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*With the Nativity of Christ  
and the New Year*

*Church News extends heartfelt greetings to its readers on the Feast  
and wishes them all the best during the coming New Year!*

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CHRISTMAS EPISTLE OF METROPOLITAN VITALY  
First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad

Christ is born; exalt Him!

I congratulate you all, the children of our Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, in diaspora and in the vastness of our homeland on the great Holy Day of the Nativity of Christ.

Every great holiday always deeply affects our way of life, our daily life, revives and sanctifies it. Even a children's Christmas tree and especially the exchange of gifts and greetings, transform us all in their celebration. The Christmas fast ends with a very strict day. On Christmas eve no one eats any food until the first star is visible and only then, only strictly fasting food, such as kutia and cooked fruits are consumed. After that all go to church dressed in their best garments.

I want to direct your spiritual gaze to the mystical essence of this holiday. Among us is being born the absolutely unusually holy, holiest among all the saints, our Lord, Jesus Christ the God-man. A human being, like all of us, but sinless and God in order to carry us along with Him into the God's Kingdom and make us gods, as King David speaks us: "ye are gods..." This is the spiritual essence of this holiday, its mystery. Thus did our saints profoundly understand this essence and devoted their entire lives to approximating the image of Christ of Nazareth with their whole being. Anthony the Great, Makarios the Great, and our Russian saints, righteous Sergius of Radonezh, Seraphim of Sarov, righteous John of Kronstadt and a countless host of known and unknown righteous people themselves became righteous and wonderworkers.

May the Lord help us to walk on the path of moving toward the God-man Christ the Saviour as much as it is possible for each one of us. We do not have to walk on water, make bread from stone and turn a snake into a fish; all we need is the grace of God Holy Spirit to direct our mind, our heart and our will.

I wish unto you all this Gift, because I know of no greater Gift. Amen.

Metropolitan Vitaly

CHRISTMAS EPISTLE OF HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP VALENTIN OF SUZDAL AND VLADIMIR  
TO ALL FAITHFUL CHILDREN OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

"Christ is born: exalt him! Christ from heaven: go to meet him! Christ on earth: be ye lifted up!  
Sing unto the Lord, all the earth, and praise him in song with joy. O ye people: for He  
hath glorified Himself."

Today the holy Orthodox Church solemnly and brightly celebrates what is the incomprehensible for the human mind: the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God and Son of Man, our Lord Jesus Christ from the All-pure Virgin Mary in the city of David, Bethlehem, during reign of King Herod (Mt. 2: 1)

One does not know with which words and which exaltations one can spread the news of the day of Christ's Nativity. At such an celebration human words are powerless to glorify God. If Christ at His birth was praised by the angels' lips, the more now, when He reigns, is it difficult to praise Him with human lips.

The holy day of Christ's Nativity today is much more superior today now than in those old days: then angels and people were just amazed at the birth of the God-Child Christ, but today, when we know not only about His birth, but also His suffering, shameful death, glorious Resurrection, wonderful Ascension and being seated at right hand of God the Father and about His second victorious coming, which we hope will be soon, then our rejoicing should be even stronger, because we happen to be not only the witnesses of all this, but also co-participants in our salvation.

Shepherds knew sooner than princes of this world about the birth of the God-Child Christ and the salvation of the world and angels manifested this not to kings and judges, but to simple people, shepherds. That is why we should not wonder that the innocent have been deemed worthy to find out about Christ's grace before the powerful, simple people before proud sovereigns.

What became known to shepherds, princes could not know (1 Cor. 2: 8).

With the birth of the God-Child Christ we have received the fullness of God's love and our fallen nature, according to the depth of our understanding of this, becomes reestablished in a superior grade of honor and dignity which were lost in Eden by our forefathers.

While rejoicing about the birth of the God-Child Christ, let us hurry, O beloved in Lord, to glorify Him with the church's hymn: "Christ is born: exalt him! Christ from heaven: go to meet him! Christ on earth: be ye lifted up! Sing unto the Lord, all the earth, and praise him in song with joy. O ye people: for He hath glorified Himself."

After living through seventy years of captivity by atheists, its revulsions, the fruits of which we feel even now, let them not lead us to despair and anger, but let us purify our senses and in the depths of our Orthodox consciousness with all our being approach the newly born Christ and with enthusiasm in our hearts, let us glorify His birth and pray Him to help us be delivered from this diabolical nightmare which has ruled for the lifetimes of several generations.

In these difficult and sorrowful times, when many of our compatriots live below the poverty line and often are lacking even bread, when hearts are hardened, when there is not only no heat in many houses, but there are absent even good human relations, I ask you, my beloved brothers and sisters in Lord to accept my greetings on the holy day of the Nativity of Christ and the approaching New Year with wishes for a grace-filled peace, love for each other, patience, wisdom, humility, generosity and zeal for the truth of holy Orthodoxy.

May everyone leap on high spiritually and direct his steps not to building a Babylonian tower of human pride and sin, but to building God's house in his soul for eternal life in Christ Jesus. May He Who was born in Bethlehem and laid in a manger, the God-Child Christ, protect you from all temptations and send you His great mercy of goodness and love.

With love in Jesus Christ,

1998/1999 C. Suzdal

the humble + A. Valentin, Archbishop of Suzdal and Vladimir

## THE TRANSLATION OF THE COFFIN OF METROPOLITAN PHILARET

On Saturday, November 8/21 on the 13th anniversary of repose of the third First Hierarch of the ROCOR, at 3 PM the translation took place of his coffin from the crypt of the cemetery chapel of Holy Trinity Monastery to a recently prepared final resting place under the monastery's cathedral church. Next to the new addition to cathedral, there is a resting place of the second First Hierarch of the ROCOR, Metropolitan Anastassy

In order to avoid any possible surprises during the translation of the coffin to another location, Archbishop Laurus, in presence of several clerics, including the deputy Abbot of the Holy Trinity Monastery, Archimandrite Luke, decided to open the coffin after it was removed from the immured burial vault several days previously. Immediately after the coffin was opened, the clergy present at this event took a number of photographs before the remains were cleaned of dust and a bit of cobweb. Then, Archbishop Laurus sealed the coffin and let it stand for a few days, until Friday November 7/20.

