THE HISTORY OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY

Background Material for Instructors and Discussion Leaders

Prepared by Patrick Henry Reardon

For a free catalog of our videos contact:



Vision Video P. O. Box 540 Worcester, PA 19490 610-584-3500 1-800-523-0226 Fax: 610-584-6643

E-Mail: info@visionvideo.com Web: www.visionvideo.com We realize this subject area may be largely unfamiliar to many who will want to use these programs, so the following material has been prepared to give further background and orientation to assist those teaching classes, lending discussion following the screening of the programs, and for individual viewers who just want more information.

An additional series of programs has been produced to follow these three. They are **The Sacraments of Orthodox Christianity**. There are four programs in this series. For those wanting further information on these programs, or other programs on the history of Christianity, please contact us at the address inside the back cover.



Patrick Henry Reardon is pastor of St. Athanasius Orthodox Church in Butler, Pennsylvania and teaches philosophy at the Community College of Allegheny County in Pittsburgh.

THE HISTORY OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY

Background Material for Instructors and Discussion Leaders by Patrick Henry Reardon

INTRODUCTION

When American Christians, but most especially Protestants, make their first contact with the Eastern Orthodox Church, it frequently happens that their initial impressions include a strong sense of history. Visiting early Christian sites at the eastern end of the Mediterranean basin, a traveler will discover actual congregations that go back in unbroken succession to the very origins of Christianity. Often there is the eerie feeling in such places that Peter or Silas or Timothy had been there just yesterday. The church at Damascus, for example, stands in direct historical continuity with the Christian congregation that once received its would-be persecutor, Saul of Tarsus, and then baptized him (Cf. Acts 9:1-19). (My own bishop was born on the "Straight Street" mentioned in the text!) Similarly, there is no break in the historical line that unites the Christians on the island of Cyprus today from their grandparents who were converted at the preaching of Barnabas and Paul almost 2000 years ago (Cf. Acts 13:4-12). Indeed, Barnabas was a local fellow there (Acts 4:36), as the Cypriots themselves are not too shy to point out.

Likewise, the modern visitor who worships with the Orthodox Christians at Thessaloniki finds himself in a congregation that has been worshipping in that place without interruption since the summer of A.D. 49 (Cf. Acts 17:1-15) and to which were carried the two Epistles to the Thessalonians. Somewhat "more recently" (as their idiom would express it), the Orthodox Christians of much of Eastern Europe owe their religious heritage to the missionaries Cyril and Methodius who were sent to their ancestors from that same congregation at Thessaloniki in 863. Eastern Orthodoxy consciousness is marked by the serene possession of its own history. Ancient but clear memories are paramount to the Orthodox experience.

Notwithstanding this indisputable historical pattern that links it to the Apostles and the local churches of the New Testament, Eastern Orthodox Christianity will frequently, and perhaps normally, seem strange and exotic to other American Christians. It will appear so awfully.... well, eastern, and therefore culturally alien. There are all those bearded monks, for example, singing those strange Byzantine chants. The ritual of worship in particular, with its candles and icons, its numerous bows, brocade vestments and billowing incense, looks like something from a distant planet. Especially to the Christian who regularly worships in a building with relatively little visual adornment, in a service possessed of only the most modest of vestments

and ritual, and where virtually no attention is paid to the senses of touch and smell, an Orthodox service may appear so bizarre that he is not entirely sure, at first, he could even classify it as "Christian worship" at all.

Somehow that hesitation needs to be gotten past. By way of doing this I suggest a simple reflection: If a person can find a way to enter the strange, exotic and perhaps even flamboyant world of Holy Scripture, the world where sticks turn into snakes and water into wine, where a sea is rolled back and a prophet gets backtalk from a jackass — if a modern American can come to the point where he is flexible enough to feel comfortable in a universe inhabited by the likes of Jacob, Hosea, Samson and Elijah, then surely exposure to the Eastern Orthodox Church should not be all that threatening nor overly tax his imaginative tolerance. The "audio-visual dimensions" of Orthodox worship in particular, which appear so fantastic and eccentric at first, are no more culturally demanding than the experiences related by Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the Apostle John.

This comparison seems fair inasmuch as the "eastern and therefore culturally alien" aspect of Eastern Orthodoxy is a feature that it shares with the Bible itself. A good number of American Christians have the impression that they are "at home" in the world of the Bible. Well, maybe so, but exposure to Eastern Orthodox Christianity can provide a realistic opportunity to test that impression, because it is culturally much closer to the world of the Bible than almost anything else that an American Christian is likely to find readily at hand. Solomon and Daniel would certainly not experience cultural alienation if faced with the Byzantine vestments and incense, and the bearded, taciturn Orthodox monk would look perfectly normal to Elijah or John the Baptist. The language that one hears in the chants of Greek Orthodox worship, moreover, is the very tongue in which the Apostle Paul spoke to the Athenians. So you can get used to those cultural aspects of Eastern Christianity that seem so strange at first. Anyone who has grown accustomed to that ancient and very foreign world portrayed in Holy Scripture should be able, with some sympathetic and imaginative effort, to overcome whatever culture shock may jar him at his initial encounter with Eastern Orthodoxy. As one begins to view these cassette tapes, I suggest that such effort will be rewarded by a clearer grasp of Christian history.

The tapes in this series are mainly historical, tracing the Eastern Orthodox Church from New Testament period to "our own times" (which latter the Orthodox trace from 1453!). One of the goals of the present booklet is to lower the anxiety of those instructors and discussion leaders who may feel that their familiarity with the historical details is not adequate to the task.

PART ONE The Beginnings

The major dates presumed in this first tape are:

- 399 B.C. the death of Socrates, followed by the careers of Plato and then Aristotle
- 333 B.C. the Battle of Issus, where Alexander the Great defeated the Persians and spread Greek culture to all the Near and Middle East
- A.D. 47-61 the missionary travels of the Apostle Paul
- A.D. 298-313 the persecution of Diocletian, terminated by Constantine's Edict of Milan
- A.D. 330 the capital of the Roman Empire moved to Byzantium, later renamed Constantinople
- A.D. 337 baptism and death of Constantine
- A.D. 380 pagan religion prohibited in the Roman Empire

In the film itself there is frequent recourse to maps, but it will be most helpful to the instructor to be very familiar with the geography of the eastern Mediterranean ahead of time. The maps found at the back of most standard translations of the New Testament will usually be adequate.

Tape 1, "The Beginnings," breaks logically into certain sections that can be identified in the subject headings that follow:

1. THE EARLY CHURCH (roughly 6 1/2 min.)

This section begins with God's historical manifestation in his Son, Jesus Christ, a revelation that occurred within a determined time and in a specific place. This emphasis is not accidental. Orthodoxy is not a theoretical religion. It is entirely tied to a definite historical sequence, certain defining events and the Christian life actually lived in specific places. Orthodoxy's entire identity is rooted in memory. In Orthodoxy, uninterrupted memory is everything. It is called Tradition, the source of Orthodoxy's self-awareness as the Church.

The opening photography dwells in some detail on the city and environs of Jerusalem; particularly to be noticed is a panoramic view of the eastern wall of the city taken from the Mount of Olives and another of the "Western Wall" of Herod's Temple where Hasidic Jews are praying with the constant bows that are customary to them. There are several contemporary scenes from the 4th century Church of the Holy Sepulcher, most notably the Empty Tomb where candles are kept burning. The inscription on the tapestry beside it reads "Christos anesti" - "Christ is risen."

