

## **What can we learn from three centuries of Orthodox-Evangelical encounter in the Middle East?<sup>1</sup>**

**LOI, Monastery of St Bishoy, 7 November 2019**

*Tim Grass*

We have thought already about how to handle and witness to our differences. I want to offer a historical perspective on that topic, looking at how we have done so over the three centuries that Orthodox and Evangelicals have been encountering one another in the Middle East and North Africa. I want to outline and illustrate four patterns which that encounter has taken: curiosity, assistance, confrontation, and dialogue and co-operation. A clearer understanding of how our traditions have related to one another can help us as we seek better relationships today. As a civil servant friend of mine once wrote, the best way to understand where we should go is to work out how we got to where we are.

The focus is primarily on Western Evangelical mission to this region. A full treatment of the subject would require investigation of relevant Arabic and Orthodox sources, as Westerners were not the only actors in this drama. Nevertheless, I hope the paper will help us to reflect on the state of relationships in our own contexts. All four patterns may be seen today, which shows that there is no one way to characterize relations between our traditions. Each encounter should be looked at in its own terms and context. As we say in Britain, 'take people as you find them'. What follows may appear critical of Western mission, but I do not wish to deny the undoubted achievements of many mission workers and national Christian leaders. Our service for Christ is always imperfect, sometimes very much so; yet the Holy Spirit is pleased to use it.

During the three centuries of evangelicalism's existence, the initiative in contacts between the two traditions has usually been taken by Western evangelicals. Partly because of this, Eastern Churches have often been on the defensive against what were seen as attempts to bring them under foreign domination or to draw away their members, or else as the recipients of external help in education, Bible translation and distribution, social work, and diplomatic advocacy. Yet Orthodox self-understanding as the Church(es) of the Fathers and the ecumenical councils makes it logically impossible for them to regard Protestant Churches as equal partners. Westerners have often found that difficult to accept.

A complicating factor has been Roman Catholic missionary activity, aiming to bring Eastern Churches under Roman jurisdiction. And Western evangelicals have often interpreted Orthodoxy in terms of what they know of Catholicism. Often, then, Catholicism (as perceived by evangelicals) set the agenda, making it more difficult for them to understand Eastern Christianity on its own terms.

### **Curiosity**

Before Westerners could engage with Eastern Christianity, they had to be curious about it. This curiosity really developed during the early nineteenth century. This was an age of exploration and of Western Protestant mission. However, overlapping the academic interest, which was motivated at least partly by missionary concern, was an outlook which portrayed the East as degenerate and corrupt, contrasting it with Western efficiency and evangelical uprightness. The West so often looked down on the East, and this extended to Western attitudes towards Eastern Christianity.

---

<sup>1</sup> This is a considerably shortened and somewhat amended version of my chapter on 'Evangelicals and Eastern Christianity', in Andrew Atherstone and David Ceri Jones (eds), *The Routledge Research Companion to the History of Evangelicalism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), pp. 110–26.

Curiosity also helped stimulate the growth of evangelical pilgrimage to the Holy Land (pilgrimage also became popular among Russian Orthodox). However, such visits usually confirmed evangelicals in their negative attitude towards Eastern Christianity. Protestant sensibilities rejected the ritualized worship and were horrified at the infighting between different jurisdictions. Evangelicals saw nineteenth-century Palestine as poor and underdeveloped, due to its rejection of God's grace. Only when the inhabitants turned to a pure form of Christianity would divine judgement be reversed, and economic and political reform become possible.<sup>2</sup>

This curiosity about Eastern Christianity still exists. During recent decades, evangelical fascination with Eastern Christianity has grown significantly. In the 1960s it was the result of reports of communist persecution of Orthodox as well as evangelical believers. More recently, interest in patristic theology has deepened as part of a paradigm shift in evangelical self-understanding and a move to greater sophistication in evangelical theology. As evangelicals have engaged in sustained missiological reflection, they have investigated Orthodox missiology. Finally, some have become Orthodox, the best known being those who followed Peter Gillquist in joining the Antiochian Orthodox Church in the late 1990s. The late Fr Michael Harper once told me that he saw this as the logical end of the evangelical / charismatic quest for New Testament church life. But we should not overstate the level or extent of evangelical interest in Orthodoxy; sadly, ignorance is widespread, even in Orthodox countries. Some know little of their neighbours, perhaps because what they see does not motivate them to find out more, perhaps because they are unwilling to accept that anything good can come out of (or rather be found in) Orthodoxy.

