

## St Tikon Archdiocesan Stewards set priorities, goals

At the June 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Archdiocesan Council, the Vision Committee for the St Tikhon Archdiocesan Stewards (STAS) set out their goals and priorities. Deacon Gregory Scratch (STAS Chair), Mark Petasky, and Matthew Francis communicated the vision at the meeting held in Edmonton. Archbishop Seraphim and the whole Council approved the report with its priorities and recommendations on how best to use the funding received from the STAS members.

### Priority # 1 : Support for the Episcopal Secretary

Through God's mercy, the prayers of St Tikhon, and the generosity of STAS members across Canada, we have achieved our first goal of providing sustainable, ongoing support for the Episcopal Secretary. Currently, in excess of \$4,000 is being donated each month by over 130 stewards across Canada, enough to sustain the required salary support for Protodeacon Nazari Polataiko, Episcopal Secretary. Already, his support to Vladyka Seraphim is making a tremendous, positive impact on our Archdiocese. *Glory to God for all things!*

### Priority # 2 : Support for the Deans

**Timeline : 1 - 3 years**

**Goal : by Pascha 2012, 300 Stewards across Canada generating \$80,000 in annual sustainable funding**

The second priority for STAS funding is to aid the work of our deans. The ministry of the deans, as "pastors to their fellow priests," is of paramount importance in the maturation of the Archdiocese of Canada.

At the time of the Archdiocesan Council meeting, the following deans were serving across our diocese:

*Québec & Atlantic Canada* : Fr Irénée (Rochon);

*Ontario* : Fr Oleg Kirilov;

*Manitoba, Saskatchewan & Nunavut* : Fr Stephen (Bob) Kennaugh;

*Alberta & Northwest Territories* : Fr Vasyl Kolega;

*British Columbia & Yukon* : Fr Lawrence Farley.

As the primary pastoral representatives of the Ruling Bishop in each geographical area of our vast diocese, the deans, experienced priests, carry out the vital role of encouraging, discerning, and mentoring their fellow clergy. These clergy in turn, through the work of the deans, are effectively supported in their own parish work. As the Holy Apostle Paul writes: "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ." (Eph 4.12) The deans' ministry in each area helps priests to experience the support of the larger Church, and to know, in a practical way, that they are "not alone," in their proclamation of the Orthodox faith.

### SAINT TIKHON ARCHDIOCESAN STEWARDS



"ORTHODOX PEOPLE!.. YOU MUST DEVOTE YOURSELVES TO THE ORTHODOX FAITH NOT IN WORD OR TONGUE ONLY, BUT IN DEED AND IN TRUTH." 1903

Currently, any travel or other costs that the deans undertake is either provided for by their own parishes, or, more likely, out of their own personal resources. While our deans would probably choose to offer this as sacrificial ministry, the Vision Committee believes that it is our responsibility, as the Church, to sustain them in this good and necessary work.

The STAS Vision Committee recommended to the Council that, having achieved full STAS funding for the Episcopal Secretary position, a stipend or "budget" starting at \$1200 per year be made available to each of the deans. This is a token amount, intended to offset some of the travel costs incurred in the carrying-out of the deans' ministries. In the initial time frame,

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this investment in ministry would add up to \$6000 per year for the five deaneries across Canada. In time, if this support is sustainable, it should be periodically re-evaluated, and raised to allow for broader support for the deans' work (for example, hosting local deanery clergy retreats, seminars, etc.).

**Priority # 3 : Seminary support for approved Canadian candidates for ordination**

**Timeline : 3 - 8 years**

**Goal : by Pascha 2017,<sup>1</sup> 1000 Stewards across Canada generating \$300,000 in annual sustainable giving**

“Over the next ten years, the Orthodox Church in America will need approximately 500 new Priests! These Priests will be needed to replace the 400 or so who will retire, as well as to staff the 100 new missions we hope to plant during this period. At present, only 20 - 25 Priests a year are being ordained, so the situation is rapidly becoming critical. And not only do we need to recruit new candidates—we need also to support existing clergy in every possible way : financially, morally, and through continuing education.”<sup>2</sup>

This quotation, from one of the pre-conciliar documents of the 14<sup>th</sup> All-American Council describes the perennial need of the Church for competent and well-prepared priestly ministers. We could extrapolate from these numbers that the Archdiocese of Canada would require approximately 15 - 25 newly ordained priests to meet the related pastoral requirements over the next ten years. This would account for the replacement of retiring priests, as well as the need for missionary priests to establish new Orthodox communities. In the Archdiocese of Canada this concern has begun to be addressed through the development of various programmes of educational formation and the focused attention of the Theological Education Committee of the Archdiocesan Council.

At our 2007 Archdiocesan Assembly it was emphasized that we require a truly holistic approach to clergy formation that balances (1) academic preparedness, (2) pastoral/liturgical competence and experience, and (3) the discernment of an authentic priestly vocation that only

<sup>1</sup> The year 2017 is chosen because it will be, God-willing, the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the consecration of Archbishop Seraphim to the Episcopate, as well as the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formal launch of STAS at the 2007 Archdiocesan Assembly, held in Ottawa.

<sup>2</sup> “Pillar Three : Clergy Formation and Development,” *The Documents of the 14th All-American Council*, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, July 17 - 22, 2005.

the Holy Spirit can communicate to, and *within*, the Church. Clearly all three of these factors are essential in preparing potential priests for a lifetime of ministry, and for this reason, the recently-created Archdiocesan Vocational Assessment Committee (AVAC) will begin to fulfill the need for assistance for His Eminence in the discernment of future clergy.

Graduate theological/pastoral/liturgical education is an expensive but worthwhile and necessary requirement for future Orthodox clergy. Currently, however, the costs associated with undertaking an Orthodox seminary education are probably prohibitive for most potential Canadian candidates for ordination. They tend to include either re-location, three years' lost-income costs, and tuition and living expenses at one of the seminaries in the United States ; or, re-location to attend St Arseny Institute, with all the similar types of costs.

Many of our priests who have graduated from the American seminaries are burdened with crippling debt loads that encumber their freedom in ministry.<sup>3</sup> Every step should be undertaken to prevent these kinds of debt-incurring situations by diligently discerning and approving potentially “good pastors,” candidates for priestly ministry in our Archdiocese, *and then supporting them in every way possible*. The STAS Vision Committee recommends that such measures, if taken intentionally “up front,” can mitigate later church problems caused or increased by clergy who are financially over-burdened, and whose marriages and family life are stressed thereby. Indeed, financial stress is one of the major factors in why clergy, some albeit reluctantly and with heavy hearts, leave the ministry ; they take up employment elsewhere in order to service their debt-loads and provide for their families. We, as the Archdiocese, should not “set up” these choice servants of God for failure or floundering. While parishes are responsible to remunerate their pastors properly, the Archdiocese of Canada can assist in placing priests into situations without crippling financial handicaps at the beginning of their ministries.

If we are successful, with God's blessing, in achieving proper support for our seminarians as potential candidates for ordination, we will unleash

<sup>3</sup> The current fees for a single student at St Vladimir's Seminary are approximately \$13,500 US per year, including tuition, room and board, and basic fees. For married students, the required accommodations would likely make this more like \$22,000 US per year ([www.svots.edu/Academic-Catalog/Financial-Information.html](http://www.svots.edu/Academic-Catalog/Financial-Information.html)). The US seminaries do have a number of scholarships, bursaries, and other financial aid, but the overall cost to the student is still very high, and some cases, prohibitively expensive. Especially in the case of mid-career candidates for ordination, the cost of re-location and lack of income often make seminary studies seem like an impossibility. Archdiocesan and STAS support could change this.

and liberate the next generation of priestly ministers for *lifetimes* of effective ministry. They will be significantly less encumbered by pastoral education-related debt, and thus freer to focus on the needful tasks of their sacred priesthood.

