

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC & FOREIGN RELATIONS

of the

SYNOD OF BISHOPS

OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

NEWSLETTER #28

January-February, 1980

PERSECUTIONS ON THE INCREASE IN THE SOVIET UNION

The Paris-based, Russian-language newspaper Russian Thought (Russkaya Mysl'), in its January 10 issue, printed an "Open Letter to the General Procurator of the U.S.S.R.", signed by Matushka Iraida G. Yakunina, who recounts therein the particulars concerning the arrest of her husband, Fr. Gleb Yakunin, a priest suspended by the Moscow Patriarchate because of his fearless confession of Orthodoxy. Matushka writes that Fr. Gleb was taken from their apartment by means of deception on November 1, 1979, by agents who, it turned out, could not even produce a warrant for his arrest. When Fr. Gleb, overcome, wished to bid farewell to his children, Novikov, a senior lieutenant in the K.G.B., said: "Why Gleb Pavlovich? We're only taking you for questioning as a witness. You'll soon return." "Thus they led my husband away, and he the father of three children (the eldest daughter is of school age, the son is five years old, and the younger daughter is two). And it was only late in the evening, after many attempts, that I was able to put through a telephone call and found out that Fr. Gleb had been arrested and was in Lefortovo Prison," Matushka writes.

All her attempts to ascertain the reason for the arrest were fruitless; but she did manage to find out that criminal proceedings have been initiated against Fr. Gleb as a traitor to the state.

Immediately following Fr. Gleb's arrest, his house was subjected to a search. All the family's papers and personal correspondence were confiscated, as well as all notebooks, books and pamphlets of a religious nature. Also taken were nineteen icons, a crucifix, and even the spoons of "white metal" which the family used daily.

On November 13, another search was conducted in the house, again without a legal warrant being shown. Matushka complains that during this search her eldest daughter, as well as a girl who was staying in their home as a guest, and she herself were forced to undergo "a degrading personal search. Forced to remove their clothes, their bodies were subjected to a disgraceful exploration." This examination was conducted by a certain woman named Shiryaeva, who shoved Matushka into a little room and both girls into the kitchen, while agents of the K.G.B., alone, without the Yakunins' presence, ransacked their drawers.

Appealing to the Procurator, Matushka demands, on the basis of the law, the release of her husband and the return of their confiscated possessions.

The informational bulletin of the Keston News Service, in its December 13 issue, reports that during one of the searches one of the agents of the K.G.B. injured the eyes of Fr. Gleb's two-year old daughter.

The confiscation of the icons gives cause for fear among people who are acquainted with the matter, that Fr. Gleb will be accused of violating Paragraph

80 of the criminal code, dealing with speculation in valuables. If this assumption is correct, Fr. Gleb may be exiled by the godless for a period of from thirteen to twenty-five years of penal servitude.

As is well known, Fr. Gleb has headed the Christian Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights in the U.S.S.R. However, as reported in the same bulletin of the Keston News Service, the Committee does not remain without leadership. In place of the arrested Fr. Gleb, a new confessor has arisen--Fr. Nikolai Gainov. He is among those who signed an appeal to the Moscow Patriarchate in 1971, calling into question the Orthodoxy of statements of the late Metropolitan Nikodim in the realm of catechesis--statements which were made as a result of his accommodation to the demands of the Soviet regime. For this Fr. Nikolai was removed from his parish and long remained without employment, despite the fact that he has a wife and three small children to support.

Before his own arrest, Fr. Gleb managed to send a letter to England, addressed to the editorial board of the bulletin, informing them that immediately after the publication in "samizdat" of the appeal he signed on behalf of the Committee entitled "To the Russian Orthodox Christians in the Homeland & in Diaspora," his apartment was subjected to a search which lasted for twelve hours. The theme of his appeal to the Russian people was the resolution of the Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia on its planned glorification (canonization) of the New Martyrs of Russia.

Fr. Dimitry Dudko reacted immediately to the arrest of his brave colleague. As early as November 11 he printed a report in his parish bulletin, "In the Light of the Transfiguration," concerning the misfortunes which Fr. Gleb's family was undergoing, and called upon everyone to pray for the "suffering priest Gleb, his matushka Iraida, his school-aged daughter Maria, Alexander (a child of 4-5 years of age), and Anna (aged about two)...(for) he is an ingenuous and ardent man, and has not taken the consequences (of his actions) into account...He is a real martyr. And martyrdom, one must note, is the most powerful apology for Christianity. God help him, his matushka and his children," Fr. Dudko concludes.