*What evidence do you see of evangelical curiosity about Orthodoxy in your own context?*

*What about Orthodox curiosity regarding Evangelicalism?*

### **Assistance**

Western Evangelicals developed a concern for the whole Christian world, motivated by their expectation of an end-time ingathering of souls. This would lead into the millennium, the culmination of which would be Christ's return. The emerging Protestant missionary movement appeared to be taking the first steps towards such a harvest. By 1800, the millennium seemed imminent. With the French Revolution and Napoleon's rise to power, one Antichrist – the papacy – was tottering; the other – Islam – was seen as likely to fall soon after. Missionaries could then expect conversions on a scale hitherto unknown, notably among Jews (whose ingathering was seen in the light of Romans 11 as precipitating a global turn to Christ) and Muslims. In this context the first evangelical missionary societies came into being. The two main English-speaking societies which began work in Orthodox areas were the Anglican Church Missionary Society (from 1815) and the Presbyterian and Congregationalist American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (from 1819).

An initial objective of the ABCFM mission was that of reaching Jewish people.<sup>3</sup> They and their land were seen as holding a key place in God's purposes. The establishment of the joint British-

---

<sup>2</sup> Ruth and Thomas Hummel, *Patterns of the Sacred: English Protestant and Russian Orthodox Pilgrims in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Scorpion Cavendish, 1995), pp. 35, 37.

<sup>3</sup> Clifton J. Phillips, *Protestant America and the Pagan World: The First Half Century of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1810–1860* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University East Asian Research Center, 1969), p. 135.

Prussian Jerusalem bishopric in 1841 demonstrates the strategic spiritual value which Jerusalem was thought to possess, not only for reaching Jews or Eastern Christians but also for reaching Muslims. The desire to take the good news to Muslims shaped nineteenth-century mission strategy decisively. It was thought that the ancient local Churches would be the best agents to achieve this. But (it was argued) they were corrupt and sunk in despair, as the result of oppression. Before they could reach anybody, they would need to be renewed; that must take place along evangelical lines. But some also hoped that these Churches would turn out to be remnants of an early, purer form of Christianity, and that they might have preserved early biblical manuscripts.

The importance accorded to Bible translation and circulation meant that the British and Foreign Bible Society (founded in 1804) and its local counterparts became central to evangelical engagement with Eastern Christianity. A host of similar societies were set up around the Near East. Fundamental to their strategy was the belief that circulation of vernacular Scriptures would lead to spiritual renewal; this was an expression of the Reformation-era conviction that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). The CMS established a base in Malta in 1815, which printed and distributed Bibles and Scripture portions in various Near Eastern languages. Some co-operation did take place with Eastern Churches and local Bible societies.

Let me give some examples of this approach. The first is the work among Armenians and Nestorians of Turkey and north-west Persia. These Churches were presented in ways which resonated with Protestants – free of what were regarded as the iconographic excesses of other Eastern Churches, and needing to be strengthened and protected against Roman attempts to subjugate them. Moreover, whilst evangelicals disapproved of their non-Chalcedonian Christologies, their early separation from Rome and Byzantium had preserved them from many other errors. Armenians in particular were regarded as noble, hard-working, enterprising and present throughout the Middle East. This, and their Church's relative freedom from error, marked them out as potential sowers of the gospel.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, there was already a reform movement in the Armenian Apostolic Church, which welcomed the missionaries when they arrived in Constantinople.<sup>5</sup>

In Ethiopia, the CMS was active from 1829. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church was commended for resisting the attacks of Romanism as well as Islam.<sup>6</sup> Here too the missionaries stressed the production and distribution of vernacular Scriptures as the main stimulus to Church reform; one result was the formation in Eritrea from the 1860s of a renewal movement which was eventually forced to separate from Orthodoxy. This developed into the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.