#### **Recommendation # 1**

**The STAS Vision Committee should have as its goal the support of seminary studies (at an agreed-upon level) for seminarians approved by AVAC as potential candidates for ordination, with the blessing of the Ruling Bishop.**

Once priorities #1 (the Episcopal Secretary) and #2 (the Deans) are met in sustainable giving, the Vision Committee recommends that the support of seminarians/candidates for ordination should be our next focus. The support provided through STAS must be meaningful and not a “token.” That is to say, the Church as a whole should intend to fund a significant portion of tuition costs (as well as also to subsidize living expenses) for AVAC-approved seminarians/candidates for ordination.<sup>4</sup>

**The model that the Vision Committee recommends is a three-fold matching approach whereby funding for approved/blessed seminary studies is provided :**

- A) 60% by STAS / Archdiocese,
- B) 30% by the candidate’s home parish,
- C) 10% personally by the candidate himself.

The costs associated with providing this kind of support to Canadian seminarians/candidates for ordination would be considerable. At current market costs, this kind of meaningful, annual support would probably not be less than \$25,000 per seminarian/candidate per year. By the time we are able to advance this priority (over the next eight years), we would hope, pray, and work to ensure that STAS membership be at an appropriate level to sustain perhaps two or three seminarians per year at this level. The projected goal of 10% Archdiocesan member involvement in STAS would more than allow for this level of support, and would indeed allow for other priorities to be considered.

#### **Recommendation # 2**

In consideration of the long-term needs of our Church, it is also recommended that once STAS moves into the third priority of sustainable funding for the formation of approved candidates of ordination (and also continues appropriately supporting the Episcopal

<sup>4</sup> During a recent personal conversation one STAS Vision Committee member had with a Roman Catholic friend, the friend was shocked to hear that there is little Church support for future Orthodox clergy, particularly since our parish priests often have families to support. In his own Roman Catholic diocese, all approved candidates for ordination received fully funded seminary education.

Secretary and the Deans), **that we consider giving the equivalent of a monthly “tithe of STAS” to a fund to aid in the establishment of a full-fledged Canadian Orthodox theological seminary.** This is not so astonishing a recommendation as it may seem at first glance. At the level of 1000 stewards giving \$300,000 per year, the monthly income to the Archdiocese of Canada from STAS would be \$25,000. A “tithe” of this amount would represent \$2500, an amount that would assist to offer a stipend for key seminary staff, or for some other necessary costs, such as towards a building fund for the development of a proper seminary campus. Even at 500 stewards giving approximately \$150,000 per year, the monthly income for the Archdiocese from STAS would still be \$12,500, and a “tithe” for seminary purposes would be \$1250.

Perhaps the St Arseny Institute may be able to evolve into this seminary. Perhaps another institution elsewhere will be raised up and meet this need. That is unknown at this time, and such things are in the hands of God. At this time, the STAS Vision Committee simply makes the recommendation that some sort of funding strategy be initiated to begin to plan in earnest for this important need and opportunity in our Church.

These are the priorities and goals that the St Tikhon Archdiocesan Stewards commit themselves to over the next several years. They are large and daunting tasks that will require great effort to achieve. Thankfully, we know that God is merciful, and ready to come to our help.

If you have not yet become a member of the St Tikhon Archdiocesan Stewards, please consider signing up today : [www.canadastas.ca](http://www.canadastas.ca).

***St Tikhon, pray to God for us!***

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and other missionary labourers  
of the Orthodox Church in America.*

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## The making of a monk

A solemn tone of “joyful sorrow” was in the air at St Herman of Alaska’s Sobor in Edmonton on Saturday, July 11, 2009, as Fr Dennis Pihach, Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Canada, was tonsured to the Small Schema [Stavraptor] by Archbishop Seraphim.

The service, by which tested candidates enter the monastic life, is rarely served in parishes, usually only in monasteries. For this reason, it was a very special occurrence for the gathered parishioners to be able to pray alongside and for Fr Dennis, as he took this powerful step towards Christ. It was a humbling and reverent experience to see our distinguished Archpriest, led by Igumen Philip (Speranza) and Monk Tikhon (Green), enter the nave of the temple, and prostrate himself fully before the altar, his face to the ground and arms spread out in the form of the Cross.

Archbishop Seraphim began the service of tonsuring by asking the candidate: “Why have you come, Brother, falling down before the Holy Altar, and before this holy Brotherhood?” To this question, Fr Dennis responded, “I desire the ascetic life, Holy Master.” After this, in order to test his willingness, the Archbishop threw the scissors, with which he would carry out the tonsuring, three times, each time asking the candidate to take these scissors and give them back, placing them on the Gospel Book. Each time, Fr Dennis went and retrieved the scissors and handed them back to the Archbishop, kissing his hand. Many parishioners noted that Vladyka Seraphim did not throw the scissors particularly close, thereby ensuring Fr Dennis’ commitment to embracing the monastic life!

In the few weeks since the parish of St Herman’s had heard that Fr Dennis would be receiving monastic tonsure, everyone had been wondering what new name would be given to him. The custom of monastics’ taking on a new name hearkens back not only to the Biblical saints of old who received new names from God, like Patriarch Moses and St Paul; it also suggests that monasticism is a new life in Christ, entered into through a kind of “death.” Echoing the step that all Christians take in Holy Baptism, the monk dies anew, completely and totally to the things of the world. God helping him, he lives for Christ alone, and as a witness to us all. Monasticism, like marriage, is an opportunity for the Christian to be liberated from the slavery of selfishness, and to live for the *other*. It is a complete renunciation of the world and self-consecration to God. Indeed, the first act of obedience of the new monk is his acceptance of the new name given him.

The time of the actual tonsuring came with Vladyka’s cutting Fr Dennis’ hair in the form of a cross, saying: “Our brother *Alexander* is tonsured by the cutting of the hairs of his head in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” From this time on in the service, we knew that he had been given this name, and would no longer be called “Fr Dennis,” but “Fr Alexander.” The new Hieromonk Alexander was then clothed in the Habit of the Small Schema, including the Paramon, a square of cloth on which is embroidered the words “I bear on my body the wounds of the Lord.” This was followed by the Cross, the inner riassa, a leather belt, the mantiya, the *klobuk*, or “helmet of salvation,” and sandals. Finally, Fr Alexander was handed a prayer rope by the Archbishop, along with a wooden cross and a lighted candle.

At the conclusion of the service, Archbishop Seraphim informed the faithful that the new Hieromonk Alexander had received St Alexander Nevksky as his heavenly patron. This choice is fitting since St Alexander, like Fr Dennis, received monastic tonsure later in his life. Vladyka told us all that Fr Alexander would be spending that whole night in the Church, to begin his monastic life in prayer. He would now be a member of the Archdiocese’s Monastic Community of St Silouan, though his other responsibilities as Rector of St Herman’s and Archdiocesan Chancellor would not be changing—with one exception. For the next year, Hieromonk Alexander will also be taking on the role of interim Dean of Annunciation Cathedral in Ottawa, until a new permanent dean can be found.

As Great Vespers began, the faithful were invited to venerate the Cross held by Fr Alexander, asking him (according to tradition), “What is your name?” He would respond, “Alexander!” To this we were all to say, “May you be saved in this name,” for now it will be through the prayers of St Alexander Nevsky, and through the mercy of Christ in the monastic path, that our new Hieromonk Alexander will enter the kingdom of God. We are all grateful for his willingness to follow Christ and serve His holy Church in this way. “O Christ, save your servant!”— *Matthew Francis, St Herman’s Sobor, Edmonton*



*The new Hieromonk Alexander greets the faithful*

## The faithful ones

Recently, it was my great joy to attend a kind of celebration so rare in our time that it deserves an entire article devoted to it: the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the loving marriage between two faithful Christians.

Paul and Jeannette Mentenko have a special place in my heart. I regard them as elders on my own spiritual journey. My wife and I look up to them as examples of a loving Christian marriage that has endured and continues to thrive. As a priest, I see them as paradigms of true lay service in a Christian community.

