Annals of the Academy of Romanian Scientists
Series on Philosophy, Psychology, Theology and Journalism
ISSN 2067 – 113X Volume **3**, Number **1-2**/**2011**

ORTHODOXY AND CULTURE

J. A. MCGUCKIN*

Abstract. The theological imagination investigates what society and social theology might mean and it is deeply imprinted now on American consciousness far beyond its original Puritan founders. This was also stretched out into a subconscious axiom for many thinkers, even Christian theorists. Therefore, in that light to ask what would be the premisses of an Orthodox theological consideration of the Social issue? How does Orthodoxy, on its own terms, stand in relation to the question of the Church's relation to the issue of society and civilisation building? It has never believed that Church is merely an apocalytpic reality, or that it is a hopelessly corrupted concept. It has never thought that the Gospel is not a power to rebuild society, or the core of the issue of forming a civilisation. It could not imagine (if left to itself) the wisdom of buildng a wall between Church and State. Does this mean it is necessarily left to the vagaries of theocracy?

Key words: theological imagination, the Puritan founders, Orthodoxy, society and civilisation

Many aspects of contemporary American culture are imbued with a deep Protestant sense, prevalent in the founders of the Constitution, that not only should there be 'no law passed regarding an establishment of Religion' (First Amendment) but even that a 'wall of separation' between church and state should be built and maintained. It was not only the fear of wars of religion, or persecutions of supposed sectaries, that gave rise to that lively awareness of the 'problem' of religion in the minds of the American Protestant foundation, but at a deeper and more psychically primed level, the rooted Puritan sense that somehow or other society and the Christian religion are meant to be concepts at variance with one another. Protestantism's intimate foundation myths imagined the Church of the Empire (whether Constantinian, Byzantine or Papal) as one of the most profound 'corruptions' that the Reformation was meant to correct. It nailed its colours to the wall in the form of a straightforward belief that its own polity was that of a return to New Testament simplicities where 'the world' on the one side, and 'the kingdom' on the other were deeply at variance. And in such a dichotomous structure of thought, even the idea of 'Church' itself, was dubiously placed: many preferring to afford it no solid earthly validity, only an apocalyptic or eschatological significance ('Church' could only exist here among us as part of the corruptible realities of the world that needed constant reformation). In the light of this metaphysics of polity, it is hardly surprising that Protestantism, by and

* Full Member ASR New York Department, Professor PhD Columbia University, New York.

large, had little room for any 'theology of society', and still struggles with the very notion (as can be seen even in large-scale thinkers such as Karl Barth). This view, this theological imagination, of what society and social theology might mean, is deeply imprinted now on American consciousness far beyond its original Puritan founders. It has stretched out into a subconscious axiom for many thinkers, even Christian theorists. It is interesting, therefore, in that light to ask what would be the premisses of an Orthodox theological consideration of the Social issue? How does Orthodoxy, on its own terms, stand in relation to the question of the Church's relation to the issue of society and civilisation building? It has never believed that Church is merely an apocalytpic reality, or that it is a hopelessly corrupted concept. It has never thought that the Gospel is not a power to rebuild society, or the core of the issue of forming a civilisation. It could not imagine (if left to itself) the wisdom of buildng a wall between Church and State. Does this mean it is necessarily left to the vagaries of theocracy? Let us consider some of the issues.

The Orthodox church has a long history, and a memory even longer than its history, for it wove the fabric of the ancient scriptures into its own robe of experience, thereby enriching its psychic perception with a prophetic acuity that was steeped in deepest antiquity, yet ever looking to a radiant future of the age-to-come that stands in judgement on present conditions. It has come through the fires of political opposition, often bloody and totalitarian, as well as times of establishment support. The bane of the one, through many tears, often became a blessing for it. The blessing of the other, even in much apparent self-congratulation, often proved its bane. Over many centuries it has seen the profound courage and faithfulness of men and women in relation to the defence of the faith (their names are recorded in thick and heavy Synaxaria), as well as observing an all too human weakness and unreliability in times of stress and crisis (though it has generally passed over the names of the lapsed and the apostates in a charitable silence, recording only the martyrs). It has learned from the Lord himself that there is an evil force abroad in the world[1], a spirit that can even pass as an 'angel of light'[2] and which will offer, to those susceptible, the kingdoms of the world if only for the price of falling down and worshipping it[3]. It has received as a warning from the same Lord the intelligence that the world will never love it, just as it has never really loved the King of Glory.[4] Indeed it has been told that the world will always tend to hate it[5], precisely because of its constitutional spiritual oppositional stance