A significant part of the assistance offered was education. Nineteenth-century confidence in all things Western was evident in the advocacy of Western-style education. This was a key component of regional mission strategy. Some ABCFM institutions proved highly successful, such as the Syrian Protestant College (1863), which developed into the American University of Beirut. Yet we may question whether the efforts devoted to education ever bore much fruit in terms of converts to Christianity or reawakened Eastern Christians.

---

<sup>4</sup> Eli Smith and H. G. O. Dwight, *Missionary Researches in Armenia: Including a Journey through Asia Minor, and into Georgia and Persia, with a visit to the Nestorian and Chaldean Christians of Oormiah and Salmas* (London: George Wightman, 1834), Advertisement; Samir Khalaf, *Protestant Missionaries in the Levant: Ungodly Puritans, 1820–60* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), p. 144.

<sup>5</sup> Avedis Boynerian, 'The Importance of the Armenian Evangelical Churches for Christian Witness in the Middle East', *International Review of Mission* 89 (2000), pp. 76–7.

<sup>6</sup> [Samuel Lee], 'A Brief History of the Church of Abyssinia', *Proceedings of the CMS* 18 (1817–18), p. 208.

Eastern Churches tended at first to welcome Western evangelicals coming alongside them. The assistance offered included education and medical care, and often came from nations deemed to have sufficient political and military weight to secure an improvement in the fortunes of Christians under Ottoman rule. Often, however, missionaries felt it necessary to create separate Churches for their converts. There were three main reasons: mission policy formulated from the home base, the need to provide for converts excommunicated from their own churches, and the desire to provide a spiritual refuge for Muslims converting to Christ.

By the 1860s, the emphasis on assisting the ancient Eastern Churches was lessening. One problem was the idea that you could seek individual converts who would then reform their Churches from within. This rested on a separation of salvation from the church which was foreign to Eastern Christianity.<sup>7</sup> Even where the Scriptures circulated freely, that alone did not produce the rethinking that missionaries had hoped for; many missionaries concluded that it was impossible for the message of the gospel ever to be heard within those Churches, and therefore it was impossible to work with them.

A third problem was that the Ottoman *millet* system made it difficult for a Muslim to convert to Christianity, because it treated religion as intertwined with all aspects of life. Evangelical converts tended to come from the Christian community, which provoked antagonism from the existing Churches. In Turkey, for instance, after 1846 converts excommunicated by the Armenian Church needed a separate Church, but excommunication also entailed exclusion from the Armenian *millet* and so it brought civil as well as religious disadvantages. British officials therefore lobbied successfully for recognition of Protestantism as a *millet* in its own right.<sup>8</sup>

Some evangelicals still advocate coming alongside ancient Churches with a view to equipping them to reach Muslims.<sup>9</sup> Others advocate coming alongside spiritually alive Orthodox individuals as the best way of seeking renewal of the Eastern Churches. The Lausanne movement, formed in 1974, has on occasion expressed this view. One Lausanne discussion paper regarded what it saw as the born-again minority within Orthodoxy as key to reaching others: they needed help to grow and encouragement to witness so that 'the way may be prepared for a mighty Reformation and spiritual renewal within the Orthodox Church'.<sup>10</sup> Lausanne evangelicals, like Orthodox, do not all have the same approach to contacts with the other tradition.

Opinions differ regarding the effectiveness of this approach. It has been argued that '[r]ather than strengthening the Christian presence in the Middle East, ... missionaries contributed to the fragmentation, dispersion and even decimation through massacre of the Christian communities'.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Habib Badr, 'American Protestant Missionary Beginnings in Beirut and Istanbul: Politics, Practice and Response', in Heleen Murre-van den Berg (ed.), *New Faiths in ancient Lands* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), p. 225.

<sup>8</sup> Rufus Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Oriental Churches*, 2 vols (Boston, MA: Congregational Publishing Society, 1872), 1, p. 424; H. L. Murre-van den Berg, 'Why Protestant Churches? The American Board and the Eastern Churches: Mission among "Nominal" Christians (1820–70)', in Pieter N. Holtrop and Hugh McLeod (eds), *Missions and Missionaries*, Studies in Church History, Subsidia 13 (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2000), p. 105.