Nor have the persecutions left this courageous pastor in peace. He was also arrested after Fr. Gleb. All of his belongings, including books, icons, funds, were confiscated, and his family was cast out onto the streets with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Sakharov, the renowned academician, invited poor matushka to live in his home, but he was himself also arrested and exiled to Gorky (formerly Nizhni-Novgorod). Before his arrest, Fr. Dimitry managed to put through a phone call to his friends in America and to inform them that he expected to be arrested at any moment. On December 20 he wrote a letter to Fr. Victor Potapov (a priest of the Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia) in which he sent Christmas greetings to Archbishop Vitaly of Canada, to two archbishops Anthony (no indication of see), to Fr. Boris Kitsenko and to Archimandrite Vasily (Rodzianko, of the "O.C.A."); and as regards Bishop Gregory and Fr. Alexander Kiselev, he said, "If I cannot write to them separately, let this letter be a collective one." Sadly, Fr. Dimitry did not manage to write anything else.

Continuing his letter to Fr. Victor, Fr. Dimitry wrote: "I had only just finished a letter to you when I received some disquieting news. All throughout Moscow a shuffling of pastors and priests is presently underway. They are sending in replacements that strike terror into the hearts of the parishes. It now becomes comprehensible why the regime has put Fr. Gleb out of the way--so there will be less publicity. They are trying to crush our remaining strength and, what is more lamentable, they are using the hands of the ecclesiastical authorities. A decree has gone out from the Patriarch (Pimen),

signed, however, by Metropolitan Alexis (of Talinn and Estonia), the Steward of the Moscow Patriarchate, which is very obsequious in regard to the Soviet regime. Sound the alarm! Silence and compromise are not tactics, but betrayal! This is beginning to be understood by those who have not hitherto comprehended it, but have loved the Church in some way or other. Forgive my haste. May God keep you. Yours, Priest Dimitry Dudko."

On being informed of the arrests of Fr. Gleb Yakunin and Fr. Dimitry Dudko, the Synod's chancery quickly composed a press release which was sent to all newspapers and magazines which print information on religious events, and also to as many religious information centers as possible. Despite the fact that it has been some weeks since this release was sent out, barely any mention has been made of these confessors for the Faith. Evidently it is not the sort of news that would interest the "free world."

A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF CHURCHES IN ... THE SOVIET UNION?!

In its December 3 issue, Time magazine reports that three of its correspondents visited the western portion of Russia (the Ukraine) and were able not only to stop at a number of churches, but were even allowed to interview Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev and several priests.

The exact number of churches open in the Soviet Union is, apparently, impossible to ascertain. All foreign journalists always give different estimates, usually anywhere from 4,000 to 8,000. This is probably explained by the fact that the Moscow Patriarchate itself gives out very inconsistent figures, possibly because it does not wish to exhibit openly the results of its sixty years of collaboration with godless communism for the "salvation of the Church" by means of compromise. Yet all, including the simple tourists, bear unanimous testimony that the few churches open for the faithful are always literally overflowing with people.

Metropolitan Philaret received the reporters in "his elegant headquarters residence" and told them that the 4,000 churches now in existence are "more or less enough" for the faithful, although the vast cathedral was quite obviously incapable of containing all who had come to pray. Of course, he categorically denied the existence of the Catecomb Church, but had to acknowledge that there are still "old priests and a few people (who follow them)." To the reporters' amazement, he said that "the Soviet state is not an atheistic state. It consists of believers and non-believers. There are periods of strong anti-religious propaganda and others of less."

The reporters also visited a parish located seventy kilometers from Kiev. Its pastor, Fr. Vasily Shtepa, was forced to explain apologetically his parish church's lack of principal icons, saying: "The people are our treasure." In his parish the flock numbers about 5,000.

Igor Sokolov, spokesman for the Council for Religious Affairs, assured the reporters that "The Orthodox Church is completely loyal to the state. It is good that its priests go to a seminary where they see the relationship clearly-- the archbishops on one wall and the Soviet leaders on the other. Without this training, priests might be uneducated village people, perhaps fanatics. It is better this way."

Of course, this is more apparent to Igor Sokolov from his own point of view.

THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE & THE DALAI LAMA

In late June of last year, as the magazine Tibetan Bulletin reports, the Dalai Lama visited the Republic of Mongolia and the Soviet Union. Buddhists greeted him with incense, flowers and banners. For Tibetans and many other Buddhists, the Dalai Lama is an incarnation of a deity.

Although the Dalai Lama underscored the purely religious character of his visit, he nonetheless made several political statements. Thus, at the airport, before his flight to Moscow, the Dalai Lama said: "I see no contradiction between Buddhism and Marxism." He also stated that he has given his blessing to the Tibetan Communist Party which has been organized by Tibetan refugees in India. "I believe in the freedom of Tibet; and if my people choose to live in a Marxist state, I will have no objection."

On arriving in Moscow, the Dalai Lama was warmly greeted by Patriarch Pimen, who organized a festive banquet in his honor and expressed his joy at "His Holiness's" visit to the Soviet Union. The Dalai Lama also visited the Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra, where he was also cordially received in the Moscow Theological Seminary. During the reception, guest and host exchanged information on monastic life in Christian and Buddhist monasteries. The Dalai Lama's entire journey was made in an airplane provided especially for that purpose by the government.

The political interest shown in the pro-communist Dalai Lama by the Soviet government is understandable; but the reception accorded him by the Orthodox Patriarchate can only be understood from the point of view of the servility of the higher ecclesiastical authorities to their atheistic rulers.

THE FATE OF THE OPTINA HERMITAGE

"Religion & Atheism in the Soviet Union," an information bulletin published in Germany, reports in its December issue (12/148) that the Soviet youth are showing an interest in the piety of the elders of Optina and in the monasteries habitually visited by famous authors of the past. This phenomenon is especially in evidence as regards the former Optina Hermitage and the Skete of Shamordino, which are both in lamentable condition. The historical cemetery of Optina Hermitage has been leveled, and a pigsty has been erected over the graves of the monks. The grave of the highly revered Fr. Amvrossy has twice been destroyed, though a small cross has now been erected over it by believers. The authorities have warned, however, that the grave will be totally obliterated should a large cross appear on it. At present, the house where Dostoevsky stayed in the monastery is open, but the church is in utter disrepair. It has long been used as a latrine. The little house where the elder Amvrossy lived is now inhabited by the Obramov family. Visitors ask the Obramovs about the monastery, and especially about the elder Amvrossy, and the authorities, on learning of this, have warned the family that if they do not cease giving out such information, they will be evicted and tried.

THE POPE'S TRIP TO CONSTANTINOPLE

On November 28, 1979, the Pope arrived in Ankara, the Turkish capital, and after a very brief official visit with the president of Turkey, proceeded to Istanbul (Constantinople) to meet with Patriarch Demetrius I.

As reported in the National Catholic Register, the Pope's intention to travel to Constantinople was kept such a strict secret that until the Pope mentioned it publically himself, many resident of the Vatican knew nothing about it.

The Turks accorded the Pope a courteous but somewhat cool reception. The government, fearing tension in connection with events in Iran, arranged a guard of several thousand strong for its illustrious guest. He was met at the airport by the president, but the entire procedure of greeting was so hasty that, as noted by one journalist, the Pope, who had memorized a greeting to the honor guard, was barely allowed the time to say it. Furthermore, all that he did manage to do was the studied and carefully planned gesture of kissing the ground when his plane had landed. Yet one reporter noted, with no little irony, that the "ground" he kissed was in fact the red carpet that had been rolled out to the plane. The press made little mention of the Pope's arrival, and for the populace, consisting as it does of 99% Moslems, it passed almost without notice. The Ankara airport was closed to the public for almost three hours. There was a conspicuous lack of any considerable crowd of people assembling to catch a glimpse of the foreign dignitary, and the police even had to disperse two small groups of student demonstrators. The Turks definitely had nothing to discuss with the Pope, who had come to work out a new union with Constantinople.

Not long before his death in 1978, Pope Paul VI stated that "slowly but surely our two churches are advancing toward complete union." And Patriarch Demetrios, shortly after his election to the see of Constantinople, wrote to the Pope, saying: "The Orthodox Church is ready to break down all the barriers separating the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, with the aim of being able to share the Body and Blood of the Lord together in the same Holy Eucharist." Patriarch Demetrios, however, met at that time with a certain amount of opposition on the part of a small number of Greek bishops who reprimanded him, lest he rightly earn the reputation of a "traitor for Rome."