Noteworthy as this couple is, though, their golden anniversary celebration was characteristically understated. A few of the church ladies cooked the supper, which consisted of ham, turkey, mashed potatoes and veggies. Dessert was a wedding cake baked by a friend. The drinks came in plastic cups, the food on paper plates.

The entertainment was equally unpretentious. Paul and a friend did a duet on fiddle and guitar. My wife and daughter sang “Bound for the Promised Land.” Another old friend of the couple (who herself had just celebrated her 51<sup>st</sup> wedding anniversary) told some jokes. It felt like an open mike at a family reunion.

One of the highlights of the evening came when Paul got up and spoke to his wife in terms of tenderness and endearment that brought tears to our eyes. Following this, our own Archbishop Seraphim, who was seated at the centre of the head table, awarded Paul and Jeannette a *gramota*, a traditional certificate recognizing their past and continuing years of faithful lay service to the Church.

Leaving this simple and down-to-earth event, I was struck with a sense of having witnessed something both beautiful and dignified: two lives of steadfast faith lived in complete and loving union for over five decades.

You might ask, as I did, how they managed it? If you think that Paul and Jeannette had it easy in some way, you would be wrong. Financial struggles and hardships dogged them for years, and now they live without

savings on their Canada Pensions alone. They suffered too in the raising of their children, with every kind of sorrow about which they were often helpless to do anything, except pray. And no doubt, they worked through the familiar daily difficulties involved in a working marriage.

Eighteen years ago, Jeannette had a kidney transplant. Ever since, she has struggled with the anti-rejection medications, often being so debilitated that she is confined to her bed. Heart attacks, bouts of pneumonia, countless operations—these are some of the sufferings Jeannette has endured, with Paul steadfast by her side.

In other words, their life together has been no easier nor more ideal than anyone else’s; and more often than not, it has been more difficult. Yet Paul and Jeannette have maintained their marriage in love and faithfulness to each other, while preserving their belief that God holds their relationship in His providential hands.



With Archbishop Seraphim are Paul and Jennette on the right. On the left are Fr Larry and Presbytera Myra Reinheimer of St Peter the Aleut’s Church, Calgary.

Are these people somehow “super” Christians, possessing extraordinary inner resources that allowed them to weather the storm? Perhaps, but it’s unlikely. From what I know of their personal spiritual lives, I am aware that they have cultivated the habit of praying daily for everyone they know. I recall, for instance, visiting them and seeing a photograph of myself and my family hanging

with several others in the corner where they go to pray—reminders of those whom they commit to God’s care every day.

And what of the *gramota*, the certificate that the Archbishop presented in honour of Paul and Jeannette’s exemplary service to the Church? For Paul, exemplary service means being in the temple regularly, and restocking candles and supplies. For Jeannette, it is even more fundamental: she attends and contributes to every church event that her weakened body will permit. They are just faithful people, who over the years have continually supported and encouraged their leaders and their community as best they could. Their choice to seat the

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Archbishop at the centre of their head table was more than merely accidental. For Paul and Jeannette, Christ and His Church are always the centre of everything.

I have told this dear couple's story, because in my limited experience, there is no shortage of those who long for power and glory in Church, who are zealous to improve and fix and reshape communities according to their personal vision. There is no end to the line of people who enjoy titles and honours, who would like their names on plaques, who dream of being toasted at banquets and applauded by congregations.

But extraordinary indeed are people like Paul and Jeannette, people who do not obtrude, who struggle quietly and are victorious without fanfare; who serve steadfastly and without complaint. Rare indeed are the people who accept whatever life God gives them, offering up everything and everyone they encounter to Him.

Don't get me wrong; we need leaders, visionaries, movers and shakers. But as we seek to raise up those folks to stand in the limelight, let's not forget to honour and treasure those in the wings, who come early and stay late without being asked; who encourage without fail; who can always be called upon in a pinch; who are cheerful, prayerful, and humble. Let's not forget the faithful ones; they are truly worthy of our praise.  
—Fr Richard Rene, *St Aidan's Mission, Cranbrook BC*

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### ***Georgian-Russian Orthodox brotherhood:*** **Heaven in a choir loft**

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In the ongoing saga of foreign affairs involving the Republic of Georgia and the Russian Federation, one story has escaped the attention of the news media. It is the story of an Orthodox Christian parish in Toronto, Ontario, where Orthodox faithful of all ethnicities, but especially Russian and Georgian, have come together as brothers, as children in the Kingdom of God. It is a joyful unity unnoticed by the outside world, but for those with eyes to see and ears to hear, it is a foretaste of the age to come, made possible only in Christ.

For many years, Christ the Saviour Sobor in Toronto has been known among Canadian Orthodox as a staunch defender of Russian language and traditions. The parish itself has been very welcoming to regular worshippers of Korean, Chinese, Romanian, and Mediterranean backgrounds, yet the prevailing ethos of the parish has remained firmly Russian. However, early in 2008, a number of choir members asked to expand the

choir's repertoire to include Georgian Orthodox hymns. Within weeks, the choir tentatively grasped the rudiments of Georgian chant, an ancient tradition of polyphony from the Caucasus mountains, believed to be the earliest form of polyphony in the world.

In the world at large, in August 2008, armed hostilities between Georgia and Russia broke out over the territories of South Ossetia (Samachablo) and Abkhazia (Abkhazeti). Media "experts" offered the same tired, tendentious opinions on the complex history of Georgian and Russian relations. In North America, Europe, and Russia, variously polarized versions of the crisis were promoted to stoke the passions of their target audiences.

In the heightened rhetoric on both sides of the political fence, Archpriest Oleg Kirilov (Rector of Christ the Saviour Sobor) courageously stood up and preached about the spiritual brotherhood that transcends the Orthodox Georgian and Russian peoples, and of all peoples who share the Orthodox Christian faith. On local Russian television and in newspapers, Fr Oleg spoke of the necessity to oppose the devilish tactics of nationalistic division, and to embrace the true unity that exists among believers of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church—the Orthodox Church. In the meantime, the choir continued to improve its repertoire of Georgian hymns as a sign of this Christian brotherhood, despite the apparent tension of Georgian-Russian relations after the South Ossetian war.

Fr Oleg's truly Christian message of Orthodox brotherhood subsequently bore fruit in September 2008, one month after the South Ossetian war. One Sunday towards the end of the Divine Liturgy, a group of newly-arrived Georgians approached the parish's choir director. Having witnessed the choir's goodwill in singing ancient Georgian chant, they offered to sing a few hymns in order to show "how it is done back home." The parishioners were riveted during the performance of the haunting, other-worldly psalmody which, when concluded, left them momentarily stunned, then quickly erupting in a thunder of applause (thus eliciting a stern reprimand to the congregation from Fr Oleg: "Clapping hands is not appropriate behaviour in the House of God!").

Since that day, the stream of faithful Georgian Orthodox flowing to Christ the Saviour Sobor has grown, and the choir has been a focal point of brotherhood among the newly-arrived Georgians and the established Russians. The piety of the Georgians has elevated the spirit of the parish and has caused many to re-focus on the essential bond of love for which true Christians,

ancient and modern, have always been known. Fr Oleg continues to add prayers for the Patriarchs of Georgia and Russia (in the Georgian and Slavonic languages, respectively) after he commemorates the Metropolitan of All America and Canada. As well, Fr Oleg prays specifically for the armed forces of Canada and Russia, at which all parishioners fervently cross themselves—the Georgians most of all! Whether the Georgians are praying for the success of the Russian armed forces (not likely) or that God may enlighten and have mercy on their “adversaries,” this act of praying for one’s “enemies”—and to do so with the love and fervency shown every week at the Divine Liturgy—is the Orthodox Christian way. There is no greater catechism than seeing the entire parish praying with one mind and one heart for God’s mercy, by all and for all.