Almost immediately the photography shifts to an aerial shot of the monastery of St. Catherine perched in the mountains down on the Sinai peninsula of Egypt. This monastery, founded by the Emperor Justinian, has been in continuous existence since the 6th century, and for many centuries it housed one of the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament (the Codex Sinaiticus from the mid-4th century). This same monastery, because it lay outside the jurisdiction of the Byzantine Empire during one of the most troublesome periods of Orthodox history, avoided the widespread destruction of icons that took place in the 7th and 8th centuries. Consequently it preserves to this day some of the world's oldest extant examples of Christian art.

The film presents two scenes of monks. The younger one, before lighting a lamp, commences striking a long board, which is the way that Orthodox Christians are summoned to worship in those regions where the Moslem invaders forbade the use of bells. The older monk is chanting in the Byzantine style; one can discern the Greek words at the beginning: "axion esti..." "it is a worthy thing" Orthodox monks chant through the entire Book of Psalms each week, as well as scores of hymns and canticles.

Among the several icons portrayed in this section of the film, attention may be directed to one of three bearded bishops: the "Three Hierarchs" as they are called, three 4th century bishops who contributed richly to the doctrinal teaching of Orthodoxy: Basil of Caesarea, Gregory (Nazianzen) the Theologian, and John Chrysostom of Constantinople. It was this last who gave final shape to the chief rite of the Orthodox Church: the Divine Liturgy.

What is the Divine Liturgy? It is what many American Christians call "the Lord's Supper," the act that a Christian congregation does together in obedience to the command of Jesus: "Do this in memory of me." Early in the film is a mural of the Last Supper, the original Divine Liturgy (from the Greek words "leitos ergon" - "public service"). This service is the central and defining ritual of the Orthodox Church. About 6 minutes into the film we are presented with several scenes of Orthodox Christians at worship in this service. They were photographed in a number of places. Two, for example, were made in the United States, where we see Archbishop Iakovos of New York "breaking the bread," while chanting "hagia hagiosis" – "holy things are for the holy ones." There is also a scene of Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople giving Holy Communion (with a golden spoon) to his congregation. It is especially in the context of the Divine Liturgy that Orthodoxy concentrates the historic memory that constitutes its very identity.

From time to time in these presentations one will see Orthodox Christians "crossing" themselves - that is, using the hand to form the outline of the cross on their bodies, the forehead, breast and two shoulders serving as the extremities of the cross. The "sign of the cross" is regarded in Orthodoxy as a form of "sign language prayer." No one knows exactly where or when this custom of "crossing oneself" started, but it is first mentioned in Christian literature of the 2nd century, about the same time as our earliest manuscript fragments of the New

Testament. It is mentioned, however, in terms suggesting that it was already a common and well known practice. The custom is universal in Orthodoxy and may be compared to the children's custom, among some American Christians, of using certain hand signals to accompany various hymns. All references to "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" in Orthodox worship are normally joined by this manual action.

2. FROM JERUSALEM TO THE NATIONS (roughly 3 1/2 min.)

This small section indicates the historical circumstances of the origins of Christianity. The roots are Semitic. That is, the earliest Christians were Jews, heirs of the Old Testament doctrine of monotheism and a strict moral code. The presentation suggests, however, that the Gentile world was never too far away from the ministry of Jesus himself; it notes that much of that ministry took place in the very "hellenized" (Hellas is the Greek name for Greece) region of Galilee.

There are photographs of the Church of the Holy Nativity in Bethlehem and then of the remains of the 3rd century synagogue at Capernaum on the shore of the Lake of Galilee. That synagogue was built on the exact site of the Capernaum synagogue frequented by Jesus and mentioned so often in the Gospels.

Several times now the narrator has used the word "philanthropia," which means "love of mankind." It refers primarily to that disposition of charity and compassion shown by God towards the human race, even to the point of sending his Son to become a member of it; in Orthodox worship God is frequently addressed as "philanthropos," "Lover of mankind." The term contains, moreover, the moral imperative to love one another as God has loved us. "Philanthropia" is a major Christian duty.

The event that marked the Church's first appearance in this world was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, 50 days after the Resurrection. Three thousand converts entered the Church on that day. Then it began to spread to the rest of the Roman Empire.

The political framework of the world at the time of Jesus' earthly life was this Roman Empire, which had begun only shortly before his birth. The Empire provided the general atmosphere of stability ("Pax Romana" or "Roman Peace"), economic cohesion and fairly dependable travel to the Mediterranean world at the time when Christianity began its ministry of evangelizing. While it describes the Empire, our tape shows scenes from the sites in Rome, first the Colosseum, built during the decade before A.D. 80, and then, some 300 yards to the southwest, the ruins of the Roman Forum.

Although the Mediterranean world at the time was politically Roman, however, the dominant culture and language was Greek, a theme that brings us to the next part of the tape.

3. CHRISTIANITY AND HELLENISM (roughly 4 1/2 min.)

Even as the tape continues to show scenes from the Roman Forum, the narrator begins to speak of the importance of Greek language and culture in the early spread of the Christian Church. At the end of the 4th century B.C. Alexander the Great, the King of Macedonia, defeated the Persians (the Battle of Issus in 333, surely the easiest date in the world to remember) and set in motion those economic and cultural forces that would make the Greek language the common international tongue from Sicily to the Persian Gulf. Greek was understood and spoken on the three continents that form the Mediterranean basin. As most of this territory came under Roman domination and was eventually incorporated into the Roman Empire, Greek remained the dominant language. While the Roman Senate debated in Latin, the people on the streets of Rome itself were more likely to speak Greek. Recall that St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans was written in Greek. More remarkably, the Roman influence extended Greek language and culture into other regions. Thus, in the second century the Christians living in the south of France worshiped and wrote in Greek.

As this development is described in our tape, the camera moves to various sites in Greece, most notably Athens, where we see the Parthenon and other buildings on the Acropolis.

Through the Greek language "abstract ideas became universally intelligible." The presentation touches on certain of those themes of classical Greek philosophy that formed the "mind set" of most of the converts to Christianity during the early centuries. Back in 399 B.C. Socrates had gone to his death proclaiming his belief in the immortality of the soul. His disciple Plato had gone on to elaborate a theory of the objectivity and universality of truth, and then his own disciple Aristotle developed rules for the proper use of reason. This philosophical tradition, carried on later by the Stoics (Cf. Acts 17:18) and others, agreed on the objectivity of truth, the ability of the human mind to grasp truth as a universal and unchanging reality, the existence of a universally binding moral law, and the fundamental unity of human nature at all times and in all places.

Most of this Greek philosophy agreed that there is at the heart of all things a Logos ("word," but more generally structure and meaning) that gives intelligibility and being to everything. The Christian preachers gave these classical Greek concepts "new content and meanings." Thus, the Gospel according to John identifies the Logos as the Person who took flesh for our salvation (Cf. John 1:1,14).

Those who had accepted and pursued the themes of classical Greek thought often became eager recipients of the message of salvation in Jesus. Others who were social outcasts felt themselves likewise welcomed into the fellowship of the Church.

Such eagerness was not universally the case, however. Many Greco-Romans actually felt threatened by the new religion and acted accordingly. First, the new religion tended to be held suspect in rural areas, where the fertility divinities were considered so important to agricultural success. As we shall see presently, early Christianity was largely an urban phenomenon, and urban life to a great extent influenced its structure and the organization of its ministry. Indeed, the Latin word for a nonurban person, someone who lived out in the country, was "paganus"; a "pagan" was anyone who did not live in a city. Since the countryside was the last area to be evangelized, the word "pagan" has remained, to this day, the term for a person who is not yet a Christian.

Second, by proclaiming Jesus as King and refusing to recognize the divinity of the Emperor, Christians were vulnerable to the charges of civil subversion and treason. They were, therefore, very suspect to the official authorities.