In the airport in Istanbul, Patriarch Demetrios greeted the Pope in company with his principal advisor, Metropolitan Meliton of Chalcedon. The most important moment of the visit was the presence of the Pope in the patriarchal cathedral for the feast of the Apostle Andrew the First-called. The Pope emphasized continually, both in Italy and Constantinople, that the Apostles Andrew and Peter were brothers, and thus it is nothing out of the ordinary that one "brother" has gone to call on the other.

The Pope stayed in the Italian consulate, and after a short rest went to the patriarchal cathedral of the Holy Greatmartyr George. The press reported that the Patriarch, when informed of the Pope's arrival in the little church's courtyard, rose immediately from his throne and went forth to meet his guest in the center of the courtyard. The Patriarch greeted the Pope with the words: "Welcome, holy brother!" They then embraced each other, their eyes brimming with tears, as the reporters describe it, entered the church and prayed there together for "reconciliation and harmony." Unfortunately, the press has supplied no details of this event, but the film clip of the meeting which was aired on television gives one grounds to suppose that it was a short moleben which was served.

On the second day of his visit to Turkey (Nov. 28), the Pope celebrated mass in the chapel of the Italian consulate. The papal mass was attended by Patriarch Demetrios and the twelve members of his Holy Synod and a large entourage. The Pope delivered an ecumenical sermon in French and stated: "We are on the eve of the opening of theological dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church as a whole...During the second millenium (of Christianity) our Churches were rigid in their separation. Now the third millenium of Christianity is at the gates. May the dawn of this millenium rise on a Church which has full unity once again."

The following day, in a gesture of reciprocity, the Pope went to the pat-

riarchal cathedral. Photographs show the pope at the liturgy vested in his pallium, the ornately embroidered stole quasi-liturgical in function. A correspondent for the New York Daily News reports that the Pope could barely keep his eyes open because of the great length (2½ hours) of the Greek liturgy.

Pope and patriarch also exchanged gifts: the Patriarch presented his heterodox guest with an Orthodox episcopal omophorion, and the Pope gave him a copy of the Czestochowa icon of the Mother of God, known commonly in America as the "Black Madonna." The Czestochowa icon is quite ancient and is attributed to the brush of the Apostle Luke. Catholic newspapers were quick to jump to the conclusion (perhaps a correct one) that the Patriarch's gift of a omophorion was a symbolic acknowledgment of the actuality of the Pope's episcopal orders.

At the conclusion of the service, Patriarch and Pope simultaneously blessed the Orthodox and Catholics present in the church. The newspaper Hellenic Chronicle printed a photograph of the Pope and Patriarch blessing the people. The Patriarch, on leaving the church, had already unvested, while the Pope remained wearing his pallium. The caption beneath the photograph read: "...His Holiness was the first Pope in over 900 years to participate in a Greek Orthodox liturgy."

The National Catholic Reporter, in its December 7 issue, writes: "Years of gestures of charity have now been rewarded. The Orthodox understand symbolic gestures. The time has come for the next stage, the properly theological dialogue... It also means that (the Pope) is prepared to extend a helping hand to Demetrios I: For the unfortunate Patriarch lives in conditions of some poverty and under severe restriction on his freedom of movement. He has not been allowed to accept invitations to visit other Orthodox Churches, notably in Russia and Romania. It would evidently be tactless of John Paul II to lecture the Turkish government on the need for religious liberty. But he can invite Demetrios to return this visit, and it would be difficult to see how the Turkish government could prevent him from going." Thus, herein lies the principle reason for the "love" of the Patriarch for the Pope of Rome! The history of the various "unions" between Constantinople and Rome is being repeated with photographic exactness.

On parting, the Patriarch and Pope made a joint announcement of their formation of a special theological commission consisting of sixty members, approximately thirty on each side. Thirteen autocephalous Churches have already appointed representatives. The Orthodox group is headed by Archbishop Stylianos of Australia; the Catholic group by Cardinal Willebrands. Of all the Orthodox Churches, only the Church of Sinai and, of course, our Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, will not take part in talks concerning union.

In its December 14 issue, the newspaper National Catholic Reporter is quite confident of the immanent possibility of the establishment of a union, considering that now "there are several important differences of method. Now church leaders are involved from the start—and so will themselves be gradually committed to the dialogue. Next, no one is in any hurry—so there will be time for the psychological preparation of the people on both sides. (Emphasis ours.) Thirdly, and most crucial of all, the dialogue will start from points of agreement...rather than from points of divergence."