Not everything has gone smoothly, however, and in the beginning there were a few bumps along the way. One Sunday, the Georgians in the choir loft unexpectedly started stumbling around in a panic, chaos quickly spreading among the ranks. One Georgian member began to pull out his hair in anguish. In this atmosphere of sudden turmoil, one of the older Georgians grabbed one of the Russians and pleaded in desperation to know why the parishioners were kneeling on a Sunday, at the consecration of the Holy Gifts! As penitential kneeling on Sundays is prohibited by the Canons [but is a local custom of reverential piety], the Georgians were up in arms. Praying for God’s mercy to be upon the Russian armed forces during the commemorations at Liturgy is perfectly fine, but woe if you dare kneel on a Sunday!

At the feast of Pascha just past (2009), Fr Oleg made it a point to read the Holy Gospel in as many languages as possible, including Georgian. Based on the evident joy and smiles by all Orthodox Georgians in attendance, while simultaneously shaking and holding their heads in their hands, two things were evident : 1) Fr Oleg’s pronunciation in Georgian could use a little more practice, and 2) they knew that they are loved and appreciated by their Russian brethren in faith, as they have loved and appreciated their new parish home in Toronto.

As the festivities after the Paschal Celebration continued long into the night—the sounds of Georgian and Russian festal hymns mingling with the joy of the communal Paschal breakfast—it was a taste of Paradise. It was the Prophet Isaiah’s vision of the age to come, where “the wolf will recline with the lamb, and they will do no hurt in all of God’s Holy Mountain, and both will feast together in the Kingdom of Heaven.” — *Mikheil Ivanidze, Christ the Saviour Sobor, Toronto*

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*A workshop in Calgary with Heather MacKean:*  
**Icons in the Orthodox temple**

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Building a new temple for God is often not an easy time in the life of a parish. It is filled with planning, hope and prayers. St Peter the Aleut’s Church in Calgary, in its attempt to build a new and bigger church to better suit the needs of the parish, invited a beloved North American iconographer, Heather MacKean, who has been writing icons for thirty-three years. She approved of the church’s decision to consult with an iconographer before designing an Orthodox temple, because the iconography in an Orthodox temple plays an extremely important role and must be considered before planning the building. We were blessed to have her fly in from her home in the state of Washington to give a four-hour workshop on iconography and church architecture, and we wanted to share a little bit of her talk.

Icons in the Orthodox Church, she began, are not a mere optional adornment, but they are essential to the faith. They safeguard the faith. Icons are not an art form but a proclamation of our faith. They are called “windows to heaven” or “doors to heaven,” because they bear witness to another reality.

First of all, icons bear witness to the incarnation of Christ. In the Old Testament, the Jews were not allowed to paint images of God because nobody knew what He looked like. But when Christ took on our humanity from the Theotokos, what was undescrivable became describable. The Kontakion for the Sunday of Orthodoxy, a hymn that proclaims the victory over iconoclasm, is addressed to the Theotokos. The iconoclastic controversy, which forbade the use of images in the churches, was actually against the incarnation of Christ. This period of church history is called the “age of blood” because the violence against the defenders of icons rivalled the persecution of the Christians under Diocletian.

Icons also bear witness to the goodness of creation : everything that God created is good and is meant for sanctification, not only mankind but also plants and animals.

Icons witness to the sacramentality of matter: when a tree is truly a tree, a rock is truly a rock, a sunset is truly a sunset, it becomes a means of communion with the living God.

And finally, icons bear witness to the resurrection of the body : the healing of the rift between the body and the spirit that is a result of the fall.

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Heather showed us a series of slides of various icons while she explained some of the underlying details of each. For example, in icons there is no outside light source indicated, as there is in realistic western art. In icons there are no shadows. They depict “quiet inner light radiating from within.” The light of the Holy Spirit radiates from inside the person depicted in the icon. True beauty is not outward appearances. The scripture does not give us the physical descriptions of people. True beauty is the beauty of the Holy Spirit. Dostoevsky says: “Beauty will save the world.”

In realistic western art, there is vanishing point perspective where the viewer is looking at the scene as through a window. He is outside the event. In icons, however, the perspective is reversed, so that the vanishing point is in the viewer. Standing before the icon, you are the focal point of the event. You are the reason the event happened, and your perspective opens out into eternity. This is termed “inverse perspective.”

It is set down by Tradition what people looked like. Iconographers cannot paint from their imaginations or from living models. You cannot paint Christ as an African American or a person with AIDS. You have to paint Him as a rabbinical Jew. Iconography is not an abstract art form. It uses concrete visual means to communicate concrete spiritual realities as spoken by the Tradition of the Church.

The features of the saints are stylized : elongated nose, large eyes, small mouth, senses refined to show receptivity to the Holy Spirit. The flesh tones are golden to show the union of the human and the divine in keeping with the Orthodox doctrine of deification. There is a link between Orthodox asceticism and the icon in the stylization of the robes and the face. Icons, painted with fleshy and emotional realism as in realistic western art, can be obstacles to prayer. They communicate a different theology.

Next, Heather talked about church architecture. She began by explaining how the temple is the gift of Paradise, it is heaven on earth. The early Church adopted the basilica for their temples, a common form of civic building at the time. If there are no domes in a basilica, (as in the Annunciation Cathedral in Ottawa), the iconographic program must be focused in the apse of the temple and is essentially different from the apse presentation in a domed crucifix design or the cross in square design. (This is according to her teacher, Fr Nicholas Ozolin, who teaches at St Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris.)

The church temple, together with its frescoes, is supposed to be an icon of the redeemed cosmos with Christ, the new Adam, as the head of the new creation. The cross in a square or domed crucifix design, which became the most popular form of temple architecture after iconoclasm, is probably the best suited to convey the fulness of this



*Heather MacKean speaking in St Peter's Church, Calgary.*

theology. In the dome is the icon of Christ the Pantocrator surrounded by archangels. In the drum of the dome is the icon of the Celestial Liturgy. Here also can be painted the forefathers of our Lord or the Prophets. In the four pendentives of the dome are the four Evangelists. The Martyrs are usually painted on the pillars, signifying that the church is built on the blood of the martyrs.

In the apse behind the altar are the Church Fathers. Above them is often depicted the Communion of the Apostles. Above the Communion of the Apostles, half way between earth and heaven, one finds an icon of the Theotokos with Christ.

In the dome of the apse over the altar, it is typical to have the icon of Pentecost and/or the icon of the Ascension since this icon is also an icon of the Second Coming of Christ.

Rounded arches and decorative details create a sense of light and space. The light coming from the dome is like the light coming from heaven. Windows in the rest of the church should be limited because they can be a distraction during worship.

The temple has three parts: the narthex, the nave or the ship (which refers to Noah and the ark and the re-creation of creation), and the sanctuary for the altar. The sanctuary wall is the east wall because the sun, liturgically Christ, always rises in the east.

Fr Alexander Schmemmann said that because of the sacramentality of matter, materials should be what they truly are. Gold should be real gold. Marble, if it is used, should be real marble. Wood should be real wood. Candles should be real candles [not flickering electric lights]. Flowers should be real flowers, not plastic.

It is very important to choose materials that are conducive to good iconography when building the



Orthodox temple. Churches should not be “throw away” buildings, especially if they are to be consecrated. Heather is a strong proponent of building churches that can hold real lime fresco. Icons painted in this way become a permanent part of the architecture of the building because lime plaster absorbs carbon dioxide from the air for a year after it is painted, returning to its limestone state.

Drywall is not a good choice for iconography. Dry wall is not permanent and requires canvas to be glued to its surface before it can be painted. The glues that hold the canvas will dry out after forty years. When the icons painted on canvas are re-glued, they will probably be damaged and will be expensive to repair or replace. A church built to hold fresco is not much more expensive to build, and in the long run will save the community a lot of money.

The warmth of faith expressed in an Orthodox church, through its structure and icons, creates a space unlike any other place in the world. Icons and churches express a different reality, and constantly remind us that we need to be “aspiring towards the divine” every day of our lives.

