

THE TRUTH? PERSONAL SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

Many groups (such as pentecostals, charismatics, neo-pentecostals, [hyperdogmatics](#) (such as evangelicals, Jehovah's witnesses, seventh-day adventists), even the "enlightened" ones, those preaching "power evangelism" and so forth), underline the importance of personal spiritual experience.

According to the holy Bible, faith in the One Lord (Deuter. 6:4) is at the centre of the Christian confession.

Philip measures the authenticity of his experience based on the teaching of the prophets; so does Nathanael (Jo. 1:45-46).

The confession of faith in the face of Christ distinguishes the Church from the synagogue; whoever insisted on that confession was announced an *αποσυνάγωγος* i.e. was sent outside the synagogue (Jo. 2:22. 12:42).

In the holy Bible, it is not the experience that determines the faith, but the belief that Jesus is the Lord (Rom. 10:9) safeguards the genuinity of the experience that is acquired in unity with the confession and life of the Church.

Apostle Paul does not rely on his personal experience; he omits it (Gal. 2:3-9). Only Luke talks regarding Paul's experience and this in order to underline his relationship with Christ, which *alone* is of critical importance. Paul's conversion into Christianity is an act of God; for this reason there is mention of it; not for the experience but for the content of the faith.

Apostle Paul himself, underlines that he delivered the gospel that he received (that Christ died for our sins, was buried and resurrected), and he motions the Corinthians to keep this gospel. As proof, he does not bring *personal* spiritual experiences but the experiences of *others*, i.e. of the Church: of apostle Peter's, the twelve ones', the 500 ones', James' and the rest of the apostles. His experience is mentioned last, but he gives it secondary importance, in order to conclude that both he and they "this is what we preach and this is what you believed" (1 Cor. 15:1-11).

Faith therefore is not determined by personal spiritual experience, but is delivered and received within the Church (1 Tim. 6:20. 2 Tim. 1:14. 2:2. Jude 3). The content of faith is the measure for the authenticity of experience.

Apostle Thomas wanted to have the experience of a miracle, the "sign" that the Jews were

asking for (1 Cor. 1:22); but this kind of faith is overcome by Christ; "blessed be those who did not see and believed" (Jo. 20:28).

The apostles undoubtedly had had a unique experience on the day of the Pentecost (Acts 2:2). But regarding the 3000 ones that believed to Peter's preaching, it is mentioned that they were staying "in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in the prayers" (Acts 2:42).

The teaching, in other words, was not a result of everyone's personal experience, but of a pre-defined measure, harmonised to the life of the Church. Each one was called to accept this teaching as something that was binding and to "construct" his personal experience *based on this teaching*. This way, he could also be certain about the authenticity of his experience.

For not all experiences are genuine, coming from the spirit of truth (c.f. Exod. 7:10-11. 20-22. 8:7.3 etc.). The holy Bible assures us that the one that violates and does not stay faithful to Christ's teaching "does not have God ... if anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching do not take him into your home" (2 Jo. 1:9-10).

It is not the spiritual experiences of a christian or of a preacher of the gospel, that certify their authenticity, but Christ's teaching.

The Lord Himself ascertains that "spiritual experiences" will appear from false Christs and false prophets too; and, as a result, bring confusion and deceive even "the elect" (Matth. 24:24-25. 2 Cor. 11:13-15. Revel. 13:12-18. 16:14. 19:20). For this reason, apostle John suggests: "Dear friends, do not believe the spirits but test the spirits if they are from God for many false prophets have gone out in the world" (1 Jo. 4:1).

If someone is based on his personal experiences, it is easy for him to be deceived. If for example, someone considers the event of speaking tongues as a genuine spiritual experience and places it at the centre of spiritual life, assessing it to be an external "sign" for the "baptism by the Holy Spirit", it is certain that he will be deceived. He will consider this phenomenon as "proof" of a "new pentecost" and the group that projects such experiences as the "church of the latter days", as the "bride" that the Lord will receive. Then for him the Orthodox Church becomes "church by name", or even "whore Babylon", from where "God's children" must exit!

The Orthodox Christian is not in any such danger of deception, because he places his personal experience on an authenticity that is separated from himself, *i.e.* on the authenticity of God's will (Acts 5:29); his experience then is not subjective, it is not the result of demonic influence. The aim of every faithful person within the Church is not to have an experience, whether it be called "speaking tongues", "prophecy", "powers", "healing gifts" or whatever else (1 Cor. 12:29), but the "best road", love (*charity* in the translated KJV Bible, but the original reads *love*), which "does not ask things for itself" and is greater than both faith and hope (1 Cor. 12:31. 13:13).

This love refers at the same time both to God and to our neighbour and cannot be isolated from the other commandments (Mark 22:37-40. Gal. 5:14. 1 Jo. 4:16-21); "if you love me, you will obey my commandments and I will ask the Father and He will give you another Paraclete, who will stay with you forever, the Spirit of truth, that the world cannot receive (by themselves)" (Jo. 14:15-17).

The one not obeying the commands of the Lord does not receive the Holy Spirit, nor does he have genuine spiritual experiences, which are fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

Obedience to the teaching of the apostles, *i.e.* observing God's commands, is a sign of true *theognosia*.

"Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. From

this, we know the spirit of truth from the spirit of delusion" (1 Jo. 4:6).

"Absolutising" one's personal experiences can prove destructive to them. This is because experiences can be processed and created, with the aim of subjecting people and making them dependant upon the decision centres of the various groups, which call for "experiences" in order to "prove" that they have divine authority.

This danger does not exist in the Orthodox Church because spiritual experience is not absolutised. Even in the case of personal spiritual experiences, these, essentially, are not individual experiences, cut off from the faith, the worship and the life of the Church.

After all, in the Orthodox Church, it is not experience that determines the contents of the faith and the way of life, but the Church's faith and life in unity "with all the saints"; *this* is what "measures" the authenticity of a spiritual experience.

PENTECOSTALS

Church of the latter days?

The pentecostals claim that their mission is to constitute the church of the latter days, the church that the Lord will receive, and they call upon the so-called pouring of the Holy Spirit among the pentecostal groups of the 20th century as proof.

Apart from the fact that, according to the Bible, the Church exists *through* the centuries (e.g. c.f. Chapters [1](#) and [14](#)) and, therefore, could not have appeared for the first time in our century, we also notice that the Holy Spirit leads to unity and not to division (Jo. 16:13. Ephes. 4:3-5.13). The various pentecostal groups do not have "one faith", but present great differences in the teaching of their doctrines, even in the fundamental doctrine of the Holy Trinity (c.f. Chapter [18](#)). Generally, we see that the pentecostal movement has not contributed towards unity, but to an even greater division of the Protestant groups.

Pentecostals discern the "little flock", which according to them, coincides with the church of the "chosen", differentiated from the church of the "masses", which coincides with the "world"; they say, it is the "church by name", which is not harmonised with the spirit of God.

But this belief is opposed to the Scriptures (Matth. 13:24-30. 36-43. Rom. 14:4. Matth. 13:47-50).

The Bible underlines that one can have the correct faith (orthodox) and still be a sinner (Matth. 23:1-3), as well as to appear on the outside as leading a "holy life" and be a false teacher and/or a false prophet (Matth. 24:23. 2 Corinth. 11:13-15). For this reason, the combination of both these elements is suggested: correct faith *and* holy life.

The "little flock" of Luke 12:32 refers to the time of the New Testament and not today. The Church then was aware that she was against the great majority of the society, which had not yet accepted the christian faith. But at some point, in many places on earth, she stopped constituting the minority. This does not mean that "she fell into apostasy"! If we accept this view of the pentecostals, we must also imply that their movement (e.g. in South America) which became the majority in the meantime, fell into apostasy. It is proved therefore that the old distinguishing lost its meaning and that it is not possible to tie our Church down to the historical time of her beginnings (c.f. last section of Chapter [14](#)).

Joel's prophecy

Prophet Joel mentions: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit" (Joel 2:28-29).