However, it is possible that the Pope will nonetheless try to hasten the proceedings. Rumors are circulating throughout Rome that in the early '70s the Pope, then Cardinal Wojtyla, visited the late Padre Pio, a Catholic priest famous as a mystic and bearer of the "stigmata", and also gifted with clairvoyance, who foretold to him: "One day, you will be Pope. But your pontificate will be short and will end in bloodshed." The Romans

interpret the intensifying of the Pope's activity as a possible desire to bring his mission of union with the East to a conclusion before his death.

AN INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF RELIGIONS

As reported in the newspaper The Episcopalian, in November of 1979 a meeting of representatives of various religions was held in the home of Baron von Blomberg in Hampton, New Hampshire. The organization, calling itself the International Council of Religions, has as its goal to function as a "United Nations" of religions. This organizational meeting was attended by Jefferson Eastmond, a Mormon bishop, David Hyatt, president of the National Council of Christians and Jews, Dr. Peter Ching, head of the United States Naturalized Citizens' Welfare Association, and others.

Baron von Blomberg, president of the new organization, has for many years been in contact with the leaders of various Eastern and Western faiths.

The meeting set up a program of activity and laid plans for setting up a world headquarters, library and conference center. The International Council of Religions hopes that it will manage to amass an ethical power which would be able to bring force to bear on world problems.

Episcopalian Bishop J. Stuart Wetmore, on opening the organizational meeting, stressed in his address that he was joyously excited by the prospect of forming a "United Nations" of religions.

SCHILLEBEECKX & ROME

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, under whose jurisdiction lies the investigation of heretical teachings of Catholic theologians, summoned the Dominican priest Edward Schillebeeckx, a prominent professor of theology, for an examination of his interpretation of their church's teaching on the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. Schillebeeckx was invited to present his own views.

A secret hearing on the matter was set for mid-December, and it was planned to continue for four days. The New York Times, in its December 14 issue, stressed that such a hearing has been extremely rare in the twentieth century. Rumors have circulated that the investigation of this theologian had not been ordered by the Pope, but by conservatives in the Congregation, who, sensing a new shift in the Vatican's ecclesiastical direction, have taken advantage of the opportunity presented them.

Schillebeeckx had hoped that his hearing would be open and with free debate, but later said that he thought the discussion would be "more like a hearing in which (he would) defend (himself) against certain charges." He stated that his chances of being understood by other theologians were not very great.

The Dominican professor, who has authored a book entitled Jesus: An Experiment in Christology, in fact preaches the Arian heresy. He doubts the fact of the Resurrection of the Savior and His divinity, does not believe in the Virgin birth, doubts that Christ Himself founded the Church, etc. Nonetheless, a multitude of defenders has come to his aid. On December 3, a week before the hearing of the case, the Dutch collected 100,000 signatures, of which 60,000 belonged to rank-and-file Catholics and the rest to representatives of the clergy, Catholic monastic orders, and members of Protestant and Catholic theological schools. Mountains of letters in his defense arrived from Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, France and England. He also received considerable support from 120 American and Canadian theologians, a fact which was especially pleasing to partisans of the modernist theologian. "We can't underestimate the significance of the American support. Rome cannot dismiss American opinion so easily," wrote

the National Catholic Reporter in its December 14 issue.

Time magazine, in its December 24 issue, also mentions the broad-based support accorded Schillebeeckx. Cardinal Willebrands, a member of the Doctrinal Commission and head of the Catholic hierarchy in Holland, also made a public statement in support of the Catholic "theologian." It was expected that Cardinal Willebrands and all his bishops would meet with the Pope in January of this year to decide what to do to pacify the life of Catholicism in Holland.

A recent statistical survey of the Dutch shows that only 47% of the Catholics believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (in 1966 70% of the population believed this).

The Schillebeeckx case is pregnant with unpleasant consequences both for the Dutch episcopate and for Rome, for he is Cardinal Willebrand's foremost theologian and advisor, and was originally to have accompanied him to a session of the synod in Rome. If the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith declares him to be a heretic, it will be very difficult for the Cardinal to take him along as an advisor, and just as difficult to find a replacement of equal calibre. Meanwhile, the Vatican cannot but take into consideration the number and rank of those who have come to his defense, beginning with Cardinal Willebrands himself, who is a very prominent ecumenical figure in his own right.