When Metropolitan Philaret's coffin was opened it was discovered that his body is totally incorrupt. When the dust was removed, it became obvious that also the vestments of the Metropolitan look as if they had been just put on. Even the paper with an absolution prayer in his hand, as well as the Gospel which was lay on his chest also suffered no changes. His mandia, which covered the coffin was found to be in perfect order, just dusty. The color of his face and hands darkened a bit only after they were washed with rose water and wine. His legs, also uncovered, but not washed, retained their natural color.

News of the incorruption of the beloved and respected Archpastor spread like lightning. The spread of this news was also helped by official information, given by the Synod's chancellery on the Internet

The previous plans for translating the coffin called it to be carried in a church procession, but then it started to rain and Archbishop Laurus ordered the coffin be brought by car. On Friday, exactly at 3 PM the sound of the huge bell from the bell tower of the monastery was heard and in about 10 minutes the car with the Metropolitan's coffin arrived at the entrance to the cathedral. Met by clergy and the monastery brotherhood, the coffin was carried into the church while singing irmos "A help and refuge hath salvation become to me" and right after a panikhida was begun. It was presided over by Archbishop Laurus with some 10 concelebrating priests and 6 deacons and protodeacons. In the church there were some 200 hundred people. After the panikhida, the coffin was moved near the wall and at 7 PM a vigil service began.

Already knowing of the incorruption of Metropolitan Philaret, a number of clergy and lay people insistently urged Archbishop Laurus to open the coffin for these 24 hours, but he categorically refused, claiming that he had no blessing for it from his superior and that he already sent his report to Metropolitan Vitaly. At the same time it became known that Archbishop Laurus categorically forbade any copies be made of the existing photographs and even that they be shown to anyone.

The next day, on Saturday, November 8/21 the Divine Liturgy was served for the feast of St. Michael, the Archangel. Bishop Gabriel, who intended to participate, unexpectedly fell ill and because of a high fever could not attend. Eighteen priests participated in the Liturgy, 11 deacons and protodeacons while a number of priests came to Liturgy, but prayed among the lay people in the cathedral. This service was attended by some 400 people.

During the communion of the clergy, Protopresbyter Valery Lukianov delivered an excellent homily in which he outlined a spiritual portrait of the reposed First Hierarch.

After the end of Liturgy at which communion was given from two chalices and before a panikhida, Archbishop Laurus said that finally, after waiting for 13 years, the additional crypt had been built for the Metropolitan's coffin and that he himself and the Synod of Bishops received numerous and insistent requests to bury finally the remnants of Metropolitan Philaret. Archbishop Laurus also at great length explained why he refused the wish of clergy and lay people to keep the coffin open, and he had to admit, that his refusal "was a cause for disappointment and sadness." He repeated again that he had sent a report to Metropolitan Vitaly and now, it is all up to the Synod's decision as to how to respond to the incorruption of Metropolitan Philaret. At the end of his sermon, Archbishop Laurus called upon the faithful to not so much concentrate on this event, but to pray for the Metropolitan and also to him until the will of God becomes obvious. A majority of clergy and faithful were at a loss regarding the absence at this feast of Metropolitan Vitaly, who

only a year ago disappointed all by his absence from the funeral of Jose, the guardian of the myrrh-gushing icon, whose body was also found to be incorrupt. Yet, the absence of the Metropolitan and also other Archpastors at such a solemn occasion as a translation of incorrupt relics of a former First Hierarch, could not dampen the festive mood of all the participants. After the end of the panikhida, the coffin with the Metropolitan's relics was carried in a church procession around the cathedral and after a short litia put in the crypt permanently, while a marble sarcophagus is made.

The translation of the Metropolitan's coffin concluded with a memorial trapeza, offered by the monastery's brotherhood. The trapeza included several rooms due to the number of people to be seated.

While a very young archimandrite in Kharbin, Metropolitan Philaret was absolutely irreconcilable toward the Moscow Patriarchate. Even then, when influenced by the propaganda of Soviet hierarchs in the 40's during the occupation of the Far East by the Red Army the entire episcopate acknowledged the Moscow Patriarchate (including Archbishop John of Shanghai) and his own father, Bishop Dimitri of Hailar together with other hierarchs repatriated to USSR - only Archimandrite Philaret in his eloquent and forceful sermons spoke of the lies of the MP and even refused to serve molebens for those who were to be repatriated. On several occasions he was summoned for interrogations (at one of them he was even beaten), and then an effort was made to kill him: a house in which he lived was set on fire and windows and doors of the ground floor were blocked. Fr. Philaret managed to escape by jumping from the window of the second floor, while rather severely burned. As a result of these burns, until the end he suffered a slight disfiguration of the lower part of his face and some bending of his head. His vocal cords also suffered.

The reposed Metropolitan very much respected Metropolitan Anthony, corresponded with him and was his true disciple, agreeing with all his views and convictions.

In connection with the revealed incorruption of Metropolitan Philaret, it is proper to inform our readers about another case, which probably is not known even now.

When Metropolitan Anthony died in Sremski Karlovci and had no money at all, Patriarch Varnava called the Secretary of the Synod of the ROCOR (at that time Count George Grabbe) and asked him to purchase the best and most expensive coffin he could find. Karlovci is a small town and as it became known later, the very best and expensive coffin had slits in the bottom. The funeral service for Metropolitan Anthony was conducted in the patriarchal cathedral in Belgrade. For this occasion the Yugoslavian government gave all their Russian employees time off. The Belgrade cemetery which had a very big Russian section (in which was an enlarged copy of the chapel of Iveron in Moscow) and where Metropolitan willed to be buried, was on the outskirts of the capital. The Metropolitan's coffin was brought to the gates of cemetery by the car and, then, to the church carried by the clergy. At that moment it 2 priests noted that a mixture of oil and wine had leaked onto their shoulders (Metropolitan received the sacrament of oil).

About some two years after the burial of Metropolitan Anthony it was discovered that there was underground water in the crypt. The sarcophagus had to be pulled apart and the coffin lifted out in order to be able to work. Archimandrite Theodossy was present, a faithful servant and friend of Metropolitan. When the marble part of the sarcophagus was removed, it was obvious that the coffin looked as if it had just been put in. According to an admission of Father Theodossy, he badly wanted to open the lid of coffin, but he did not dare to. The workers noticed his emotions and started asking questions about who the deceased was to him and when he died. When they found out that the Metropolitan had died some two years previously, the workers were astonished and said that after such a period of time they normally could not work without masks and when they found out that this was a bishop they piously crossed themselves and declared that, undoubtedly, this must have been a saintly man.