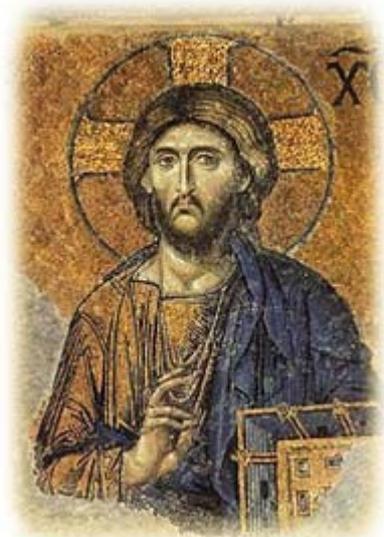
This prophecy is interpreted by Pentecostals in reference to our days. But this belief is erroneous. For this prophecy was realised on the day of the Pentecost; this is mentioned by apostle Peter: "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16).

When the Bible mentions regarding the "latter days", it takes into consideration only those days beyond which we expect nothing more; it is a series of events that ensure man's salvation.

For this reason, Christ's incarnation constitutes the beginning of the latter-days period; its end is Christ's second coming. So: "early" days are the days of the patriarchs and prophets, whereas "latter" days are the days that started with Christ's nativity and with His apostles!

This is the teaching of the Holy Bible (1 Cor. 10:11. 1 Peter 1:18-20. Jude 18). Before Christ's second coming we do not expect another "pouring" of the Holy Spirit or "second pentecost", but the "pouring" of the spirit of the Antichrist, *i.e.* of a demonic spirit (2 Thessal. 2:3) !

The reference of Pentecostals to the verse Joel 2:23 is unjustifiable. For there is mention there about "the early [=winter] rain and the latter [=spring] rain as in the beginning"; it does not refer to some new, unknown till that moment event. In order for earth to grow and bear fruit, it doesn't only need the winter rain, but the spring rain too; these are the best conditions for fertility. Therefore the people do not need to be "afraid"; the "animals of the plains" are not going to suffer from the "pasture"; the trees will bear a lot of fruit, "the fig-tree and the vine", the "threshing-places" will be full of corn, and the pits beside the presses will overflow "with wine and olive-oil"; all will be happy and glorify the Lord for this blessing (Joel 2:21-28).



The "spring rain" is the yearning of the cultivators (Zech. 10:1), who await not only the winter rain, but the spring rain too (James 5:7-8).

If we take seriously the view that the verse James 5:7 refers to our times, then we must deduce that after the Pentecost there is winter rain. So, will we have overall three pentecosts???

Therefore we see that the Pentecost is one, unique and never-repeated; as one is the incarnation of the Word of God, His crucifixion and His resurrection!

The charismata

The Orthodox Church believes that the Holy Spirit, that "resides" in the faithful one's soul, creates a new reality, which becomes perceived by the spirit-carrying man in the same way a pregnant woman feels the embryo inside her womb, and this perception is expressed on the outside by wondrous events.

These phenomena in the life of the spirit-carrying people are not "ecstatic", but a result of the residence of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9. 1 Cor. 3:16).

It is not the power of the saints that does miracles, but the grace of the Holy Spirit; but the

saints made God's will to become their will, inside them lives Christ (Galat. 2:20. Rom. 14:8) and they walk "in the Spirit" (Rom. 8:4. Gal. 5:25). This way they are internally informed of the power and will of the Spirit, in order to be able to say: "but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6), or "Tabitha, arise" (Acts 9:40). The genuine [charismata](#) therefore presuppose the residence of the Holy Spirit (c.f. Chapter [21](#)).

But this is not achieved neither by the external techniques of the Pentecostals, nor "automatically"! It presupposes the internal cleansing, which is not only the result of the divine act but also the result of the human effort. Man must prove with his own sweat that he truly wishes to receive the grace and that he is ready to sacrifice everything for it (Matth. 13:44); the coexistence of the grace and sin is impossible. The true [charisma](#) is not given independently of the spiritual readiness of man; it is not granted without the existence of moral progress (Mark 4:28).

The fact that God does not respond automatically (like a machine) and "instantly", like many neo-Protestant and pentecostal groups believe, is proved even by those exceptional and extraordinary cases mentioned in the holy Bible: Cornelius was a convert, "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house ... and was constantly praying to God for all" (Acts 10:1-2); the Ethiopian eunuch, the official of Candace, was studying carefully the word of the prophets; he was prepared to be baptised and receive the grace (Acts 8:27-28).

The charismata that God offers constitute reality in the life of the Church (Rom. 12:4-8. 1 Cor. 12:4-11. 27-28). They are not received by force, but are given as a gift to the humble souls. Not with the aid of techniques, but based on the divine will. The Holy Spirit distributes the charismata as He wants (1 Cor. 12:11. Hebr. 2:4), *when* He wants, and *for the purposes* He wants!

This is the meaning of the word *charisma*; it means something that is given for free and in that case it is given "from above" (James 1:17); it cannot become the result of forcing God to give it to man by techniques! The grace "blows" wherever it wants (Jo. 3:8); nobody knows where it comes from and where it is going! God defines this: *when* It will come and *to whom* It will come to; *He* defines the targets and *not* man. Man can only accept the grace and submit himself to God's will (Rom. 9:16).

All the charismata of the Holy Spirit have as their purpose the "construction" of Church (1 Cor. 14:1-28. Ephes. 4:11-13). If someone is not united with the Church and does not "construct" the "one body" (Ephes. 4:4), but divides it, is not a true charisma-carrier or *charismatic* (1 Cor. 10:17. 12:12-31. Ephes. 4:4.11-12. Collos. 3:15). If someone preaches that he has the prophetic charisma and does not preach God's teaching, talks "in disrespect"; his charisma is not real, he is a false prophet (Deuter. 18:20-22); even if he presents "signs and miracles", these do not stem from the Spirit of truth, but from the spirit of delusion (2 Thessal. 2:9-12. c.f. Matth. 24:24. Revel. 13:13-14).

The experiences of the Pentecostals

The experiences of the Pentecostals are not fruit of the Holy Spirit. They are created with special techniques. Let us take as an example one of the largest pentecostal groups, the "Free Apostolic Church of Pentecost" and their mission in Greece. We will base our arguments using as evidence their own pamphlets and recorded speeches of their "pastor" Mr. L. Fengos. (The movement uses today the internet via the web page <http://www.christianity.gr/>).

This movement connects ill-fate with the situation of the "latter days", that is described in the holy Scriptures. Thus, it presents an important problem that indeed does occupy man's thoughts today: "Where are we headed? What will become of us?"; this is the title of a

pamphlet that underlines that humanity is going "everyday from worse to worst"; instability, anarchy, terrorism, wars, corruption ... Nothing can stop the problem. Everything shows that "the time of Christ's coming is near". Faced with this reality, man is not called to react, affecting his environment in a positive way or change the social structures, but instead to enter himself in the "church of the saved ones", to prepare himself for the "receiving"!

The christian churches are identified here with the "churches by name", with the "whore Babylon"; they do not constitute the "solution". The only way out is the "church of the chosen ones", that is represented by the movement. This church constitutes the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, the final pentecost! Whoever enters in it, becomes greater than all the prophets, even greater than John the baptist! (cassette 25/1/83).

The technique used by this group creates an environment and instances of suggestion.

First, there is a sermon, during which hymns are added, and at some point the pastor calls the new converts to make the first step to "salvation":

"If any soul wants to give itself to Christ whole-heartedly, it can come here at the front and kneel and say: 'Christ, save me and show mercy upon me, consolidate me too with your Holy Spirit' ... ". Afterwards, the hymns continue to be chanted and finally the pastor motions: " ... if you want to submit yourself to Christ, say: 'Lord I want too' Take a pillow, kneel, and He will save you ... "! After this, the hymns start again ... (cassette 1/6/82).



