

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC & FOREIGN RELATIONS
of the
SYNOD OF BISHOPS
OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA
NEWSLETTER #29

March-April, 1980

FROM THE LIFE OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

His Eminence Metropolitan Philaret, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, who is presently in Australia, where he went to take part in a jubilee celebration in honor of His Eminence, Archbishop Theodosius of Sydney, and also to visit several parishes, will be returning to New York in late April. His Eminence plans to leave Australia on the third day of Pascha.

In late January, Bishop Gregory of Manhattan fell prey to a particularly virulent form of influenza, in consequence of which he was unable to preside at the divine services of the first week of the Great Fast. However, His Grace did recover to the point where he could serve the Rite of Orthodoxy and was even able to take part in the procession and moleben served on behalf of the Orthodox believers who have been arrested and imprisoned in the Soviet Union. Having begun the service of supplication in the Synod's cathedral and afterwards travelling most of the route (about thirty blocks) by car, Bishop Gregory walked the last few blocks to the place appointed, leading the procession. The service continued and included the anathematization of the bolsheviks and the chanting of "Many Years" for the confessors of the Faith.

To correct several inaccuracies which appeared in the reports of several newspapers, be it known that only clergymen of the Church Outside of Russia participated in the moleben. While clergymen of other ecclesiastical allegiance did walk in the procession, they did so among the people and not with our clergy.

Afterwards, having spent several days in Florida to rest and visit the parishes there, His Grace had to return somewhat earlier than expected in order to take part in a press conference which had been arranged for March 11.

Early in March of the current year an unusually powerful snow storm descended upon Jerusalem. According to a report in the New York Times, about nine inches of snow fell, causing considerable damage. Our Mission lost about forty trees which were unable to stand up to such an accumulation of snow. A large tree damaged the roof of the main residence building of the Convent of the Mount of Olives when it fell. Six large trees fell on the grounds of the Convent of Gethsemane causing considerable inconvenience. The building known as "Raskopki", which constitutes the administrative center of our Mission also suffered as a result of the storm. A large leak has developed in the roof and there is the danger that ceilings may collapse in several of the rooms. The need for extensive remodelling is foreseen.

The loss of olive trees constitutes a tremendous loss for our convents. There will in all probability be additional expense in connection with the clean-up, for city employees are so overworked that one cannot really expect any speedy assistance on their part.

PRESS CONFERENCE IN SYNOD

The following is a translation of an article which appeared in Novoye Russkoye Slovo (New Russian Word), a New York-based Russian-language

daily newspaper, on March 18 of this year:

On March 11 a press conference, the subject of which was the persecution of religion in the U.S.S.R., was held in the large hall of the Synodal residence.

Bishop Gregory of Manhattan, Secretary of the Synod of Bishops, spoke briefly to representatives of the press and radio, as well as to interested...people, relating that the persecution of the Church in the Soviet Union, which had begun during the lifetime of Patriarch Tikhon, have continued down to this very day, varying at times only their form and intensity.

His Grace pointed out that the press has devoted a great deal of space to political dissidents like Sakharov, but has hitherto not drawn attention to the cruel persecutions directed against the Faith. The Secretary of the Synod emphasized the particular significance and merits of Frs. Dimitry Dudko, Gleb Yakunin, and many others arrested with them who are now suffering. Fr. Dimitri Dudko has shown himself to be the first priest who has broken free of the chains of fear which have bound all believers since the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, who later became patriarch. He (Fr. Dudko) He not only began to preach the Gospel extensively and to print a parish bulletin in which were reported incidents which had become known to him concerning the oppression of believers, but also was not afraid to perform thousands of baptisms, disdaining to register the names of the parents and of the godparents as is required in such cases in the Soviet Union. Officially many lose their jobs in the Soviet Union for having their children baptized.