It is also interesting to note that Metropolitan Anastassy was buried on the fifth day after his repose in a warm period at the end of May. The funeral home attendants at that time asked what must be done in the Orthodox Church to have no change in the appearance of Metropolitan Anastassy and no odor. They were told that there must be a pious life.

Unfortunately, spiteful people spread rumors that both Metropolitans Anastassy and Philaret were embalmed. At present time there are still many witnesses alive who participated in the organization of the funerals of both First Hierarchs who know that the procedure for both Metropolitans was the same as for every Orthodox clergyman: after repose, their bodies are washed and vested by clergy who themselves lay them into coffins. In both cases, the funeral directories delivered the coffins to the Synod of Bishops and entire participation of those funeral homes was limited only to delivering the coffins from New York to Jordanville.

The Deputy Secretary of the Synod of Bishops, His Grace Bishop Gabriel, regarding this false information issued an official statement, categorically denying the possibility of embalming.

In reporting this event in the life of the ROCOR, a bulletin published in St. Petersburg in issue # 11(44) noted not without reason that "recently we were informed from Jordanville that the relics of Metropolitan Philaret were again lowered into grave and given up to the soil, which evokes at the very least bewilderment."

## A FALL OF METROPOLITAN VITALY

On Tuesday, November 11/24th, while walking on a street near the building of the Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR, Metropolitan Vitaly slipped on the sidewalk face down and at that broke his right shoulder and collar bone.

Metropolitan Vitaly was immediately brought to the nearest city hospital where he was treated. Vladyka already has returned from the hospital and is on his way to a full recovery. Unfortunately, a fall which results in broken bones at his age will require a substantial time to heal.

#### ABOUT RUSSIAN CHURCH PROPERTY IN GERMANY AND ITALY

The newspaper "Izvestiya" (Information) on November 26th published an article entitled "What about the bells toll in Dresden of Nazi times." In it there are very sadly described the emotions and difficulties of members of the Moscow Patriarchate parish, which by some means managed to seize their church of St. Symeno Divnogorets in Dresden.

According to a ruling of the German supreme court, the MP has to return this church to the ROCOR, based on the law which was passed by German government in 1938, called "On real estate of the Russian Orthodox Church in Germany."

The newspaper states that "the 'head of the Zarubezhniki' (a derogatory term for members of the Church Abroad) Archbishop Mark demands that he be given the keys 'in a polite manner' this property be cleared by Christmas or he threatens to send court officials to impose the eviction 'according to proper orders', and suggests the parishioners pray in a gymnasium."

The representatives of the MP started to fuss, began to write petitions to the prime minister of Saxonia, St. Daniel Monastery, the Patriarch, the Russian President and Duma, but, as the aggressors lament, "the higher authorities avoid answering," and Archbishop of Berlin and Germany Theophan, who "vigorously defends the interests of the Mother Church, even he quivered and appealed to parishioners to accept the loss and submit to the inevitable."

It is self evident that in the opinion of the newspaper "the 'Karlovcane' faithfully served Hitler and proved their loyalty to him, fully supporting his march toward 'the east.' Goebbels' ministry of propoganda in Berlin built for them with its own money a cathedral and handed the keys to Metropolitan Anastassy." Of course, a quotation is made from the thank you address to the head of the German government, Hitler, signed by Metropolitan Anastassy

In these less than four lines there is a lie in almost every word.

Indeed, the march toward 'east' was not only supported by the Synod of Bishops, but Metropolitan Anastassy officially and solemnly blessed volunteer troops to fight Communism. At that time, the Russian patriots and Germans regarding the "east" had quite different goals: the Germans who at the beginning declared that they started the war against Communism and not the Russian people, as it became clear some time later, actually intended to conquer Russia, while the Russian patriots were seeking her liberation from Communism. After permitting to organize volunteer anti-Communist Russian troops, Germans at the beginning promised that they would be sent to the Russian front, but eventually did not keep their word and used these troops against Communists, but in Yugoslavia. The Russian emigration of that time gave 5 full regiments. To fight Communism every one available went, teenage boys tried to speak with low voices to be recruited and old officers of Tsarist times, including some generals, did not hesitate to put on a private's uniform or, being in advanced years to serve at general staff quarters. It was just for this fight that Metropolitan Anastassy blessed the volunteer troops. The Germans did not trust him and he was even arrested by them and Synod's office searched resulting in the removal of many documents.

And regarding the building of the cathedral, this is also a lot of lies.

As we have already written to the newspaper "Rus Pravoslavnyaya" ("Orthodox Russia") [# 6/12, 98] regarding this building in Berlin, "Archbishop Tikhon of Berlin of the Church Abroad decided to build an apartment house with the church, so that income would support the parish priest. The building contractors turned out to be dishonest. There was no way to complete this building, and Archbishop Tikhon was retired for not being vigilant enough. Yet, the Labor ministry became interested in this almost completed building and it was sold to them, but at a loss to the diocese. Probably to prepare the masses for military action against the USSR. Hitler released quite reliable information about the persecution of the Church in Russia and the destruction of a multitude of churches and monasteries. Keeping this in mind and fearing the possibility that actions of the German government might be associated with persecution of the Church by Stalin - the Germans thought at that time to give the appearance of a government which also persecuted the Church, was not profitable for them. Therefore, the German authorities in Berlin (instead of our unfinished house) - gave a plot in a very good section of Berlin in its center and also made a substantial donation for a building. Yet, as a base, there still was our church funds. It is quite natural, that the Church Abroad was grateful to the head of the government, no matter what his name, even more, since we were not asked for anything and there were no demand for anything, the official gratitude of Metropolitan Anastassy, therefore, was an act of elementary politeness for help in building the cathedral and nothing more."

It is self-evident that no one ever presented Metropolitan Anastassy with the keys.

Unfortunately, when the Metropolitan arrived in Germany to consecrate the cathedral it became clear that the speech, prepared by the president of the Russian community (which the Metropolitan did not like because of its bombast) could not possibly be replaced for practical reasons: a copy had already been sent to the Ministry of the Interior.

All the criticisms of this address deliberately avoid mentioning that at that time Hitler had not revealed himself in any negative way. The consecration of this cathedral turned out to be an pan-Orthodox celebration, since it was the very first cathedral in German capital and Synod of Bishops at that time received a number of congratulations from many autocephalous Churches and some of them sent representatives to participate in this celebration which was considered to be of immense importance.

