

# ORTHODOX ANGLICANISM AND CHRISTIAN REUNION

## The Time Is Now

by Fr. Victor E. Novak

### ONE HOLY CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH

For the first millennium of Christianity there was only one Church. Denominationalism as we know it today did not exist. The Church was one. No matter where a Christian lived, whether in Jerusalem, Antioch, Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, Gaul, Britain, Ireland, Russia, Africa, or anywhere else, everyone belonged to the same Church and believed the same thing. The Church was known as the “Catholic” Church, and we find that word in use to describe the Church as early as AD 105. The word Catholic means universal, and whole and complete.

Although the Church was one, there were a variety of rites and languages used in worship. There were Eastern and Western families of rites, and various national and regional rites and uses in each of these liturgical families, yet the Faith was the same everywhere. There was a unity amid cultural, national and liturgical diversity, and the Catholic Church was knit together by a common doctrine, apostolic ministry, sacraments and conciliar Church government. The Catholic Church was the Church for all peoples, of all races and nations, throughout the whole world, and for all time.

As Christianity grew, five great centers were developed for the administration of the Church: Rome, Constantinople (modern Istanbul), Alexandria (Egypt), Antioch (where the disciples were first called Christians) and Jerusalem. These centers are called Patriarchates, and their bishops are known as Patriarchs. The Patriarch of Rome, also known as the Pope, from the Greek word for “Father,” was the *primus inter paras* (first among equals) and had a primacy of honour, with the right to preside at councils of bishops, because he was the bishop of the chief city of the ancient world.

The Church governed herself through councils of bishops, with the first council meeting in Jerusalem, as recorded in the fifteenth chapter of the Book of Acts. Throughout history the Church has used local, national and regional councils, or synods, to deal with problems in the Church and to administer its affairs. There have also been seven Oecumenical (Universal or General) Councils of the whole Church which met to deal with global problems, the first in AD 325 and the last in AD 787. The first two Oecumenical Councils, Nicea in AD 325 and Constantinople in AD 381, wrote the Nicene Creed that we say every Sunday during the Eucharistic Liturgy.

### EARLY ANGLICAN HISTORY

The word Anglican comes from the Latin and means English, and refers to its Anglo-Saxon and Celtic spiritual heritage and roots in the ancient Church of the British Isles. The gospel of Jesus Christ was brought to Britain from Jerusalem by St. Joseph of Arimathea, the disciple who buried Christ after His crucifixion. Gildas the Wise (AD

425-512), an early British historian wrote, "Christ, the True Sun, afforded His light, the knowledge of His precepts to our Island in the last year, as we know, of Tiberius Caesar." The last year of Tiberius Caesar was AD 37, just a few years after the Resurrection of Christ. William of Malmesbury (AD 1080-1143), the best British historian of his day, says that after the crucifixion of Christ, St. Joseph of Arimathea came to Britain with eleven missionaries, and that the King gave them twelve hides of land at Glastonbury (*De Antiquitate Galstoniae Cap. 1*). St. Aristobulus, who is mentioned by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans (16:10), was the first bishop in Britain.

The English Church was acknowledged by five Western Church Councils (Pisa 1409; Constance 1417; Sens 1418; Sienna 1424; and Basil 1434) as the oldest Church outside of the Bible lands; with the Council of Basil declaring in 1434, "The Churches of France and Spain must yield in points of antiquity and precedence to that of Britain, as the latter Church was founded by St. Joseph of Arimathea immediately after the passion of Christ."

While the English Church was a national Church, it was not a separate denomination. It was a national branch of the Catholic Church, and after the synod of Whitby in AD 664, was a part of the Roman Patriarchate. The Gospel had come to Britain from Jerusalem, and the British Church was an organic part of the Catholic Church, sending bishops to the Council of Arles in AD 314, and possibly to Nicea in AD 325.

## THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

In his classic book, *The Ways and Teachings of the Church*, which has been a popular Anglican course of instruction for more than a century, author Fr. Lefferd M. A. Haughwout, wrote, "In the beginning all Bishops of the Church were possessed of equal powers. But for convenience of administration the dioceses were grouped into provinces, with an Archbishop at the head of each. These provinces were, in turn, grouped under the Bishops of the five great Christian centers - Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, Alexandria, and Constantinople - each of whom was independent in its own district. These Bishops were called Patriarchs..."