"Say: 'Lord, I want to be reborn by You'; you *can* say it, say it this morning: 'Lord, today I want You to rebear me' ... " (cassette 2/3/80). "This morning I have to say to those that have not been reborn that the wind is ready to blow in their heart ... " (cassette 2/3/80).

"We will chant the hymn 'You must be reborn' ... and I want this morning, if someone has not been reborn, to be reborn. Is there any soul here that was not reborn? Let them raise their hand!

- Indeed! If you haven't been reborn, this morning you must be reborn".

After the chanting of the hymns is over, the pastor continues: "If anyone wants to be reborn, let them come to the front. Kneel and say: 'Lord, rebear me'; not those reborn, but those that have not been reborn yet. Come to the front, take a pillow, kneel and say: 'Lord, rebear me' ... ". The chanting of hymns continues afterwards (cassette 2/3/80).

This "ritual" is followed up in all gatherings so that, in time, a feeling of inferiority is developed inside whoever has not yet been "reborn". Then he too decides to come forward, take a pillow, kneel, and say: "Lord, rebear me". After this, he will want to receive the "baptism by the Holy Spirit". And, since speaking tongues is a necessary "sign" in this group, he will soon start to "speak tongues"!

This way, a desire from within develops for the construction of such "events". This is essentially a special method of praying in a particular ecstatic atmosphere and environment, in which enthusiasm is let loose. The need for such experiences creates an atmosphere of psychological pressure, for in the case when someone does not have these spiritual experiences, this is attributed to the fact that he doesn't believe correctly!

This psychological pressure increases especially in those groups that believe that there is

no experience of salvation without the baptism by the Holy Spirit.

But this way, the boundaries between the act of the Holy Spirit that creates genuine spiritual experiences like the one of apostle Paul's (1 Cor. 12:1-3) and subjective or even demonic situations, that lead to "experiences", vanish. Man can no longer discern the genuine from the non-genuine and considers situations that are interpreted based either on man's natural abilities or even as demonic influence, to be "residing of the Holy Spirit".

On the other hand, the teaching that the "baptism by the Holy Spirit" is expressed by the phenomenon of speaking tongues, enacts psychological pressure to the followers, because they think that they *must* have this experience, in order to be included among the chosen ones (the "elect"). Thus, a lot of them are led to disappointment and to desperation, not to the freedom "in Christ". This problem is recognised even by basic factors of the pentecostal movement.

L. Steiner, manager of the Swiss pentecostal mission, notes: "This erroneous teaching on baptism by the Holy Spirit is the reason for many heresies and deviations in the pentecostal movement ... the number of those that were not helped [*i.e.* did not receive the "baptism by the Spirit"], is much larger than anyone could possibly imagine. The correction of the teaching on baptism by the Holy Spirit is a need of absolute priority" (*c.f.* Reiner - Eggenberger, 154).

According to the Orthodox Church, the spiritual life is not comprised of ecstatic events. Ecstasy calls for man to leave his self and to meet God outside his self. This, according to the Orthodox faith, is an expression of an evil spirit. Life "in the Spirit" presupposes the union of man with the Holy Spirit, the "residing" of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:11. 2 Tim. 1:14).

Speaking tongues

First of all, we must note that the phenomenon of speaking tongues is not new. It was known in ancient Greece (*Pythia* in Delphi) and to other non-christian religions, *e.g.* among the *Derbisides*.

Historian Eusebius refers to *Montanus* that he was being inspired by a spirit of delusion and would start to "enthuse" and "speak tongues", prophesying "things different from the old tradition and succession custom of the Church" (Euseb. Eccles. Hist. E 16, 7, EPE 2, p. 170).

Such phenomena appeared in the 17th century among the *ugenottes* and in the 18th century among the *yansenites* of France. In England, this phenomenon appeared among the *quakers* and *methodists*, to the *mormons*, and to other american heresies.

But in these cases, this was a sporadic phenomenon and thought of as an expression of piety. To the new movement of Pentecostals, this is not any more an exception, but a doctrine, a rule. It constitutes proof that the faithful one has received the completeness of the Holy Spirit (even if not "enforced" in all pentecostal groups) and, therefore, the certainty of his salvation. It was therefore only natural that the internal desire and strong tendency to experience such phenomena be cultivated. Thus, without realising it, a special psychological method was developed, aiming to lead to such experiences.

Pentecostals refer to the event of Pentecost and underline that this was not a unique event, but is repeated to each one of them. In the same way the Apostles spoke "in strange tongues", this way too they, today, via the "baptism by the Holy Spirit", speak "in strange tongues".

We do not know if the apostles *literally* spoke the tongues mentioned in the Bible (Acts 2:9-11). The fact is that the apostles would speak and each one of the listeners would hear their words in his own tongue/dialect (Acts 2:6-8). They were speaking "in the Holy Spirit".

The event of the Pentecost was the "inauguration" of sermon, by the power of the Holy Spirit. And those times needed this, because the "world" was spiritually uncultivated! In this way, God declared that many nations would enter the Church and His name will be glorified in all tongues. It was also a symbol of unity, cancellation of the event of Babel, where the tongues had been confused!

Another kind of speaking tongues is the "speaking of strange tongues" (1 Cor. 14:2-5). Now, this "speaking of tongues" by the apostles, had as its main purpose preaching, but "he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries." (1 Cor. 14:2).

The speaking of tongues of the Pentecostals is not a means that provides unity; it continually creates new schisms in church. Pentecostals claim that these constitute repetition of the Pentecost, but the "tongues" they speak are not understood. On the contrary, during the Pentecost, all would understand the apostles, even the ones that were mocking them (Acts 2:6-13).

The "speaking of tongues" mentioned in 1 Cor. 14:2-27 is not considered by apostle Paul an important charisma, nor would all the faithful ones receive it. It played an absolutely secondary role in Church and, in time, it was effaced.

Already from the time of St. John [Chrysostom](#), this charisma had dulled, for he himself mentions:

"In the old days, there existed people that had the charisma of praying together with the charisma to speak tongues ... " (Chrys. , speech 35, to 1 Corinth., EPE, p. 464).

The "signs" mentioned in Mark 16:17-18 were confirmed (Acts 10:44-45). But this "speaking of tongues" was not something compulsory for all the faithful people.

"Not everyone has the power to work miracles or to heal diseases or to speak in strange tongues..." (1 Cor. 12:28-30), and the apostle underlines that we must set our hearts "on the more important gifts" (1 Cor. 12:31), such as love, for "there are gifts of speaking in strange tongues, but they will cease", whereas "love is eternal" (1 Corinth. 13:8).

The phenomena described in Acts 10:44-46 (Cornelius), Acts 8:14-17 (in Samaria), and Acts 19:1-6 (in Ephesus), were exceptional cases, that God decided for them to happen, as of course the case of the thief on the cross was an exceptional one too (Luke 23:43). The phenomenon of speaking tongues never became of central importance in the life of the christian Church, nor is it connected to the central contents of the gospels.

Apostle Paul takes a critical stand against this phenomenon (1 Cor. 12-14) and is very cautious regarding the use of "speaking tongues" in gatherings. He motions that its use must be confined to private use (secret praying). With his intervention, he wanted to correct a preposterous situation: the Corinthians were doing exactly the same mistake with the present-day Pentecostals, namely over-stressing the "sign" of "speaking tongues" (1 Cor. 14:2-18).

Contrary to this behaviour of the Corinthians, Paul underlined: "Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue" (1 Corinth. 14:19). "Tongues", he says, "are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not" and if someone uninitiated (unlearned or unbeliever) enters, he will say that "ye are mad" (1 Corinth. 14:22-24).

Apostle Paul therefore did not motion people to speak "tongues" (1 Cor. 14:19). After all, "speaking tongues" in gatherings was not "self-sufficient"; it needed interpretation (1 Cor. 12:10. 30. 14:13. 26-28).

In fact the apostle places "speaking tongues" at the lowest level of charismata (1 Cor. 12:28) and in some verses he does not even mention this charisma at all (Rom. 12: 4- etc.) .