4. EXPANSION AND ORGANIZATION (nearly 4 min.)

The most important figure in the expansion of the Christian Church throughout the Mediterranean world was the Apostle Paul, whose missionary journeys, as well as those of his immediate associates, placed Christian congregations in most of the great urban centers of that large region. Paul seems intentionally to have concentrated his efforts in the cities, where his message was immediately available to larger numbers of people. This strategy is precisely what made Christianity, at first, an urban phenomenon.

The Christian message was always an appeal to a decision; it was an either/or, not to be met with indifference. Wherever it made new converts, it invariably made enemies. As the Book of Acts testifies, Paul and his new Christians were held suspect or were even persecuted wherever they were found.

The video tape describes the conversion of Lydia at Philippi, recorded in Acts 16, along with a brief picture of the stream in which she was baptized. Right after this point in the presentation, there is a picture of the prison cell of Paul and Silas at Philippi. It was discovered by archaeologists under the remains of the 4th century church of Saints Paul and Silas. When the narrator describes Paul's sermon on the Areopagus, or Mars' Hill, from Acts 17, the picture seen appears simply as a rather flat surface of jagged rocks. The scene is, in fact, the top of Mar's Hill, which sits adjacent to the entrance of the Acropolis in Athens. The temple to Mars (the Roman version of Ares, the god of war; hence, "Areopagus") which stood there in Paul's time is long gone. On the side of Mars' Hill now, outside the range of the camera, is a large inscription of the entire text of Paul's sermon in the original Greek. It is worthy of note that Paul preached that sermon to the Greek philosophers only about some 50 to 100 yards from the very spot where their guiding light, Socrates, had been put on trial by the Athenians back in 399 B.C.

At first the local congregations were under the care of one of the Apostles. The authority of the Apostles was delegated to a group of elders ("presbyteroi" in Greek), and there were other ministers ("diakonoi") who saw to the social responsibilities of the congregation. This pattern

of organized ministry gave shape to the three-fold order of bishops (derived from the Greek episkopoi or "overseers"), priests (derived from presbyteroi) and deacons (from diakonoi) that is found everywhere in the Christian Church by the beginning of the second century. The bishops in each place were regarded as historical successors of the Apostles themselves, and throughout Eastern Orthodoxy today there are bishops who can trace their ordination line back to an Apostle. Sources from the second century indicate how carefully those records of succession were maintained.

5. PERSECUTION AND CATACOMBS (2 1/2 min.)

This section, descriptive of the nearly 300 years during which Christianity was an officially proscribed religion, commences with pictures taken from the dungeon in downtown Rome where tradition says that the Apostle Peter was kept prior to his execution in the autumn of A.D. 64. The upside-down cross on the wall is a reminder that this was the mode of his martyrdom, which took place on Vatican Hill, to the west of the city.

Numerous mural scenes, starting with the stoning of Stephen from Acts 7, portray various ways in which Christians were put to death at different times during that long period.

During this time the Christians had often to go "underground," an expression that found rather literal application in the catacombs. The catacombs formed the first real estate that was owned by Christian congregations. Since they could not legally incorporate as religious organizations, and since their belief in the Resurrection forbade them to follow the pagan custom of cremating the bodies of the dead, the Christian congregations legally incorporated themselves as burial societies (fossores), a move that permitted them to own real estate for that purpose. The catacombs dug into those pieces of property can still be visited today, and the various chapels found down inside them were actually in use as places of worship from time to time as the periodic persecutions rendered necessary.

The worst of the official persecutions was that begun by the Emperor Diocletian in A.D. 298. It was not regional as had been so many of the others; Christians were hounded, robbed, tortured and put to death everywhere that the Roman authorities could get at them. This persecution lasted until the rise of Constantine.

6. CONSTANTINE AND BYZANTIUM (just short of 6 min.)

The Emperor Constantine, seeking to solidify the recently divided Roman Empire, moved his forces to that purpose in 312. Some religious experience seems to have dictated his decision to free the Christians from the threat of persecution, and his Edict of Milan in 313 did just that.

The Roman Empire had always been founded on religious principles, and Constantine came to believe that this "new" religion called Christianity, characterized by monotheism, a strict moral

code and a pronounced social sense (philanthropia), would provide the cohesion that the civil organization needed. The recent persecution had made it clear that the Christians were far more numerous than anyone had suspected and that they were one group in the entire Empire who really stood for something. They were dedicated and principled people, found in all the lands of the Empire and bound together by a common set of beliefs, uniform government and mutual service. No other known religion of that period could provide so many benefits to a civil organization attempting to preserve the integrity of the Empire. Thus was born the new "Church of the Empire." By the year 380 the Roman Empire prohibited paganism and made Christianity the official state religion.

In the year 330 (The narrator says 324, a mistake not caught by the editor), Constantine moved his capital from Rome to Byzantium, a port city nearly at the point where Europe and Asia meet. It became known as the New Rome or Second Rome; later it would be called Constantinople, "the city of Constantine." This move was dictated, not only by the entrenchment of paganism in the city of Rome itself, but also to place the seat of imperial government closer to the actual geographical center of the Empire. Indeed, similar attempts to find a more easterly site had already been made prior to Constantine.

Under the influence of the Church, the city of Byzantium or Constantinople flourished in what the presentation calls "the integration of Christianity and Hellenism." This flourishing was marked by outstanding productions of music, art, architecture, literature, medicine and law. While this process is being described, the modern pictures of Constantinople (now called by the Turkish mispronunciation "Istanbul") concentrate on the church building known as "Hagia Sophia," "Holy Wisdom," built 200 years later by the Emperor Justinian. There will be more attention directed to this building in the next video tape.

Constantine's dynasty at Byzantium lasted from 330 until the capture of the city by the Turks in 1453.

PART TWO Byzantium

INTRODUCTION

The second video tape in this series ambitiously covers the long period from the Edict of Milan in 313 to the Turkish capture of Constantinople in 1453. Discussion of Orthodox Christianity during this period is impossible without sustained attention to the history of the Byzantine Empire, and it will be useful to start with a general political analysis of that long era.

The first video tape properly identified the Byzantine Empire, from the move to Byzantium in 330 until the fall of that city in 1453, as the "longest dynasty" in the history of the world. This statement is correct, but it is also in some danger of being misunderstood, because the very term "Byzantine Empire" is fairly recent and somewhat artificial. During all that long period, the political entity that we call the "Byzantine Empire" called itself, in fact, the "Roman Empire." It did not trace its dynastic roots back to Constantine but to Caesar. Constantine was simply the first Christian Emperor. He changed the Empire's religion and moved its capital, but that, the Byzantines believed, was all. He continued to be called Caesar, and Byzantium was called the Second Rome.

It is important to bear in mind that Byzantium thought of itself simply as the continuation of Rome and that, in its official documents, the Byzantine Emperor was habitually referred to as the Roman Emperor. The rest of the world regarded that development in the same way; to this very day, for instance, the Arabic word for Orthodox is *rom*. While the people crowding the streets of Byzantium, as well as the Emperor himself, spoke Greek, Latin remained the official language of the Byzantine court for a long time. The Emperor Justinian's famous Code of Law in the 6th century was promulgated in Latin. Later historians formulated the distinction between the Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire for purposes of academic classification, but like many such modern distinctions it tends to blur the sequence and continuity which the people themselves felt at the time. Anyway, the Byzantines thought and spoke of themselves as Romans.

The thousand years described in this video presentation were a period of constant war and strife. During the early centuries of the Empire the Persians proved themselves a powerful adversary to the east, and military efforts to contain their threat required an inordinate measure of the resources of the Mediterranean world. To the west the barbarian invasions swept through Gaul, Italy, Spain and even north Africa. Gradually Byzantium lost control of these regions, and they require a separate historical treatment of their own.