[1] Jn 12.31; Jn 14.30.
[2] 2 Cor. 11.14.
[3] Mt. 4. 8-10.
[4] Jn. 15:18 'If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.'
[5] Jn. 15:19. ' If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.' Also see Jn. 16.33.

to the *Kosmos*[1], its character of always being 'unknown' and unmanageable to the powers that attempt to rule the world's affairs.[2]

The Apostle has also confirmed for it that the Church has to maintain, as a primary duty, this sense of careful distancing from the world. It must always be on its guard that the world does not form its mentality (the élan of its imagination, its ethos, its *nous* or *phronema*[3]) but that on the contrary it struggles to conform the world always to its fundamental charter and inspiration, the Gospel that will save it. This is the burden of the apostle's own warning to the Church: 'Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.'[4] The Church has seen the rise and fall of empires and ideologies as vast and antique as those of Persia and Rome, as all-embracing as those of Lenin and Mao. It has witnessed the vigorous flourishing of heresies that once seemed so trend-setting, so elegant, and persuasive, but are now no more than foolish whispers in the dust. It has lived and experienced the perennial grace of the Spirit so long now as no longer to be excited and led away by the promises afforded by theories of 'theological enculturation' or 'acculturation'. It has sufficient wisdom to ask: What culture? Whose theology? and ever seeks to discern the spirit and rationale behind what is fundamentally a term of description for the way the Church exists within the world until the time of the Kingdom.

Equally foreign to the Orthodox Church, then, are the concepts that the Church must abhor and turn away from human culture; or that the Church must seek to embrace it. Both positions have been sustained in recent times, and in past times, but not by the Orthodox Church. The first shamefully neglects the missionary imperative of the Church of Christ in the world[5], and the obvious corollaries, first that the Church's members are necessarily in dialogue with the culture with which they seek to share the good news; and secondly, that the world as the created order (*Ktisis*) established by God is good and holy and beautiful, and not always, in an indiscriminate way, to be identified with the *Kosmos* spoken of in the Gospel of John, that spirit of rebellion that exists within the beautiful world-order of the Pantokrator. This simple and foolish mistake in theology is often to be found behind certain sectarian attitudes within Orthodoxy, noticeable since the collapse of Byzantium, that call for the abhorring of the 'world' by the

[1] Jn.16:20 Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice.
[2] Jn. 17:14. ' I have given them thy word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.' Again: Jn 14:17: 'Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.'
[3] 1 Cor. 2.16; Phil. 2.5.
[4] Rom. 12.2; also see: Rom. 8.6-7.
[5] Mt. 28. 19-20

'church', applying both mysterious and sacred terms in a monochromatic and unreflective way.

The Church's true position in regard to human culture, with the latter being understood as a complex extension of the human person in society,[1] is exactly what its position is towards the human person itself: that all stands under the light of God's glory: a light that is joy for the righteous elect, and yet judgement over all wickedness. Human culture in Orthodox thought, therefore, is not a univocal concept. But if the Church cannot endorse any aspect of culture unambiguously (not even its own ecclesiastical sub-culture, or any periods of so-called establishment 'Golden Age', be it that of a Justinian or a Romanov), then neither is it positioned in such a way that the entirety of human culture is so compromised that the Church must separate itself out, stand apart from it, seek to dominate it. Culture is part of the God-given call of human beings to serve as priests of the cosmos, as the Byzantine fathers expressed it; priests whose spiritual task is to assist in the transfiguration of the world into a sacrament of divine glory. It is part of human race's innate gift from God, therefore, to wish in the deepest aspirations of its being to make of the world a better place, more elegant and wondrous, than the one they found. This theo-drama is written into the charter of humanity's making. This is partly why the term for Spirit (*Ruah*) in the Old Testament is so often associated with the artistic skillfulness of the craftsmen who fashion the vessels for the sacred worship of the Israelites[2], or with the wisdom and intelligent rhetoric of the teachers of the Law in the Wisdom literature. Wisdom and craft are proposed as inherently holy things. These are precisely the things, intelligence and craft, that comprise most human definitions of culture and civilization. To pretend that the Church can stand apart from them, or should be innately hostile to them, is as misguided an exercise as arguing that it stands apart from world history in so far as it is eschatological, or is itself excused all moral and spiritual criticism in so far as it is the immaculate Bride of the Lamb. This gift of the Spirit and this Icon of the Christ as woven into the soul of the race, is also why the Orthodox church finds the theological sub-text (it is, sadly, more than a theologoumenon now) of humanity and human culture as a *massa damnata* to be a shocking thing, seriously misguided, if not downright sacrilegious. What this theme signified in the Blessed Augustine was certainly not the role it has come to play in his later commentators.

