of the event can be found on the website of the Holy Metropolis of Demetrias at <http://www.imd.gr/html/en/section02/academy/review.htm#paralle1>.
- ⁴⁰³ *Islam & Fundamentalism – Orthodox Christianity and Globalization* (in Greek), Pantelis Kalaitzidis and Nikos Ntontos, eds. (Athens: Indiktos Publications, 2004).
- ⁴⁰⁴ Some of the themes and arguments presented in the book are supportive of those covered in chapter four of this writing, which focused specifically on the theme of identity.
- ⁴⁰⁵ For an overview of the events that took place from January-May 2007 see: *Orthodox Christianity & Islam – Islam in Europe: Program and Parallel Events* (Volos, Greece: Holy Metropolis of Demetrias, 2006). Accessed on-line at http://www.imd.gr/html/en/section02/academy/academy06_07.pdf on 11 April 2009.
- ⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 3.
- ⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 3.
- ⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 1.
- ⁴⁰⁹ From an *African News Dimension* article titled, ‘Orthodox Church Archbishop attacks “Islamic fanaticism,”’ v. 8, n. 54 (24 September 2006). Accessed on-line at www.orthodoxytoday.org on 1 February 2009.
- ⁴¹⁰ ‘A Message from His Beatitude Ignatius IV to His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI,’ *Patriarchate of Antioch News*, no. 2/663 (17 September 2006). Accessed on-line at <http://antiochpat.org/english/news/print.php?newsid=105&PHPSESSID=93a85ba6a66fe0982fd99e00d4e6c3f8> on 2 February 2009.
- ⁴¹¹ Accessed at http://media.mgnetwork.com/ric/pdfs/20071012_muslim_letter.pdf on 16 October 2007.
- ⁴¹² The web link to the sight is: <http://www.acommonword.com>. Accessed 1 May 2009.
- ⁴¹³ *Ibid*, letter dated 6 February 2008. Accessed 1 May 2009.
- ⁴¹⁴ For example, this was a consistent theme (almost a foundational principle) of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, a group that slit with the Russian Orthodox Church during the communist period but that has recently reunited with it.
- ⁴¹⁵ From <http://www.acommonword.com>, letter dated 10 November 2008. Accessed 1 May 2009.
- ⁴¹⁶ ‘Al-ta‘addudiyya wal-ta‘assub (Pluralism and Fanaticism),’ Royal Institute of Interfaith Studies. Accessed on-line at <http://riifs.org> on 19 June 2007.
- ⁴¹⁷ ‘Churches to gather for international conference on Middle East peace, launch of new advocacy forum,’ WCC News (12 June 2007). Accessed on-line at http://www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/eng/a/browse/1/article/1722/churches-to-gather-for-in.html?tx_ttnews%5Bsword%5D=new%20advocacy%20forum&cHash=0f7773af41 on 19 June 2007.
- ⁴¹⁸ ‘Occupation hurts human dignity on both sides,’ WCC News (19 June 2007). Accessed on-line at http://www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/eng/a/browse/1/article/1722/occupation-hurts-human-di.html?tx_ttnews%5Bsword%5D=occupation&cHash=898c602ae1 on 19 June 2007.
- ⁴¹⁹ ‘Churches in Jerusalem welcome WCC’s new advocacy initiative for peace in Palestine/Israel,’ WCC News (19 June 2007). Accessed on-line at http://www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/eng/a/browse/1/article/1722/churches-in-jerusalem-wel.html?tx_ttnews%5Bsword%5D=churches%20in%20jerusalem&cHash=6a2dafa1de on 19 June 2007.
- ⁴²⁰ ‘Syria sets example for good relations between Christians and Muslims and hospitality to refugees,’ WCC News (24 April 2008). Accessed on-line at http://www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/eng/a/article/1722/syria-sets-example-for-go.html?tx_ttnews%5Bsword%5D=Syria%20sets%20example%20&cHash=fa396bd722 on 19 June 2007.

⁴²¹ An excerpt from the message of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew delivered at the Phanar 10 October 2008 at the Synaxis of the Heads of All Orthodox Churches. Published under the title, 'Ecumenical Patriarch's Address to the Synaxis of Hierarchs,' *Orthodox Observer*, v. 73, n. 1242 (October 2008), 6.

⁴²² 'Ecumenical Patriarch's Address to the Synaxis of Hierarchs,' 5.

⁴²³ An excerpt of the 'Message of the Heads of the Orthodox Churches' from the Synaxis of the Heads of All Orthodox Churches. Published in the *Orthodox Observer*, v. 73, n. 1243 (November 2008), 19.

⁴²⁴ The term "Crusading ethos" was introduced by John V. Taylor in a 1981 article ("The Theological Basis for Interfaith Dialogue," *Mission Trends No. 5: Faith Meets Faith*, G. Anderson & T. Stransky, eds. [New York: Paulist Press, 1981], 95).

) to characterize a common mentality among Christians toward Islam. Taylor, a well-known figure in Muslim-Christian dialogue claimed that this was a "fundamental feature" of the Church's tradition, which is "second nature for most Christians."

⁴²⁵ See note 419 above.

⁴²⁶ Terms taken from Konstantinos Romanos' article, 'Hellenic Culture – Orthodoxy – Islam.' See note 321 above.

⁴²⁵ In *A History of Christian-Muslim Relations*, Hugh Goddard demonstrated the way in which the Arabic Christian term for Trinity, *tathlith*, has not helped matters in that it can be understood to mean "making three." He suggests that it might help Muslim better appreciate the distinction between Trinity and tritheism if there were some revision or change in the term that is currently in use.

⁴²⁸ See, for example, *Paths to the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East*, James Cutsinger, ed., (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, Inc., 2002).

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