COMPULSORY CELIBACY OF BISHOPS

Question: Why do the Orthodox forbid marriage for bishops, since apostle Paul explicitly says: "A bishop then must be ... the husband of one wife ..." (1 Tim. 3:1-2) (KJV Bible)?



Answer: To examine this verse more closely we must resort to the koine text, for the translation fails to bring in some other points. The original then in Greek reads: "dei ton episcopon mias gynaikos andra (esti)" (= "must the bishop (of) one woman man (be)"). I will agree that the "andra" refers to the word "man" in the sense of "husband"; the usage of the word in the same context is kept in modern Greek too.

Two things must be considered here:

(a) where the stress of this phrase should be placed, and

(b) what "bishop" ("episcopos") means in the New Testament.

Let us first note that the word *bishop* used in the translated Bibles corresponds to the Greek word *episcopos* which means *overseer*. In all translated Bibles, wherever you see the terms *overseer* and *bishop*, both correspond to the same word (*episcopos*) from the koine text.

Also, the word *elder* used in some Bibles is identical to the word *presbyter*, for the word *presbyteros* (from where *presbyter* stems), which is used in the koine text, in Greek means *elder*. Usually such Bibles will use either the word *presbyter* or *elder* but not both, so therefore this matter need not bother us anymore (simply think of the words *elder* and *presbyter* as having the same meaning in both the Bible and in today's usage). I will use the word *presbyter* henceforth in these notes; however, if in a Bible you see the word *elder* instead, it is the same thing.

Let us start:

(a) The stress of the sentence "*dei ton episcopon mias gynaikos andra*" must not be placed on the word *dei* which means *must* but on the words *mias gynaikos* (=of one woman) which means something different, namely, that the bishop must have married one woman (whether she is still alive or has passed away) and not married more than once in his lifetime. We must not place the stress on the word *dei* but on the word *mias* because the apostle suggests celibacy to the everyday christians, saying: "for I would that all men were even as I myself" (1 Corinth. 7:7-8), in particular celibate, and in verse 38: "so then he that marries doeth well; but he that marries not doeth better", where, looking back at the koine text *marries* (*marries not*) corresponds to *εγγαμίζων(μη εγγαμίζων)* , i.e. *is coming (is not coming) into matrimony* which means simply *gets (does not get) married*. So in plain English verse 38 says: "so then he that marries does well; but he that does not marry does better". How then would the apostle wish to *impose* a law of matrimony (by the word *dei*) for bishops (who, after all, as overseers of the rest of the Church, must follow

laws at least as stringent as the rest)?

So we see that those Protestants that have abolished celibacy in their ranks, and therefore imposed a law of matrimony, are clearly in the wrong. But could also the Orthodox be wrong by *imposing* a law of celibacy? And we come to the meaning of the word "bishop" in New Testament in (b). As a convention to avoid confusion, I will use capital initials for the word's usage in New Testament times (*i.e.* Bishop) and small initials for the word's usage today (*i.e.* bishop).

(b) "*Bishop*" in the New Testament means *presbyter*. This is obvious from many verses of the New Testament. In his epistle to Philip. 1:1, apostle Paul writes "with Bishops and Deacons". Could it ever be possible in one city, the Philippians, to have many bishops? There would be only one. But here it talks about many Bishops. Therefore they must be the presbyters. The same can be said about Ephesus, where the words *Bishop* and *Presbyter* [alternate](#), having the meaning of *presbyter* (Acts 20:17.28).

Therefore there too, he talks about presbyters who are called *Bishops*, for it was not possible to have many bishops in Ephesus. We will come to the same conclusion by examining other verses from Paul's epistles in the Scriptures.

So the obvious question now arises: who were the *bishops*, in today's sense of the word, at those times?

bishops in today's sense of the word, were then the Apostles. This is clear from the Acts 15:2 verse, where it says: "unto the Apostles and Presbyters", verse 4: "of the Apostles and Presbyters", verse 22: "then pleased it the Apostles and Presbyters", verse 23: "the Apostles and Presbyters". Therefore the distinction between the *Apostle* and the *Presbyter* is quite clear, in these verses. The Apostles were superior to the Presbyters (in rank, for hierarchical purposes), therefore they were their *bishops* (= *overseers*). After the death of the Apostles, their successors received the name *bishop*, which was separated then from the name *presbyter*, as can be seen by the words of the apostolic Father Ignatius (d. 107), who names the three ranks clearly : "Bishop, Presbyter, Deacon" (Magnesius VI, 1).

Conclusion: The Apostle saying "*dei ton episcopon mias gynaikos andra*", means: "the presbyter must/may (?) be the male spouse (husband) of one woman (whether she is still alive or has passed away), and not get married more than once in his lifetime (even if his wife has passed away)". The question mark of course was placed in the above sentence because we must also remember that the stress of the sentence must be placed on the *mias* and not the *dei*, giving finally the following: "it is possible for the presbyter to marry; if he does however, he must be the husband of one woman in his lifetime".

Indeed, this is done today by the Orthodox: the presbyters either get married (the various *vicars*) or stay celibate (the *hieromonks*). We therefore see that the celibacy of "Bishops", namely of the presbyters, does not oppose the Holy Scriptures.

And to finish the topic, we turn our attention to today's (Orthodox) *bishops*, the successors of the Apostles. Following the example of many of the Apostles they stay celibate, like they did, and never marry. Since we have seen that bishops today are the successors of the Apostles, therefore celibacy makes sense to be imposed on them (they can thus dedicate all their time to their flock and to God, something which is of course liked by God, namely celibacy). Of course during the Apostolic times bishops were allowed to marry. In fact the very Apostolic canons talked about how married bishops should conduct themselves. However celibacy was highly praised by them. This is of course now a matter of the external evolution of the Holy Tradition. The first bishops could marry. But the first bishops (and other priests) were also wearing *papalithra* and were [shaven](#), elements which were later on changed as part of the external evolution of the Church, and became long beard and vestments (with the Orthodox "shovel hat"). These external elements wisely evolved

into the ones we have had for centuries now; indeed, the vestments and the celibacy of the bishops in particular, received a great importance and were sanctioned at Synods, and became of central importance in the life of the Church. Since the Bible not only does it not contradict the existence of such elements but implies that they are the best road (even the Apostles being the Bishops Universal, *i.e.* travelling missionaries that would set the first local bishops around the world, even though they were not all unmarried, lived a difficult life of celibacy, struggle and even martyrdom after they followed Jesus), the Tradition (and we have seen the great importance of the Divine Tradition which has survived till today, always engulfing at its centre the Tradition of the Bible - which is part of the Divine Tradition of course - through the Oecumenical Synods), is well in its own right to establish such regulations, totally in harmony with the life of the Church and the belief of the Church of Christ to date. This is exactly what it means that Christ is at the helm always, the head of His Church.

Note that the Church as a whole is the Sole Judge of the Tradition and has a right and an obligation to examine and even modify or cancel the external Tradition. To understand how this is and what this means, please read [here](#) (and preferably the whole of that chapter as it is a good practical example of what Tradition is and what it is *not*).

And how about celibacy among everyday Christians (laity), which was implied in 1 Cor. 7:7-8 as we saw above? One example is the *monks* who are not priests (*i.e.* monks who are not *priestmonks*) (see also notes on [Monasticism](#)). Of course, both male and female lay people are allowed to follow this road of celibacy.

A little thought

Every person is called to follow his or her own martyrdom for Christ. We have three roads to martyrdom: the bloody martyrdom where the martyrs die for Christ, the ascetic martyrdom, where the person (priest, monk, nun *etc.*) sacrifices his or her pleasures of the flesh to follow the narrow path of asceticism, and finally the martyrdom through matrimony, where the spouses sacrifice their self for their other half and for their siblings, giving up their self-centredness and self-love for their beloved ones and for all. It is possible for someone who lives in the world and has not become a monk or a nun to reach a higher level of spiritual clarity. For example, the ascetic genius and hermit, Antonios the Great, recalls a story when He asked God to show him a person more spiritually advanced than himself. God sent him to a small village. When Antonios the Great arrived there, he saw that the man he was seeking was a humble shoe-maker who lived in a small hut with his wife and children. He did not expect this (he expected probably some hermit or another ascetic) and asked the man to tell him a little about himself. The man replied: "What can I say about myself? I live in this place with my wife and children, and make shoes for people. While I sit here and work I often think, while watching the people pass by, how much more each one of these people deserves to go to Heaven, so much more than me!". And the saint admired his reply and thanked God for the lesson He sent to him.