The Church, therefore, occupies a tentative space, as the writer of the ancient *Letter to Diognetus* said, in the world but not of it, yet occupying a place in the world as the very soul of the world's finest aspirations, and thus, certainly, in a way in which "not of it" never means "apart from it". Even those ascetic zealot

[1] Human culture as the refined extension of human effort and aspiration: 'culture building' as that which rises beyond subsistence existence, into a concern for art, literature, complex human and material constructs for the building of human agencies; all the varied enterprises and activities that go to make the record of civilization.

[2] Ex.35.31; Num.24.2; Deut.34.9; Sirach. 39.6-7;

Christians who fled the cities to inhabit the deserts, knew that this fundamental duty of being church in the world had priority over their (equally valid) search for solitude; and this is why the monks have always recognized the duties of hospitality, missionary witness, and spiritual guidance, as fundamentally related even to the ministries of the most dedicated solitaries.

Orthodoxy occupies a more complex and ambiguous position in relation to the notion of 'a theology of culture' than can be seen in the writings of several different types of contemporary theologians (mainly 'first-world' Western Protestant) who demonstrate a certain fault-line in the western Christian experience between those who affirm the significance of theological enculturation[1], and those who seem decisively to equate human culture with what the Lord spoke of in the Gospel as 'the Kosmos' which is hostile to the Spirit. Neither position seems to the Orthodox to be correct.

In its own journey through human history and culture, Orthodoxy has refined central aspects of human culture in decisive ways that in turn have shaped and altered the face of civilization. It has made, on its journey, monuments of enduring culture that speak to the world of the power and spirit of the Christian imagination and passion. From the simple rock cut cells of the Cappadocian or Coptic monks, so redolent of simplicity and modesty, to the cathedrals of Constantinople or Moscow, so filled with dignity and elevation of soul, it is unarguable that Orthodoxy has a certain culture and ethos that marks it. It is distinctly *sui generis* from that which characterises the Protestant or Catholic worlds. This is not to say that it has a monopoly on Christian culture, of course, but its cultural presence has been immense, and immensely formative.

All the architectural proto-structure of the church's historical presence, its polity and praxis, was formed and shaped in the Orthodox East[2]: one need only mention briefly in support of this the fact that the Church's Gospels are Greek, its Creeds are Greek, its liturgy is Syro-Greek; its major spiritual writings are Greek, its foundational music and hymnography is Greek, the form of its Rhetoric is Greek. It was the Orthodox East which took the extensive culture of Roman Law, and Roman Empire (often at variance with one another in the uneasily juxtaposed aspirations of equity and dominance) and attempted to refashion them both: now with Law understood as a spirit of Justice, and with Empire reinvented as a system of God-founded stability and human concord. Whether or not it extensively succeeded in that task of 'Christianizing Hellenism' (a task and *telos* that remains at the heart of the Orthodox attitude to culture) it is the case that in its

[1] We may assert Paul Tillich as a case in point. Niebuhr is also an important aspect of this. Barth at first stood against the trend, though some have seen his late treatise *The Humanity of God*, as a signalled change of direction.

[2] Rome itself, we may recall, that vastly formative capital, before the 4th century was also fundamentally a Greek church, extensively worshipping in Greek until the time of Damasus.

Byzantine ascendancy the Church certainly brought to the Roman Law which undergirded all ancient societal values, the re-pristinating charter of the Gospel; and decidedly brought to the Hellenistic concept of sacral and absolute Kingship, the biblical notion of the monarch as God's anointed servant, whose right to rule depended on his sustenance of covenant values for God's poor.