By far the greatest military challenge, however, and a challenge that ultimately proved insuperable, came from Arabia. Following Mohammed's death at Mecca in 632, those who embraced his new religion strenuously carried the cause against both the Persian and Byzantine empires. The former held out until 651, but Moslem armies had already been turning their attention toward the Mediterranean. Major centers of the Byzantine Empire were taken in rapid succession: Damascus in 635, Jerusalem in 638, Caesarea in 640, Alexandria in 641. The Moslems swept across north Africa, crossed the Straits of Gibralter, went through Spain and kept going until finally stopped by Charles Martel and his Franks in 732, exactly one century after the death of Mohammed. On the eastern side of the Mediterranean, Moslem conquests continued north and then west, over the top of Greece and on through the upper Balkans, where a Moslem presence has been the occasion of endless conflict ever since. (The recent formation of an independent Moslem country called Bosnia, whose projected geographical lines would include Catholic Croations and Orthodox Serbs as ethnic minorities, sparked a civil war that continues even as I write.) Finally, the Moslem Turks took Greece itself and held it until 1821.

An appreciation of the power of Islam is essential to understanding, not only the earlier history of Eastern Orthodoxy, but also the contemporary situation of many Orthodox Christians. In Arabic-speaking countries today, for example, Orthodox Christians form rather weak minorities among the Moslem masses, and on occasion they suffer local persecutions of various kinds, such as physical violence and the destruction of property. This has currently been happening in Egypt. Likewise, over the centuries the Turkish overlord has been oppressive against the Greek Orthodox minority within his borders. The Orthodox are grateful that the current government of Turkey, growing ever more secular, has thereby become somewhat more tolerant, a circumstance which, as we shall see, is permitting greater and more effective cooperation of the Patriarch of Constantinople with the rest of the Orthodox Church.

Besides Islam sweeping up from the southeast, the barbarian invasions pouring down from the north also greatly influenced Byzantine history and the Orthodox Church. Successive bands of Goths, Vandals, Visigoths, Huns, Lombards, Franks and others conquered territories that had belonged to the Roman Empire, including Italy itself. Nearly all of these peoples were evangelized into Christianity under the spiritual leadership of the Roman Pope. Likewise, in the Italian peninsula the ensuing political and social chaos produced by these invasions left a vacuum of leadership that only the Pope of Rome had the moral prestige and spiritual authority to fill. The Roman Papacy's final endorsement of the Frankish Empire, symbolized in Charlemagne's crowning by the pope in 800, and Rome's growing jurisdictional claims over the rest of the Christian Church met with resentment and resistance in the East. Only a few critical incidents were required to cause the break between Rome and Constantinople in 1054. That sad date is equally lamented by both the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches, which have not been able, during the many ensuing centuries, to find the means to heal the rupture.

Once again the video presentation will make occasional use of maps, but it would be helpful to the instructor to have prior recourse to map study. The map of St. Paul 's travels, found at the back of many editions of the New Testament, will still be handiest, but a larger map of Europe, especially Eastern Europe, will become increasingly more useful.

Tape 2, "Byzantium," breaks logically into certain sections that can be identified in the subject headings that follow:

1. COUNCILS AND CREED (7 minutes)

The Christian Church was formed of local churches, individual congregations joined in communion with one another in the common faith and structure that they had received from their founding Apostles. In the New Testament we see such churches founded at Cyprus, Philippi, Thessaloniki, Corinth and so forth, by missionaries sent from Antioch. Indeed, Antioch remained a major missionary source for a long time and is so once again today. Other large urban centers (the Greek word is "metropolis") and provincial capitals likewise became missionary centers instrumental in founding new Christian congregations. Such were Ephesus, Carthage, Alexandria and Rome.

Rather early (Cf. Acts 15) we find a disposition among Christian leaders to confer with one another to settle whatever problems and doubts might arise on points of Christian discipline or more obscure aspects of the Christian faith itself. These meetings were called synods or councils of the Church. At first they were local. For example, in the second century such councils were held in Rome and in Ephesus to discuss the annual date for celebrating Easter, the feast day of the Resurrection of Christ. Several such councils were convened, likewise, in Africa and Asia Minor in the 3rd century.

Gradually there developed a permanent apparatus for summoning these meetings. Since they normally gathered in a metropolis, the task of convening them fell to the administrative responsibility of the bishops of large cities, especially when those larger churches had been the founders of the smaller ones. The bishop of a metropolis was called a "metropolitan," the title implying certain administrative and jurisdictional responsibilities. For example, in the 3rd century the metropolitans of Carthage summoned several councils numbering scores of bishops from all of northwest Africa. The conditions of attendance were not always clear. Councils in Gaul, for instance, sometimes included bishops from Britain. In general, however, the bishops ("overseers") of the Christian congregations tended to meet within civil provinces. Metropolitans thus became provincial leaders of groups of churches.

On occasion the problems to be dealt with required a more general consultation across provincial lines. The responsibility for such consultations gradually fell to the three bishops of the three largest cities in the Empire: Rome, Alexandria and Antioch. These three cities were geo-

graphically distributed around the Mediterranean in an even way and at strategic points; indeed, they lay on three different continents. Besides, the origins of each of their churches were associated with apostolic preachers of great authority: Rome with Peter and Paul; Antioch with Barnabas, Paul and Peter; Alexandria with Mark. The bishops of these three bishoprics (or "sees") came to be called archbishops, later patriarchs. Local affection for two of them, the bishops of Alexandria and Rome, caused them even to be called "papa," or "pope," a title that each of them has kept to the present day. It may be useful to recall that "pope" was originally a term of endearment.

Almost as soon as Christians received their civil liberty in 313, the Church was troubled by Arius, a priest from Alexandria, who denied the full divinity of Jesus Christ. His ideas proved so popular that they produced a crisis for large sections of the Empire. Following the pattern of councils already long established, Constantine summoned a larger council to deal with the teaching of Arius at the city of Nicea in 325. Since this council was judged to speak for the whole Church, and not just one region, it received the name "ecumenical" or world-wide.

The first six of the Ecumenical Councils are treated in this section.

The First Ecumenical Council of Nicea in 325 composed and approved the Nicene Creed, which was later somewhat expanded in 381, when the Emperor Theodosius convened the second ecumenical synod, the First Council of Constantinople. That expanded Nicene Creed, with its insistence on the full divinity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, has ever remained Orthodoxy's standard for the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and it is always recited in the very center of the Divine Liturgy.

The First of Council of Nicea in 325 made official what had already become customary by recognizing three "patriarchal" bishoprics with jurisdictional authority over the other churches: Rome, Alexandria and Antioch. To these was added Jerusalem by way of honor and dignity. Then, in 381, taking into consideration the new capital that Constantine had established 51 years earlier, the First Council of Constantinople made the bishop of that city also a patriarch, ranking him just after the "Pope of the Older Rome." Friction between these two bishoprics would later be at the heart of the rupture of 1054.

The Council of Ephesus was summoned in 431 to condemn Nestorius, a Patriarch of Constantinople who had attempted to abolish references to the mother of Jesus as "Theotokos." The latter title, meaning "God-bearer" or "Mother of God," had long been used by Christians as an expression of reverence and devotion. Closer examination showed that Nestorius 'discomfort with this title was inspired by a faulty way of looking at Christ himself. That is, he spoke of Christ as though Christ were two persons, the Divine Son of God and the human son of Mary.

The Council of Chalcedon (right across the Bosporus from Constantinople) in 451 dealt with an almost opposite problem. There were those who so insisted that Jesus Christ is one divine person that they denied, or nearly denied, that he has two integral natures. This synod proved to be a bitter pill for some. The doctrinal question was complicated by the difficulty of finding technical theological terms that could satisfy the several languages involved. Pope Leo I of Rome wrote the major document in Latin, and the Council itself used Greek. The difficulties produced by the teaching of Chalcedon as understood by Coptic and some Syriac-speaking Christians were compounded by political tensions that led to a major schism within Eastern Christianity. To this day the Coptic Church of Egypt and other "Oriental Orthodox" Christians are still out of communion with the other traditional bishoprics of Orthodoxy. Fortunately that schism now appears to be in the process of getting healed, though Orthodoxy moves very slowly whenever it suspects that the integrity of the Christian faith may be at stake.