And indeed my friends. Nothing helps us ascend faster than knowledge of how spiritually low we are, how much more others deserve to go to Heaven than us, because if we truly were spiritually advanced, we would be able to truly help others with our prayers and even heal them.

If I had one tiny spot of faith in my heart, I would not need to write any of this! But because I am of such a low spiritual progress I can only hope that someone might get some help from these pages. For that simple shoe-maker if he lived today and we knew of him and he was praying for us (he is certainly praying for us from the triumphant church), he could help you, dear reader, much more than all the knowledge of the internet put together! Because we must not only satisfy our intellect, believe that we love and believe in God through our intellect, but also our heart must follow accordingly. And that is what is needed

for you, and for me, and for all of us.

May the Lord help you and grant you many good years.

ZIONISM

Based on the teaching of the holy Bible, there are no discriminations between the nations; God calls people from all nations. The national and racial discriminations are now abolished and everything is conducted "in Christ" (Gal. 3:26-29).

The divine oeconomia, therefore, is the same for all the nations; there are no two oeconomias, one that will end with the "receiving of the Church", and another one during some earthly reign for a thousand years under the Jews.

Israel was called first. But the Israelites rejected this calling, and for this reason the other nations come first now. When the "fulness of the nations" is completed, the Israelites will be called again. Then this will become "their fulness" (Rom. 11:12. 15-21. 25-32. Matth. 21:43. 13:46).

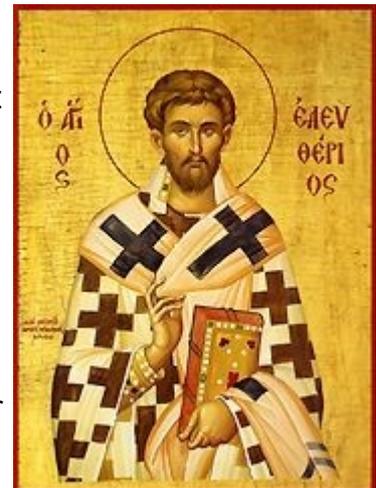
Israel's fall became the reason for the inauguration to be passed on to the other nations. However, "their fulness" will be treasure for the Church (Rom. 11:12). This will take place after the "fulness of the nations", *i.e.* after the number of the ethnics (pagans *etc.*) that will convert to Christianity is completed (Rom. 11:25).

SECULAR MUSIC IN CHURCH **INTRODUCTION**

We will briefly quote some of the things the Fathers of the Church have said regarding the use of musical instruments in Church worship.

The saintly Western father Augustine mentions: "musical instruments were not used. The pipe, tabret, and harp here associate so intimately with the sensual heathen cults, as well as with the wild revelries and shameless performances of the degenerate theatre and circus, it is easy to understand the prejudices against their use in the worship." (Augustine 354 AD, describing the singing at Alexandria under Athanasius).

St. John Chrysostom talks similarly saying: "David formerly sang songs, also today we sing hymns. He had a lyre with lifeless strings, the church has a lyre with living strings. Our tongues are the strings of the lyre with a different tone indeed but much more in accordance with piety. Here there is no need for the cithara, or for stretched strings, or for the plectrum, or for art, or for any instrument; but, if you like, you may yourself become a cithara, mortifying the members of the flesh and making a full harmony of mind and body. For when the flesh no longer lusts against the Spirit, but has submitted to its orders and has been led at length into the best and most admirable path, then will you create a spiritual melody." (Chrysostom, 347-407, Exposition of Psalms 41, (381-398 AD) Source Readings



in Music History, ed. O. Strunk, W. W. Norton and Co.: New York, 1950, p. 70).

Eusebius of Caesarea also quotes: "Of old at the time those of the circumcision were worshipping with symbols and types it was not inappropriate to send up hymns to God with the psalterion and cithara and to do this on Sabbath days... We render our hymn with a living psalterion and a living cithara with spiritual songs. The unison voices of Christians would be more acceptable to God than any musical instrument. Accordingly in all the churches of God, united in soul and attitude, with one mind and in agreement of faith and piety we send up a unison melody in the words of the Psalms" (commentary on Psalms 91:2-3).

Even though we will find musical instruments in Protestant churches as well, their leaders seem to have different opinions. Regarding the "reformists" of Protestantism, here is what they said:

Luther said: "The organ in the worship is the insignia of Baal. The Roman Catholics borrowed it from the Jews" (Martin Luther, McClintock & Strong's Encyclopedia Volume VI, p. 762).

Calvin, even though in his rationalistic spirit fails to understand the importance of incense used in liturgical services and the lighting of lampads which were both kept as part of the first-Christian Tradition, *did* believe that musical implements must be avoided; he said: "Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The Papists therefore, have foolishly borrowed, this, as well as many other things, from the Jews. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise; but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostles is far more pleasing to him. Paul allows us to bless God in the public assembly of the saints, only in a known tongue (1 Cor. 14:16). What shall we then say of chanting, which fills the ears with nothing but an empty sound?" (John Calvin, Commentary on Psalms 33).

Of course Calvin here presents a very naive idea about the transfer of customs in the Church through the ages since his rationale is applied here outside the context of Tradition: the customs were not borrowed but complemented, to become part of the Christian Temple. Their presence does not necessarily imply pompousness. Of course there is nothing "unknown" as regards the tongue in which hymns are chanted. Therefore the whole argument that Calvin presents here is rather shaky, essentially based upon his personal preferences, since he now replaces the Pope as the unique interpreter of Scriptures. It would be constructive at this point for the reader to examine [this article](#) as regards the presence of "rituals" in the temple.

At any rate, what is important for our discussion is that he was against the use of musical instruments in worship, despite what contemporary Protestants do.

John Wesley, founder of Methodism, praised by many Protestants (Anglicans, for instance, who use musical instruments in their worship; from pianos in High Church to electric guitars and drums in Low Church) quotes in Adam Clarke's commentary, Vol. 4, p. 685: "I have no objection to instruments of music in our worship, provided they are neither seen nor heard".

Even the Frankolatins admit that the first Christian music in Church was only vocal (*c.f.* Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 10, p. 648-652. Vol. 10, p. 657-688).

Of course, what the parachurches believe is not essential for our discussion (at least for the expository part). It is however interesting to note that, despite the "laws" imposed by the "reformers" and despite the fact that the "Roman Catholic Church" admits that first Christians would only have vocal music in their Church, and Ecumenical Synods

discussed the need for *katanyxis* (in the sense of *devoutness*) in the temple while praying, they still use musical instruments (the Frankolatins use the organ and orchestras, and among the Protestants that use instruments one could find anything from a simple piano or classical guitar to electrical guitars and ecstatic background music, such as "christian discotheques" and similar musical events).

One of the main problems of course that the musical instruments cause is that they do not let the faithful concentrate to prayer and, rather, the focus is on the singer and the musical group that is playing or to the splendour of the organ. All these means do not let the faithful person concentrate and pray humbly to the Lord with the other people but make him enjoy the event in the same way he would enjoy a show at the theatre or in an orchestra. There is an immediate danger that the Christian will not be going to church to pray but to enjoy the performance. The devil can very easily use this to ensure that it becomes the central part of the whole worship; and indeed, if you look at the various "Willow Creek" or some of the other "live worships" you will always see a secular singer at the front, not an icon of the Lord or something spiritual. It will be like a usual pop album; and this in fact has become known as "Christian music"! The centre is always on the singer, whereas the lyrics come to the people in the background, as secondary. Most of such music is relatively mild, though we do have the odd repetitive ecstatic piece hammering down our ear drums; the Protestants support this as a means to bring the message that Christ is our Saviour although we are not sure why this has got to be done by someone shouting like a mad man and why on the other hand when it is time for prayer Orthodox Christians are scorned many a time for repeating certain prayers (e.g. *Kyrie Eleison* said 40 times on occasion etc.)!