A correspondent of the newspaper Daily News was interested as to whether it is possible to hope that the movement of religious rebirth which is now beginning will be spontaneous in character. Bishop Gregory replied: it is without a doubt that the regime cannot now halt the upsurge, but what forms it will take and how soon, it is difficult to say. In any event, before his imprisonment Fr. Dimitry asked that support be shown to the embryonic religious renaissance by making public everything that is happening in the Soviet Union regarding the persecution of the Church.

In the name of those who have been arrested, His Grace begged the representatives of the press to show them moral support in their publications.

THE ARREST OF CLERGY & BELIEVERS IN THE U.S.S.R.

On receiving news of the arrest of Fr. Gleb Yakunin, and soon afterwards of that of Fr. Dimitry Dudko, the Synod of Bishops adopted a resolution to commemorate those who are suffering at Proskomedia and also to insert a special petition concerning them in one of the ektenias at every liturgy. At the same time, a telegram was sent to President Carter, signed by all the members of the Synod, and a letter of similar content was also sent, urging him to do all in his power to mitigate the lot of those who are being martyred for the Faith. In reply to this a letter was received from the White House notifying the Synod that the government is very troubled by reports of the violation of elemental human rights and will do everything possible to help the victims thereof.

Not long before his arrest, Fr. Gleb Yakunin managed to send abroad a report he wrote concerning the state of the Russian Orthodox Church at the present time. This report constitutes a supplement to the letter which he and Fr. N. Eschliman wrote to the patriarch in 1965, which caused such a sensation. It is glaringly apparent from this article how grievous the position of the Church has become under the regime of the godless.

Fr. Dimitry also managed to make one final appeal, ordering that the "alarm be sounded," for "silence and compromises are not tactics, but betrayal. This is beginning to be understood by those who have not hitherto understood but have in some way loved the Church." This val-orous pastor also composed a movingly humble "Testament", in which he asks prayers for himself, promising that "if God permits" him, he will himself intercede before Him for those who have remained. Mentioning the fact that he had not managed to amass any riches and that, for this reason, his family has not been left in a decent financial position, Fr. Dimitry asks all his friends to help his matushka, children and other relatives.

The newspaper Nasha Strana (Our Land), which until recently has been quite skeptical of Fr. Dimitry's sincerity, reported in its February 29 issue that "recently the Soviet regime has intensified the persecu-tion of those who think differently than itself. The arrest of Fr. Dimitry Dudko, a fearless preacher, is a great blow for Orthodox belie--vers in Russia. They relate that when Fr. Dimitry was taken away to the Lubianka (prison), he said: 'Now at least they will not think that I am an agent of the KGB.' It is not known, however, if the slanderous campaign against Fr. Dimitry Dudko on the part of certain irresponsible representatives of the Russian emigration will cease."

According to reports received from one correspondent in Moscow, the ad-mirers of Fr. Dimitry Dudko, immediately after his arrest, turned to the Patriarchate with two proposals: to organize a procession through Mos-cow, or to serve molebens for him and other victims in each church which remains open, one after the other. Metropolitan Juvenaly, who received the delegation, decided not to refuse their requests entirely, and con-sented to the serving of molebens (which, of course, was the proposal which entailed the least publicity). However, as has become known from the testimony of a priest of the Moscow Patriarchate who has arrived to take up permanent residence in America, the ecclesiastical authorities have been imposing increasingly stern stricures on their clergy, for-bidding them to pray for those who have been arrested.

METROPOLITAN ALEXIS OF TALLINN & THE QUESTION OF THE PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH

As reported in the March 21 bulletin of the Keston News Service, Metro-politan Alexis of Tallinn and Estonia, when in Austria, told journalists that the Moscow Patriarchate has directed inquiries to the Council for Religious Affairs concerning the arrest of Fr. Dimitry Dudko. This in-formation was first received by the West German news agency KNA. The Council replied that Fr. Dimitry is under investigation, but that no charge has been brought against him as yet.