It is also a lie that "in those years many representatives of the Russian emigration, including several Orthodox churches, turned away from the 'Karlovchane' ", which ones, of course, are not mentioned by the paper.

"Izvestiya" is especially concerned that the law of 1938 have no unfortunate results for the Patriarchate since Molotov in 1935 clearly declared that the Soviet government is not at all interested in property (in particular a church in Baden Baden) and was not claiming it. By the way, the German diocese had a litigation with MP just for the church in Baden Baden. "What should one say," laments the newspaper. "At that time Moscow did not show enough farsightedness and did not care about state property outside Russia"

It is nice to note that in this case of the Dresden church, Archbishop Mark definitely has defended the property of the ROCOR from the MP.

Simultaneously with the difficulties in wrestling with the MP in Germany, they also developed in Italy.

The bulletin "Vertograd Inform" in issue # 11(44) published information entitled "The authorities of Italian City of Bari illegally handed over to the MP the Church of St. Nicholas."

Persistent rumors circulated long ago about the possibility of such a hand-over and we decided to get information from one of the clergy of the West European diocese in whose jurisdiction is this church. At the present time the situation is as follows:

The two-story church and the building attached to this church were property of the Orthodox Palestine Society. After the Revolution in Russia, the OPS was not able to maintain this property adequately and it was handed over to the municipal authorities and the ROCOR parish has been renting these facilities.

At present the upper church is undergoing a total renovation, done by the city, but the lower church is still occupied by a clergyman of the ROCOR. Bishop Ambrose of Vevey went to serve there on the feast of St. Nicholas. He will stay a few more days in Bari in order to meet with the local government of this city in order to counter the attacks of the MP.

Metropolitan Cyril Goundiayev indeed visited Bari and obtained a provisional agreement to use this property. Yet, until now, there was NO decision on part of the city council, so one can say that the threat of a hand-over does hang in the air, but the hand-over itself, as such, so far has not materialized. Our parish has one important advantage: the length of our stay in this church.

#### ECUMENICAL UNION OF ORTHODOX YOUTH IN GERMANY

The bulletin "Vertograd Inform" in issue # 11 (44) relates that in Germany there was established the Union of Orthodox Youth. The first meeting was held in a Serbian parish in Germany in this new organization. Representatives of the Ecumenist "Churches" participated as well as members of the ROCOR. A professor of Münster University Dr. Kallis was elected president of this Committee. A very important role in this has been played by a priest of Antiochian Patriarchate (the most modern of all the present Patriarchates) Rev. Elias Esber.

Participants of this youth organization hope to unite all the Orthodox in Germany, regardless of nationality. To achieve this they will organize festivals and seminars with intensive cultural and religious programs.

The bulletin quite correctly notes that "In this way, the German diocese of the ROCOR made one more step toward integration with 'world Orthodoxy' in which, as it was mentioned by one of the initiators of the Union of Orthodox Youth, there is no room for 'fundamentalists', which means zealots of Orthodoxy, but there is room for 'for ecumenical contacts with other Churches'."

The participation of young parish members of the ROCOR certainly would not take occur were Archbishop Mark indeed to oppose it. Is not the truth being sold out by silence in this case?

#### FROM LIFE OF THE FREE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Archpastoral Visits to Parishes by Archbishop Valentin of Suzdal and Vladimir

From November 3 through 8 the Archbishop of Suzdal and Vladimir, Valentin, visited several parishes of the Russian Free Russian Orthodox Church in the Caucasus and Ukraine.

On November 3rd Vladyka served a vigil service and Liturgy in the parish of the Holy Virgin of Kazan in stanitsa (a large Cossack village) Otradnaya, of the Krasnodar Region.

On November 5th and 6th Archbishop Valentin served in the Church of St. Olga, Equal to the Apostles, in the city of Zheleznovodsk, where two brothers, Fathers Roman and George Novakovsky, are priests.

On the 6th and 7th Vladyka served in the Church of the Apostles Peter and Paul in village Sovietka, in Rostov Region.

On the 7th and 8th in the Church of Blessed Xenia of Petersburg in city of Sukhodolsk, Lugansk Region in Ukraine.

As reported by Deacon Fr. Serge Slonov, "In all the churches which Archbishop Valentin had visited, he was happy to note that in spite of financial difficulties and a lot of problems, the clergy as well as parishioners are working hard on building or restoring the churches

Following the Orthodox tradition, Archbishop Valentin left a donation to help in the restoration of churches and asked for holy prayers for donors.

On one of his trips, Vladyka Valentin met with a Catacomb bishop, a true podvizhnik, man of prayer and a writer. May the Lord preserve him and his flock for many years.

During this trip to southern parishes it was noticed that for a few days prior to the Archbishop's arrival in a certain parish, special talks by 'zealots of Orthodoxy' from the MP were broadcast on the local TV, who from the TV screens appealed to the faithful not to attend the services in 'the sectarian American church'. In every way they could, they were 'with brotherly love' sowing disagreements and discord among the faithful by threatening them with anathemas.

And still, in spite of threats and anathemas, people crowded into the churches and in private conversations were relating about 'miracles and podvigs' of local MP clergy."

#### Bishop Theodore's Trip to England

On the altar feast of the Church of St. Michael the Archangel in Guilford on November 8/21, the vigil service and Liturgy were served by Bishop Theodore who concelebrated with Priest Nicholas Novoselov. Prayerful singing of the choir was conducted by Reader Vladimir Moss, a well known religious writer. Services were conducted in church Slavonic and English.

It was evident that the Guilford community is closely knit and this is due to the efforts of Moss's wife, the ones who established it. Many parish members experienced spiritual difficulties in their search for the faith, until they found it in Orthodoxy.

While staying in England, Bishop Theodore and his companion, were acquainted through Reader Moss with the past Orthodox history of England, about which little is known. In his company the guests visited a number of holy and historical place of this country.

The visitors were very much impressed by the city of Glastonbury, a site of the life and podvigs of the holy Apostle Christobulus and St. Joseph of Arimathea. In this place are remnants of the first church and house in which St. Joseph lived.

In Medieval times there was built here a large church and a monastery. Now it is all in ruins, but the place of the church and St. Joseph's house are still visible. There is also preserved a wondrous tree, once the walking staff of St. Joseph which grew into a tree. This tree blooms twice a year, in May and in December, but always by the day of Orthodox Christmas.