Instrumental music - while it certainly existed in the form of instruments in Old Testament times - never became of central importance in the Church of the post-apostolic years. Simplicity implies humility and musical instruments used in church worship lead the person to feel the warmth of the music and not of God, to lose humility if he/she is a good singer and thus praised by others etc.. To prove this, all you have to do is ask people who truly view musical instruments as a central part of their worship (e.g. Evangelical Anglicans) if they could do without that music. When music is lacking in their gatherings this is not liked at all! Of course, musical "haven" is a great way to attract people in church. But church is not a market, where we advertise our product, for curious by-passers to enter in it. We do not change the Church and her ways in order to please some people who want to enjoy a show. Christianity is not a show. The people who enter the Church must enter humbly and with their thoughts being only of God; it does not matter if the little choir or chanter is out of tune slightly, or if they do not sound very well in some way. What counts is the words of prayer, and only through [vocal music](#), which is what was given to us through the Tradition, can we concentrate in our praise to God. And when we do not concentrate the devil is truly enjoying himself for he can do anything he wants with us.

At this point it would be constructive to recall another important objection of the Protestants. Fun! The Psalms tell us we must praise the Lord with guitars and trumpets, so yes, we can have fun! Does it say anywhere a Christian must not have fun?

Let us then examine the NT and see the spirit of the Bible as to the typical behaviour of a Christian. If we turn to the NT we will see in many places that the disposition of a Christian should not be to have fun with the world but to carry his Cross too, away from the world. As James writes characteristically: "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you men of double mind. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to dejection" (James 4:8-10). Fun? Frivolity? Of course, it is not a sin for a lay person to have some solemn fun within limits! Christ participated in the celebration of the marriage in Canah, where He also performed His first great miracle, that amazing protypon of the Eucharist offering to come. But in our life in Christ we must move away from fleshly pleasures as much as we can in order to try and live life in Christ. This is what James is telling us, essentially. But the Church is the Body of Christ, where the Orthodox belong to and must therefore try and imitate the life in Christ suggested by James. During the Liturgy, the whole of the Church meets mystically and unites during the terrifying Sacrifice of our Lord. This is the life in Christ, which we must live in the temple as well, for the temple becomes abode of the living God and all His Church, it is not just a building where we meet to pray only.

Another problem is that popular music which has long been associated with or is directly demonic music (loud, constant beats leading to ecstasy, sexual frenzy and/or emotionalism), is used by Protestants. That introduces an additional problem; the problem with the Frankolatin parachurch in this respect is that the people enjoy a lot the classical music show and the splendour associated with it, and thus cannot possibly feel true *katanyxis*. You can imagine how much more this is the case with people who have degraded their spiritual behaviour to such an extent that they associate it with popular music (pop, jazz, rock 'n' roll *etc.*) This topic is enormous and we can only briefly touch upon it at the moment. For those who think otherwise however, let them ponder upon this: from the era of the Beatles who were supporting the Indian beliefs and brought back to Europe the mystical theosophical teachings of Tibet, who blasphemously claimed they were more popular than Christ and gave us the first backward message on a label, all the way to today with blasphemous pop singers such as Madonna (recall "Like a virgin"), Robbie Williams, and the others (all of which rely upon sex as a means of publicising their music) - and we are not even going to touch upon the rock or heavy metal scene- what do we have? Ecstasy, sex, drugs, blasphemy, degradation, non-Christian "ethical" (or not so "ethical") values ... We know of Protestants who sing in their churches "Jesus loves you, Mrs. Robinson" bringing to mind Simon and Garfunkel, now the soundtrack of the film ... "The Graduate"! Such disrespect!

But even if we assume we ensure all the songs used in our worship are entirely "clean" from bad elements in current music trends we are still following musical styles associated with purely carnal images and connotations. Even if we are dealing with so-called "classical" music. Can we follow upon these trends just because they are popular among people in order to bring them closer to Christ? Is the Church then a secularised institution? This is exactly why Holy Tradition has wisely refined the ecclesiastical chanting we follow today in Orthodoxy (which included before the Schism similar [Latin forms](#) in the West), to make people realise that this is not music "just for the ears", but of a different purpose; it must differ from common everyday music not only out of respect for our Lord and King, but also because it must be something which does not change depending on the current trends of music, most of which is totally alien to the life of the Church both with its tunes (loud, with beats) and its lyrics (none complimentary to the soul) and more importantly which is unable to help us move spiritually.

For example, how can the existing chants of the past two millennia be sung in revised musical implementations? Imagine singing "Thine birth O Christ" with an electric guitar: an instrument that brings to mind tight jeans, sexual "freedom" (the rock 'n roll era) and junkies who are at best atheists. But even if it does not bring any of that to mind, what person won't be moved to start "rocking to the beat", smiling, grinning, clapping, and totally losing the precious connection to the spiritual ladder that will drive him upwards?

Many times we see people discussing whether this or that musical trend is beneficial to the soul or not. While it is true there can be secular music which is not bad for the soul, and indeed good music can even be beneficial to the soul, it is not a random event that monks - those soldiers of Christ who try to follow Him as much as possible - listen to no (secular instrumental or non-instrumental) music at all. Music is still a pleasure and thus something that ties us down to earth and does not allow us to ascend. Even [Byzantine](#) chant loses a lot of its "hypostasis" when chanted in a very pompous way; because it loses its spiritual element. It is not only our best (clean and decent, not necessarily expensive) clothes we must wear when going to church but also the best ecclesiastical music that we must practise; and we cannot use any music that leads to ecstasy, or which has been associated with evil practices, or that cannot help us concentrate -- but at best (if it is e.g. some "slow" guitar song) makes us feel emotionalist (as if we were in a blues bar) -- as Church music!

Those who have felt *katanyxis* at Church may recall before they felt it how static and even boring [Byzantine](#) (or its analogues of [Russian](#), Rumanian *etc.*) chant would sound to their ears, or perhaps how simple in some ways. This was because they were not ready spiritually; they were trying to concentrate on the chanting itself in order to gain pleasure out of it, whether consciously or unconsciously. But when they were eventually carried through with their prayers of *katanyxis* they saw the difference, they realised how beautiful it was and how divine this music was; the by-product of the Tradition of the Church, the experience of the Ecclesia herself. Divine people wrote this music; not just everyday composers. Even geniuses' music (e.g. the music composed by Bach or Beethoven) is still "fleshly", secular. The people who wrote the ecclesiastical chants were ascetics and melodists, some of whom would hear divine melodies (like Romanus the Melodist would).

Let us bring a typical example: a few years back, a monk at Katounakia on Holy Mount Athos wrote new ecclesiastical chants on the [Byzantine keys](#), as wonderful and divine as the ancient ones were; and he did this while hardly having learned how to read or write. The chants were all written by his hand in perfect old Greek; something scholars could hardly do today! (His work was also rewarded by the Byzantine Academy in Athens). Of course divine prayers are written all the time (either for private use or [formally](#)) by hundreds of such Holy Fathers, and many of the contemporary chants written are pious melodies in full harmony with all the ancient ones, equally wonderful, written in perfect *koine* Greek, by many Athonite (and other) monks. The point we are trying to make here is that, like in all other parts of the Holy Tradition, music composition (much like [iconography](#)) must also be done by people living in a "divine state", by people who have a "blessing" for this work; so that the end result can also be blessed (and felt as such by those of course who follow the same spiritual "frequency").