We feel so blessed and are so thankful to have had Heather MacKean as a guest speaker to do this workshop for us, and we hope you, the reader, will keep us in your prayers as we strive to build our new temple.  
— Daria Tilimpea, *St Peter the Aleut's Church, Calgary*

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## **Victor Malarek to lead NASHI conferences On human trafficking**

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Victor Malarek, noted CTV and W5 journalist and author of *The Natashas : the New Global Sex Trade* and *The Johns : Sex for Sale and the Men Who Buy It*, will be speaking on the third weekend in October at two conferences, the first in Saskatoon on October 17, and the second in Edmonton on October 18, on the topic of “Human trafficking : modern day slavery.”

The conference in Saskatoon is sponsored and presented by NASHI, a Saskatoon-based organization dedicated to diverting children of Ukraine from the sex trade and to raising awareness of the global problem of human trafficking. One of the organization’s founders and continuing leaders is Savelia Curniski, who has led many groups within the Archdiocese of Canada on pilgrimages to Ukraine. She has also encouraged many to support children caught in poverty there through the

Pochaiv Project under Childcare International. Mr Malarek has said about NASHI,

Everyone on this fragile planet has the capacity to reach out and touch the soul of someone less fortunate. If everyone did this, what an amazing world it would be. NASHI, and its devoted coterie of volunteers, have taken on a daunting task with a deep sense of mission and driving spirit. From Saskatoon, all the way across the Atlantic Ocean to Lviv, Ukraine, NASHI makes an incredible difference in the lives of so many abandoned orphans in Ukraine. They are to be commended for their work and their selfless dedication.

The conference on Saturday, October 17 in Saskatoon will be held at the Travelodge Hotel and will last all day with various sessions on human trafficking, policing, breaking local and international cycles of poverty and exploitation; it will include discussion groups and a supper followed by the keynote speaker and a book signing.

Registration and cost for the day conference is \$50 per person, \$40 for NASHI members, or \$25 for students. Cost for the banquet is \$50 for everyone. The registration form is available on the website [www.nashi.ca](http://www.nashi.ca), or people can email [nashi@info.ca](mailto:nashi@info.ca), or call 306-281-9877 or 306-653-4646.



*Victor Malarek*

The afternoon conference to be held in Edmonton on October 18 again will feature Victor Malarek, and will be chaired by Graham Neil, an award-winning CTV reporter. This conference is a fund-raiser for one of NASHI’s major projects, the Pochaiv / Klenovi Lyst “Safe House” in Ukraine, and will be held at St Andrew’s Cultural Centre Complex at 9831 - 75 St, Edmonton.

Tickets for this event are \$25 per person, in advance only (seating is limited). For more information or tickets, please contact: either Pauline Lysak at 780-434-4826 or [aplysak@telusplanet.net](mailto:aplysak@telusplanet.net); or Tymofiy Hawrysh at 780-437-2116 or [tymofiy3000@yahoo.com](mailto:tymofiy3000@yahoo.com); or Robyn Shewchuk at 780-465-1334, or [rrs@shaw.ca](mailto:rrs@shaw.ca).

*An Orthodox physician's perspective :*

## The art of medicine

— Nikita J Eike, MD

*In the practice of medicine science gives way to art when we allow the Holy Spirit to act in us. — Unknown*

*If medicine is an art, the canvas is the love of God and the paint is prayer. — Unknown*

*We must take care so to use the art of medicine, if need arise, as not to assign to it the whole cause of health or sickness, but to accept the use of its remedies for the glory of God and a type of care of the souls. — St Basil the Great*

Medicine is both an art and a science. This is an expression that some consider *cliché*,<sup>1</sup> perhaps because it highlights the fact that a crucial element is disappearing from modern medicine : the higher purpose above the realities of the practice.

The expression is generally understood as the practice of medical sciences with artful skills ; some even consider it as a prescription to fully enjoy life.<sup>2</sup> Art encompasses science and represents an entire dimension of the physician's ethos that medical schools cannot formally teach, only foster. It is the God-given talent of the physician that, if cultivated, will blossom into art. It is through prayers and communion with God that the physician will nurture his talent to the fullest and will see his art mature and come to fruition.

Modern medicine is increasingly moving towards an evidence-based medicine<sup>3</sup> and a greater reliance on technology.<sup>4</sup> With such an approach, the physician-patient relationship is at greater risk of further deterioration. The relationship has already been devitalized by the constraints of the healthcare system and by the changes in the perception that patients have of their physician.<sup>5</sup> The art of medicine is what prevents the physician from merely inflicting technology on patients ; but use it as a therapeutic tool while maintaining a holistic view of the person. Unfortunately, in the recent years we have been

<sup>1</sup> Moussa, I.D., "The Practice of Interventional Cardiovascular Medicine : 'Evidence-based' or 'Judgment-based'?" in *Catheterizations and Cardiovascular Interventions*, vol. 72, Issue 1, pp. 134 - 136.

<sup>2</sup> SUNY Buffalo, (n.d.) Accessed July 1, 2008, from : [http://www.smbuffalo.edu/ome/admission/admission\\_preparation.htm](http://www.smbuffalo.edu/ome/admission/admission_preparation.htm).

<sup>3</sup> Shaneyfelt, T., Baum, T.D., Bell, D., et al., "Instruments for Evaluating Education in Evidence-Based Practice : A Systematic Review," *JAMA*, 2006, vol. 296, Issue 9, pp. 1116 - 1127.

<sup>4</sup> Merril, J.M., Lorimor, R.J., Thornby, J.I., et al., "Reliance on High Technology among Senior Medical Students," *Am. J. of Med. Sci.* 1998, vol. 315, Issue 1, pp. 35 - 39.

<sup>5</sup> Kaba, R., Sooriakumaran, P., "The evolution of the doctor-patient relationship," *Int. J. of Surgery*, Vol. 5, Issue 1, pp. 53 - 65.

witnessing a decline of the art and a subsequent weakening of the physician-patient relationship.<sup>6</sup>

For an Orthodox physician the art of medicine goes beyond the demands of secular medicine to embrace its spiritual dimension—the calling of the physician, the sacredness of the doctor-patient relationship, the soteriological and eschatological dimensions of medicine. This commitment can only be fully answered as an integral part of the life in the Church.

It is an unfortunate situation that with the advances of science, technology is now at the centre of the training of medical students and the practice of medicine. There is nothing inherently wrong with technology. Patristic literature views medication and medical techniques—and by extension, technology—as something created by God through the intelligence of man, and like the physician, they are instruments for the healing grace of God.<sup>7</sup> If man creates technologies that are ethical from an Orthodox perspective and are used in the same spirit, it is a welcomed adjunct to the practice of the art of medicine.

The machine should not have an equal part in the physician-patient relationship. All good things created by man are an inspiration of the Holy Spirit; but as man's creation, machines are only tools and should not take precedence over the person created in the image and likeness of God. Unfortunately, technical applications in medicine often depersonalize patients who find their identity reduced to their diseased part, with a physician who ministers to their ailments from behind an array of fancy but impersonal equipment.

There is also a disconnection between the telos of secular medicine and medicine practiced in an Orthodox way. The former is looking for a cure, a treatment that will see results in this world. An Orthodox physician is before anything else concerned with the salvation of his patients. Being a physician does not exempt us from the Royal Priesthood. The art of medicine should flow from the baptismal font and be constantly renewed by a life of prayer.

The practice of medicine in an Orthodox way follows when we see the patient as an icon of the Suffering Christ and when we love the other as He has loved us; only then can we offer to God our ministrations to the patient as a prayerful offering for the talents He has given us as physicians. It is in this elevation of our medical work through prayers, in this anabatic movement, that the practice becomes art through the intervention of the Holy Spirit.

The subject of the art of medicine is God, the Heavenly Physician from whom everything comes and to

<sup>6</sup> Gillick, M.R., "From confrontation to cooperation in the doctor-patient relationship," *J. of Gen. Int. Med.*, 1992, vo. 7, no. 1, pp. 83 - 86.