"As Rome was at the time the first city in the world, the influence of her Bishop was naturally very great. Little by little he succeeded in forcing his claim [of primacy of jurisdiction] upon the surrounding Churches, until after a while he gained complete authority over every Bishop in western Europe. The English Church was the last to yield; and it was only after an independent existence of more than eight hundred years that she was finally compelled to surrender her lawful rights. The Papal rule was set up by force of arms when William of Normandy conquered England in the year 1066. From that time until the sixteenth century the Church of England was dominated by Rome. Yet even so, it was never thought of as the 'Roman Catholic Church.' It was always and at all times the 'Church of England, or 'Anglican Church' — 'Ecclesia Anglicana.' The name 'Roman Catholic' does not appear in any document relating to the English Church prior to the Reformation.

“The eastern Bishops, however, were strong enough to resist the power of Rome. The great Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople maintained their independence, and have remained independent ever since” (Morehouse-Barlow Co., New York, c. 1907, 1930 and 1944; pp. 71-73).

## THE GREAT SCHISM, THE NORMAN CONQUEST, AND THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

At the time of the Great Schism (division) between Eastern and Western Christendom in the year 1054, the Anglican Church sided with the four Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem in rejecting the novel claims of the Bishop of Rome to a primacy of jurisdiction over the entire Catholic Church. In response, the Pope blessed the Duke of Normandy, William the Conqueror, to invade England and force the Church there into submission to Rome. This was accomplished in 1066, with the Norman invasion. William conquered England, seized the throne, replaced all but one of the native British bishops with Normans, and forced the Anglican Church to submit to papal authority. For the next four and a half centuries the English Church maintained an uneasy, sometimes beneficial and sometimes stormy, relationship with the papacy.

With the separation of the Roman Patriarchate in the West from the other four ancient Patriarchates, the Catholic Church, which had remained united for a millennium, was divided into two. The Catholics of the Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem are called Orthodox Christians or Orthodox Catholics, meaning correct doctrine and worship, because they have not changed, and their Church is known as the Orthodox or the Orthodox Catholic Church to this day. The Church in the West was known as the Roman, or the Holy Roman, Church. The Anglican Church, *ecclesia anglicana*, was part of the Orthodox Church until the Norman conquest in 1066. The last Anglo-Saxon king, King Harold, who died in battle against the Normans on October 14th, 1066, is known as a “passion bearer” because he died to defend Orthodox England, and is considered a saint by many Orthodox Christians in the West.

Lanfranc, a Lombard Abbott, helped gain William of Normandy the support of his barons for the invasion of England by casting it as a crusade to bring the English Church into submission to the papacy. For doing this he was awarded the position of Archbishop of Canterbury after the conquest.

David Howarth, in his *1066 The Year of the Conquest*, explains: “The invasion should not be seen as a merely secular conquest; its highest aim should be, or appear to be, the reformation of the English church. It should become a crusade, a holy war to bring back an errant church to Rome. Lanfranc himself, or the Norman church as a body, was willing to bring accusations against the church of England” (p. 100).

Howarth continues, “Perhaps its principal sin was merely to be different: much of its scholarship and all of its pastoral work were in English instead of Latin, and it was easy for other churchmen to suspect that schisms and heresies were hidden by such a barbarous language. But finally, whatever was said against it, the fact remained that the

English then were a devoutly religious people and were satisfied on the whole that their church provided for their spiritual needs” (ibid.). And it should be noted that the English Church not only did its pastoral work in English rather than Latin, but that it had married deacons and priests as well as celibate monks and nuns.

In 1534, the Anglican Church was finally able to renounce papal supremacy and end centuries of papal control that had been uncanonically established by force of arms. In that year, Convocation, the governing body of the Church of England, declared that “the Bishop of Rome hath not, by Scripture, any greater authority in England than any other foreign bishop.”

“Once freed from the Roman influence, the Church set about to reform some of the abuses into which it had fallen. The old [Latin] service books were revised and translated into English, many wrong teachings and harmful customs were done away with, and the Bible was given to the people in their own language” (ibid, Haughwout, p. 74).

“The reform movement in England was of great benefit to the Church in many ways, but it would be a mistake to assume that everything was 100% perfect. It was very far from that. There were losses as well as gains. Among other things, there came to be divisions in the Church, which in some cases resulted in schisms or separations. Schism is the sin of separating ourselves from the visible communion of God’s Church. The extreme reformers were not satisfied with what was done. They wanted to make the English Church exactly like the newly founded Churches of continental Europe - the Lutheran of Germany and the Calvinist or Presbyterian of Switzerland. Those who favored doing this were called Puritans. Most of them eventually left the Church, but in many ways their influence remained” (ibid, Haughwout, p. 75).

Unfortunately, as Fr. Haughwout says, those who want to make the Anglican Church like the Lutheran and Calvinist denominations are still with us today. But the Anglican Church is not a creature of the 16th century, it is a Catholic Church with roots going back to the dawn of Christianity, that was separated from Orthodox Catholic unity by force of arms in AD 1066. It is a part, that needs to be reunited with the whole; a branch that needs to be fully re-grafted onto the vine.