#### ABOUT THE NEVSKY ASSEMBLY OF THE LAND

The newspaper "Russkii Vestnik" ("Russian Herald") in issue # 43 (385) reports that in St. Petersburg there was held an Assembly of the Land, which met on November 8th and 9th and was chaired by Professor Viacheslav Klykov. The "Approved Declaration" of this Assembly states that it is issued in the name of "the Assembly's representation" which includes "The local heads of the Russian Counciliar Movement, elected with 1 representative of the Land". This Council was represented by delegates of various regions and all their resolutions deserve full approval and support. "The Approved Deed" begins with the words: "We, gathered in the God-preserved city of St. Petersburg from cities and all Northwestern Russia: Novgorod, Pskov, Tver, Smolensk, Riazan, Ivanov, Vladimir, Penza, Vologod, Archangelsk, Murmansk, Kaluga, Tula Regions, the Republic of Karelia and the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg, after receiving Communion of Christ's Holy Mysteries, before the Life-giving Cross of the Lord, before the icon of His All-pure Mother - in one conciliar Spirit do declare:..."

The main theme of all of those decisions is that Russia has to repent of the sins of breaking the oath, tsar's murder and apostasy from the faith and return to her ideal historical way, reflected in motto: Faith, Tsar and Fatherland or: Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality.

The Assembly petitioned the Patriarch to bless bishops and priests to participate in this Assembly to which the MP chancellery, in the person of Archbishop Arseny of Istrina (the Patriarch's vicar) informed the organizers that Ridiger made the following resolution on their petition: "23/10/1998. May the Lord's help accompany your intentions." A resolution which say absolutely nothing and is very evasive in character. Yet, the Assembly received a full support from a number of the most important monasteries of Russia.

The newspaper reports that just a few days before the opening of this Assembly, myrrh started to gush from the icon of the Holy Virgin the Sovereign, which was made the patron of this Assembly. This icon was discovered on day of abdication of Tsar Nicholas on March 2nd and ever since has been very much venerated by the faithful. In the Communist era it was especially dangerous to have this icon in one's home.

The Council made a number of appeals, starting with one to the Synod of the MP, and then to the Russian people, the leaders of the political parties, to the General Assembly of the UN, and the International Court. In this one last appeal are listed all the crimes committed by Western governments against Russia, starting with 1917, when the so-called "Allies" (especially France and England) consciously turned traitor and let Russia to be torn aside by the godless Communists.

At the same time the Council approached the Moscow Patriarch with a petition to permit in St. Petersburg a local veneration of the Tsar Martyr, Paul the First.

Even in peaceful times in Russia numerous cases were known of miraculous help following the serving of a panikhida at the grave of Tsar Paul. Those cases were so numerous that guards from Paul's regiment were congratulated those who left church after serving such a panikhida with the greeting "May your wish be fulfilled." To this martyred tsar the people would turn when in need of help in cases of administrative injustice, impossibility of putting their children in a state run schools or a simple judicial error.

One would hope that these published resolutions and decrees by the Assembly would become widely known and will reach not only the minds but also the hearts of the Russian people.

### A NEW BLASPHEMOUS "BIBLE"

In England a new version of Holy Bible in a comic book form was just recently published and the same is due to be published in America next year.

According to information from the "Ecumenical News International" of November 4, the 'Bible' of 256 pages was favorably received not only by the general public, but also the clergy. British TV reports that the new "Bible" is meant to satisfy the lovers of comics and also church going Christians.

Peter Ward, the Archbishop of Canterbury's advisor for youth ministry showed special enthusiasm. "The Bible crammed into speech bubbles? It's a crazy idea -- and it really works. This is a quality job. Kids who might never read a book are going to enjoy it and get lots out of it. The Lion Graphic Bible makes the people of the Bible come alive."

The publisher of this blasphemous "Bible" is very excited by its tremendous success. His book is printed in color, the pictures are so good that they will appeal to adults and children alike and, the main thing, it is already a best seller!

Mike Maddox, who authored the text for pictures, claims that before he started to write, he studied a number of various Bible translations, because "it is a big responsibility. You can give a wrong message about God if you leave out something." Nevertheless, in this book, which some have the audacity to call a Bible, there was a lot of episodes taken out. In his opinion, the story about the slaughter of the Canaanites by the Israelites is too short, while the story of cities Sodom and Gomorrah are totally left out. In this information it is said with satisfaction that there "no intimate scene is sown" in the adulterous story of the Prophet David and Bathsheba."

Such now has become the Word of God for contemporary "Christians" instead of the original Holy Scripture.

### PREPARATIONS OF "CHRISTIANS" ON THE EVE OF THE 2ND MILLENNIUM OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY

The same bulletin, but of October 21, reports that in England in connection with preparations for the celebration of the 2nd millennium of Christianity, there are notable difficulties in the relations between Evangelicals and Anglicans. Yet they unanimously accepted a resolution which is to be proclaimed on December 31 of 1999 during the "Millennium Moment" which the name of God and in particular, of the Savior, is deliberately omitted, so that it would be acceptable to "Christians" as well as to atheists.

This resolution reads as follows: "Let there be respect for the earth, peace for its people, love in our lives, delight in the good, forgiveness for past wrongs, and from now on a new start!"

This "Christian" composition will be declared during the moment of silence when there will be lighted millions of candles. Special volunteers will go from house to house and give out the candles with some special candle holders.

The reaction of the English clergy of various denominations to this revolting "celebration" was very passive. Evangelists lamented that at the time of the acceptance of the resolution there were not taken into consideration the needs of Christian communities. A President of this group Philip Hacking declared that "It is very disappointing. The resolution offers sentiments we'd all agree with, but it is not a prayer. I'd like to see two versions [from the Church Millennium Group] -- one for Christians and one for others, so people can choose which to use."

Gevin Reid the Anglican Bishop of Maidstone admitted that "it was a high-risk strategy, but my hope is that the words of the resolution will become the agenda for a nationwide time of taking stock about the sort of world we want for our children."

A Roman-Catholic Millennium official said that "Every line in the resolution is undergirded by Scripture and we are providing a leaflet to help Christians to use it as a focus prayer, reflection and Bible study."