Metropolitan Alexis stated that the Patriarchate can provide no legal protection for Fr. Dimitry until he has been officially charged and com-mitted for trial. Actually, it is clear that if the Patriarchate has made any inquiry, it has only done so on orders from the Council of Rel-igious Affairs and cannot "meddle in the case" herself.

The reporters bombarded the metropolitan with questions regarding sub-sequent arrests of believers, especially concerning the fate of the ar-rested members of the Christian Seminar. Metropolitan Alexis refused to reply to such questions, pleading insufficient acquaintance with the essence of the movement and, in general stated that "in the Soviet Union citizens are never arrested for their religious or ideological convic-tions."

ARCHBISHOP PITIRIM & FR. DIMITRY DUDKO

In its February 14 issue, the Paris-based newspaper Russkaya Mysl' (Rus-

sian Thought) published a report on a statement it had received which had been made by Archbishop Pitirim of Volokolamsk and appeared originally in a Swedish newspaper in connection with the arrests of believers being conducted in the U.S.S.R. by the bolsheviks, and with that of Fr. Dimitry Dudko in particular.

Archbishop Pitirim stated that he and Fr. Dimitry had studied together in seminary in 1945. "We are praying for him," he said, "but Fr. Dimitry is a very nervous and unbalanced man and it is always easy to assume that such a person can break the law. All the governments of the world react against such."

The above-mentioned hierarch is, apparently, a rising star in the firmament of the Moscow Patriarchate. He heads the publication department of the Patriarchate and, as a trusted agent, has begun to travel abroad. Late last year he visited America. His name is being mentioned with greater frequency in the foreign press. Quite recently the German magazine Stern printed an extensive article on the Church in the Soviet Union, and Archbishop Pitirim appeared in most of the photographs accompanying it. He also visited Germany recently. Frankfurter Allgemeine, a magazine with a wide circulation, also printed an article concerning him in its issue dated March 4 of the current year, from which it is apparent that Archbishop Pitirim, facts to the contrary notwithstanding, called the reports of western correspondent concerning the persecution of the Faith in the Soviet Union "absolutely false." On the contrary, in his opinion, the position of the Orthodox Church and clergy in the U.S.S.R. has "stabilized" over the past fifteen years!

In its March 21 issue, the Keston News Service, quoting the words of a German reporter, related that to all questions addressed to him concerning the fate of Fr. Dimitry Dudko and Fr. Gleb Yakunin Archbishop Pitirim stated that they were singular cases and that the authorities had informed the Patriarchate that both priests had been arrested not in connection with their fulfilling their pastoral duties. While they are under investigation, the authorities will keep the Patriarchate informed as to when the investigation will be concluded. Archbishop Pitirim has categorically denied the journalists' assumption that both arrested priests have suffered because of their connection with dissidents. The Archbishop stated further that while the masses of the populace support the politics of their government, there are nonetheless certain individuals who cannot grasp the "historical process." The Soviet hierarch also told reporters that there is no shortage of clergy in his country and that the principal concern of the Church should be "to safeguard and develop the achievements of the period of detente."

Archbishop Pitirim's statements would lead one to believe that the Soviets are devising any sort of political or criminal accusations to use against the arrested believers. Alexander Solzhenitsyn confirms this thought in his statement of March 20. According to information he has received, the KGB is preparing young false witnesses to accuse Fr. Dimitry of homosexuality and of holding drunken orgies. Regarding Fr. Gleb, he will be accused of speculation in icons...

APPEALS FOR HELP

Fr. Nikolai Gainov, president of the Christian Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights in the U.S.S.R., has managed to inform the publishers of the bulletin of the Keston News Service that, despite the arrest of Fr. Gleb Yakunin and his closest co-worker Viktor Kapitanchiuk, ten new members have been admitted to the Committee; however, as a precautionary measure, the editors will not publish their names, "as there is no point in putting them under threat of arrest" (a wise decision, we might add). Documents published by the Committee are now being signed

by Fr. Nikolai and by Vadim Shcheglov.