Questioned by reporters as to how he felt about the possibility of the condemnation of his teachings, Schillebeeckx said that in the event he is condemned, he would obey and would no longer officially preach his "controverted" opinions; but stated further: "I would not change my opinions, because I feel I am within the Catholic Faith, in the continuity of dogmas from Chalcedon on, and I seek only to explain them to people in our time." This is a decidedly peculiar way of expressing one's adherence to the dogma of Chalcedon.

HANS KÜNG & THE VATICAN

Almost simultaneously with the hearing of the case of the modernist Catholic theologian Fr. Edward Schillebeeckx, which has yet to be concluded, the Vatican was taking definite steps against another modernist Catholic, the Swiss theologian Fr. Hans Küng, professor at Tübingen University.

In his case, the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith (which has now replaced the medieval Inquisition) issued an official statement, in accordance with which it was explained to Catholics that Professor Küng, in his writings, has "departed from the integral truth of Catholic faith...(and) therefore, he can no longer be considered a Catholic theologian nor function as such in a teaching role." However, he still remains a functioning priest with full rights.

His case was conducted without his personal appearance, for Küng has repeatedly spurned the Vatican's demand that he explain a number of points of his teaching. Although not in such an explicit form as that of Schillebeeckx, Küng also rejects the Divinity of the Savior and His Virgin birth, and doubts not only the "truth" of papal infallibility, so dear to the heart of the Roman Church, but also the infallibility of the Church as a whole.

The West German episcopate has not followed the example of Cardinal Willebrands, and has shown definite support for the Vatican's resolution which, two days after it was issued, was personally confirmed by the Pope, who had studied the Küng case for a full five hours.

Küng is a prominent ecumenist, and the World Council of Churches is fearful that his removal from his teaching position could have a very adverse

effect on dialogues between Catholics and those of other denominations.

Küng himself was profoundly upset by the Congregation's decision, which he received in Switzerland. He flew immediately to Tübingen and there informed the press: "I am deeply ashamed of my church. Even in the twentieth century it is conducting secret inquisitorial proceedings." He did not miss a chance to point out that he was being tried by the same Congregation which the pope quite recently permitted to acknowledge officially as a mistake the 350-year standing condemnation of Galileo, and stated that he planned "to continue as a Catholic theologian, in the Catholic Church, to be an advocate for numerous Catholics. And I know that I have behind me countless theologians, pastors, religious teachers and lay people in our Church. At the same time, I shall fight in my own church until this disciplinary measure is formally revoked..."

Bishop George Moser, who met with Küng personally, tried to convince him to relinquish his post peacefully and was even not too ready to demand that Hans Küng be removed from his position. Küng, however, paying not the least heed to the Vatican's demands and those of his own bishops, delivered a lecture in the university auditorium, which was attended by several thousand people who accorded him a standing ovation.

The Roman Catholic church's difficulties with Küng began as early as 1977, when it asked him point-blank; "Is Jesus Christ the uncreated, eternal Son of God, consubstantial with the Father?" and "Do you adhere without reserve to the confession of the Church that Jesus Christ is true God and true man?" Küng did not answer directly, but stated that he was writing a new book in which the answers to the questions put to him would be found. As a result of conference between the Pope and Bishop Moser, the latter analyzed the mandate to teach theology in Tübingen University given to Küng nineteen years ago. According to a concordat reached between the German government and the Catholic hierarchy in 1936, an agreement which still remains in effect, a professor of theology in a state university must have the official sanction of his ecclesiastical authorities. This places the administration of the university in a difficult position. Küng has many followers among Catholic liberals and, as the New York Times reports in its December 25 issue, fifty Spanish theologians have expressed their solidarity with him. At the same time, statements supporting Küng arrived from sixty American and Canadian "theologians."

ECUMENISM IN PRACTICE

In its January issue, the magazine Ecumenical Trends reports that, in the State of Virginia, the parish of the Holy Apostles is functioning, the only one in America which is headed by two pastors—one Catholic, one Anglican. Both pastors have concluded contracts with their combined flocks, which were signed not only by the whole parish, but by the bishops of both denominations as well. The fundamental point in the contract is the acknowledgment of the Divinity and manhood of Christ the Savior, and that He established the Sacraments, accepted by both groups, as essential for salvation. However, insofar as both groups realize with regret that complete unity does not yet exist between their confessions, they nonetheless desire to be in close fellowship, and have accordingly drawn up special guidelines for all parishioners, which also received subsequent approval from both bishops.