The above does not mean that we cannot use musical instruments to praise the Lord; this is clearly implied in the OT: "praise the Lord with cymbals" *etc.* However the Psalms here are simply trying to emphasise how much we must praise the Lord; us and all the cosmos, with our voices, with cymbals, with guitars with all possible means! The main point is at the emphasis. Thus it says: "Let every breath praise the Lord".

Also, we should realise that the use of instruments in the OT was due to the hardness of heart of the people of Israel who were not ready for the refined version of vocal music.

Of course, this was the case with nearly all issues in those days; people lived in difficult times and were still very far away from the time of Grace we live in. People were not ready yet for the ascetic journey of the ecclesiastic chant; they needed a lot of "fanfare" in order to become enthused in something. So we meet Christ giving the Decalogos to the Jews through lights and thunder; does God need to do this? But people were all still in a crude state then, they were not prepared for something better. (Of course, this was not the case

for Holy Moses and the other Prophets who reached theosis). Even today, people in the Church who are spiritually immature get enthused with signs and such. Only people who move up the ladder to theosis understand more and more that God is Love and as such He is humble and expects us to cease being spiritual "infants" and to progress spiritually towards theosis. Only in terms of wickedness we should be like the infants!

But of course at the same time it is allowed to use instrumental music - provided it is decent - to praise the Lord but outside the temple. Nowhere does it prophesy in the OT that this is to be done within the Christian temple in the future. (Notice that the Jewish temple is not the same as the Christian temple of the NT times, as their purpose was different, and thus its use during the OT times does not count; also the former was meant to eventually be effaced as the only offering that would need to be given would be the *todah*, through eternity, namely what we call the Divine Eucharist). The worship in the Christian temple has a different purpose, and there is a time for everything. Outside the temple, we can praise the Lord in this way as well. The difference is not just a matter of "tradition"; it is a matter of Tradition. It is an essential difference in the concept of "worship" that Protestants and Papists adhere to, which is alien to Orthodoxy.

From an Orthodox point of view "church worship" has at its centre the Divine Liturgy and the Church is a temple, consecrated by a bishop, and not a mere building where we gather to pray. From this point of view, we can see why the first Christians, like us too, would not use musical instruments or pompous choirs (*i.e.* large choirs with splendour). Because we witness the fearful sacramental change of the Precious Gifts during our daily and Sunday worship at the temple; and if we are prepared to receive the Eucharist we shake and sigh within our hearts for what we are about to do (*i.e.* receive our Lord's Body and Blood) praying non-stop that this will not be to our condemnation but to our salvation; whereas, if we are not prepared and we can thus only receive the unconsecrated blessed bread at the end (the *antidoron*) by the priest, we still pray humbly and ask the Lord that one day we too will be allowed to participate in the Feast.

Now, in this setting, place a disco or an electric guitar inside the temple (a holy place, where all of the Ecclesia meets mystically, with the Virgin Mary, the Angelic Orders, the Saints, ready to honour and witness the one and only fearful Sacrifice of the Liturgy) with TV sets, video recorders and cameras and what you get is a market, a blasphemy against the holiest of places. But Jesus raised His whip when His temple had turned into a market, showing to us that humility and a contrite heart are what is strictly required within the environment of the temple; respect for the holy place of God; not trampling it with heathen acts of the flesh.

Of course the argument in the previous paragraph applies mainly to the Papist practice but also today to certain Orthodox temples (largely in the Diaspora) where by trying to imitate a distorted Western Christian ethos they have taken to using organs in their worship though -- we are glad to say -- to a relatively small extent. This shows clearly how a distorted view on Christianity affects all the areas of worship, even in this respect.

The argument of course does not apply to the Protestant parachurches as they have no notion of a temple but only buildings; so their main purpose is to gather to sing, pray and pass the time or have fun; our main purpose (and supposedly but not in reality that of Papists) is to attend the Liturgy and therefore the Eucharist. For the Protestants the Eucharist is only a symbol, and the building is just a building; for us it is not at all like that. Therefore the Protestants are excused in their behaviour (it is all part of the domino of heresy that alters Christian doctrine all the time).

The "Roman Catholics" should reconsider, though it is to be noted that part of their pompous ways has arisen due to their heretical views on papal primacy.

Finally, those Orthodox who have taken up this bad habit should reconsider what piety truly entails and whether our need for pompous and extravagant music is due to our lack of having Christ within us, therefore needing to be entertained in a fleshly manner during the liturgical services, or just due to our inflated egos that make us want to show off our musical talents in the temple: either way, we are a long way from leaving this world during the Liturgy and seeing the angels, the bodiless powers, the Saints, smell the divine fragrance of the miraculous bones under the altar, watch the icons turn their heads and smile back at us and feel that amazing blessing emanate through our pores, that indescribable divine life on earth, that moment when heaven meets earth, when the Mother of God takes us in her arms and Christ shines His uncreated light upon us, while we cry kneeling down for mercy, because we have been blessed to witness such wonders and beauty even though we do not deserve it. In other words, we have a long way to go until we view the Liturgy in the [context of the Fathers](#).

In order for us to provide a more proper understanding of the issues above, we must separate Ecclesiastical Music from ordinary *kosmiki* music, by providing the reader with a more detailed examination of the development of Ecclesiastical Music in the West and the East, and the resulting differences. Ultimately, these differences reflect differences in theology, in the same way this has happened in both Iconography (statues replaced Icons) and architecture (God-comes-to-save-man domes are contrasted to the man-tries-to-find-God-through-his-intellect pointed roofs).

In a very real sense then, we shall see that Western ecclesiastical music is almost entirely identified with certain forms of *kosmiki* (secular, ordinary, non-ecclesiastic) music (most usually classical music). The best exposition on the matter can be found on the website of St. Anthony's monastery in Arizona. The link can be found [here](#) and it is a must read if you wish to understand these issues in detail. Please also note that there is a PDF file you can download from the site (you will need to have the Acrobat Reader installed on your computer in order to view it).

EXPLANATION OF TERMS USED IN THIS SECTION

- theognosia = knowing God, Christian wisdom, in the sense of 1 Jo. 4:6 .
- winter, spring = in the koine text, it reads *πρόιμη* i.e. early and *όψιμος* for latter, but these words can also be used to refer to (both in koine Greek and everyday modern Greek) the *winter* and *spring* rains respectively, because the winter rain is the "early" rain and is thus known as the *proimi* rain; the same holds for the spring ("forthcoming") rain.
- charisma = spiritual gift in the sense of James 1:17 ; charismata is the plural.
- more than once = If he is a widow, he cannot re-marry, for then he will have married *more than once* in his lifetime. The matrimony in one woman as opposed to many women mentioned in this verse has precisely this meaning, and not "he must be monogamous and not polygamous" because matrimony "in the Lord" (c.f. [Matrimony](#) notes) presupposes unity of one man with *one and only one* woman. Therefore the "monogamous" in "marriage" is implicit throughout and "married more than one woman" can only mean therefore "married more than one woman in his lifetime, after the previous one passed away".
- formally = Of course, the Church has her monastics that continue to write hymns in fully "theologically correct" poetical styles, to this date. For example, recently (2004), the event of the first "exodus" of the miracle-working Holy Icon of The Tricherousa Virgin Mary from the Monastery of Chilandar on Athos, for reasons of

pilgrimage to mainland Greece, saw the need of a Paracletic Canon for her, so it could be used henceforth by all pious Orthodox Christians. This task was assigned to Archimandrite Moses and his brothers in Christ, from the Monastery, who completed the task exceptionally well. If one reads the Canon, they will not be able to find anything "modernist" about it, for it faithfully follows the regulations set by our Holy Hymnography, within the set limits of this sacred art. At the same time, the poetic chants written are marvellously unique, full of distinctive depth and beauty, a depth that mirrors not only the human talents of the hymnographer monks but also the inner beauty of their life in Christ, through hidden struggles, Whose blessing they clearly had for this God-pleasing enterprise. May these words be a small thank you of gratitude towards all the wonderful monastics who labour for our salvation day and night.