Members of the Committee bear witness that the recent arrests are the result of the general intensive campaign against the Faith, in view of the fact that anti-religious methods of doing battle with the Faith have proved ineffectual. At present the persecution is being directed at the prevalent religion. Yet the Crimean Tartars, who confess the Moslem faith, are also suffering.

The courageous example of Fr. Dimitry Dudko is evidently producing results. People are beginning to free themselves from the life of fear they have been leading, and western journalists have already received two appeals for help, one of which was dated the day of Fr. Dudko's arrest and contained one hundred signatures. In other words, in the course of a single day the appeal was not only written, but was circulated among one hundred persons for their signature, and those people, located as they are under the conditions of the cruel realities of Soviet life, were not afraid to write down their names in defense of their spiritual leader.

THE "ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA" IS UPSET

The Russian Orthodox Journal, the mouthpiece of the Federated Russian Orthodox Clubs, which are under the jurisdiction of the "Orthodox Church in America," reports in its January, 1980 issue on a protest made by Metropolitan Theodosius to Patriarch Demetrios of Constantinople.

the head of the "autocephalous" "Orthodox Church in America" has lodged his protest over the fact that, in connection with the reorganization of the Greek Exarchate in America, the bishops who had previously been vicar bishops to Archbishop Iakovos have now become ruling bishops in their own right and in a number of cases have assumed the titles of sees of cities in which the "O.C.A." already has bishops of its own.

In his letter to the Patriarch, Metropolitan Theodosius expressed "astonishment and sadness" that Constantinople "could find it possible without consultation to establish new episcopal sees in America in places and towns where Orthodox bishops have already been 'rightly defining the word of truth' for many years."

"It is clear," continues Metropolitan Theodosius, "that canonical order in America cannot be restored through further unilateral actions, but requires the agreement of all the Orthodox Churches." In his words, the "Orthodox Church in America" "recognizes the age-old privileges of the ecumenical throne of Constantinople and prays God that in spite of all historical difficulties and trials, it will succeed in fulfilling its responsibility by becoming again the instrument and minister of Orthodox unity and consensus--a role it has so ably performed in the past."

One need not command a great deal of insight to reach the conclusion that the letter of the head of the "Orthodox Church in America" will accomplish nothing.

THE POPE OF ROME STRIVES TO INTRODUCE ORDER

The manifest disintegration of Roman Catholicism which has become apparent with particular clarity since the close of the Second Vatican Council, has become a moiment with which Pope John XXIII, who, as it were, let the genie out of the bottle, and his successor Paul VI, were unable to cope. Apparently, Pope John Paul I, who manned the helm of the Vatican for all of a month and earned the nickname "the smiling pope," also was ill-suited, as regarded his personality, to bring his unbridled clergy and laity to rein. Soon after his death persistent rumors began to circulate that the pope had been poisoned. Swiss and Italian physicians found much that was perplexing in the published diagnosis of the causes

of the Pope's death and demanded an autopsy, which the Vatican categorically refused.

The election of the new Pope, John Paul II, was a great surprize for both the majority of Catholics and, of course, for those responsible for the Vatican's affairs. The new Pope showed quite soon that he is indisputably a personality of considerable dimensions and that this time Vatican politicians had not missed the mark in placing him at the head of Roman Catholicism. He is quite obviously possessed of great diplomatic abilities, is in complete command of several different languages, has an attractive manner and is definitely quite aware of what he hopes to accomplish. In his person the Orthodox Church has a powerful and dangerous enemy.

Gambling on union with Constantinople, the Pope is especially careful to emphasize his conservatism which, of course, he should have, on the basis of the fact that he hales from the most fanatically Catholic country in the world.

The first problem which has confronted the new Pope has been the tremendous losses sustained by the Catholic clergy and monastic orders, whose ranks have been more than decimated thanks to the ease at which laicization could be obtained under the policies of his predecessors. During the course of the fifteen-year pontificate of Paul VI, 30,000 Catholic priests returned to the lay state. Pope John Paul II has suspended the process of laicization. The newspapers write that there are thousands of petitions in the Vatican now from clergymen who are awaiting dispensations from their vows so that they can marry; most of these petitions are from former nuns.