These are lofty matters that have not yet attracted the critical attention and study that they deserve. The refashioning of the ancient world's soul and values through the Byzantine synthesis has all too often been dismissed by scholars; either ignored, or caricatured on the basis of minimal contact with the primary texts. Fortunately the study of the real political, theological, and societal genius of Byzantine multi-culturalism has in recent decades begun in earnest. Even in the Eastern Christian world the sources for such a study were not readily available (with the exception of Russia before the 20th century) because of the socio-economic hardships concomitant with the fall of Byzantine civilization, and the loss of two progressive forces in the historical process of Orthodox cultural refashioning, firstly the patronage of the Emperor and that of an extensive class of aristocracy, and secondly the existence of higher centres of learning and the arts as sponsored and sustained as part of the central forms of self-expression of the Orthodox imperial state. Other centuries, many of them dreary and oppressive, have taken away the cultural artifacts enduring from another age of the Orthodox church, and have placed a somnolent veil over much of contemporary Orthodoxy's imagination as it is concerned with socio-political involvement, or even in regard to the Church's engagement in the central processes of healing, educational, artistic and cultural institutions; many of which (take healing and higher education as examples) are now regarded as purely the concern of a secularized state, and no longer a 'proper domain' of the church. New vistas emerging from the realignment of Eastern Europe after the demise (dare we hope?) of totalitarian politics, have already dawned, and will continue to stimulate world Orthodoxy to 'think again'.

In this light it is of crucial importance, in the interim era, as it were, to avoid the easy temptation to allow the church's imagination as to how to relate its mission to the condition of the world's present culture to be conditioned by immediately preceding models. It is, for example, the time to celebrate the saintliness of the Romanovs who faced the mystery of their deaths with such Christian gentleness, but it is not the time to advance Nicholas II as a model for how the Church should negotiate politics. What is at stake is not the recreation of old models, but the witnessing of the same spirit that was bold enough to see the demands of the Gospel and wise enough to recognize how they could be used as a leaven in the dough of contemporary culture. This prophetic insight was what energized the ancient church, the church of the fathers, and the church of the medieval byzantines. It is this spirit that must again be brought forward in the

contemporary Orthodox church, the heir of all these ages, but an heir that is not enslaved to those cultural answers they gave in their own times. In proving it has both prophetic insight and wisdom in applying the Gospel, the Orthodox church in the present century will prove that it is truly, and effectively, Christ's church alive in the world as its sacrament of healing. Taking the step to think through, deeply and collegially, in all the parts of the Orthodox world, how the ancient Christian traditions of wisdom can be orchestrated to effect, transform and redeem contemporary human culture is an absolutely pressing *prolegomenon* to action that falls to this generation.

In an enduringly significant part of his *opus* Archpriest Georges Florovsky was once asked to deal with this issue of Faith and Culture. It is an essay that first appeared in St. *Vladimir's Quarterly* and is now accessible also in his *Collected Works.*[1] Florovsky recognized, in the mid fifties of the 20th century, that a great crisis of culture was upon them, and he defined it in terms of a crisis of faith: 'The major tension is not so much', he said, 'between belief and unbelief, as precisely between rival beliefs. Too many 'strange Gospels'[2] are preached, and each of them claims total obedience.' Florovsky did not think that the Church's answer to the problem of culture, was to argue for greater spirituality, or for more religion, in a renewed society. He states clearly that it would be disastrous in his view if society, turning away from secular disbelief should come to a position where: 'It rallied around a false banner and pledged allegiance to a wrong faith.'[3] He puts his finger on it, unerringly from an Orthodox perspective, when he makes his final diagnosis of the crisis of contemporary culture: 'The real root of the modern tragedy does not lie only in the fact that people lost convictions, but that they deserted Christ.'

His analysis of the problem of Faith and Culture attempts several definitions of what culture might mean, not all of them leading to a single common answer. But he marks out human culture essentially as that which separates civilization from primitivism:

When we speak of a crisis of culture what do we actually mean? The word culture is used in various senses, and there is no commonly accepted definition. On the one hand culture is a specific attitude or orientation of individuals, and of human groups, by which we distinguish the civilized society from the primitive. It is at once a system of aims and concerns, and a system of habits. On the other hand culture is a system of values, produced and accumulated in the creative process of history, and tending to obtain a semi-independent existence (that is, independent of that creative endeavour which originated or discovered these

[1] 'Faith and Culture', St. Vladimir's Quarterly. vol.4. nos. 1-2. 1955, pp. 29-44; repr. in: *Christianity and Culture.* Collected works, vol.2. Nordland. Belmont. Mass. 1974. pp. 9-30.
[2] Gal. 1. 6-9.
[3] 'Faith and Culture'. p. 11.