In the agreement, it is stated that "Baptism is incorporation into the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church," but "...those baptized according to the Roman Catholic ritual will be considered as members of that church, and those baptized according to the ritual of the Episcopal Church will be considered as members of that church. The administration of the sacrament would be proceeded by the appropriate instructions for parents...The

instructions would be handled by the respective co-pastor, and the liturgy would employ either the baptismal rite of the Episcopal Church or that of the Roman Catholic Church... The third Sunday of the month is baptismal Sunday, with the monthly celebrations alternating between the two rites."

The second point of the agreement refers to the eucharist. "Because we respect the integrity of our disciplines, inter-communion is not yet possible. Therefore, on the first Sunday of the month and on the major feast of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, the Word would be shared; then would follow the separate celebration of the eucharist, using two distinct altars. The other Sundays of the month would involve a para-liturgy incorporating the entire community, followed by distinct eucharistic liturgies celebrated in two locations.

Confirmation is to be celebrated over each group individually, but both bishops are to be present simultaneously.

In cases of ordination, each co-pastor will be present in the capacity of ecumenical observer.

As regards marriages, they will be celebrated subject to the wishes of those who wish to enter upon matrimony, and the co-pastor will be present as concelebrant. Only in the case where a couple of different religious loyalties wishes to receive communion would recourse have to be made to the canons concerning the eucharist.

As a corporate entity, both religious bodies have equal rights to the parish property and participate equally in its administration.

THE ANXIETIES OF THE POPE OF ROME

Rome, which with the passing of the centuries has grown into a monolith, has suddenly become aware of clear signs of immanent disintegration. All of sixteen years have gone since the famous Vatican Council II, and Catholicism has become unrecognizable. Liberals who have risen to the top have zealously taken up the dissemination of pernicious ideas, and those theologians like Küng and Schillebeeckx, who were quite moderate at the Council's sessions, have now become proponents of doctrines which undermine the very foundations of Christianity, denying the Divinity of the Savior, His Virgin birth, His Resurrection from the dead, etc. This disintegration has developed with greater force and speed in Holland, where a significant portion of the episcopate has gone over to the modernist position, including the primate of the Dutch Catholic hierarchy, Cardinal Willebrands. The first difficulties were experienced there as early as 1970, when the National Pastoral Council began to exhibit such liberalness in regard to Catholic traditions and catechism, that conservatives were seriously upset. In response to their concern, Pope Paul VI, ignoring the desires of the powerful liberal faction, appointed Adrianus Simonis as bishop of Rotterdam, and Johannes Gijsen as bishop of Roermon, both staunch conservatives. At the same time, the Pope decreed that the National Pastoral Council, which had acquired an inordinate amount of influence, be reduced to a consultative status.

As Newsweek magazine reports in its January 28 issue, Bishop Gijsen zealously set about rooting out liberals, "immediately fired his entire diocesan staff, established his own traditional seminary and publically castigated his fellow bishops for giving too much authority to the laity. In turn, he has repeatedly refused to accept the decisions made by the Dutch hierarchy, saying: 'I am dealing only with the Holy Father in Rome.'" All of this have brought about a crisis in the country, for one part of its hierarchy is continually contradicting the decisions of the other, causing chaos and confusion in the minds of Catholics. Wishing to smooth over

these difficulties, Cardinal Willebrands arranged a meeting of seven Dutch bishops with Pope John Paul II. A hearing on the Dutch problem is also slated for the Roman Synod, which is to study the decrees of Vatican II in their application to local conditions. It is expected that at this Synod, which has become conservative under the new Pope, the two Dutch conservative bishops will receive support.