The English Reformation was carried out gradually and over a long period of time. Anglican theologian Vernon Staley writes, “In speaking of the Reformation, we should remember that though this great movement began in the 16th century, it was not confined to that period. The Reformation was continued and brought more fully into shape by the Caroline Divines in the 17th century, whose spirit the leaders of the Catholic Revival in the 19th century so largely inherited” (The Catholic Religion, A Manual of Instruction for Members of the Anglican Communion, by Vernon Staley; A. R. Mowbray & Co., London & Morehouse-Barlow Co., New York; 1893; p. 83).

## FOUR HUNDRED YEARS OF DIALOGUE

Beginning early in the 17th century we find Orthodox and Anglican Church-leaders corresponding and building relationships. Patriarch Cyril of Constantinople had many contacts with representatives of the English Church and government. He corresponded with Archbishop George Abbot of Canterbury from 1611 to 1633, and then with his successor Archbishop William Laud. He was also a close personal friend with the English Ambassador in Constantinople and with the Anglican embassy chaplain. Archbishop Abbot invited the Ecumenical Patriarch to send Greek students to be educated in England, and in 1617 Patriarch Cyril sent Metrophanes Kritopoulos to study at Oxford and he remained in Great Britain until 1624. Late in the 17th century a Greek College was even established at Oxford that functioned from 1699 to 1705, but closed because of the difficulty of getting Greek students to England.

The Anglican Non-Jurors carried on correspondence with the Orthodox from 1716 to 1725 seeking corporate reunion. The Non-Jurors described themselves to the Orthodox as "the remnant of the ancient and once Orthodox Church in Britain." The description that they used is accurate and needs to be remembered by orthodox Anglicans today.

In 1718 the Orthodox Patriarchs wrote to these "British Catholics" about the Non-Juror version of the Book of Common Prayer: "When therefore, we have considered it, if it needs correction, we will correct it, and if possible will give it the sanction of a genuine form." Later the Patriarchs wrote to the Non-jurors saying that in regard to "custom and ecclesiastical order, and for the form and discipline of administering the Sacraments, they will easily be settled when unity is effected. For it is evident from ecclesiastical history that there have been and now are different customs and regulations in different places and Churches, and yet the unity of the Faith and Doctrine is preserved the same." (*Orthodoxy & Anglicanism*, by V. T. Istavridis; SPCK; 1966; p. 5 ).

In response to the unity dialogue between the Orthodox and the Anglican Non-jurors, Archbishop William Wake of Canterbury wrote to Patriarch Chrysanthos of Jerusalem saying that the Non-Jurors were schismatics and disloyal subjects, and that any correspondence with them should therefore be closed. Patriarch Chrysanthos replied that the Orthodox were unaware that the Non-jurors were schismatics, and agreed to end discussions with them. In 1725, Archbishop Wake wrote to Chrysanthos saying, "we, the true Bishops and clergy of the Church of England, as, in every fundamental article we profess the same Faith with you, shall not cease, at least in spirit and effect (since otherwise owing to our distance from you, we cannot) to hold communion with you, and to pray for your peace and happiness. And I, as I do profess myself most specially bound to your Holiness, so do I most earnestly entreat you to remember me in your prayers and sacrifices at the Holy Altar of God."

In 1840, George Tomlinson, a priest of the Church of England and Secretary of SPCK, became bishop of Gibraltar and was sent to the Middle East by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Bishop Tomlinson was directed to make it clear to the Orthodox that the

Anglican Church had nothing to do with proselytizing activities among Orthodox Christians in the Middle East.

In the mid-19th century the Russian Orthodox theologian Alexis Khomiakov became very interested in the return of the West to Orthodoxy. He encouraged an Anglican Deacon, William Palmer (1811-1879), who had visited Russia, to start a movement in England toward Orthodoxy. The famous Orthodox bishop, Metropolitan Philaret (Drozdov) of Moscow, said that while Anglicans who embraced Orthodoxy must be in full accord with the rest of Orthodoxy in regard to doctrine, "every rite not implying a direct negation of dogma would be allowed."

In July 1869 Archbishop Archibald C. Tait of Canterbury wrote Patriarch Gregory VI of Constantinople, expressing his prayers for unity, and asking for the Patriarch to grant permission for Anglicans to be buried by Orthodox clergy in Orthodox cemeteries when no Anglican clergy or cemeteries were available. In response, Patriarch Gregory VI declared on September 26, 1869 that Orthodox priests would bury Anglicans who died abroad.