In Rome the Pope had promised that, by the end of 1979, he would publish new guidelines for laicization, but, as the National Catholic Register comments in its March 2 issue, the Vatican has yet to promulgate any such regulations. Meanwhile, the Pope has stated that on the day of their ordination priests obligate themselves to serve the Catholic Church and for this reason they dare not expect that their return to a lay state can be a mere "administrative procedure."

The Pope has also demanded of his clergy and monastics that they wear the dress appropriate to their calling, that nuns remain in their convents and dedicate their time to prayer and manual labor. He has also given a stern reprimand to the Jesuits, demanding that they bring themselves under control and bring a halt to the process of

he has gone so far as to issue warnings against the danger which might be evoked by the liturgical changes of the Second Vatican Council, saying that there is a "widespread tendency, at least in some places, to desacralize everything" which may lead to "scandal and disturbance." Those who prefer the Latin mass, in the Pope's words, a worthy of "full respect."

Apparently, with the goal of the utmost ordering of the life of Roman Catholicism, the Pope plans to convoke a session of his Synod in the fall of this year, at which question which are especially disturbing to Catholics will be raised: e.g., the annulment of marriages, single parents, the needs of the widowed, separated and divorced Catholics, etc. The Pope has said that "It will be necessary, indeed, as far as possible, to eliminate useless publicity."

GAIN "JESUS OF NAZARETH"

The NBC television network is again advertizing its blasphemous film "Jesus of Nazareth," which was aired in April of 1977 which we accorded a very careful review in our Newsletter #10 at that time. The Department

of Public and Foreign Affairs of the Synod of Bishops has already received three letters from the television company in less than three weeks, in which are to be found enthusiastic testimonials on behalf of this film. Among the most enthusiastic reviews was one by Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum, National Director of Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee. In his opinion, "Jesus of Nazareth represents a major breakthrough in the filming of the life of Jesus, in that it rests on the strongest foundations of the most advanced and serious Biblical scholarship in modern times. It is also a masterpiece of artistic imagination."

From the Orthodox point of view the last statement is undoubtedly correct: the film is the fruit of imagination, but not of Christian imagination.

Now, as we did several years ago, we call upon our readers not to watch this film so as not to participate in the blasphemies of this age.

Furthermore, the blasphemous stream does not stop with this film. In its March bulletin, the National Federation for Decency reports that the NBC television network has produced a blasphemous film entitled The Day Christ Died, which is to be aired during the Easter season of next year. Jesus of Nazareth has been proclaimed a classic and will be shown every Easter. Thus, believers will be treated to a double dosage of blasphemy during the holy days of Pascha. The new film will run for three hours. This is its history:

More than twenty years ago, James Bishop, a Protestant fundamentalist, wrote a book by this title, which enjoyed widespread popularity. The television company decided to use the book as the basis for one of its programs. The film was made, but with very crude distortions not only of the book itself, but of the entire text of the Gospel. For example, in the film the Savior is made to say to Judas: "Of all My disciples, in some ways you have been closest to Me, because you have understood My words best!" The people responsible for the script also placed words in the mouth of the actress playing the role of the Virgin Mary to the effect that Jesus had been stoned in Nazareth.

On hearing of this patent falsification of the Gospel narrative, many began to write letters of protest and received the reply from the company that it sees nothing objectionable in the film and that Judas was actually "a holy and gifted man." The author of the book himself wrote a protest to the company, demanding that NBC remove his name from the film's credits and change its title, which has not yet been done.

It is of interest that not long ago a certain Polish-American Society brought suit against NBC for airing a film entitled "The End," in which there were several insulting jokes aimed at Poles. The film's showing was delayed for a week and the offensive scenes were deleted.