values) … Thus, when we speak of the crisis of culture we usually imply a disintegration in one of these two different, if related, systems, or rather in both of them.[1]

What seems to be the operative model here is a set of communal spiritual values that are so enshrined in a human social collective, that almost as a natural law of growth, the values seek to embody themselves, or incarnate their spiritual ethos, in a set of habits, customs, institutions. The institutions (take for example the way in which a society's religious ideals will reflect themselves – inevitably so – in the Law) may at some stage dissociate themselves from the élan of the spirit that first gave rise to them. So, for example, pagan Roman Law which began as part of the system of the priestly veneration of the old gods, was radically secularized by the time of the Principate, and reworked by the Christian empire as a new form of secular *pro-paideusis*. This time round, Byzantium's sense of the 'secularity' of civil law was applied as a way of ensuring the adherence of large imperial populations to a form of ethical and equitable behaviour that was consciously parallel to the legal system of the Church Canons. Byzantine Christian theorists made the Christian civil law come onto a course parallel to the canons, but not subject to them, for the latter only were the proper domain of the bishops [2] whereas communal legal rights were the domain of lay magistrates. The subtle and fluid movement of law within a society (law which changes so slowly and led by its own conservative priesthood as much as by societal pressures) can bear witness to the way the spiritual ethos of different ages has passed under the shadow of the Gospel, or has passed out of the shadow of the Gospel. The long arduous struggle the church had, for example, legally to protect the life of the unborn, has been unravelled by many contemporary societies today which have pushed the frontier back to pagan times: applying new technological facilities to effect abortion as (apparently) a preferential contraceptive method; the figures here no longer supporting the argument that it was a measure of last resort. Here is a case in hand of how a cultural institution (the law on this or that aspect of behaviour) rises out of a 'spirit abroad'. It is an example how an ethos, or set of values, can be incarnated in specific instances (culture is nothing and means nothing if it is not constantly grounded in a local human environment), can lose the élan that once embodied itself in a societal structure, and may often fail before the pressures of other movements.

In this sense the Church's attitude to culture seems to be a critical one: a matter of assessing how much the structures of a given society work, or fail to work, incardinating within its core the values that the Church collectively celebrates in its mystical, liturgical, and moral life. It will know, from the outset,

[1] 'Faith and Culture'. pp. 11-12.

[2] Who were also given a distinct legal status in the Christian empire, but not legal authority over the 'secular' domain of Christian laity's affairs.

that the structures of the wider society, will not be ones that will be easily surrendered to those it would itself prefer and wish to embody in its own domain (the Church considered mystically as the society of God's elect in the world). This gives us to understand immediately that the Church's own culture must always be far ahead of that of society as a whole. Its 'churchly' culture (since the words ecclesiastical and churchy have been too debased to have any utility any longer) is meant to be no less than paradisial, the eschatological hope for all that the world looks for in its healing. This is why, essentially speaking, the ultimate 'culture of the Church' is love and mercy and reconciliation: the quintessential marks of the presence of its Lord among it. When these charisms flourish all will be well. But the Church has to resist the temptation to play at being an alternative culture, inhabited by the pious, a culture which is 'cute, or 'exotic (good for tourist value), but not one that can be taken seriously by the intelligentsia, who are the critical factor in times of reorientating cultural institutions and elaborating principles of cultural ethos. The Church, if it is serious in leading the movement to a renewal of culture, must require of all its leaders (it is already the case in relation to all of its significant theologians) the minimum 'normally applicable' requirement in the present era of a doctorate in a higher institution of learning. It has already laid down stringent requirements ethically and ascetically for its leaders. Now it has to repristinate the episcopate by henceforward only admitting to its ranks monastics of the highest intellectual capacity, allied with the deep spirituality we customarily expect.