In 1869 and 1870 the Orthodox Archbishop Alexander (Lycurgos) of Syros and Tenos visited England, discouraged proselytism among Anglicans, and said that the Church of England was "a sound Catholic Church, very like our own." On February 27, 1873, the Patriarchate of Constantinople forbade proselytizing among Anglicans.

The Eastern Churches Committee of the third Lambeth Conference in 1888 stressed that proselytizing of Eastern Orthodox Christians must stop, and that Anglicans should do all in their power to support the Orthodox in their ecclesiastical and spiritual life. The 17th resolution of that Lambeth Conference declared, "This Conference... desires to express its hope that the barriers to fuller communion may be, in the course of time, removed by further intercourse and extended enlightenment."

Greek Orthodox Archbishop Kallistos (Ware) wrote, "This [Anglican] appeal to antiquity has led many Anglicans to look with sympathy and interest at the Orthodox Church, and equally it has led many Orthodox to look with interest and sympathy to Anglicanism. As a result of pioneer work by Anglicans such as William Palmer (1811-1879), J. M. Neale (1818-1868), and W. J. Birkbeck (1859-1916), firm bonds of Anglo-Orthodox solidarity were established by the end of the nineteenth century" (The Orthodox Church, by Timothy Ware, Penguin, c. 1993, p. 318).

In 1925 the Church of England organized jubilee solemnities to commemorate the 1600th anniversary of the Council of Nicea (AD 325). Representatives of the Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem attended, as did Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky), primate of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR). During a Solemn Eucharist in Westminster Abbey, at which the Eastern Orthodox hierarchs were present, the Nicene Creed was read aloud in Greek by Patriarch Photius II of Constantinople. So impressed was he by what he had experienced and seen, that at a special banquet attended by the Anglican and Orthodox

hierarchs, Metropolitan Antony of ROCOR said that “if any Anglican Bishop or cleric were to desire to enter the Orthodox Church, then he could be received in the third rank — that is without a second consecration — in other words, in his existing rank.”

These positive and ongoing contacts between representatives of the Orthodox and Anglican Churches led to three important and official Conferences. Two of these were held in London (1930 and 1931), with the third held in Bucharest in 1935. This last Conference was the high point in Anglican-Orthodox rapprochement. At the close of the 1935 Conference in Bucharest, the delegates stated, “A solid basis has been prepared whereby full dogmatic agreement may be affirmed between the Orthodox and Anglican Communions.”

With the outbreak of the Second World War there was an unavoidable pause in the Anglican and Orthodox dialogue; but with the end of the war, dialogue became very difficult to resume. An Iron Curtain had fallen across Europe. The Orthodox Churches in Eastern Europe found themselves behind that curtain, and under ever increasing persecution. The beginning of the Cold War which spread world-wide only made matters worse.

However, nineteen years after the end of the Second World War dialogue between the two Churches resumed. “In 1964 the Third Pan-Orthodox Conference at Rhodes unanimously decided officially to resume dialogue with the Anglican Communion, and this was ratified by all the Orthodox Churches... The Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I described Archbishop Michael Ramsey’s 1962 visit to Constantinople as ‘the beginning of a new spiritual spring that may lead to greater rapprochement and the closer collaboration of all churches.’ During his visit to the Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrios I in 1982 Archbishop Robert Runcie of Canterbury referred to that earlier remark and then spoke of the first series of Anglican-Orthodox conversations [in the 1930s] as a ‘spiritual summer’ with the Moscow Agreed Statement [of 1976] as its ‘first fruits’” (Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, c. 1985, pp. 1-2).

Unfortunately, all of that was about to change. “The main part of the 1978 Conference at Moni Pendeli, Athens, was devoted to setting out the Orthodox and Anglican positions on the ordination of women to the Priesthood. In its report the [Eastern] Orthodox members said: ‘We see the ordination of women, not as part of the creative continuity of tradition, but as a violation of apostolic faith and order of the Church... This will have a decisively negative effect on the issue of the recognition of Anglican Orders... By ordaining women Anglicans would sever themselves from continuity in apostolic faith and spiritual life.’ They added: ‘It is obvious that, if the dialogue continues, its character would be drastically changed’... Following the 1978 Lambeth Conference’s Resolution 21 on the ordination of women, the Orthodox Co-Chairman of AOJDD, Archbishop Athenagoras, expressed his view that ‘the theological dialogue will continue, although now simply as an academic and informative exercise, and no longer as an ecclesial endeavor aiming at the union of the two churches’” (ibid, pp. 2-3).