However, the adoption of a new, conservative line has not been going very smoothly for the Vatican. While recent sessions were being held, groups of demonstrators marched in the square waving placards bearing such slogans as : "Synod Equals Repression!", "Wojtyla Go Home!", and "Wojtyla Equals Khomeini!" Time magazine noted that the personal attendance of the Pope at sessions dealing with Holland is considered without precedent and emphasizes the importance and complexity of the problem. World War II united Catholics and Protestants in that country, where the former comprised 40% of the population. The traits of the denominations began to be felt less strongly. The reforms of the Vatican Council advanced the spirit of innovation, and under the direction of the episcopate the "catechism for adults" was published, in which the Savior's birth from the Virgin was denied. Ecumenism has also played a great role, and Catholic and Protestant parishes have begun to give communion to each other. Priests who decided to marry were accepted with their wives by parishes and expressed no intention to renounce their positions, despite disapproval of their behavior by the bishops. Personal confession all but disappeared in favor of infrequent, general confession. In the course of ten years, 4,300 monastics forsook their monasteries in tiny Holland, and 1,700 priests renounced their orders. Meanwhile, only fifteen candidates for the priesthood were ordained in 1978.

This is something to which the Pope should give much thought, considering talk in Holland of the possibility of going into a schism on the model of the Anglicans' under Henry VIII.

Yet, as the newspaper Daily News reports in its January 24 issue, the Pope has managed to obtain the agreement of the Dutch hierarchy that seminarians study in seminaries and not in secular institutions of higher education, and that Catholic priests will, as before, be celibate. The Dutch also had to accept the Pope's public affirmation that there could be no ordination of women.

THE GREEK BIBLE IN DANGER

The United Bible Society reports in its bulletin (#84) that in September of last year, in accordance with a previously arranged plan, two meetings of its representatives were held with delegates from the Greek Orthodox Church in Athens and on the island of Crete.

The informational bulletin stresses the importance of this historic occasion and says that the path to this meeting between Orthodox and evangelicals was strewn with many obstacles, which were caused on the one hand by distrust (not without justification, we might add) of aggressive Protestant propaganda among the Orthodox, and on the other hand with the prevalent opinion among Protestants that Orthodoxy is a "ritualistic and magical shadow of the Biblical truth."

"We came from these meetings with the feeling that doors were opened for an intensified service of the Bible Society in Greece—and possibly one day of the Bible Societies in other countries with a strong Orthodox tradition—to the Orthodox Christians."

A particularly important role in this fresh betrayal was played by Dr. Savvas Agorides, a professor of the theological faculty of the University of Athens.

AN ECUMENICAL BIBLE

In its #15 issue, the Herald of the Western European Diocese included a note from Fr. A. Trubnikov, warning the Orthodox against using the so-called Ecumenical Bible which was published in 1975, and on the translation of which, apparently, several Orthodox scholars participated.

Fr. Alexander reports that when this Bible appeared, he did not pay it any particular attention, for it was notable for being of an unwieldy size, awkward format and, furthermore, was so expensive that there was no talk of its wide circulation. However, in September of 1979 the same Bible came out in a pocket-sized edition, externally very attractive in its printing, being furnished with a great many illustrations and appendices.

Fr. Alexander therefore considers it "his pastoral duty to warn Orthodox readers...about this edition which contains not merely simple variant readings, but translations which distort the basics of our Faith." For example, the verse in the prophecy of Isaiah; "Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bare a Son" (14:7) is altered in the Ecumenical Bible, where the word "Virgin" is translated as "young woman."

Ecumenists are not happy with Orthodox fasting, which has existed since the foundation of the Church. In the passages in the Bible where the word "fast" is encountered, the compilers have inserted asterisks which refer to an glossary of misunderstood words and terms, as Fr. Alexander explains: "It says in the glossary that the Jews practiced fasting for religious reasons, that the Pharisees fasted twice a week, and that Christ rose up against the formalism of this practice, though it is true that the first Christian societies resorted to fasting in certain circumstances."

Fr. Alexander is quite correct in calling upon Orthodox readers to refrain from using this edition of the Bible, for they have no moral right to support it with their money. We may say the same in America. The number of falsifications of the Holy Bible is increasing with catastrophic rapidity in all languages, and one can now recommend only that the Orthodox seek out older versions for their use, avoiding the "new translations" of this Book of Books.

* + * + * + * + * + * + * + * + * + * + * + * + * + * + * + * + * + * + *

The Department of Public & Foreign Relations of the Synod of Bishops wishes gratefully to acknowledge the generous donations received from: Fr. Zheromsky, Archimandrite Theophan, Mr. McNamara, and Mr. Golovach.

Due to the increased costs of producing and mailing our Newsletter, we would like to take this opportunity to request our readers urgently to send donations to assure the continued publication of what we hope is a valuable source of information for the Orthodox Christian.