Florovsky's essay on Faith and Culture raises many concerns of enduring significance. He had read his Barth, and knew him closely. His essay resonates with some of the style of the Swiss theologian, especially when Fr. George warns the reader that culture in decline can collapse into mere civilization. His own sense seems to resonate empathetically with that cautious reserve:

Culture is not an unconditional good. Rather it is a sphere of unavoidable ambiguity and involvement. It tends to degenerate into civilization… Culture is human achievement, is man's own deliberate creation, but an accomplished civilization is so often inimical to human creativity. …In civilization man is, as it were, detached from the very roots of his existence, from his very self, or from nature, or from God. This alienation of man can be described and defined in a number of ways … but in all cases culture would appear not only to be in predicament, but to be predicament itself.'[1]

And yet he insists, soon after this, that an overall negative view of culture is not appropriate for Orthodoxy at large. Florovsky's essay then takes a turn (its originating context in all probability) from theology of culture into Ecumenics. He begins, in his customary style of drawing large intellectual typologies, to diagnose various (Protestant) attitudes of hostility towards a theology of culture characterising

[1] 'Faith and Culture.' p. 14.

them in broad strokes according to four prototypes.[1] He laments this western theological tendency towards cultural 'iconoclasm', and in the course of that argument proposes one his most famous ideas: the notion that Protestantism should not shy away from culture because it fears it as a form of 'Hellenization of Christianity'[2] in the sense of a 'paganization' of the Gospel. Rather, he argued, the Church's involvement with Hellenistic civilization, in the manner of an engagement that sought constantly to turn the Hellenistic spirit of human development and intellectual curiosity into something that was baptized in Christ, and put to the service of the Gospel,[3] was part and parcel of its evangelical mission to bring the Good News of Christ to the world, and to fashion a Christian civilization which would be the destiny of the ages. 'Cultural concerns', Florovsky concludes in that study, 'Are an integral part of actual human existence and, for that reason, cannot be excluded from the Christian historical endeavour.'[4] His overall conclusion is that human culture always needs to stand under the scrutiny of the Gospel. The church is not committed to the denial of it, any more than it is able to endorse it without further qualification.

What is thus required for an authentic Orthodox theology of culture, would seem to be fundamentally an act of spiritual discernment based upon the concrete and specific realities appropriate in each case; each instancing of cultural formation. In this light, and given the previous observation how cultural practices inevitably institute systems of habituated behaviour which then accumulate towards long-term cultural identities, it becomes apparent why the Church needs to be in constant dialogue with the movers and shapers of 'cultural epicentres': the poets, artists, intellectuals, political leaders, scientists and philanthropists of each and every generation. This is the way in which the leaders of the Christian Church from century to century can play their part in the shaping of the cultural reflection that will go on to form the institutional values of the following generation. There is never a guarantee that the secular cultural leaders of any age will look upon the Church's leaders with anything other than disdain. In many generations past the cultural leaders have deliberately sought to mock and marginalize the Church's vast cultural experience and its deep ethical and wisdom traditions. On many occasions their response has been the even cruder answer of a bullet. It does not matter. The Church needs to be ready to offer its wisdom tradition to those who will not necessarily hear it preached from the Ambo each Sunday. It needs to be as prepared to navigate those rhetorical arenas as much as it is familiar with

[1] The 'Pietistic' aversion to cultural theology, the 'Puritan' aversion, the 'Existentialist' aversion, and the 'Plain Man's' aversion.

[2] He has Harnack in mind mainly, who uses this term pejoratively, to explain most of the development of early Christian theology.

[3] In short his favoured phrase: 'the Christianization of Hellenism'.

[4] 'Faith and Culture'. p. 26.

addressing its own faithful: and perhaps in reflecting on the syntax necessary to communicate faithfully with the un-churched, it may discover a renewal of methods of evangelising the churched at the same time.

This vocation to address the leaders and shapers of the cultural ethos in successive generations has, perhaps, been more faithfully addressed in times past than in the present era, when it has to be admitted Orthodoxy is only just emerging from the shadow of totalitarian oppressions of frightening intensity. But it is a task of pressing importance in the world of the 21st century where access to, and command of, the skills necessary to flourish in the world of high-tech media have become increasingly and imperatively important. This is a vocational challenge that falls to our bishops and other Church leaders in the Orthodox world today; and one where they have the duty to organize, and encourage the laity, more than a need to engage in the work directly themselves. The tools of the new evangelism to the unchurched will be music, video-film, radio, instantaneous electronic exchange. These are the contemporary equivalents of the rhetoric once used by the patristic giants of our past to such monumental effect in transmitting the Christian culture across Antiquity. It is creativity here and now, that will smooth the path for building a new cultural platform where the Church's witness can shine in what will surely continue to be a swiftly evolving human society in the century to come.