<sup>7</sup> Larchet, J-C., *Le Chrétien devant la maladie, la souffrance et la mort* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 2002), p. 40.

## . . . *The Orthodox physician* . . .

whom everything returns. The patient is the divinely created object of medicine—the human person—for whom God in His mercy gave us medicine to care for His creatures. Everything else is incidental and only instruments at the service of the person, instruments whose goals are to cooperate with and not hinder the healing grace of God. The physician is also a tool because it is only through the work of the Holy Spirit that he can practice his art of healing. It is in prayers that the physician invokes the Holy Spirit and thanks God for the healing of his patients. The work of the physician will find its ultimate meaning in the full participation of the sacramental life of the Church.

Medicine is certainly a theandric activity, and it would be misguided to see physicians as passive instruments of God's will. They have to cooperate actively with Him in the everyday care of patients. Physicians are often placed in situations to make life and death decisions. To discern the will of God in those situations demands a spiritual maturity that is the result of a life of prayer, spiritual struggles, and participation in the Sacraments. Otherwise, a correct medical decision is simply an expression of God's grace and not of our cooperation with Him. Discernment is a key element in every clinical action and decision.<sup>8</sup> To be able to discern the will of God we need to surrender our free will ; to do so requires humility. The practice of medicine affords daily opportunities to keep physicians humble, but it also presents us with the choice to take pride in one's accomplishments. The practice of medicine is an arena for spiritual struggles. It is only through the personal and communal prayers that this battle can be fought with any measure of success.

Even if the practice of medicine is ripe with lessons in humility—patients have not read the textbooks and nothing works as they say in the manual—in order to absorb those lessons, we have to pray for our patients, sometimes with our patients, and we also need our patients to pray for us.

In the early years of my practice, an older nurse, whom I had treated for a reactive depression in the post-chemotherapy period, once tactfully asked if she could pray for me. She did not assume ; she gently offered. It was a defining moment. Patients often want to do something for their physicians to show their gratitude. Ethically physicians are not allowed to accept gifts from patients, save for little things that would be callous to refuse, like home baked goods. The woman had lived a life of prayer and had gained a wonderful simplicity of the heart. Although I felt I had done very little for her, she had perceived that therapy is an interactive process between God, the patient, and the physician, where the invisible link that

carries God's energies is love that is expressed not only in the providing of care, but also in prayer.

“The decision to receive treatment does not lie with the man who administers the medicine but actually with the patient.” [St John Chrysotom] Respecting the patients' decisions and accompanying them on the journey that will see their consequences is an integral part of our role as physicians. It is very easy to dismiss the patient who does not follow recommendations. It is in ministering to difficult patients that the physician can best learn to embrace the full personhood of those under his care, where they are in their life, and wait patiently for the right time to intervene. By praying for recalcitrant patients, the physician turns them to God and answers his calling by taking care of everyone God puts under his charge, in the only manner they will allow, and not abandoning them. We need to pray to grow in love for those who are difficult to love.

I was once told never to blame the patient for anything that goes wrong with the treatment. This did not make much sense at the time, knowing that patients surely do not always follow their prescriptions or doctor's advice. Eventually, I realized that I am the one who has to wait patiently for the person to be ready to accept help. We are constantly refusing God's help, why would medical patients act any differently towards another human being? Patients have the freedom to exercise their free will and will inevitably have to face the consequences, which should not be accompanied by reproaches, but an atmosphere of understanding that leaves the door open for changes.

It is also true that the realities of medical practice do not always allow us to go after the 100<sup>th</sup> sheep or wait for the patient who comes at the eleventh hour. If we accept the decision of the patient and avoid assigning blame, we give the relationship a chance. Even if, faced with the patient's decision about his treatment, we sometimes have to say “I cannot do anything more for you,” we can add: “today.” It is an art to be able to hold someone responsible for their decision while maintaining an attitude of love and respect. That openness comes from the heart, the spiritual place where the physician has to make his home and where he will find the compassion he needs for the practice of his art. Without prayers, it is difficult not to fall prey to anger and resentment, two sharp blades that can sever the strongest ties.

In medicine we are often powerless in effecting significant changes for the patient ; the vast majority of the physician's caseload is comprised of chronic cases.<sup>9</sup> This

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<sup>8</sup> Chirban, J.T., *Sickness or Sin? Spiritual Discernment and Differential Diagnosis* (Brookline MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001), pp. 47 - 60.

<sup>9</sup> Wagner, E.H., Austin, B.T., Von Korf, M., “Organizing care for patients with chronic illness,” *The Millbank Quarterly*, 1996, vol. 74, no.4, pp. 511 - 544.

. . . continued from page 11:

does not mean that we abandon the patient. In the early ages of medicine, the physician-patient relationship was viewed as therapeutic and was touted as the epitome of the art.<sup>10</sup> In those cases where it seems that we cannot offer anything more, we can take comfort in the prayers we offer for the patient knowing that we are actively participating in their healing, which we may never see in our time. In praying for our patients we embrace the whole person, body and soul.

While Western medicine has progressed from a Cartesian mind-body dualism to adopt a more holistic view of the person,<sup>11</sup> this does not mean that secular medicine understands the interrelations of body and soul in an Orthodox manner. The Fathers viewed the body and soul of the person as “two distinct entities that are in balance without being separated and united without resulting in confusion.”<sup>12</sup> Modern medicine does not make a distinction between an individual and a person. It does not have a clear definition of the soul that is shared by all physicians. It certainly does not consider that only in liturgical and eucharistic worship and with the gift of righteousness, does one come to full personhood. Therefore, modern medicine can only have a truncated understanding of the very being it proclaims to be treating.

The definition of holistic in secular medicine—“a system of health care which fosters a cooperative relationship among all those involved, leading towards optimal attainment of the physical, mental emotional, social and spiritual aspects of health”<sup>13</sup>—does not share the Orthodox understanding that the body is in fact ensouled. Modern medicine considers spirituality<sup>14</sup> to be outside the responsibilities of the physician. In some ways, this is correct. However, as Orthodox Christians, our concern for the salvation of our neighbor is a responsibility that belongs to all of us, no matter our profession. Being mindful of our patients’ salvation finds its expression in ensuring that our patients receive treatments that are ethically sound from an Orthodox perspective, and that their spiritual health is not hindered but is fostered by our ministrations and the example we project as physicians.

The practice of medicine as an Orthodox Christian is not an easy task. The philosophical anthropology of Western Christianity has deeply influenced secular medicine.<sup>15</sup> This influence is manifested in subtle deviations from Orthodoxy and requires vigilance and attention to detect it. Modern medicine sees religion<sup>16</sup> as an activity that the person chooses to do and not as what defines the person. For Orthodoxy what is not turned towards God is considered fallen ; this is not the view of secular medicine and can be a source of considerable misunderstandings.

Secular Medicine is rather ambivalent in its view of religion and sees it as either something in itself pathological<sup>17</sup> or something that can be a contributing factor in the etiology of a number of mental diseases.<sup>18</sup> Yet most recent studies are conclusive in their finding of a positive association between religion and health.<sup>19</sup> Although physicians might be becoming slowly more open to the spiritual life of their patients, it is only through the physician’s own spiritual life that the art of medicine can grow to its fullest.

In addition to those challenges, Orthodox physicians may find that some colleagues are uncomfortable with the way Orthodoxy defines how we view and practice the art of medicine. We have to be ready to stand fast while at the same time maintaining a patient understanding. This is not the easiest thing to do; but the Lord never said it was going to be easy. He warned us about it and gave us what we need to grow in the practice of the art of medicine : His Love and His Church because “men ought to pray and not lose heart” [Luke 18:1].

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<sup>10</sup> Keenan, M.E., “St Gregory of Nyssa and the medical profession,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1944, vol. 15, pp. 154 - 157.