According to "The New York Times" of November 7th, the contemporary world is worried about the forthcoming millennium of Christianity from point of view of substantial updating of computers. Yet, a number of Christian sects believe that this is the moment of the end of the world and in this connection there might come the terrible natural catastrophes predicted by Jesus Christ. But one of the major denominations in America, the Evangelical Lutheran Church (5.2 million members) published a pastoral epistle entitled by their Bishop Anderson "The year of Our Lord 2000" which reports that "The end of the millennium continues to spawn all sorts of world prophecies about the end of the world.... Many connect certain dire events in world history with some of our Lord's words in the New Testament, and they come to conclusion that the world is about to go up in flames.... But Our Lord came to beat back the works of evil and establish a new order, a time of God's reign of peace.... His return therefore will not mean fearsome catastrophe but rather blessed completion; it will mean the end of the old time of sin and suffering and the beginning of the new, when God will wipe away tears from every eye and death shall be no more."

The same newspaper on November 28th reported that in connection with beginning of the third millennium the Roman Pope declared that during the whole jubilee year (Vatican has set the dates as Christmas of 1999 until Epiphany in 2000) every penitent who does a charitable deed, or even stays away from cigarettes or alcohol during a whole day will get a special indulgence of forgiveness of their sins. It recommends that Catholics pray with rosaries, visit those in jail, go to Mass and so forth. This Papal epistle called "Incarnationis Misterium." But this announcement embarrassed many Catholics, especially liberals, who saw in it a sort of return to the Medieval practice of the sale of indulgences.

The Mayor of Moscow Louzhkov did not want to be left behind either. According to information in the official publication of the Serbian Church, the newspaper "Pravoslavlje" ("Orthodoxy") of December 1, he made an agreement with Arafat suggesting that for the period of the jubilee, the city of Bethlehem be cleaned up and made attractive to tourists. Louzhkov told Arafat that he likes his tolerant attitude toward all religions. He also expressed his special gratitude for help given to Moscow Patriarchate during the seizing of several Russian churches and in particular, the Monastery in Hebron. It seems that in payment for those services, Russian experts are working now on alterations and restoration of the Nativity Church in Bethlehem. Louzhkov and Arafat also made an agreement about Russian pilgrimages to the Holy Land.

At the same time, the bulletin "Ecumenical News International" of December 9th reports that at the initiative of Anglicans in the Holy Land an agreement was reached between local Christians and Muslims to restore a part of the city of Nazareth in its former appearance in the area of the ancient city. Catholics also are participating in this project. The costs are estimated to run something like 60 million dollars and collections for this purpose have already started.

No doubt the organizers already foresee a substantial income from this enterprise. It is known already, that some residents of Nazareth will be hired to wear ancient clothing, raise cattle and make wine. Some of them will undergo a special training so that they would be able to tell tourists the story of Jesus Christ who lived in Nazareth as a child. The tourists themselves will be able to purchase copies of ancient garments in order to parade in them in the same way as dressed up residents who agreed to play roles of inhabitants from the first century of Christianity. A dean of the Anglican community in Jerusalem, Michael Sellors, said, "I think it should be splendid. If one has dedication and determination, you can work miracles."

Is not the prophetic question of Christ that at His Second coming He doubts there would be left any faith is already fulfilled in our times?

## AN INTERESTING DEBATE

The newspaper "Rus Pravoslavnaya" whose chief editor is Mr. Dushenov, a former associate of the late Metropolitan John of Leningrad, devoted a whole issue # 9 (15) to a very interesting debate with Archbishop Vladimir of Middle Asia and Tashkent.

Each one of the full newspaper pages is divided in half. One half, authored by Archbishop Vladimir has the title "Have You Really Gone Blind?" -- and the second, signed by K. Dushenov, is entitled "Let Us Talk Openly." The article by Archbishop Vladimir is slightly longer than Dushenov's.

Archbishop Vladimir starts his discussion with an explanation of contemporary church problems and feels that at present the most important subject is the struggle against pornography and heresies which pour into Russia from abroad and not at all the discussion by Dushenov of the activities and faults of the Moscow Patriarchate. According to Archbishop Vladimir, even if the shortcomings pointed out do exist, still, they should be covered up with understanding, because "the persecutions of the Russian Church have not stopped; they have just become more sophisticated in character [?!]. Right now, our Mother Church finds herself amidst a spiritual, moral and material collapse, being spat upon by the mass media, with hands tied, a gag in her mouth and an economic rope around her neck."

It seems that Archbishop Vladimir considers the close relationship with the government to be "persecution" which is so obvious from the constantly published photographs of Alexei Ridiger with the President, the powerful Mayor Louzhkov and other important representatives of the Russian Federation. And regarding "the economic rope around her

neck": this statement is also a shameless lie. Even the international media (which has no special interest in abusing the MP, but just the opposite) unanimously insists that the MP owns companies which export diamonds, oil, sell tobacco and alcohol, not to mention is the owner of several banks.

In the letter of Archbishop Vladimir there are numerous salutations to "dear brother Constantine" and is characterised by a scarcely hidden hostility for his opponent (including an accusation of being rude) and an utter lack of factual documentation. Dushenov's response, on the other hand, keeps within the boundaries of propriety and contradicts him with the support of commonly known facts and quotations from declarations made by Archbishop Vladimir himself as well as by other hierarchs of the MP.

The "dialogue" touches on a number of subjects. Archbishop Vladimir tries by every possible means to whitewash the representatives of the MP, including Ridiger, as well as the Ecumenical Patriarch, by denying all the heretical movements inside his Church. He does not miss any opportunity to kick once again the ROCOR.

So, in reproaching Dushenov of prejudice, Archbishop Vladimir writes: "In the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church the problems of 'the Ecumenical pan-heresy', the problems of apostasy of the sacred authorities, which is hinted at by you in your paper, in such a form simply do not exist. From the point of view of the spiritual struggle it is a myth, an apparition, an illusion, -- from the moral point of view a slander, based upon unchecked rumors and false opinions. In reality there exist only the personal problems of the improper judgement of individual bishops and the problem of "double standards."

Since Dushenov responds to him not only properly, but also with ample documentation, we will basically follow the line taken by his answers

On the first page Dushenov asks the Archbishop: "Upon what is based your insistence that 'the very same hierarchs, whom you accuse of apostasy, are willing to die for Christ the Saviour'?" And he answers: "I do agree that the facts of contemporary church life allow the possibility of thinking that in Russia, as well as in Galicia, the Orthodox are threatened more by the bishops than by the atheists? So, when you ask if we indeed fear more the 'mass treason of the bishops' -- I in all honesty answer: yes, we do fear this, because before our eyes there are numerous grievous examples. Your recent colleague, the former locum tenens Metropolitan Philaret Denisenko, whom you now so bravely accuse: is he much different from some other members of the Holy Synod who still retain their prestigious positions?"