Those who wish to lodge a protest against this new blasphemous film should write to:

—or phone him at:

Chairman William S. Paley (212)-422-3000
CBS Inc.
Shelter Rock Rd.
Manhasset, NY 11030

RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT OVER THE STAGING OF THE OBERAMMERGAU PASSION PLAY

We have several times reported to our readers that in the course of several years, a joint commission of actors in the Oberammergau passion play and Jews from America have been conducting negotiations apropos to a new editions of the script of the next production of the play, which has been performed every ten years for the last three hundred years. The

production attracts more than half a million spectators from abroad and brings in a revenue of no less than ten million dollars which, for a village of somewhat less than a thousand inhabitants, is a financial mainstay. Thus the question of whether or not the play will be held and in what form are important.

As the Herald Tribune reports in its February 22 issue, the agitation over the future editing of the script began almost immediately after the last production, in 1970, which was then the object of bitter criticism on the part of American Jews who accused the residents of Oberammergau of spreading rabid antisemitism. Pressured by them, even the Vatican refused its official sanction for that production. Thus, protracted negotiations began between the American Jewish Committee and B'nai Brith's Anti-Defamation League on the one hand, and the residents of Oberammergau on the other. The latter were told to expurgate all "antisemitic" passages from the text of the script. After lengthy talks between the American Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum and Cardinal-Archbishop Ratzinger of Munich, it was decided to use the eighteenth century text of the monk Ferdinand Rosner, which had been conveniently discovered in the town's archives by a group of burghers who were worried about the possible financial consequences of open conflict. This text was submitted to the six hundred resident artists as completely free of antisemitic allusions. It met with the approval of both the rabbi and the cardinal. Although with great reluctance, the inhabitants of the village nevertheless bowed to pressure and agreed to use the text, the vote taken being six to five in favor of approval. However, this diplomatic coup was to be very short-lived. Within a month there was held a new election of the town council in Oberammergau; the sole issue of the election campaign was the production of the passion play. When the results of the election became known, it was seen that twelve of the seventeen positions were held by opponents of the new text. The first resolution of the new town council was to rejection of the Rosner text and the return to the old "antisemitic" text which everyone was used to. Thus Oberammergau came face to face with the threat of a simultaneous boycott by both America and the Vatican.

As the inhabitants relate, the roles which the various residents assume are taken quite seriously by them; for example, the one who plays Judas is often subjected to insults and is to a certain extent ostracised by his neighbors, at times for a period of time lasting several years. The village's steadfast refusal to alter the text of the play in 1970 resulted in the cancellation of some 70,000 tickets and hotel reservations due to a boycott initiated by the above-mentioned Jewish organizations.

Seeking a compromise, Cardinal Ratzinger flew to America for a personal meeting with Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum. Thereafter, the cardinal returned with the "consoling" news that there would be no boycott if the old text was reworded along lines indicated by Jewish demands. A revisory commission was quickly formed which indefatigably labored for several months. This commission was composed of Hans Maier, the play's 1980 director, the village pastor, monks from Ettal monastery, to which belonged the author of the present text of the play, and members of the village council.

As a result, the production has been shortened by an hour, and alterations have been made in about three dozen places. To counter the assertion that the Jews were responsible for the Savior's crucifixion, the following phrase has been inserted in the prologue: "Far be from us all efforts to seek guilt among others. Welcome to you, also, brothers and sisters of the race from which Jesus came." The Gospel's words: "His blood be upon you and your children" has been completely expurgated. The scene of the Pharisees in the Temple has been altered so that the Pharisees are now just a large crowd.

Hans Schwaighofer's attempt to reform the Rosner script provoked a raging dispute which cut through ties of friendship and family, dividing the village into camps. One of those opposed to the Rosner text complained to a reporter; "Jews in America are violating our human rights and religious freedom. It's like interference in our internal affairs. All we want is to stage the play as we've always done—with a script that is close to the Bible."