<sup>9</sup> Joyce Napper, *Christianity in the Middle East* (revised ed., Larnaca: Middle East Christian Outreach, 1996), pp. 5–6.

<sup>10</sup> <<http://www.lausanne.org/content/lop/lop-19>>, 'Christian Witness to Nominal Christians among the Orthodox', Lausanne Occasional Paper 19 (1980), §§4c(v), 4e(iii).

<sup>11</sup> Heleen Murre-van den Berg, 'The Middle East: Western Missions and the Eastern Churches, Islam and Judaism', in Sheridan Gilley and Brian Stanley (eds), *Cambridge History of Christianity*, 8: *World Christianities, c.1815 – c.1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 470.

But there has also been considerable renewal in parts of the Orthodox world, one example being the Coptic Orthodox Sunday School movement; some observers have argued that this has been due partly to Western input. And the CMS has adopted this sort of approach to good effect during the last three decades in the post-communist world and elsewhere.

*What assistance has been offered by Evangelicals to Orthodox in your area? (or vice versa)*

*Was it marked by a willingness to work with the other tradition on its own terms, or was it linked to any kind of 'hidden agenda'?*

*How was it received, and what was the result?*

## **Confrontation**

Before too long, those who accepted the evangelical message began to experience persecution. During the 1860s and 1870s the Evangelical Alliance in Britain led the way in lobbying for religious liberty in Turkey and elsewhere, often on behalf of fellow evangelicals. Such activity was liable to bring evangelicalism into confrontation with Orthodoxy.

Confrontation with Eastern Churches could also be provoked by Western religious disagreements. For instance, around 1850 the CMS found itself having to counter the charge of proselytism from high-church Anglicans who wanted to establish good relations with the Eastern Churches. Its defence was that its mission was to make available the Scriptures and win Easterners for Christ, even at the risk of their leaving the ancient communions.<sup>12</sup> One CMS writer asserted that these communions 'must be led to see that what they consider Christianity is not Christianity, and that what they regard as truth is not truth'. The missionary's aim was not to detach people from their Church, but to preach the gospel; if that led to people separating, he was not to be held responsible.<sup>13</sup>

The second half of the nineteenth century also saw a subtle shift in the dominant Evangelical missionary outlook, from idealism inspired by end-time hope to a more pragmatic focus on the need to create spiritual homes for evangelical converts. The new faith missions did not usually have strong connections with Protestant denominations. Their outlook was pessimistic, whereas the earlier outlook had been optimistic. They focused on rescuing as many individuals as possible, at the expense of longer-term objectives such as church reform or education. They often saw 'Christendom' as apostate and doomed, calling on converts to leave it and join the churches which they tried to form.

Some of the confrontation was rooted in an Orthodox perception of evangelicalism as something foreign and threatening.<sup>14</sup> This could lead to a rejection of what evangelicals had to offer. But some resulted from evangelical attitudes, whether we describe them as insensitive or imperialistic. If coming alongside the ancient Churches was not going to work, and the missionary longed to see evangelical conversions, converts must be provided with a spiritual home. From saying that separate congregations were necessary in practice, they came to be seen as desirable in principle, because the ancient Churches were no place for anyone who came to a living faith and

---

<sup>12</sup> Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society: Its Environment, its Men and its Work*, 3 vols (London: Church Missionary Society, 1899), 2, pp. 144–5.

<sup>13</sup> 'The Oriental Churches', *CMS Intelligencer* 2 (1851), pp. 171–7, 193–216, 219–39, at 194–5.

<sup>14</sup> Tibebe Eshete, *The Evangelical Movement in Ethiopia* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), p. 4, with reference to Ethiopia.

wished to worship in a scriptural manner. This approach was widely adopted. American Presbyterians aimed at creating a separate Church from the beginning of their work in Egypt in 1854. By contrast, the CMS aimed primarily at fostering renewal in the Coptic Orthodox Church. Not surprisingly, the Presbyterian work produced a much larger Church than the Anglican one; the two Protestant traditions have not related to Orthodoxy in quite the same way, although both do so positively.