The Second and Third Councils of Constantinople, in 553 and 670, also dealt with Orthodox teaching about the identity of Christ. The first condemned certain earlier writings that had obscured the one-ness of Christ's personality, and the second insisted that, having two integral natures, Christ has also two wills.

A quick glance at these first six councils will show that all of them treated a single subject: the identity of Jesus Christ. Each of them was an attempt to deal with the question that Jesus himself put to the Apostles: "what think ye of the Christ?" Throughout history the identity of Jesus Christ has been Orthodoxy's consuming passion. The very word "orthodox" means "correct belief" about who Jesus is. All other theological questions pale beside this one. Any line or process of thinking that might deflect the Christian vision from its proper way of looking at Jesus Christ is a matter of the gravest concern to the Orthodox Church.

The seventh ecumenical synod, the Second Council of Nicea in 787, may appear at first to be quite different from the others, because it treated the keeping and veneration of holy images ("icon" in Greek) of Christ and the saints. As we shall see, however, it was still part of the same question about the identity of Christ.

2. ICONOCLASM (almost 4 minutes)

The Interior of an Orthodox church is supposed to be a feast for the eyes, and one of the first things noticed by a person on his first visit to one is how the scene is dominated by icons. Often the very walls are covered with them. That this was an ancient practice among Christians is clear from what remains from antiquity. One thinks of the numerous biblical scenes that embellish almost every inch of the walls in the 2nd century "Greek Chapel" in the Catacomb of St. Priscilla in Rome and the 3rd century church at Dura-Europos overlooking the Euphrates River. When extensive Christian architecture became possible in the 4th century, Christians immediately took to adorning their buildings with paintings and mosaics of Christ, the saints and pictorial stories from Holy Scripture.

There had always been a certain measure of hesitation about this practice, nonetheless. Some bishops, such as Epiphanius of Cyprus in the 4th century, were afraid that those who had only recently been rescued from idolatry might slip back into it by reason of images found in churches. Islam's prohibition against images later made certain Christians even more sensitive on the subject, particularly in the East. There began a movement called iconoclasm or "iconsmashing." In 726 the Emperor Leo III (not Leo II, as the video tape says!) gave official approbation to that movement, and in 730 the veneration of icons was prohibited. Iconoclasm prevailed in the East for another half-century, until the Empress Irene summoned the bishops to deal with the problem at the Second Council of Nicea in 787. This synod vindicated the earlier popular practice of venerating (not worshipping) icons.

Once again, the reasoning of II Nicea was rooted in the identity of Christ. The Council affirmed, simply, that the invisible God has been made visible in Christ ("He who sees me sees the Father"); that the Incarnation of God's Son is the definitive revelation of God in history; that Christians have in faith a genuine vision of God and not just certain proper ways of talking about him.

The habit of venerating icons was popular; indeed, it took theologians themselves some time to catch up with the spontaneous practice of ordinary Christians. As is almost always the case in Orthodox history, the theory followed the tradition, not vice-versa. An Orthodox cherishes and kisses an image of Jesus or Mary or St. Nicholas for much the same reason that he cherishes and kisses a photograph of his mother, his grandfather or Aunt Dot. He was not going to wait around until the theologians could find the right words for it, but eventually they did.

The Orthodox Church came to believe that, in the iconoclasm controversy, the very essence of the Christian faith was at stake - not because of the images as such but because of the underlying principle of the Incarnation, the doctrine that the Son of God had actually become a visible man. The defeat of the iconoclasts came to be known, then, as "The Triumph of Orthodoxy" and gave to the Orthodox Church that certain enthusiastic confidence, even ebullience, that leaves it vulnerable, at times, to the charge of "triumphalism." It is an historical fact that the defeat of iconoclasm led almost immediately to a massive expansion of the Orthodox Church, especially in the great missions of 863 and 988. More on this somewhat later.

The Orthodox Church celebrates "The Triumph of Orthodoxy" each spring on the first Sunday of Lent by a special service that includes the carrying of icons in procession. In our video tape the bishops doing this are the Patriarchs and other national heads of the Orthodox Church gathered from around the world at Constantinople for that feast in 1992. The recent fall of the Soviet Union and the greater freedom enjoyed by Christians in Moslem lands made that important gathering possible for the first time in 1000 years. Orthodoxy really does measure time in centuries and has been known to weather out a storm or two.

3. THE CHURCH FATHERS AND MONASTICISM

(nearly 4 minutes)

At various times in the history of the Church, certain bishops, priests, deacons and also laymen of both sexes came to be recognized as especially endowed by the Holy Spirit with gifts of insight, teaching and writing. These have particularly come to the fore in times of crisis, and on occasion they have been obliged to stand up courageously for the faith, even against Christian emperors. The conversion of Constantine brought about a sort of sociological blurring of the difference between Church and State, but when the State interfered with the work of the Church in an inappropriate way, the line between the two had a way of becoming very sharp again. In the 4th century even Byzantine Emperors had to back down before St. Ambrose at Milan and St. Basil in Cappadocia.

Sometimes this experience was costly. St. Athanasius of Alexandria often had a price on his head, and the forces of the Empire expelled him from his bishopric five times. St. John Chrysostom of Constantinople died in exile. One of Orthodoxy's most brilliant theologians, St. Maximus the Confessor, who was not a clergyman, had his right hand and his tongue amputated by Emperor Constans II in order to "shut him up." Examples abound.

So many of these Church Fathers came from monasteries, and monasteries continue to put into Orthodoxy today a certain tone of sustained seriousness. To be a monk or nun is a highly individual calling; it is not a "normal" way of life, and Orthodoxy has always regarded it as extraordinary. Monasticism began as an individual reaction against the tendency to worldliness that was almost inevitable when Christianity became a popular and officially approved religion. A monastic vocation is very much an individual charism, a special way of life that is not standard. It has ever tended to serve, nonetheless, to keep other Christians mindful that "we have not here a lasting city but we await one that is to come."

Monasteries, of either monks or nuns, are dedicated to perpetual prayer and the quest of holiness; generally they also become places of pilgrimage where other Christians go to be spiritually refreshed. It is often the case that Orthodox congregations in a given area tend to be unified around a local monastery. This is especially the case in Greece and the Balkans, Russia and other Slavic countries, and even in Finland. Fyodor Dostoyevski's character of Father Zosima in The Brothers Karamazov, modeled on a saintly monk personally known to him, is very typical of what the Orthodox are looking for in a mature monk or nun.

Some monasteries have become very famous. We have already mentioned St. Catherine's in the Sinai peninsula of Egypt (which is once again seen in our presentation). One also thinks of the monastery of the Caves near Kiev in Ukraine, Meteora in central Greece and St. John's on the Isle of Patmos. The most famous monastic settlement is found on a peninsula of northern Greece called Mount Athos, known popularly as "the holy mountain." Since the 10th century it has set the standard for monastic life in Orthodoxy. Currently it is home to some two dozen monastic communities from various nations, as well as numerous hermits.

Unlike Roman Catholicism, the Orthodox Church ordains married men to the priesthood, and most of its local pastors are, in fact, husbands and fathers. Traditionally, however, missionaries to foreign lands are mainly chosen from the monasteries, and even today almost all Orthodox bishops come from the ranks of the monks.