<sup>11</sup> Archbishop Chrysostomos, *A Guide to Orthodox Psychotherapy: the Science, Theology and Spiritual practice behind It and Its Clinical Application* (Lantham MD: University Press of America, 2007), p. 33.

<sup>12</sup> Larchet, J-C., *Thérapeutique des maladie mentales* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 2007), p. 29.

<sup>13</sup> Canadian Association of Holistic Medicine (n.d.), accessed 3 July 2008 from <http://www.holisticmed.com/whatis.html>.

<sup>14</sup> Note: spirituality can mean a pursuit of the mind outside of organized religion or the inner life of the faithful. I refer to both definitions here.

<sup>15</sup> Archbishop Chrysostomos, *op.cit.*, pp. 7 - 9.

<sup>16</sup> Note: I am using the secular term “religion” to indicate what Orthodox would call “a life in Christ,” which is the end of all religions.

<sup>17</sup> Pargament, K.I., Koenig, H.G., Tarakeshwar, N., Hahn, J., “Religious struggle as a predictor of mortality among medically ill elderly patients : a two-year longitudinal study,” *Arch. Intern. Med.*, 2001, 161 : 1881 - 1883.

<sup>18</sup> Koenig, H.G., McCullough, M.E., Larson, D.B., *Handbook of Religion and Health* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 78.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

**Robert Louis Wilken,**  
*John Chrysostom and the  
Jews: Rhetoric and  
Reality in the Late 4<sup>th</sup>  
Century.* Eugene OR:  
Wipf & Stock, 2004. ppbk 210 pp



*Reviewed by Archpriest Lawrence Farley, Dean of British  
Columbia*

Sometimes one finds oneself embarrassed by the saints—or at least by the criticism sometimes levelled at them. (One thinks, for example, of the accusation that St Cyril of Alexandria was behind the savage murder of the pagan philosopher Hypatia, when angry crowds of monks literally ripped her to pieces.) I myself had one of those embarrassing moments when I was speaking as part of an ecumenical panel. Besides myself, there was a Catholic priest, two evangelical ministers, and a Messianic Jew—that is, a Jew who had converted to Christianity but still defined himself as a Jew. He was very articulate, and also very pointed in his indictment of historic Christianity for its anti-Semitism. He quoted a number of anti-Semitic remarks from a number of historical figures, including Martin Luther and John Chrysostom. While I was happy to leave Luther to be defended by his Lutherans, I was distressed at the bad press being given to our own beloved and golden-mouthed John. But there was little I could say, since I could not deny that the words quoted were St John's own.

That is, until now. Now I would have something to say in St John's defence, and I have Mr Wilken's book to thank for it. The slim volume (its Epilogue ends on p. 164) does the Church the great service of putting St John's words in their proper historical context. It is not just a matter of realizing that *any* criticism of "the Jews" will resonate differently after the Nazi Holocaust than before it. It is also a matter of seeing the place of the Jewish community in Antioch and the Roman Empire generally in the fourth century.

The usual temptation is to look at the oppressed and marginalized place that Jewry occupied in medieval Europe and then to read that back into St John's time. As Wilken demonstrates, Jewish communities at that time were not oppressed or marginalized, but were powerful and respected. Moreover (and this was what spurred St John to action) they were making inroads into the nominally Christian people of his flock. Some of his congregation felt, for example, that oaths taken in synagogues before the Torah scrolls were more binding than oaths taken in Church before the Gospels, and they were attending Jewish services and keeping Jewish feasts.

And these people were not simply being good and ecumenical neighbours. Church and Synagogue were locked in a battle for men's souls, since the Synagogue was actively denying the Messiahship of Jesus and the validity of the Christian Faith, and this Judaism was an attractive faith to many of St John's parishioners. John Chrysostom's words about "the Jews" have to be read in this context. That is, his real target was not so much the Jews themselves as the *Judaizers*—those in his flock who were tempted to drift into Judaism.

As well as looking at the Jews of St John's day, Wilken also paints a more general picture of the Church's situation. He writes of the special situation of Antioch, of the history of Christianity in that city and of its special challenges (the Jewish challenge was only one), including the vitality of paganism and of the Arians. He also (in a brilliant chapter entitled "Preaching and the Rhetoric of Abuse") describes how preachers were expected to preach, and how different were the style and expectations then from now. St John's sermons, valuable as they are to us now, were heard very differently by their original audiences.

The book *John Chrysostom and the Jews* makes a valuable addition to the library of anyone striving to understand the saint whose Liturgy we serve almost every Sunday. More than that, since John is not just an historical figure but also "our father among the saints," it also can help us Orthodox to grow in our love and appreciation for one of our own, who served his Lord with zeal in his own generation, and now prays for us in the Kingdom as we do the same in ours.

**Jenny Schroedel,**  
*Naming the Child: Hope-  
filled Reflections on  
Miscarriage, Stillbirth,  
and Infant Death.*



Brewster MA: Paraclete Press, 2009.  
ppbk 150 pp

*Reviewed by Lyn Breck, RN, CAC II, LPC, Counselor*

This is truly an exquisite book on a challenging subject. With these eleven chapters and 150 pages, the author invites us into "the forbidden room" of infant death. She is herself a wife, a mother, and a survivor of infant loss as the dedication to her infant brother, Garrison, suggests. An Orthodox Christian with a master's degree in theology, she brings to her work a rare and welcome depth and breath of spiritual perception,

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gentle, and inviting. Through poignant personal sharing, inspired quotes from the bereaved, captivating story telling and good, orderly direction in the form of specific suggestions closing each chapter, Jenny Schroedel shows herself to be a competent and compassionate guide. Her personal spirituality is respectfully woven through the paragraphs like a golden thread.

The real life stories of real people, many of whom I know personally, are both devastating and grace-filled. Without exception, they requested that their real names be used. They were not interested in protecting their identities or shrouding the realities they experienced and continue to experience. These grieving parents, siblings, and other family members and friends entrusted their most personal moments into the author's care. She has honored their trust.

Jenny Schroedel adroitly fashions a pathway through the grief, confusion, and heartache, lifting the veil of secrecy and shame from what characteristically in our society is a disenfranchised loss. She exercises a precious ministry by, among other things, understanding the importance of naming the child, no matter the age or stage of that child's development. She addresses the essential issues faced by those experiencing peri-natal loss with holy respect and reverence.

This book will provide basic information, solace and even, I would say, will serve as a rudder for sanity in the troubled times that follow the loss of a child. For those in caretaking roles—counselors, ministers, and others—this book will offer insights and provide a template of sensitivity to the myriad issues raised by these particular losses.

Essentially, as Jenny expresses so well : “God is the one who holds every memory of every child tightly, tenderly, against the backdrop of eternity.” This is the cradle of her work.

I can wholeheartedly recommend that you make space in your heart and mind and on your bookshelf for this precious witness to hope and healing that can emerge from the precariousness of our life's experiences. It will draw you into a place of spiritual beauty and be a balm for your soul.

[*Editor's note: related to this book is the following website: <http://namingthechild.com/>. It contains helpful articles, stories, poems, and video related to these losses, most of them from an Orthodox perspective.*]

**William P Young, *The Shack*. Newbury Park, CA : Windblown Media, 2008. ppbk**



*Reviewed by Archpriest Lawrence Farley, Dean of British Columbia*

Despite its best-selling status in the Evangelical Protestant world (or perhaps because of it), I had resolved to somehow avoid reading this novel. The many questions and citations from the book with which I had already been bombarded by a parishioner told me all that I needed to know and more than enough to confirm my jaundiced opinion of it. But when another parishioner held the book up to my face after Liturgy with the request that I please read it and give my opinion, I felt that being a good pastor meant that I would have to slog through it after all.