In the troubles in Oberammergau we see what happens when the facts of history are falsified or covered up in conformance with the ulterior motives of this or that group of people. We have seen how the bolsheviks have rewritten world history to conform to their Marxist world view; now we see how the Jews are trying to hide the part played by their ancestors in the condemnation and execution of the Savior. Both groups have taken as axiomatic the notorious dictum: the end justifies the means, and both groups will undoubtedly have much to answer for on that account.

BURIAL IN AMERICA

In its March 2 issue, the New York Times reports that over the last five years the percentage of people who are cremated rather than buried has risen 6% and now stands at 10% overall.

In connection with this trend a significant number of new, special cremation societies have been organized, of which there are now about 175 nationwide. (One should keep in mind that the ordinary funeral establishments also handle cremations.) In San Pedro, California, one such enterprise has a yacht which makes several trips a week to cast into the ocean the ashes that remain after the cremation of a corpse.

The changes which are occurring in the realm of funerary habits have a number of reasons underlying them: keeping costs low is one of the foremost, of course. Many families are merely renting caskets or coffins for the memorial services prior to cremation. The decline of religious standards has contributed to the fact that families are less likely to demand a carefully crafted casket, solemn prayer services, the presence of a clergyman or flowers for the grave; and the absence of overt tokens of love for the departed frees relatives and friends from the necessity of a public display of grief.

The increased mobility of families, especially young people, also plays a role in this growing trend, for if they know that they will most probably change the place of their residence in the near future, they will be less likely to invest in a cemetery plot. Sometimes the elderly themselves stipulate that their bodies be cremated, wishing to avoid incurring great expense for their loved ones or fearing that their heirs would have less inheritance.

Thanks to all of this, many funeral directors have been forced out of business. Even those factories which manufacture hearses have had to reduce production to meet a decreased demand for their product—down to 900 per year instead of the 3,000 of the past. Of the twelve such factories in business not long ago, nine have already shut down.

The combination of all these circumstances which are adverse to their business seriously disturbs funeral directors. Even those clients who still purchase caskets have become very discriminating, and the time when people merely arrived and said that they had to bury a loved one and left the rest for the funeral director to arrange, is past. Buyers not only haggle over the price, but even make the rounds of other funeral establishments to find the cheapest rates.

Statistics show that in 1978 11.8% of the dead were cremated in New Jersey, 8.8% in New York and 6.7% in Connecticut. In the Midwest and in the South the Christian method of burial still is prevalent, but those who are investigating the problem note that cremation has made inroads there as well.

It is interesting that simultaneously with the rise in the percentage of cremations, there is quite unexpectedly a tremendous rise in the popularity of pet cemeteries. Such cemeteries, which are now being established with greater frequency, are often laid out with roads, immaculately landscaped and adorned with artistically wrought monuments.

In accordance with a resolution of the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, cremation, in that it is not a Christian custom, is strictly forbidden, and if it becomes known to a priest that the body of one of the departed is to be cremated following the funeral service, he cannot serve the funeral service, nor can he serve pannikhidas.

CHARISMATIC PENTECOSTALS

In its March 6 issue, the newspaper Catholic News reports that 19% of all adults in America consider themselves to be Pentecostal or "charismatic" Christians. The above percentage represents about 30,000,000 people, of whom $\frac{1}{4}$ are Catholics and $\frac{2}{3}$ are Protestants with a small number of "Orthodox." Approximately 5,000,000 of these sectarians consider themselves to have received the "gift of tongues" which is usually accompanied by trances, at times even by convulsions, and is expressed in the utterance of inarticulate sounds which are, at times, interpreted by others.

Unfortunately, the Greek Exarchate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in America has not only failed to prohibit this sectarian hysterical manifestation, but is even taking it under its wing. To a conference several years ago Archbishop Iakovos sent his greetings and best wishes for success. In 1979 he delegated Fr. Coniaris as the official observer from his Archdiocese. The latter transmitted Archbishop Iakovos' greetings to the assembly. In August of this year another conference of such charismatics was held under the banner "Spiritual Life & Renewal." On behalf of Archbishop Iakovos, Bishop Maximos of Pittsburgh arrived at the conference, at whose sessions he even presided.