- iconography = In order to understand the above points a little better, we strogly recommend [this article](#) on the principles of Holy Iconography.
- consequences = There is a myth that continues to this day, namely that the *filioque* became the main cause of the Schism of AD 1054 because supposedly the Hellenic Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches held differed opinions on this issue. This myth must eventually be put to rest. Read [here](#) for some more information.
- alternate = Why on earth would the Bible alternate the two words *Bishop* and *Presbyter*? The reason is, as we said above, the word *Bishop* used in general in the koine (and modern) Greek, means *Overseer*. Indeed both the *bishop* and the *presbyter* today, are *Overseers* in the Biblical sense of the word (and *overseers* in modern Greek) because the former *sees over* the presbyters, deacons and laity, whereas the latter *sees over* the deacons and laity. Both *supervise* the Church. From the post-apostolic times till today, however, the word *overseer* (*episcopos*) is used exclusively for what we call today *bishop*; why this is is evident from the notes above; read on.
- gehenna = from old Greek, this word means a place outside where rubbish was thrown in and burnt; something like a dump.
- hieromonks = Priest monks.
- imposing = Celibacy is imposed only upon bishops. Vicars may marry, however they can only do so before their ordination for afterwards they "marry the Lord", Who exactly for this reason is also known as the Bridegroom (and the Church - female structure in Greek - as the Bride)
- *katanyxis* = Please note that in a number of other occasions this word carries negative connotations.
- shaven = While no Oecumenical Synod has mentioned anything explicitly regarding the issue of the priest's beard, this does not necessarily mean that priests are supposed to shave. What it means is that, the Church, for reasons of Economy, accepts such priests into Her realm, since of course this is not a dogmatic issue. Alas, a few priests who just think in terms of "what the rules allow", and not truly enquire within their hearts why this external element of the faith has survived for such a long time, do shave (esp. in the Western "diaspora" e.g. some OCA and GOA priests). The Tradition informs us that in the 1930s a priest - now a Saint of the Church - fr. Joachim from St. Anne's *Skete* on Athos (the *Ayiannaites*) went to the USA. When he saw the situation where priests would shave (mainly in trying to be "modern" forgetting that shaving is really ... older than leaving a beard *i.e.* forgetting that this is the evolution of the Church if you like) he prayed to God to give him a very long beard. God indeed granted this, and (we have pictures to date to prove this and hundreds of people all over the world who knew him well and saw him) he received an extraordinarily long beard which would go all the way down to the ground literally sweeping the ground! A lot of priests in the States who saw this

miracle believed and grew back their beards. St. Joachim the Aysiannites returned to Athos when he came back from the States, at the Skete of St. Anna, where he also slept in the Lord. However, we should also hasten to add here that this does not mean that if we see a priest in the USA who shaves that he is not a "proper priest". Many of these priests grow up in an environment where some of the canons are being neglected, but ultimately are pious and good hierarchs. Thus, even though we must try to obey the canons and those who knowingly throw them away show pride which might condemn them to eternal hell, deviations in the canons is not the same as deviation in the doctrines and ethos, which constitutes heresy. Another example then should be this: Elder Gerasimos (Abid) who was staying for a time at St. Anne's Skete left to go to the States. He taught theology at the Seminary in Boston, where he resided and became a well-known and very holy Orthodox hierarch that greatly helped to establish the early Orthodox communities in that troubled country. On certain occasions (major feasts etc.) he would return to his old "home" at St. Anne's Skete for pilgrimage and eventually return to his new residence in the USA. He did have a beard but it was small and quite trimmed. Once, when he was at St. Anne's with his slightly trimmed beard, some of the monks there were scandalised and some even referred to him as "the Frankish priest" when they would talk about him, an insult meant for his small beard. Sometimes, the priest that would cense the temple would not incense in his direction during the services! This holy man however endured all this happily and never said a thing. The situation was soon corrected when another holy monk from the same Skete mentioned to the fathers that "I see the Holy Spirit descending upon this man during the services and the devil standing in the middle of the temple and holding his belly in laughter, mocking us". This clairvoyant ascetic was considered very highly and when the others heard this they corrected their ways and asked for the holy hierarch's forgiveness and peace was once again brought in the Skete. Of course, we should not forget to add that some Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church could not grow long beards. St. John Chrysostom hardly had any hair on his face, he was short and ugly. And yet when he opened his mouth golden syrup came out! (Hence his name *John of the Golden Mouth*). Arius, however, a contemporary heresiarch, was an influential tall and handsome man, with a long bushy beard and receiving great respect from the world of his times, greatly learned in the theological seminaries of his time and having a vast knowledge of ecclesiastical matters. And yet he was the leader of one of the most terrible heresies that ever plagued our Church!

- context of the Fathers = The Fathers would never of course *look for* signs or other miraculous blessings to be bestowed upon them during the Liturgy. Those elders who did quickly fell into demonic *plani* (delusion), as the countless stories in the *Gerontika* tell. The Fathers of the Church would be humble and stay within the humble non-pompous atmosphere of the Divine Liturgy and only pray that Christ shows them their shortcomings and forgives them their innumerable sins. The Fathers considered themselves worse than anyone else and for this reason they would be worthy to watch the Bodiless Powers, Virgin Mary, the Saints, even Christ during the course of many Liturgies. After all, with their humility, their constant fasting and vigils, with their struggles, they had already "left the world". Such signs, therefore, would never be considered by them as something they were truly worthy to witness -- indeed, in many instances their first thought was that the cunning one (the devil) was trying to deceive them by "lights" and they would always do the Sign of the Cross and even ask the appearing Saints prostrate before the Icons to show to them they are not demonic -- but they would simply not think about it: these were realities which they believed in, and sometimes Christ deemed right to give them

such blessings to help them in their struggles. For this reason, the presence of extravagant music in a temple (especially one which includes an organ, like some Orthodox temples in the Diaspora have), shows lack of spiritual maturity from the members of that parish; in other words, lack of humility. In such cases God is not pleased. Even pompous Byzantine chanting displeases Christ: on Athos, when during Passion Week a lamp in the monastery of Iveron often swings by itself, it has been noticed that the swinging is reduced in size whenever the monks chant too loud. So what *is* the context of the Fathers?, you may ask. The Fathers always remembered -- and, as we said above, many times also lived -- the fact that the temple is God's abode, where the Liturgy brings the whole Church mystically together with Her Head Christ, the Saints, His Mother and the Angels. Would *you* dear reader play silly little tunes on some "ecclesiastical" organ (a later Western innovation totally unconnected with Holy Tradition) in the presence of the Lord? Would *you* chant loudly with pride or laugh with the guy next to you? Would you demand pews to replace the traditional *stasidion* in the temple so you can relax and sit down more, even crossing your feet, as some "modernist" Orthodox converts do in the USA? So it all depends on our level of awareness. The more spiritually immature we are, the more we do not care or understand these issues; such people will often turn up in the Liturgy 15 minutes before the end and demand that we make the Liturgy shorter, so they can follow it! The more we advance, however, in other words the more we humble ourselves, the more it is that we also realise that the presence of instruments in church does not let us pray properly, because it creates a "fleshly" environment where *true compunction* (the Orthodox state of *charmolype* or "sad-happiness") gets replaced by *carnal romanticism and emotionalism*.

- the = The article *the* here is very important for another reason. It clearly indicates (it becomes obvious if you look at the Greek text) that it is referring to a pre-defined set of liturgical prayers already in use. For more on this read Professor Arakaki's paper [here](#).
- vocal music = In the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium), this developed into what today is known as *Byzantine chant* and is based on four main *modes* (keys) plus four *plagal* ("slanted") modes. This format also led to the *Russian chant* which is based upon the same keys (known as "the eight *tones*"). In a different way, the same music developed in the West in the pre-Gregorian Latin chants. It seems that folk music on one hand and the Western spiritual degradation of Papism on the other led to the polyphonic and instrumental variants we often meet today. For more information please read the aforementioned article from St. Anthony's Hagioritic Monastery in Arizona, USA.