A church-planting strategy did not necessarily rule out the earlier practice of seeking to assist the ancient Churches. Even after the formation of a separate Assyrian Protestant Church, for example, W. A. Shedd of the ABCFM continued to hope for the renewal of the communion from which it had separated: 'The reformation of the old churches themselves may be hastened by the presence alongside of bodies of Christians practising a simpler and more active faith.'<sup>15</sup>

This outlook gave rise to controversy at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh. Catholic and Orthodox countries were initially to be treated as 'unreached'; after intense debate, 'Edinburgh 1910 implicitly declared Protestant proselytism of Roman Catholics, and rather less clearly of Orthodox and Oriental Christians, to be no valid part of Christian mission.'<sup>16</sup> Yet this confrontational outlook has persisted, sometimes in the activity of converts from Orthodoxy who seek to reach their former co-religionists and to demonstrate the errors of that tradition. (In fairness, we should add that, on the Orthodox side, there are ex-evangelicals who seek to do something similar.) It was repeated at the 2010 Lausanne congress in Cape Town. One speaker asserted that Orthodox counted as unreached peoples, and this led to some frank conversations between Orthodox observers and evangelical leaders. The result, however, was the formation of the Lausanne-Orthodox Initiative (LOI)!

<i>What factors can change an attitude of confrontation into something more positive?</i>
---

### **Dialogue and Co-operation**

Sixteenth-century Protestants sought dialogue with Orthodox in order to join forces against Rome and/or the Ottoman Empire, but this ended when Patriarch Jeremias II put an end to theological exchange, asking that future contact focus on practical assistance instead. In the West, therefore, serious and open evangelical dialogue with ancient Eastern Christianity is largely restricted to the last three decades.<sup>17</sup> Apart from evangelical involvement in bilateral theological dialogues between world communions, as between Anglicans and Orthodox or Baptists and Orthodox, several dialogues have taken place between evangelicals and Orthodox (for books and articles about this, see the resources section of the LOI website). However, not all evangelicals and not all Orthodox have been happy to participate in such dialogues. Much dialogue has taken place in the West rather than the

---

<sup>15</sup> W. A. Shedd, *Islam and the Oriental Churches* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1904), pp. 216–17, quoted by J. F. Coakley, *The Church of the East and the Church of England: A History of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 64.

<sup>16</sup> Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids, MI / Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), p. 72.

<sup>17</sup> Bradley Nassif, 'Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism: The Status of an Emerging Global Dialogue', in Daniel Clendenin (ed.), *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), pp. 211–48; 'Orthodox Dialogues with Evangelical Communities', in *Orthodoxy and Ecumenism: A Handbook of Theological Education* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2014), pp. 536–41; Tim Grass, 'Evangelical – Orthodox Dialogue: Past, Present and Future', *Transformation* 27 (2010), pp. 186–98.

Orthodox world, but the issues vary according to where the dialogue is happening. When it takes place in a majority Muslim setting, the issues change again.

*What dialogue has there been in your area?*

*What issues has it focused on?*

*What impact has it had?*

Dialogue objectives have shifted. Attempts to seek theological convergence proved frustrating, yet the experience of fellowship remained compelling. So a more pragmatic approach has sought closer collaboration in mission.<sup>18</sup> This has been strengthened by a broadening evangelical understanding of what mission involves.

A persistent problem, however, has been the difficulty of moving from conversation to co-operation. Following Edinburgh 1910 there was some co-operation between evangelicals and Eastern Christians, which was expressed primarily through shared participation in movements such as the Student Christian Movement. But relationships withered as evangelicals distanced themselves from organized ecumenism following the fundamentalist controversies of the 1920s. Such co-operation as there was owed much to evangelical pragmatism. Billy Graham's policy of working with all the churches in a city (not merely the evangelical ones) when conducting a mission is an example of this. But continuing conversation has helped to create a climate in which co-operation has again become thinkable in such fields as translation and publishing, and welfare projects. However, I suspect that the more distant the link between a project and the worshipping life of local congregations, the easier it is for evangelicals and Orthodox to co-operate in it.