Archbishop Vladimir writes that "I would be cautious about calling Roman Catholics 'graceless'. Regarding them there is the proper fine theological term, but terrible in its meaning, of 'non-salvific grace'. The Spirit of God breathes where He will -- and His breathing exists beyond the borders of the Orthodox Church, the only question is how this or that religious organization uses this gift of God... Rome has retained Apostolic succession: its clergy has grace and this is without any doubt."

Dushenov answers: "Just so! On this subject Your Eminence's refinement of terminology is indeed Jesuitical," and he quotes from the "Complete Orthodox Theological Encyclopedia," which defines the term "grace."

Another part is of special interest to us, entitled "About Russian Foreigners." Here the problem is that Archbishop Vladimir cannot reconcile himself with the fact that a number of clergy of the MP have left her and joined the ROCOR, among them happens to be Fr. Vladimir Savitsky, a priest of Archbishop Vladimir, whom he had given many awards. It seems this is the reason why the Archbishop makes slanderous attacks against the Church Abroad. However, he makes one exception. Addressing Dushenov, Archbishop Vladimir says: "I hope that you published my open letter to Vladyka Mark of Berlin: what a joy to see a wise and meek archpastor in the Church Abroad and try to enter with him into a conversation. But with the ideologists of hatred, with those who foster schism, with hysterical slanderers -- there is a different kind of conversation." In another place he again praises Archbishop Mark saying that "The German Vladyka Mark resurrected the hope for reconciliation which seemed to be impossible. And what are needed on this path are not mutual reproaches, but love, meekness and understanding."

In this case, Dushenov defends the ROCOR from the baseless attacks of Archbishop Vladimir. Dushenov answers him: "As much as I could find within the ROCOR itself not a single priest belonging to the Synod of Bishops Abroad who ever carried on any sort of intelligence briefings (CRU?) under the name of 'The Moscow Patriarchate, the last resort of obscurantism and Communism' as you insist. Never did I personally hear or read that the priests of the ROCOR called upon intelligence agents to annihilate the Russian Church. And as far as appeals from "abroad" are concerned in the broadcasts of the 'Voice of America' to support sectarian incursions into Russia, it is quite obvious that here you have confused something. Such appeals were made indeed. But not on the part of clergy of the ROCOR, but in the broadcasts of the Catholic 'Common Christian' radio station, where speakers were the genuine 'patriarchal fathers': Archpriest John Sviridov, Abbot Innocent Pavlov, Priest George Chistiakov and many others... You accuse 'the Abroaders' of being overcome by the 'fever of hatred.' But it seems that this is the very feeling which moves your pen the minute you touch upon relationship of the MP and the ROCOR."

In one place, Archbishop Vladimir (nowhere does he quote anything) without adducing any proof insists that "the sources of my information present no mystery. Regarding the phrases of Metropolitan Anthony about His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon: the first one is Metropolitan Evlogy (Georgievsky), the second Archbishop John (Shakhovskoy). I believe this is authoritative enough. And, what else! After the saintly [Patriarch] Tikhon demanded the disbanding of the Synod Abroad, then what sort of criticism did not descend upon him in the emigre press?" In this statement every word is

a total lie. Both "authoritative" witnesses for Archbishop Vladimir were pathological haters of the ROCOR and in particular of Metropolitan Anthony himself. Absolutely nowhere and never did any "emigre press" attack Patriarch Tikhon, who was looked upon as a confessor and Metropolitan Anthony in particular was specially careful not to damage the prestige of the Patriarch-Confessor.

Of interest is also a section entitled "About the Patriarch," in which contradicting the statement of Archbishop Vladimir that "It is hard to forget the slanderous campaign which was raised against His Holiness the Patriarch. And the bravery and steadfastness of our First Hierarch is worthy of admiration, who put down all the underground criticism." Dushenov quotes from not only the traitorous speech of Alexis Ridiger to New York rabbis, but also data from famous report of Furov which he made to the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1979 in which the KGB refers to Alexis Ridiger in favourable terms as an outstanding loyal citizen of the USSR. Dushenov also quotes a sentence from a publication of the Foreign Relations Department of the MP "Novosti" ("News") of Nov. 27, 1997, in which was published the greeting of Ridiger to the chief rabbi in Russia, Shayevich, which stated that the Patriarch "highly values 'the brotherly and fruitful interaction' of the Russian Church with the Jews, directed toward 'welfare of our country.'" Dushenov rightfully asks: "What welfare for the Russian people can come from collaboration of the Christ's Holy Church with the unrepentant descendants of those who crucified Christ the Savior?"

In a section "About the Relationship of 'Zealots' with Church Higher Authorities" K. Dushenov touches on a statement in which Archbishop Vladimir denies the agreement between the MP and the Monophysites. He writes regarding the so-called Chambesy union: "For the second time you publicly affirm that it was repudiated by the Bishops' Council in 1997. And for a second time I am forced to categorically object: no, unfortunately it was not repudiated. You yourself write that the authors received a 'polite thank you for work done'. It is timely to ask: is this a way to repudiate efforts towards agreements with heretics who were condemned by the Ecumenical Council?"

Turning to the section "About Lay People" Dushenov asks his opponent "Don't you feel that the spiritual paralysis of the contemporary lay person is a result of the fact that the bishops, who are obliged by their monastic vows and their archpastoral ministry to be the primary examples of a pious and highly moral way of life, very often do not present such an example. One need not look far to find such examples: The very same Vladyka Chrysostom (Martishkin) of whom you sing songs of praise and glory, openly admitted that in Soviet times he was an informer for the Committee of State Security (KGB). 'Yes, I collaborated with the KGB,' he said in his interview with "Russkaya Mysl" ("Russian Mind") in April 24, 1992. 'I collaborated: I did sign an agreement, had regular meetings, gave reports. I had my own pseudonym, code name, as they say, 'Restorer'. I consciously collaborated with them... I had to sign an engagement that I will inform KGB... I started those contacts when already a bishop."

Further, the same bishop related to a reporter that "the common way of life molded all of us -- so that we are corrupted to a certain degree. And today one should not demand from us servants of the Church too much..."