4. MISSIONS TO THE SLAVS (2 1/2 minutes)

Restrained by Islam to the east and south, and hemmed in by Rome in the west, Eastern Orthodoxy turned its missionary eyes to the north. In 863, at the cathedral of St. Demetrios in Thessaloniki, a congregation founded by St. Paul and his companions more than 800 years earlier, Cyril and Methodius were set aside and consecrated to take the Gospel to the Slavs. Their extraordinary religious and cultural efforts are described in the presentation. Their mission led to the new congregations in Bulgaria, Albania, Serbia and Romania, while their gift of literacy to the Slavic tongue provided the instrument for yet further missions, the chief of which was sent from Constantinople to Kiev, in Ukraine, in 988. It was the beginning of the conversion of Russia. Thus, the confident enthusiasm that followed the defeat of iconoclasm was carried up to the Slavs and thence eastward, clear across the top of Asia, then over the Bering Strait to Alaska. Orthodox missionary expansion by the Slavs covered an area 4 times the size of the United States and involved 28 languages. After America's purchase of Alaska, the Orthodox missions continued down the western coast of Canada into California. Even the Orthodox Church in Japan was begun by Russian missionaries. No people has ever shown greater enthusiasm for the Orthodox religion than the Slavic peoples.

5. SEPARATION OF EAST AND WEST (8 minutes)

The causes of the break between Eastern and Western Christianity were complex, but the chief one was probably the Roman Papacy. The political disintegration resulting from the barbarian invasions solicited a strong, highly centralized form of oversight in the Western Church, and Rome was the only one of the original patriarchates found west of the Adriatic Sea. As more and more problems and questions in the West were referred to the Roman Papacy for adjudication, Rome's recognized authority grew. This authority was considerably aided by certain forged documents, one of which purported that Constantine had given the government of central Italy into the hands of the Roman Pope. In the East, meanwhile, marked by greater political unity and stability, the Church felt no need for such centralized oversight. To this day there is no earthly "head" of the Orthodox Church corresponding to the role played by the Bishop of Rome in the West.

Several crises developed, most notably in the ninth century, when Rome attempted to exercise in the East the sort of authority it had begun to assume in the West. To this day it appears that the question of the jurisdictional authority of the Roman Pope is a major, if not indeed the major, obstacle to the re-union of Roman Catholicism with the Orthodox Church.

There is also a creedal difficulty. In 6th century Spain the custom grew of adding the simple word "filioque" to the Nicene Creed, so that it affirmed that the Holy Spirit "proceeds from the Father and the Son (filioque)." By way of contrast, the original Creed still used by the Orthodox says simply that the Holy Spirit "proceeds from the Father" (Cf. John 15:26). Although Rome itself did not adopt this alteration of the Nicene Creed until 936, the custom of using it gradually spread to other western regions and became normal in the new Frankish Empire of Charlemagne. Those nearby Orthodox who did not use it were accused of heresy, a circumstance that occasioned alarm throughout the East. For example, even the 9th century missionaries Cyril and Methodius were so accused by German Christians. The Filioque has remained the single major doctrinal problem preventing the re-union of Western Christianity with the Orthodox Church.

The definitive break came in 1054 when Cardinal Humbert laid a Roman edict of excommunication against Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople, on the altar of Hagia Sophia during the Divine Liturgy. The Orthodox Church responded in kind. These were very costly displays of impatience. In a joint statement in 1965, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople confessed that neither side would have taken such an action if they had known that it would split Christianity for the next thousand years.

We have several times reflected on Orthodoxy's vivid memory, and some of its recollections of ill treatment at the hands of Western Christians are bitter indeed. Chief among these is the memory that the Crusades, which had been called to fight against the Moslem invaders, also turned the sword against the Orthodox Christians of the East. Our video tape will describe Orthodoxy's experience of the 4th Crusade in 1204 and the suppression of the Orthodox Church in its own capital for a half-century. It is no exaggeration to say that that event still causes millions of Orthodox Christians to remain skeptical about any Roman overtures for re-union of the two churches. The viewer will probably sense a measure of that skepticism in the presentation itself.

6. THE END OF BYZANTIUM (something over 3 min.)

As Moslem forces began to take the territory all around Constantinople, Byzantine emperors pleaded for military help from fellow Christians in the West. In response to these pleas, Rome summoned a synod of reunion at the city of Florence in 1439. Eastern Orthodoxy's small delegation, including the Emperor, the Patriarch of Constantinople and a few bishops, capitulated to Rome's insistence on the Filioque and the supremacy of the Roman Pope over all of the Church. This "Union of Florence" was immediately and universally rejected in the East, nor did it bring very many Christians from the West to fight for the survival of Byzantium.

Constantinople fell to the Turkish forces at the end of May, 1453, bringing all the Orthodox Christians of the Mediterranean under Moslem domination. Even the successful Greek war for independence in 1821 did not free Constantinople, whose Patriarch is still subject to close governmental surveillance and control. Hagia Sophia itself was transformed into a mosque until the present century, when a secularized Turkish government converted it to a museum.

PART THREE A Hidden Treasure

INTRODUCTION

Having examined, in the two previous video tapes, the strong ties that bound Orthodox Christianity to the fortunes of the Byzantine Empire for over 1000 years, it will come as no surprise to us that the fall of that empire to the Moslem Turks in 1543 brought the Orthodox Church to a state of extreme crisis; humanly speaking, indeed, a threat to its very survival. Certainly the experience of Orthodox Christians has been profoundly different since that date, and the present video tape is devoted to an examination of that difference.

When an average American Christian visits a local Orthodox parish nowadays, he will likely be disposed to describe it as "ethnic." Indeed, the parish itself may be named in such a way as to invite such a description. For example, Holy Cross GREEK Orthodox Church, or St. Sava's SERBIAN Orthodox Church, or St. Vladimir's RUSSIAN Orthodox Church. On occasion the American visitor may be shocked (justifiably, I think) to find a corresponding national flag displayed up in the front of the church near the icons themselves, as though the Orthodox parish were a kind of outpost or embassy building of some foreign nation. Similarly, even in the video tapes that we are using here it is obvious that some of the spokesmen for Orthodoxy are speaking English with rather heavy accents. Now such phenomena certainly heighten the common impression of Orthodoxy as alien to mainline America.

Though the vast majority of them were born and raised in the United States, most Orthodox Christians in this country are, in fact, of Eastern European or Arab extraction. Their ethnic character tends to be restricted, on the whole, however, to their church experience. In all other aspects of their lives they are very much like other Americans. In church concerns they take their ethnicity very much as a matter of course and hardly think about it.

Indeed, it is not uncommon to find Orthodox Christians who presume that the ethnic character of their Church is inevitable. Recently, for instance, I watched the reactions of a Serbian-American lady who, on meeting an Orthodox priest of Irish blood married to an Orthodox wife of German descent, marveled almost to stupefaction, as though she had been introduced to a cone-head from Neptune.

Orthodoxy's history over the past 500 years easily explains this ethnic feature that is so obvious, but our discussion of the subject needs to start somewhat further back. In the first video tape of this series we saw how the Christian leaders of the first three centuries, when faced with some doctrinal crisis or serious question of ethics and discipline, tended to meet regionally. Those regional meetings gradually led to the formation of permanent regional structures.

Even after the Edict of Milan in 313 and the adoption of Christianity as the official religion of the Empire in 380, those regional structures tended to remain in place, and this was especially the case in the East, where the social stability of the Empire did not call out for the sort of centralized control that came to be exercised by the Pope of Rome in the West.

Indeed, to this very day the absence of any central authority or "head" in Eastern Orthodox Christianity is one of the characteristics that most strongly distinguishes it from Roman Catholicism. Many Roman Catholics and even some Protestants seem to imagine that the Patriarch of Constantinople (called the "Ecumenical Patriarch") is a sort of "Orthodox Pope." The assumptions implicitly prompted by the Roman Catholic model make this impression understandable, but it is nonetheless erroneous, and the Ecumenical Patriarch would be the first to challenge it.