I found that it was *not* heavy slogging, but was actually well-written and very readable. I also found it to be quite heretical. Polite people, I'm told, don't use the h-word anymore, and I myself like to save it for just such occasions as this. That is, the book does not just contain doctrinal errors. The presence of some errors do not justify use of the h-word. I use the h-word because the Trinity it proclaims is not recognizable as the holy Tri-une God revealed in the Scriptures. As St Irenaeus says regarding heresy, it is as if someone deconstructed a mosaic of the face of the King and rearranged the pieces to create a mosaic of a fox, saying that this was the face of the King. All the pieces (or Scripture verses) used by the heretics are the same, but they have been dramatically altered out of all recognition. Though *The Shack* is a compelling read and has many valuable insights regarding the human heart and the state of Evangelical religion, I can no longer recognize the face of the King.

The novel tells the story of a father tragically bereft of his young daughter at the hands of a serial killer. Her body is never found, only her blood-soaked dress, which was recovered in an isolated shack. It is this shack to which the father is invited, much later, by God (in an apparently hand-delivered letter, signed only “papa”), so that God can reveal Himself, teach him some lessons and reform his heart (*Christmas Carol*, anyone?) The father, “Mackenzie” by name, goes alone to the shack to meet this “papa,” not knowing what to expect. Then God reveals Himself in a weekend-long retreat, full of good southern cooking, good weather and heart-warming laughter. And here is where the book makes me reach for the h-word.

The Trinity is revealed as three persons : not three *hypostases*, three persons. The Father is an older African-American woman, complete with southern accent (“sho nuff”) who answers to the name “papa,” though she is “rather fond” of the name “Elousia.” (*El*—God, and *ousia*—essence, get it?) She reminds me suspiciously of the Oracle in the movie *The Matrix*. The Son is a young man, “appearing Middle Eastern” and dressed in a tool belt and gloves, jeans and a plaid shirt ; the Holy Spirit is a “small distinctly Asian woman” whose name is Sarayu. (I asked myself, why an *Asian* woman? Perhaps because Asians are supposed to be exotic and mysterious? Whatever.) The three are always affirming one another, saying how much they love each other, laughing, kidding around with each other, and giggling. I’m not making this up : *giggling*. And apparently, the Father appeared to Mackenzie as a mother because he had trouble with his father. Later, He would appear as an older man, with “silver-white hair pulled back into a pony tail, a gray-splashed moustache and a goatee.” (He reminded me of Willie Nelson.) And, straining to be profound, the author offers a fourth member, the woman “Sophia.” Sergius Bulgakov’s reaction can be imagined.

So, what’s the problem? Where to begin? For one thing, the Scriptures teach that the invisible Father, “whom no one has seen or can see” (1 Tim 6.16) is made visible only in His Son, who is “the image of the invisible God” (Col 1.15). Thus, the Father reveals Himself in His eternal Logos, so that all Old Testament theophanies of the Father were revelations of the Son, which is why St John could write that Isaiah saw the glory of Christ when the prophet had his vision of the Lord of Hosts in the Temple (Is 6.1f, Jn 12.41). The Father and the Spirit, never having been made incarnate, have no visible image—they cannot be seen as two men, much less as two women.

But more alarmingly, the Trinity as pictured in *The Shack* is utterly devoid of any awe-inspiring *numinus*. Moses may have been full of fear and trembling at the manifestation of the God of Sinai (Heb 12.21), Isaiah may have declared himself undone at the sight of the Lord of Hosts in the Temple (Is 6.5), Ezekiel may have fallen on the face before the Lord at the River Chebar (Ezek 1.28) and even St John fell at the feet of the glorified Christ as if he were dead (Rev 1.17). But the sight of the Trinity in this volume excites no such reaction at all. All is warm and casual, comforting and cozy—a God who giggles, and calls you “honey,” a God who drops and breaks crockery, a God who never condemns our actions or is disappointed in any of us. In short, this is the God who is your buddy, so characteristic of modern Evangelicalism and celebrated in their feel-good choruses. It is not the God invoked in our baptismal service, “whose glance dries up the deep, whose interdict makes the mountains melt away,” the God who “touches the mountains and they smoke, who clothes Himself with light as with a garment.” All of the other

errors and mis-steps of the volume pale in comparison with this basic mis-presentation of the divine. The awesome God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has become the comfortable demi-god of the emergent church. The face of the King has been distorted to resemble the face of a fox.

A commendation on the book’s cover says that the book “has the potential to do for our generation what John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* did for his.” For the sake of our Evangelical brethren, we can only hope not.

## Pastoral Notes

24 Dec 08: **Priest-monk Peter (Kondratyev)** was received from the Moscow Patriarchate into The Orthodox Church in America, and transferred by Metropolitan Jonah to the Archdiocese of Canada; and effective the same date, attached to the Monastic Community of St Silouan the Athonite in Johnstown ON, and to the Bishop’s Chapel of St Silouan

6 May 09: **Priest John Beal** was released from his duties and attachment at Holy Martyr Peter the Aleut’s Church in Calgary AB, and transferred to the Omophor of Metropolitan Jonah for assignment in the Diocese of the South.

6 May 09: The publication of the weekly Russian-language newspaper *Pravoslavnaya Kanada* from Toronto was blessed.

4 Jun 09: The Mission Station in Canora SK was formally established, and later blessed with the name of St Andrew, the First-called Apostle.

4 Jun 09: In addition to his other duties, **Archpriest Andrew Piasta** was assigned as Priest-in-Charge of the Mission Station of St Andrew, the First-called Apostle, in Canora SK.

1 Jul 09: In addition to his other responsibilities, **Archpriest John Jillions** was appointed Ecumenical Officer of the Archdiocese of Canada.

8 Jul 09: The establishment in Victoria BC, of the St Maria (Skobtsova) Outreach Centre, with its Chapel of the Protection of the Theotokos, was blessed.

10 Jul 09: The Hermitage of St Elias, near Dickie Bush AB, was re-established.

12 Jul 09: At the Divine Liturgy in Sts Peter and Paul’s Church in Dickie Bush AB, **Hieromonk Alexander (Pihach)**, formerly Fr Dennis Pihach, was elevated and installed as Igumen of the Hermitage of St Elias, remaining a member of the Monastic Community of St Silouan the Athonite.

15 Jul 09: The establishment of the Hermitage of St Nicholas of Myra in Gibson’s Landing BC was blessed. **Nun Anna (Barkham)**, remaining a member of the Monastic Community of St Silouan the Athonite, was assigned to this hermitage.

22 Jul 09: **Priest-monk James (McLuckie)** fell asleep in the Lord in Kamloops BC.

1 Aug 09: Remaining a member of the Monastic Community of St Silouan the Athonite, **Hieromonk Basile (Paradis)** was attached to the Sobor of Sts Peter and Paul in Montréal QC.

1 Sep 09: In addition to all his other responsibilities, including remaining as Rector of St Herman of Alaska’s Sobor in Edmonton AB, **Igumen Alexander (Pihach)** was assigned as Interim Dean of Annunciation Cathedral, Ottawa ON.

## *In the electronic media . . .*

For more recent, up-to-date news of the Archdiocese of Canada than can be produced in a quarterly like the *Canadian Orthodox Messenger*, readers should look regularly at the diocese's website : [www.archdiocese.ca](http://www.archdiocese.ca).

On YouTube, the Retired Bishop of Ottawa, Archbishop Lazar (Puhalo), has produced scores of videos about the Orthodox faith, from the Monastery of All Saints of North America in Dewdney, British Columbia. Reaction to

these videos has been mostly very favourable, and Vladyka Lazar believes that using the electronic media for Orthodox outreach is very important. To see any or all of the videos, go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and type "Archbishop Lazar (Puhalo)" in the website's search line. The monastery also has a regular podcast called "Radio Orthodox Canada," and two websites ([www.orthodoxcanada.org](http://www.orthodoxcanada.org) which features their online Orthodox magazine, and [www.new-ostrog.org](http://www.new-ostrog.org)).

*Remember the Our Father and the Beatitudes :  
you love Christ only as much as you love your enemies.*

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