## **Conclusion**

What factors have determined which of these approaches have been adopted? Doctrinally, different views about the end times have shaped evangelical engagement with Eastern Christianity. The doctrine of the church, however, has also played a defining role. Evangelical ecclesiology has often adopted an approach to history which sees the true Church as cast out and persecuted. Such an approach predisposes many to write off the Eastern Churches – until those too are persecuted and so come to share the marks of the true Church, as with the Nestorians in 1870s Turkey or Orthodox in 1960s Russia.

Turning to specific evangelical ecclesiologies, it is clear that Anglicans tended to feel they had a head start in building relationships with the Eastern Churches because of their episcopal order. This is sometimes still the case, although Orthodox apprehension at developments in parts of the Anglican communion has meant that relationships are not as warm as they were. Engagement with Anglican provinces of the Global South, which tend to be more evangelical, might well prove more productive in terms of practical collaboration in mission.

Many evangelicals, however, have a congregational approach to ecclesiology, in which the local congregation is the primary ecclesiological unit, rather than a diocese or jurisdiction. This makes the formation of new congregations more likely, because it can be done more easily than setting up a whole denominational structure. Such evangelicals often have trouble seeing Orthodox parishes around them as true Christian congregations. Many of these congregations practise

---

<sup>18</sup> For further details of this initiative, see Mark Oxbrow and Tim Grass (eds), *The Mission of God: Studies in Orthodox and Evangelical Mission* (Oxford: Regnum, 2015).

believer's baptism. Baptist denominations have found it difficult to engage positively with Eastern Christianity, not least because they have not accepted infant baptism as valid and have therefore (re)baptized converts. Divergent baptismal practice adds another dimension to the differences between the traditions.

Differing understandings of salvation have provided a major obstacle to better relations. Evangelical insistence on salvation through faith in Christ alone has often been contrasted with an understanding of Orthodoxy which sees it as teaching something like 'salvation by works' (often understood in the light of Catholicism). In the same way, Orthodox reject evangelical teaching regarding salvation by faith alone. Dialogue statements have not yet offered a convincing account of how the respective views of two traditions can be regarded as compatible. However, changing understandings of such evangelical doctrines as justification by faith alone (as seen, for example, in the work of N. T. Wright<sup>19</sup>) may offer new avenues of exploration. Likewise, a broadening evangelical understanding of what it means to share in the *mission Dei* is facilitating co-operation in some areas.

As for external factors affecting the development of relationships, the political climate has alternately facilitated and hindered them. Ottoman decay facilitated not only Western political intervention but also Western religious intervention in the region. By contrast, recent dialogue between Baptists and the Ecumenical Patriarchate was dealt a mortal blow by NATO bombing of Serbia in 1998; and the complications arising from Western involvement in conflicts in Iraq and Syria cannot yet be adequately evaluated.

Political power could be used in various ways: to facilitate evangelical mission, as in early nineteenth-century India, or to secure a greater measure of freedom for Eastern Christian communities, as in Turkey; on the Orthodox side, it has not infrequently been used to repress evangelical activity. Evangelicals, whose outlook was marked by a readiness to innovate, failed to grasp that centuries of Orthodox political powerlessness under Muslim domination had made any form of development very difficult for Churches in those lands; their priority had to be faithful maintenance of the tradition. We cannot comprehend fully how evangelicals and Eastern Christians have related to one another in this region without taking into account the Islamic tradition. There is much to learn from one another as we compare the various ways in which each tradition has engaged with Islam. On the other hand, evangelical political powerlessness, when Orthodoxy was the religion of the rulers, strongly reinforced a negative attitude towards it; this was partly the result of experience of antagonism, and partly derived from the strand of ecclesiology earlier mentioned, which sees the true church as cast out and persecuted.

*What 'external' factors have affected between Orthodox-Evangelical relationships in your areas?*

This has in some ways been a sad story, a tale of missed opportunities. It is not only evangelicals who are at fault, but I am speaking as an evangelical, confessing my own tradition's sins rather than pointing the finger at the Orthodox. At the same time, there are bright spots in the story, and I believe that the future holds great potential. We must surely agree that in spite of our failures, God has been pleased to accept and honour the service of Christians in both traditions. In the grace that has been shown lies our only hope.

---

<sup>19</sup> See N. T. Wright, *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision* (London: SPCK, 2009).