Dialogue between the two Churches resumed in 2009, when Metropolitan Jonah of the Orthodox Church in America spoke at the inaugural Assembly of the Anglican Church in North America. His talk was enthusiastically received with numerous standing ovations and cries of agreement. The official ACNA Press Release said, "This significant gesture represents the possibility of full communion between the churches." The Press Release also noted that the Metropolitan's message, "focused on unity but did not fail to address areas of contrasting beliefs between the two churches... the Orthodox Church and the Anglican Church in North America have differing opinions on matters such as the ordination of women and other doctrinal issues."

Metropolitan Jonah listed the doctrinal issues. Anglicans would have to end the ordination of women to the diaconate and presbyterate, reject Calvinism (and by implication Zwingliism), remove the Filioque clause from the Creed (which the Anglican Communion long ago agreed to do, but has never followed through on), reject homosexual marriage and end cafeteria style Christianity, and embrace the fullness of the Faith of the undivided Church. Adoption of the Byzantine Rite, or becoming "Eastern," was not among the conditions. Anglicans were not asked to cease being what they are and become something they are not. In short, he called for a return to what Anglicans have historically claimed to be. Metropolitan Jonah said to the Assembly, "our arms are wide open." In 2012, Metropolitan Jonah delivered a similar talk to the second Assembly of the Anglican Church in North America, and again received standing ovations and cries of agreement.

Unfortunately, while the Orthodox Church's "arms are wide open," the Anglican Church in North America has not carried out the necessary reforms. A generation after the cultural revolution of the 1960s, many Anglicans do not know what Anglicanism really is. They think there is an "Anglican religion" and take a "cafeteria-style" approach to Faith and Order.

## CLASSICAL ANGLICANISM

Orthodox Anglicans are classical Anglicans. What do I mean by classical? The dictionary definition of classical is "of or relating to the ancient Greek and Roman world." Classical Anglicanism is the Faith of the Fathers of the Catholic Church, those ancient Greek and Latin Fathers (and others) who laid the foundation of orthodox Christian theology.

In 1562, Bishop John Jewel, the editor of the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion said, "We have returned to the Apostles and old Catholic Fathers. We have planted no new religion, but have only preserved the old that was undoubtedly founded and used by the Apostles of Christ and other holy Fathers of the Primitive Church."

In 1563, Queen Elizabeth I said, "We and our people - thanks be to God - follow no novel and strange religions, but that very religion which is ordained by Christ, sanctioned by the primitive and Catholic Church and approved by the consentient mind and voice of the most early Fathers."

How should the Anglican formularies be understood? The Church gives us an authoritative answer to this question. In 1571, the same year that the Thirty-nine Articles were adopted by Convocation, Canon 5, "On Preachers," was also adopted. Canon 5 says, "But especially shall they see to it that they teach nothing in the way of a sermon which they would have religiously held and believed by the people save what is agreeable to the teaching of the Old and New Testament and what the Catholic Fathers and ancient bishops and doctors have collected from this selfsame doctrine."

Writing of the 17th century, Dean G. W. O. Addleshaw says, "The Anglicans are thinking and working the whole time in terms of patristic thought, more especially that of the Greek Fathers" (*The High Church Tradition*).

Classical Anglican theology can be summarized in the oft quoted Canon or Rule of St. Vincent of Lerin's, which says that the Catholic Faith is that which has been believed "everywhere, always and by all" - universality, antiquity and consent.

## OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

Some Anglicans have the idea that classical Anglicanism and the Orthodox Church do not have the same theology. This can be for several reasons:

First, many contemporary Anglicans do not really understand classical Anglicanism, and have had their theology confused by a resurgent Calvinism, prevailing modernism, contemporary pop-evangelicalism, and other isms. In fact, many are not classical Anglicans at all, but are in reality Calvinists, Zwinglians, and even "Anglo-Baptists" who like elements of Anglicanism, but do not believe in the Catholic Faith. What holds these people together is a cafeteria style theology and a broad "comprehensiveness." They will never agree with the Orthodox Church or with classical Anglicans.

Second, Anglicans often do not understand the theological language of Orthodoxy, and do not understand why the Orthodox often do not use our theological terms or have the same hot button theological issues. Western Christians commonly use language shaped by the Reformation/Counter Reformation debates, but Orthodoxy was not involved in the Protestant Reformation or the Counter Reformation. The Orthodox do not think in terms of those debates or use the language of the Reformation era. If postmodernism has taught us anything, it is that we interpret reality through the eyes of our own history, and we must remember that when looking at the Orthodox Church *and* take that into consideration when Orthodox Christians comment on Anglicanism or Western theology.

Third, sometimes poorly catechized people or fringe elements in the Orthodox Church condemn everything "Western" in general and St. Augustine in particular, but the Orthodox Church is not the only Church that has such people. There are plenty of Anglican Donatists and denominationalists who dismiss 300 million Eastern Christians

with an arrogant wave of a hand, and behave as though Christian reunion is not a priority or even necessary, but something to be resisted.

## THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

Let's take a look at several issues that some Anglicans raise. Do the Orthodox reject the atonement; do they confuse justification and sanctification, and teach that salvation is earned; and do they reject St. Augustine of Hippo, as is sometimes charged?

What the Orthodox reject is the Penal Satisfaction Theory of the atonement. The Penal Satisfaction Theory has its roots in the teaching of Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109), a Norman Archbishop who was imposed on the English Church in the wake of the Norman conquest. Two years before he died, Anselm wrote his epoch-making book, *Cur Deus Homo?* In this book he outlined a new theory of the atonement. Theologians call it "the satisfaction of God's outraged honour theory."

Almost immediately another Western theologian, Abelard (1079-1142), began to criticize Anselm's theory. In *The Epitome*, Abelard asks the same question as Anselm, Why did God become man?, but his answer is very different. Abelard writes, "The Son of Man came not to redeem men from the devil's power, but to redeem him from slavery to sin, infusing into him His love."

Over the centuries, Anselm's theory of the atonement continued to evolve as it was shaped by the criticisms and contributions of other theologians. Under the Protestant Reformers it became what theologians call "the Penal Satisfaction Theory."

In his book, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin presents the clearest and fullest statement of the Penal Satisfaction Theory of the atonement. Calvin writes, "He [Jesus] endured the death which is inflicted on the wicked by an angry God. He bore the weight of the divine anger, that smitten and afflicted, He experienced all the signs of an angry and avenging God. How dire and dreadful were the tortures which He endured when He felt Himself standing at the bar of God as a criminal in our stead." Calvin did not even shrink from declaring that Christ did, in a literal fact, descend into Hell, "to feel the weight of the divine vengeance." Anglicans, of course, do not believe that Jesus descended into Hell, but to the dead, as the note before the Apostles Creed on page 15 in the 1928 Book of Common Prayer demonstrates.

To the Orthodox, the Penal Satisfaction Theory sounds too much like "good God-bad God." The Father is filled with anger and wrath, while the Son is loving and gentle. The Son bears "the weight of an angry and avenging God," and dies on the cross to appease the terrible wrath and vengeance of an outraged Father. As Christos Yannaris has written in *Elements of Faith: An Introduction to Orthodox Theology*, "In the teaching of Luther and Calvin later, it is not simply divine justice, but the wrath of God which must be appeased by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross."

As a pastor I can tell you that I have known many Christians who believe that way. The Father is angry, wrathful, strict and bent on judgement and vengeance, while the Son is gentle, loving, forgiving, and bears the terrible anger and wrath of the Father to save us from His vengeance. When Western Christians define the atonement in this way, the Orthodox naturally say that they do not believe in it, and neither should Anglicans.

Before Anglicans condemn the Orthodox for “not believing in the atonement,” they should remember that the Penal Satisfaction Theory originated in the 16th century, with roots going back to Anselm’s book written about 1107. If this is the doctrine of the atonement that all Christians *must* believe, then why was it unknown during the first millennium?

What do the Orthodox believe? They are doing their theology with the Church Fathers. When the Reformers and Continental Protestantism speaks of the atonement, they mean the Penal Satisfaction Theory, and when they speak of Original Sin, they mean Original Guilt, depravity, and the bondage of the will. In Orthodox theology what is inherited in Original or Ancestral Sin are the consequences of the fall, not a collective guilt. The posterity of Adam inherited the consequences of his sin, but not his guilt. The effect of Original Sin is primarily corruption, which results in the blinding of man’s spiritual vision, a propensity to sin, and death. Classical Anglican theology agrees, saying that after the fall man “is very far gone from original righteousness,” but not totally depraved; and man’s will is not in complete bondage, but by grace can and must cooperate with God (synergy).

In Orthodox theology the death of Christ is a sacrifice. In *De Incarnatione*, St. Athanasius (c. 298-373) writes, “By offering unto death the body He Himself had taken, as an offering and sacrifice free from all stain, straightway, He put death away from all his peers...” St. Athanasius sums up his teaching in these famous words: “He was made man that we might become God; and He manifested Himself by a body that we might receive the idea of the unseen Father; and He endured the insolence of men that we might inherit incorruptibility.” Church historians call the Orthodox understanding the “Patristic” or “Classical” view.

While the Protestant Penal Satisfaction Theory dates from the 16th century, with roots in the 12th century, the Patristic view held in the East and West during the millennium of the undivided Church, and still held in the East today, has a very long history. In Patristic theology the starting point of the fallen human condition is death from sin, not guilt, so redemption brings life through Christ.