"The further we go, the more there is," writes Dushenov. "Without a trace of any repentance for what he did, "Restorer" proudly announced that while being a bishop he was working also as an informer, just in order... to be useful for the Church."

In his other declaration, Archbishop Chrysostom clearly said that "I never was an informer. If in my reports I spoke badly about someone, this was first of all about the enemies of the Church, about those KGB members, who were instilled in Christ's Body." For some reason, Archbishop Chrysostom flatly excludes himself from having participated in the KGB agency!

But, as is revealed further in Dushenov's report, in spite of a strongly worded renunciation by this bishop of his reports to the "authorities," the very same bishop made a public declaration in one of his interviews that "In our Church there are genuine KGB members who have had astonishing careers and, without any hesitation, he named one of the contemporary metropolitans, whom he characterized as "an officer of the KGB, an atheist, a corrupted man" and who "never liked honest priests, never defended them, but only persecuted them!"

It is interesting that in the above mentioned report of Furov, Archbishop Chrysostom is placed in a third group of the episcopate of the MP, which, from our point of view is the best one and "in which at different periods appeared and now make efforts to bypass the laws against religions, some of which laws are religiously conservative, others are capable of falsification of diocesan records and their relationship with local authorities, by third ones were noticed efforts to bribe the "authorized" and slander them and other local authorities."

In the first group he placed the hierarchs most convinced and loyal to the Soviet government. During that period in the first place was Patriarch Pimen and next to him Alexis Ridiger; while in the second group were those who were loyal but out of necessity.

The Ecumenical Patriarch is quite correctly accused by K. Dushenov of treason against Orthodoxy and he is specially upset by the fact that this heretic in 1992 sent his representative, Bishop Vsevolod, to Lvov to participate in a 'Uniate council, who greeted the Uniates in the Cathedral of St. George, which just recently had been taken by Uniates from the Orthodox. In his greeting, this traitor to Orthodoxy (whom Dushenov calls a Judas) said: "This is the first case in 400 years, when a bishop from Constantinople directs his words to you, the Greek-Catholic hierarchs of the Kievan Church. Preserve the treasure of the Church which belongs to all of us. Your Council is a legitimate successor to the Kievan metropolitans! Your church structure affords a possibility of restoring the separated Kievan Church! And

therefore upon you there rests a tremendous responsibility. The Patriarch of Constantinople always took care of Ukrainians as much as he could. We are ready to help Ukrainians also today. I am especially happy that I prayed with you today."

Dushenov is doubtlessly correct when he unmaskes the Moscow hierarchy's treason of Orthodoxy and points out that a number of their bishops in no way can serve as example to their flocks.

#### THE EIGHTH ASSEMBLY OF THE WCC IN HARARE (ZIMBABWE)

The bulletin "Ecumenical News International" of December 9th reported that in Harare was solemnly opened with a prayer service the Eighth Assembly of the WCC at which 332 Churches were represented by 960 delegates, who altogether with the staff and other guests gathered under a huge tent at Zimbabwe's University totaling 5,000 persons.

The bulletin noted with satisfaction that the singing and reading from Holy Scripture was accompanied by "pulsating African rhythms" and that the culmination was a recitation of the Lord's Prayer which was said simultaneously in all the different languages!

The General Secretary of the WCC, C. Raiser, even before the opening of the Assembly, expressed his worries in October that the Orthodox might not come, but they did, although on a "low level." An exception was the Patriarch of Alexandria Peter VII and the representative of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Ephesus, who read his patriarch's greetings. The Moscow delegation was represented by Priest-monk Ilarion Alfeyev, who participated in debates and said that "Two Orthodox Churches have already left the WCC [and] some other Churches have decided to send reduced delegations to Harare. If the structure of the WCC is not radically changed, other Orthodox Churches will also leave." Yet the bulletin noted that "Orthodox Churches as several leading Orthodox clergy conducted portions of the service and the congregation was liberally sprinkled with Orthodox worshipers, clearly recognizable by their distinctive dress."

The Zimbabwe hosts on a number of occasions stressed the importance of having the Assembly gathered in their country, admitted that there had been a number of obstacles, but "from the beginning we remained united."

A group of homosexuals and lesbians attended the Assembly. President Robert Mugabe, who personally greeted the Assembly declared in his speech: "I don't know about any gays or lesbians. I came to address the World Council of Churches." But the President mentioned that "if they came as individuals... then they have come to the right place. This is the church, this is the organization that can purge them."

Raiser was asked what he thought of the President's remarks. To this he replied that he can not make any comments, but said that "President Mugabe is in his own country. He is free to say what he says."

Raiser was also asked his opinion about the declarations at the meeting of 15 autocephalous Churches during end of April and the beginning of May in Thessalonica, where they made a recommendation to "express a concern" regarding WCC and also about different aspects of the Assembly, which included a refusal to participate in common prayer with the heretics. He replied: "The response of the Orthodox Churches to the recommendations has been very different" and "not been unanimously affirmed... We will see how Orthodox participate in this assembly and I think we will be surprised."

At this assembly the Bulgarian Church officially declared it would leave the WCC. The rest of the Orthodox members agreed to wait for results of work of a recently established committee which will have representatives of the Orthodox and the WCC study the Orthodox grievances against this organization. The committee will work for a whole year.

During sessions of the Assembly it became clear that there has sprung up a new movement in the WCC proposing relationship with non-Christian religions, based on "global ethics."

At the Assembly Raiser used a new theory of Bishop Kallistos Ware of now sad prominence, who said that "If you take seriously the Christian affirmation that men and women are created equally in the image of God... the systematic exclusion of women from ministry cannot be defended on purely theological grounds."

At the Eighth Assembly there was also created a "Forum of Christian Churches and Ecumenical Organizations." It is expected that the Forum will have as members sects with large membership, which at present are not members of the WCC and also Catholics and Pentecostals. Its official opening is scheduled for the year 2001. Its "advantage" for the Orthodox Church lies in fact that this organization is meant to serve as a sort of Council and not direct membership in the WCC!

In spite of a strong recommendation by the WCC, the Assembly only "temporarily" refused the membership to WCC to groups which practice polygamy.

It also became clear that the very uncertain financial situation of the WCC has stabilized and no material problems are expected. Certainly, there was no mention about who are the generous donors to this repulsive organization.

Raiser was definitely right when he said, "I believe we will be surprised" by the behavior of the "Orthodox" members of the WCC!