Even during the time of the Byzantine Empire, the normal oversight and ministry of Eastern Orthodoxy tended to fall under local and regional organization. Except when faced with a more general crisis, such as Nestorianism in 431 or Iconoclasm in 787, the bishops of the Church met in regional groupings under the leadership of a regional patriarch or metropolitan: Egypt, Syria, Greece, Cyprus, Asia Minor and so forth. Those early regional structures, some of them in place prior to 313, endure to the present day.

As missionary expansion moved Eastern Orthodoxy outside the borders of the Byzantine Empire, it was natural that the customary regional structures should be duplicated along national or ethnic lines: Serb, Georgian, Armenian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Russian, etc.

Once again, it will be instructive to contrast this Eastern development with that of Roman Catholicism in the West. A single illustration may serve the purpose. When monks from Rome established their mission in England, centered at Canterbury, near the end of the sixth century, they continued to remain under the immediate jurisdiction of the Roman Pope and their language in worship continued to be Latin. The same pattern attended the missionary work in Gaul, Germany, Scandinavia and elsewhere in the West. Latin was the language of worship in all these churches (until Vatican II in the early 1960's), and Rome endeavored with varying success to gain and retain appointment of the local bishops. By and large the latter is still the case today.

Such centralization and uniformity did not characterize the historical development of Eastern Orthodoxy, as we may see in the matter of language. Notwithstanding the dominance of the Greek tongue throughout the Byzantine Empire, there had always been Eastern Christians who worshiped in Syrian, Ethiopian, Coptic and eventually Arabic; so as Orthodox missionaries moved northward it was understood from the beginning that the native tongues of the new regions would be the languages used for the worship and life of the new congregations. In fact, since these native languages had never previously been written down, the missionaries them-

selves were obliged to elaborate a new alphabet for them and commence their literature from scratch. One should keep in mind that between the Slavic mission of 863 and the Alaskan mission of 1793 the Orthodox Church put the Gospel into nearly 3 dozen languages that had never been written down before. By any standard that was a noteworthy cultural feat.

Now the very fact that the new Orthodox Christians in these missionary regions preserved their own distinctive languages tended to accentuate the "national" character of their Orthodoxy. In other words, Orthodoxy itself, by putting those native languages into writing for the first time in history and asserting their value by using them in worship, went out of its way to affirm the ethnic and cultural identity of these new converts. This policy was not accidental; Orthodoxy purposely entertains a high estimate of the uniqueness and special qualities of distinct ethnic and cultural groups. When Holy Scripture proclaims: "all ye nations, clap your hands," the Orthodox Church draws attention to the word "nations" (Greek ethnoi) and insists that national and cultural distinctions should be enhanced, not destroyed, in the worship of the true God who made them all. Orthodoxy remembers that the "glory of the nations" is to be brought into the Kingdom.

Had it not been for Orthodoxy, in fact, some of those nations might well have disappeared from history, because invasions by the Seljuk Turks in the 10th century, the Tartars in the 12th and the Ottomans in the 14th put their existence severely to the test. That sustained, centuries-long alternation between threat and oppression made it very difficult for Orthodox Greeks, Georgians, Armenians, Bulgarians, Serbs and others to distinguish very sharply between their own cultural, ethnic identity and the religion that affirmed and consecrated that identity. The furnace of history thus forged for many of these peoples a bond between Church and ethnicity that even now has a certain fierce and militant quality about it.

Some of these peoples, in fact, escaped being part of a Turkish empire only to be absorbed into an Austro-Hungarian kingdom, and only fled the latter to find themselves in a worse bondage behind the Iron Curtain. The single culture-affirming reality that sustained their ethnic identities during so many centuries of darkness was the Eastern Orthodox Church, which they grew to love as their own souls.

Here in the West the fortunes of Orthodoxy will be quite different. In the course of this presentation Bishop Kallistos Ware, who became an Orthodox years ago when he was a college student in England, comments that in the past it was common for Orthodox Christians to be Orthodox by a sort of cultural instinct; they largely "inherited" Orthodoxy in much the same way as they inherited certain foods, stories, songs and dances. A person no more "chose" to be Orthodox than he "chose" to be Serbian or Greek. Orthodoxy was experienced as simply a component of one's given identity; it was absorbed in an implicit and non-reflective style. Bishop Kallistos goes on to predict, however, that such an approach will not be possible in the future, particularly in the West. He suggests that Orthodoxy will be more and more a matter of personal choice in the years to come.

It will be helpful to say something of the almost unique situation of the Orthodox Church here in the United States, where the presence of "ethnic churches" sometimes leaves the impression that the Orthodox Christians in this country belong to different denominations, much like Methodists and Presbyterians. In fact, this is not so, though it is easy to see how such an impression is conveyed to the popular mind.

The peoples traditionally identified with Orthodoxy - that is to say, the peoples of Eastern Europe and the Middle East - were not part of the great colonizing ventures that followed the discovery of the New World. As we know, Protestants and Roman Catholics originally came to these shores as part of the geo-political and economic aspirations of the countries of Western Europe, and then many others from roughly the same places followed them during the last century when political upheavals and severe economic conditions in Europe made America seem like a promised land.

Far fewer people came here from Eastern Europe and the Middle East back in those days. Most Orthodox families in this country right now, in fact, were not here prior to 1900. In illustration of this point, we may look at the Greek-Americans, who by far constitute the largest group of Orthodox in this country today. Even though the records of the Commissioner General of Immigration make no reference to Greeks until 1824, there had actually been a few settlers from Greece in Florida from a much earlier period. Still, Greek immigration was relatively slow, as government records bear witness. The year 1848, for example, saw the arrival of 91,061 Irishmen to these shores and 51,593 Germans, but only one Greek. Two more Greeks came here in 1850, but only 3 in the next ten years, only 7 more prior to 1870, and only a further 210 by 1880. Thus, during the 3 decades between 1850 and 1880, out of a total immigration of nearly 7 million people from Europe, only 220 were Greek. Now remember that among the Orthodox you see around you in America today, the Greeks form the majority. It is no wonder, then, that American religion long thought of itself as Protestant, Catholic and Jewish; until the present century the Orthodox could hardly be counted. The first Orthodox to come here with full ecclesiastical organization were the Russians. When America purchased Alaska, it also inherited, so to speak, the thriving Russian Orthodox missions in that territory, and the Russian church was energetic in extending the faith to the rest of what is now the United States. Other ethnic groups of Orthodox, such as Greeks and Syrians, found themselves under the oversight of Russian bishops as a matter of course. The Russian mission itself endeavored to minister to all Orthodox of all ethnic groups; a priest of Syrian descent, for example, was consecrated a bishop as part of that ministry.

The great crisis for Orthodoxy in America was the Russian Revolution at the end of World War I. The subsequent oppression of the Orthodox Church in Russia rendered impossible its effective and fully credible ministry of oversight in this country. Meanwhile there grew a vastly greater need for ministry to the Orthodox in America. The period between the two World Wars saw a massive increase of Orthodox immigrants to this country, so that the Orthodox

hierarchies in other regions, so many of them isolated from one another by unfavorable political conditions, felt obliged to send bishops here to serve their varying ethnic immigrants. That set of circumstances is what accounts for the presence in America today of varying ethnic jurisdictions of Orthodox, all of them still missionary in character. The Orthodox regard this situation as merely provisional and something to be corrected as soon as it can be. The recent political freedom gained by Orthodox Christians in Russia and the Balkans, along with the current loosening of Turkish restraints on the Patriarchate at Constantinople, seems to be creating the atmosphere in which such a development will be possible.