The Western Church Fathers focused more on the transactional aspects of Redemption, while the Eastern Church Fathers focused more on its transformational aspects, but these emphases compliment rather than conflict with one another. The Eastern and Western Fathers recognized both aspects in their soteriology, but focus primarily on one of them.

Interestingly, while Martin Luther taught the 16th century Penal Satisfaction Theory of the atonement, he did not seem completely comfortable with it. He also taught the Patristic or Classical view. In fact, Gustav Aulen, the distinguished Swedish Lutheran theologian, maintained in his popular book, *Christus Victor*, that Luther's view of the work of Christ was really the Patristic or Classical view. For instance, in the *Small Catechism*, commenting on the Apostle's Creed, Luther writes, "Now when asked: what does thou believe in the second article concerning Jesus Christ?, answer most briefly thus: I believe that Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, has become my Lord. What do the words to become my Lord mean? They mean that He has redeemed me from sin, from the devil, from death and all misfortunes... So the main point of this article is, that the title Lord, taken in its simplest sense, means as much as Redeemer; that is, He who has led us back from the devil to God, from death to life, from sin to righteousness, and holds us safe." This is the theology of the Orthodox Church. The Patristic or Classical view can be found in even more detail in Luther's *Larger Catechism* and in his *Commentary of Galatians*.

Some Anglicans accuse Orthodox theology of confusing justification and sanctification, teaching that salvation can be earned, but that is a false charge. In the Byzantine Rite, after a baby is baptized, the priest says to him, "Thou art justified! Thou art illumined! Thou art sanctified! Thou art washed in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." Justification is the beginning of the Orthodox Christian life!

Eastern Orthodox theologian Dr. Bradley Nassif is a representative of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North America, and serves on the Orthodox-Lutheran Bi-lateral Dialogue in North America. He writes, "In this liturgical setting [the Rite of Baptism] the evangelical theology of the Orthodox Church is vividly confessed... No mistake can be made about the free gift of salvation given by the unmerited favor of God's grace, or the sufficiency of the redemptive work of Christ on the cross and his triumph over sin, death and the devil. Reflecting a strongly Pauline and Johannine theology, the liturgy confesses that through baptism we enter into the inner life of the Trinity (Matt. 28:19-20) and thus are saved (I Pet. 3:2), regenerated (John 3:5; Titus 3:5-6), united with Christ in his death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-8; Gal. 3:27), adopted (Rom. 8:23; Gal. 4:5), justified (Rom. 5:12-6:12), incorporated into his body, the church (I Cor. 12:13), and made partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). All of these biblical and liturgical images are different ways of showing how God makes us his own through Jesus Christ" (*Three Views of Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism*, pp. 70-71).

Those who accuse Orthodox theology of being pelagian do so because Orthodox theology, like classical Anglican theology, teaches synergism rather than monergism. Synergism teaches that God woos us, and that we must cooperate with God's grace. Calvinist monergism teaches that God ravishes us, and that His grace is irresistible.

Pelagius was a British monk and pelagianism was primarily a Western heresy. The controversy did not really effect Eastern Christendom, so it is hardly on the Orthodox

radar. The Orthodox Church does recognize the condemnation of pelagianism though, and Orthodox theology is not pelagian.

Calvinists like to claim St. Augustine of Hippo as a monergist, but he was not. Both the Roman and the Orthodox Churches accept St. Augustine as a Father of the Church and a saint, in fact Rome considers him the greatest of the Western Church Fathers, yet both Churches condemn monergism and teach synergism. The fact that Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism all teach baptismal regeneration, contradicts the monergistic theology of Calvinism, and that is why Calvinism must reject baptismal regeneration. Calvinism teaches that only the elect are regenerated at baptism.

There are members of the Orthodox Church who are not well catechized or on the fringes, just as there are in Anglicanism. Unfortunately, the Internet, for all of its good, does give these elements in both Churches and in every Church a forum for their ideas.

The Orthodox Church is actively working to counteract the harm done by such people. Unfortunately, due to the terrible lack of authority and discipline in contemporary Anglicanism, little can be done to counteract the confusion caused on the Anglican side.

Metropolitan Philip of the Orthodox Church, writing of the so-called Orthodox fundamentalists, has said, "As our Apostolic Faith begins to take root here in America, we are faced with those who would reduce this faith, 'once and for all delivered to the saints,' to the strict observance of rules and regulations, as the Pharisees did in Christ's time... When they are merely the following of a certain code or law, however, they lead to spiritual death."

Archpriest, Fr. John Morris writes, "Despite their meticulous devotion to every custom of traditional Orthodoxy, the judgmental attitude of the Orthodox fundamentalists displays all the characteristics of a condition identified by the Holy Fathers as spiritual delusion" (*The Orthodox Fundamentalists: A Critical View*, p. 75).