Although the number of Orthodox who have been "reborn" as charismatics is still comparatively small, there are grounds to fear that the movement will assume an aspect which is undesirable for the Church.

The founder of the charismatic movement among the Orthodox is Archimandrite Eusebius Stephanou, a priest of the Greek Archdiocese, who, judging from unconfirmed rumors now circulating, has been suspended by his ecclesiastical authorities, but, strangely enough, not for disseminating heresy, but for absence without leave and travelling abroad.

FIRST ORDINATION OF A "REFORM" RABBI IN ISRAEL

In its February 20 issue, the New York Times newspaper reports that the Reform Jewish movement preformed its first ordination of a rabbi in Israel.

The 90-minute ceremony of ordination had barely ended when Israel's Chief Rabbi for the Ashkenazim declared it invalid. Reform Jews, however, consider the event to have historic importance, seeing it as an effort to root the movement firmly in Israeli soil. The Reform movement is presently composed mainly of American Jews, but has interested a number of native Israelis who, however, must travel to the United States for ordination to the rabbinate. At the moment there are several Reform rabbis in Israel,

but all have come from America and have not obtained recognition of any of their rights: e.g., marriages performed by them are not recognized as valid, they cannot grant divorces or make conversions. Such rights are the exclusive privileges of orthodox rabbis only.

Late last year, several Reform rabbis married an American-born couple at a kibbutz and managed to get the marriage certificate signed by the orthodox rabbi of Eilat, thereby making it legal, theoretically.

KARAITES IN EGYPT

In its January 20 issue, the New York Times reported that there live in Cairo a small group of Karaites, adherents of a Jewish sect which split with the main body of Jewish believers in the first millenium, who possess the most ancient copy of the Karaite Torah know to exist, a manuscript of 560 pages, beautifully illuminated, written in the ninth century. Modern scholars are very interested in this book, and consider it the best of its genre. The book, admittedly, is in need of extensive repair and restoration, but the Karaites, not without cause, fear to let it leave their control for an instant. It is kept in their synagogue, which is headed by Mr. Barouk Haroun, who leads the community in prayer since the death of their last rabbi in 1957. The Karaites constitute a small congregation in Cairo. Usually only five or six attend Sabbath services, though at times there are ten or more. This is all that remains of a community that numbered more than 5,000 in the '40s; the decline of the Karaite congregation is due to emigration occasioned by circumstances attendant upon the Arab-Israeli wars.

One of the members of the community pointed out that the Torah was written twelve centuries ago in the city of Tiberias, by a scholar by the name of Ben Asher. The title page also records that it took twenty-five years to complete the book.

The group's lawyer, himself a Karaite, stressed that the Karaites "are the real Jews. The difference between us and the others is the Talmud, the book that they use to explain the Torah. We have only the Torah. We do not accept the Talmud."

The famous manuscript is kept in a large safe in the synagogue. The doors of the safe are secured by a heavy metal bar held in place by two padlocks. Two members of the Karaite community hold the keys, and neither can open the safe without the other's key. There is no other security except a 24-hour police guard in front of the synagogue.

There were settlements of Karaites in the Russian Empire, especially in the Crimea, and they were subject to absolutely no restrictions. They were industrious, peaceful people, who kept the Law of Moses in a holy manner.

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The Department of Public & Foreign Relations would like to express its heartfelt thanks for donations made to further the work of our Newsletter from: Archpriest Th. Martynenko, Fr. A Kovalev, Archpriest V. Zheromsky, Archpriest John Legky, Th. Kain, Mr. McNamara, and the Monk Gregory.

The Department of Public & Foreign Relations also wishes to greet all of its readers on the great feast of Holy Pascha and to thank them for sending in interesting material and financial assistance.