Tape 3, "A Hidden Treasure," breaks logically into certain sections that can be identified in the subject headings that follow:

1. THE CHURCH IN CAPTIVITY (nearly 3 minutes)

While showing us the ancient walls of Constantinople, the Bosporus and the church of Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom), now flanked by the minarets that indicate its long use as a Moslem mosque, the narrator tells of the life of the Orthodox Church in Greece and the Balkans after the conquest by the Ottoman Turk in 1453. It was a very bad time.

Christianity was a second-class religion, tightly controlled to prevent its further growth. No new churches could be built for nearly 400 years; no missionaries could be sent out; conversion of any Turk to Christianity was invariably punished by the death of everyone concerned. Orthodoxy had its hands full just with the problem of survival.

The pastoral structure of the Church, moreover, was used as the organization by which the Ottoman Empire maintained its control over the subjugated people. Thus, the Church's hierarchy became the political instruments of the overlord, a circumstance that was very damaging to the spiritual life and energy of the Christian cause.

This was a period of great isolation among the Orthodox in Greece, Syria and the Balkans, all of them under Ottoman Turk domination. The oppression in Greece lasted until the War of Greek Independence in 1821, and in Syria and other regions it lasted until the downfall of the Ottoman Empire at World War I. No synods could be convened during that long period, nor realistic help extended, across national lines. This was the age in which the various ethnic groups of Orthodox were fighting for the survival of their cultural identities, and the memory of that struggle will go a long way toward explaining the tenacious hold that certain ethnic loyalties exercise on many Orthodox Christians today.

2. MOSCOW: THE THIRD ROME (3 minutes)

There is an abrupt change from the eerie notes of Moslem worship to the harmonies of Christian chant, as the scene shifts to the famous onion domed churches characteristic of Russian Orthodoxy. By the time of Constantinople's fall in 1453 the Orthodox Church in Russia was already much larger than that in Greece (and even today Russia has by far the largest population of Orthodox Christians in the world), so that it was not surprising that Moscow began to fill the vacuum of leadership found in Orthodoxy after that tragic date. Not only was the Church free in Russia; it had official sanction and support. Muscovite princes took care to stress any aspects of continuity that joined them to the former Byzantine Empire; they assumed the title "Czar," the Slovanic form of "Caesar." (Just as the German emperors in the West had adopted the Teutonic variant "Kaiser.") They spoke of Moscow as the Third Rome.

The bishop of Moscow became a patriarch, so that today the Patriarchate of Moscow ranks immediately after the ancient Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. Under the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate phenomenal missionary efforts carried Orthodoxy all the way from the Baltic to the Bering Sea, evangelizing an area four times the size of the United States. In 1793 the Russian mission crossed into Alaska and thence to the rest of the New World.

While the Orthodox were trying to convert the pagans, certain Western Christians were endeavoring to convert the Orthodox. Particularly in Ukraine, long under the domination of Roman Catholic Poland, the work of Jesuit missionaries led to the "Union of Brest-Letovsk" in the late 16th century, whereby the majority of Ukrainian Christians left the Orthodox Church and submitted to the Roman Papacy. They were joined in later centuries by other Eastern Christians, notably in Syria and Lebanon, and all of these groups continue to preserve their distinctly "Eastern" form of worship within Roman Catholicism. They are often called "Greek Catholics," but because of their union with Rome the term "Uniates" is the name by which they are usually known among the Orthodox. In our video tape no attempt is made to disguise the hard feelings and deep resentment of the Orthodox Church toward such attempts by Western Christians to proselytize among its own members. In Orthodox thinking the one to be evangelized and converted is always the pagan, the non-Christian, the unbeliever, not some member of another Christian group. Consequently, as a matter of general policy the Orthodox Church for the most part refrains from proselytizing among other Christians.

3. THE GREEK WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE (3 minutes)

The year 1820 is noted in the history books as the year of revolutions throughout Europe, but it was not until the following year that Greece staged its own war for independence from the Ottoman Turkish Empire. Because Greece has always been thought of in Western culture as the ancient model of modern freedom and civilization, there was widespread sympathy for the Greek cause, not only among traditional friends like the Russians, but also in England, France, the United States and elsewhere. Moreover, the paramount reputation of Greece in the history of philosophy, literature, drama, art and architecture solicited general support for the

Greek Revolution around the world, and individuals came to fight in the Greek army. The English poet, Lord Byron, was one of these.

The Ottoman Empire exacted a high toll of martyrs from the Orthodox Church for its support of the Greek Revolution. Likewise, when that revolution itself succeeded in freeing only the central and western parts of Greece, Constantinople remained within the boundaries of Turkey. The consequent isolation of the Patriarchate of Constantinople rendered impossible its effective oversight of the Church in Greece, Cyprus and the Balkans. The churches in these regions became "autocephalous," or jurisdictionally independent.

4. THE ANCIENT PATRIARCHATES TODAY

(about 8 1/2 minutes)

Brief descriptions of the current state of the traditional Patriarchates of Alexandria in Egypt, Antioch in Syria, Jerusalem in the Holy Land and Constantinople in Turkey are accompanied by individual remarks of the present bishops of those cities. In most of these remarks one will observe a certain preoccupation with the Church's relationship to the Moslem religion that surrounds it. The presence of large Moslem populations in the geo-

political neighborhood of the Near and Middle East gives rise to this serious historical concern that is, understandably, almost unknown in the West.

Patriarch Parthenios of Alexandria presides over Eastern Orthodoxy in Africa, and his remarks display the enthusiasm associated with the promising missionary activity of the Orthodox on that continent. Since the venerable Christian city of Antioch is now found within the extended borders of Turkey, Patriarch Ignatius of Antioch actually resides at Damascus in Syria. One will note in his remarks a certain universal sympathy rendered necessary for his difficult ministry in the predominantly Moslem countries extending from the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Gulf. He also oversees the thriving new missions of Antiochian Orthodox Christians in the United States and Canada. The remarks of Patriarch Diodoros of Jerusalem, which are distinctly ethnic, seem concerned solely with the preservation and oversight of the ancient shrines of the Holy Land.

Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, who is often perceived as Orthodoxy's representative to the rest of the world, is very preoccupied with ecumenical relations with other Christians. His remarks reveal the serious concern that Orthodoxy has about Roman Catholic proselytism among Orthodox populations during the past five years. Since Orthodoxy does not send missionaries into Italy or Spain where 99% of the population are baptized Roman Catholics or into Denmark where 99% of the population are baptized Protestants, there is some bewilderment and distress about the Vatican and Protestant missionary activity in Russia, where 99% of the population are baptized Orthodox. This is the burden of the Ecumenical Patriarch's comments on "Uniatism" and "proselytism," which probably provide the most negative tone in this video series.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE (10 minutes)

In this last section attention is given to several areas that will challenge Orthodoxy in the days to come.

Among the churches of Christianity, the Orthodox is in the best position to dialogue with Islam, with which it has had a longer and more closely shared history. Long involved in the ecumenical movement among Christians, Orthodoxy is currently studying how to live among other Christians in a pluralistic world, especially in the West.

In English-speaking countries, but particularly in the United States, Orthodox Christians are still burdened by ethnic separatisms that simply must be discarded in order to attain the proper qualities of "unity and cohesion" necessary to the effective proclamation of the Gospel.

The isolation attendant on urban life especially poses for Orthodox spirituality new challenges to that integration of life that has always been one its chief characteristics.

Most of the closing scenes in this presentation are concerned with worship, including the fervent devotion of personal prayer, the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the marriage rite, baptisms (normally done by immersion, as the viewer can see), etc. The bishop in the white head-dress giving the blessing with the cross is Patriarch Alexis of Moscow, spiritual leader of the world's largest group of Orthodox.