Finally, some Anglicans accuse the Orthodox Church of rejecting St. Augustine of Hippo. Nothing could be farther from the truth. St. Augustine is on the Calendars of both the Greek and Russian Churches, there are icons of him, and churches named after him.

Fr. John Morris, a member of the Orthodox Theological Society writes, "Although St. Augustine held some ideas that Orthodox Christians reject, especially those concerning original sin and the procession of the Holy Spirit, his views on other matters still carry a great deal of authority since the Fifth Ecumenical Council, the Second Council of Constantinople in 553, cited Augustine as a father of the Church" (ibid, p. 38).

## THE BASIS FOR REUNION

In 1973, as Anglicans were moving toward allowing the ordination of women, Patriarch Pimen of Moscow told them that they must interpret their doctrinal statements "in the

spirit of the Undivided Church of the Seven Ecumenical Councils” before there could be unity between the Anglican Communion and the Orthodox Church.

“Orthodox clergy and laity participating in discussions with other Christians also steadfastly maintain that the truth must not be sacrificed for the sake of unity. They have rejected doctrinal relativism and have informed non-Orthodox that Communion between Orthodox and other Christians can only be possible on the basis of a common acceptance of the Faith of the ancient undivided Church, the Faith of the Holy Fathers and the Ecumenical Councils. They have also argued against moral relativism and have defended traditional Christian values on such issues as abortion and sexual morality in ecumenical gatherings. One official statement after another has made it perfectly clear that the Orthodox Church will not compromise its Faith and moral beliefs for the sake of unity with any other group” (ibid, Morris, p. 16).

God has not preserved the Anglican Communion, but He has preserved orthodox Anglicanism in faithful congregations all across North America and throughout the world. There is no possibility of corporate reunion between the Orthodox Church and the Anglican Communion or with the Anglican Church in North America. There are too many internal divisions and contractions on everything from women’s ordination, Calvinism vs. Catholicism, the new “three streams” theology, the number of the sacraments, the Liturgy (vital because of *lex orandi, lex credendi*), morality, and much, much more. The ACNA will ultimately fracture and Anglicanism will continue to divide. The answer is for orthodox Anglican congregations and orthodox dioceses to seek full sacramental communion and visible unity with the Orthodox Catholic Church based on the Faith and Order of the undivided Church, which classical Anglicans have always confessed a commitment too.

Just over 35 years ago, the great St. Louis Church Congress met and adopted *The Affirmation of St. Louis*. In that *Affirmation* the Congress proclaimed, “We declare our firm intention to seek and achieve full sacramental communion and visible unity with other Christians who ‘worship the Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity,’ and who hold the Catholic and Apostolic Faith in accordance with the foregoing principles.”

In 2003, Orthodox Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch said, “Our divisions make Christ unrecognizable. We have an urgent need for prophetic initiatives in order to bring ecumenism out of the twists and turns in which I fear it is getting stuck. We have an urgent need for prophets and saints to help our Churches to be converted by mutual forgiveness.”

In 2005, Brother Roger, the founder of Taizé, wrote, “When communion among Christians is a life and not a theory, it radiates hope... How then, could Christians remain divided? Reconciliation among Christians is urgent today; it cannot continually be put off until later, until the end of time... Over the years, the ecumenical vocation has fostered an invaluable exchange of views. This dialogue constitutes the first-fruits of reconciliation. But when the ecumenical vocation is not made concrete through a communion, it leads nowhere.”

Anglicanism has long seen itself as a bridge Church whose special vocation has been to be a healing balm in a divided Christendom. May this year, 2013, be the year that our ecumenical vocation is made concrete in full sacramental communion and visible unity with the Orthodox Church. Then, we can fully fulfill our vocation by being an ongoing bridge between Western Christians and the Orthodox Church, rather than a bridge leading to nowhere. Jesus said, "he who does not gather with me scatters." If you will join with me in praying and working for Anglican-Orthodox unity, I would like to hear from you. I can be reached at: [venovak@hughes.net](mailto:venovak@hughes.net)

C. 2013, Fr. Victor E. Novak

*Fr. Victor E. Novak was a priest of the Diocese of Mid-America of the Anglican Church in North America, and the rector of Holy Cross Anglican Church in the Ralston suburb of Omaha, Nebraska when he wrote this article. He is now an Orthodox priest; and Holy Cross Orthodox Church, where he remains rector, is a Western Rite parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. Fr. Novak's Blog can be viewed at: [www.frnovak.blogspot.com](http://www.frnovak.blogspot.com)*