

BOOK REVIEWS

†Anastasios (Yannoulatos), Archbishop of Tirana and All Albania, *Mission in Christ's Way: Theological Studies And Omilies*, Introductory Letter of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Romanian translation by Ștefan L. Toma, Andreiana Publishing House, Sibiu, 2013, 296 p.

In the world today, more than ever, there is the need to realize the witness of Orthodoxy within its world-wide dimension. We must understand Orthodox duty, within a larger, universal and holistic (*pan-orthodox*) dimension, and we must act in a concrete place and time with a vision of the whole (*katholou*), with an Orthodox universal and eschatological vision. The whole Orthodox Church must offer the entire Gospel to all the world, both to those near (internal mission) and far (external mission). This is the leit motive of this volume, which underlines that mission is inseparable from the very nature of Church, and that the task of Orthodox theologians is to strengthen the awareness of Orthodoxy's ecumenical nature and the obligation to make it active.

In order to express this Orthodox witness, His Beatitude Anastasios, Archbishop of Tirana and All Albania shows five missionary areas and some fundamental theological points.

Regarding the areas of mission for Orthodox Churches, Archbishop Anastasios spoke about: 1) the former atheist communist societies where ignorance of the Christian faith remains high, 2) the secularized societies of Western Europe and North America, where religious confusion grows, 3) the traditional cradle of the Eastern Church, found now within Muslim societies, 4) the mixed media that are in development - especially in Africa and Asia - where Orthodoxy came increasingly more during the last decades, and 5) the contemporary ecumenical movement, in which the Orthodox provide a theological, liturgical and ecclesiological presence contributing to the development of the modern Christian world.

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The theological principles underlying the Orthodox mission are, in the author of this volume's view, the following: 1) The love of God for the entire creation, which is the fundamental reason for every missionary enterprise, 2) the missionary mandate from Matthew 28, 19-20, which is a necessity not only for theologians, but for the whole Church, 3) the Orthodox spirituality, 4) the mission as Christian inner necessity, 5) the centrality of Resurrection and Pentecost in mission, 6) the Holy Liturgy as a way of Orthodox witness („liturgy after the Liturgy”), 7) incorporation, not only adaptation (the translation of the Bible and of the Divine Liturgy into the language of each people), 8) the ecclesial self consciousness, or the Orthodox witness to the modern world as assimilation of the mystery of the Cross and proclamation of the Kingdom to the end of the earth. Following these principles will result, in the author's opinion, in the accomplishment of a mission „in Christ's way”, which is based on love for all creation (as the incarnate Son of God is love).

In Introductory Letter His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew wrote to Archbishop Anastasios Yannoulatos: „we would not be unrealistic in emphasizing the primary and most important role which you played in regenerating and reactivating in our times the missionary practice and service, as a most essential act and obligatory expression of the self-consciousness of the Church toward those God-created brothers and sisters outside Faith, living throughout all the continents of our planet”. These words of appreciation are not exaggerated if we consider the whole missionary activity carried out by Archbishop Anastasios. We conclude our review by recalling the most important contributions made by him to the development of the Orthodox mission in the second half of the twentieth century and early twenty-first century, both in word and deed. On the one hand, he has written numerous books, studies and articles which have been translated into many languages (English, Russian, Swedish, Serbian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Albanian etc.): see *Various Christian Approaches to the Other Religions* (1971), *Islam* (1975) or *Facing the World* (2000). On the other hand, he held a specific missionary activity, the most important moments being those in Africa and especially Albania : he visited Africa repeatedly in 1964, 1967, 1968, 1974, and 1978, and during 1981-1990, as *Locum Tenens* of the Metropolis of Eirenoupoleos (East Africa: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania). He founded and organized the Patriarchal School, Archbishop of Cyprus Makarios III, he ordained sixty-two African priests and

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blessed forty-two Reader-Catechists from eight African tribes. At the same time he promoted the work of translation of the Divine Liturgy into four African languages, and he erected seven missionary stations. But he conducted the most spectacular missionary as Archbishop of Albania (1992 to present): within tremendously difficult circumstances, he succeeded in resurrecting and reconstructing the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania, which had been dissolved for twenty-three years. He founded the Orthodox Theological Academy, an orphanage, three elementary schools, seventeen nursery schools, two residential Ecclesiastical Lyceums, two Institutes for professional training and Logos University. He led the effort to build new churches, to repair and to restore damaged churches, as well as to erect ecclesiastical centers (as a whole 450 buildings). In addition, he developed the charitable work of the Church through the distribution of hundreds of tones of food, clothing and medicines. He also promoted the publication of a newspaper, periodicals, and books; he organized a printing press, a candle factory, and an iconography studio.

His contribution to theology, to contemporary witness, to inter-Christian dialogue and to the peaceful coexistence of people have been recognized internationally. Archbishop Anastasios has been honored with many medals and awards: e.g. he has been awarded honorary doctorates from eighteen Universities. He is President of the World Council of Churches (since 2006) and Honorary President of the World Conference of Religions for Peace (since 2006).

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