

Part IV

Chapter 6. The Missionary Activities of the Church Abroad

Thus far, little research has been done into the mission of the Russian Orthodox Church.¹ This is because the Russian Church possessed vast missionary territories within its own country: Siberia, Central Asia and the Far East. Only when the people of these areas were converted to Orthodoxy and the Empire pushed forward into Asia and America with the [other] European powers, did the Russian Church establish a new field of activity outside its national borders. In China, Japan, Korea, Persia, Palestine, Alaska, the United States and Canada, the Russian Church established missions. The majority of these missions came into being in the 19th century; the exception was the Peking Mission.²

The Catholic and Protestant churches viewed this new mission Church with distrust, at times even with enmity. They surmised, not entirely incorrectly, that government interests lay behind the missionary work of the Russian Church: "If Orthodox priests bring the Chinese youth to faith in the Russian God, they also mean thereby faith in the Russian Tsar."³ These suspicions were not confined to the Far East; they were also raised against the Russian Church in Palestine. Certainly, political considerations must have played a rôle; yet for representatives of the Church these were entirely secondary.⁴

The Church Abroad inherited the missions abroad after 1920. The Peking and Jerusalem Missions, the Mission in Urmia (Persia) and the missions in North America recognized the jurisdiction of the Church Abroad unreservedly. A certain special development took place in Japan. Bishop Serguis (Tikhomirov: from 1921, Archbishop; and from 1931, Metropolitan) maintained close relations with the Synod of Bishops until 1927. After the break between the Synod and Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky), Archbishop Sergius remained faithful to the Patriarchal Church, but in practice autonomously administered the Japanese Orthodox community, because no direct relations with the Mother

Church could be established. In 1940, the Japanese Orthodox community was changed into a "religious corporation" and placed under the authority of a Japanese archpriest, Arsenius Ivasava. Metropolitan Sergius was forced to step down from his office and was retired.⁵

The Russian Church Abroad divided its missionary activities into two types: the internal and the external mission. The internal mission applied to the members of its own nationality, first Russians, then also non-Russians (e.g., Ukrainians, Belorussians, Estonians and other nationalities that were historically subject to the Russian Church).⁶ The external mission was directed at those people who either belonged to non-Christian cultures or who were non-Orthodox Christians, whom one wanted to convert to Orthodoxy. Both forms of mission, the internal as well as the external, were given much attention. During its existence (since 1920), the Church Abroad has enjoyed signal success in both areas.

Nothing further will be said about the internal mission here. It should, however, be noted again that this mission pursued the goal of keeping the Russian faithful in the diaspora a part of the Russian Church, to which end the Church always took care to set up its own parishes and supply them with priests even in the farthest corners of the world. This objective was, by and large, achieved: the more than 350 parishes of the Church Abroad throughout the world are the most conspicuous expression of this internal mission. This, however, must also be seen in light of the fact that the Church Abroad was able to bring many back to Orthodoxy who had lost any contact with religion. This was particularly the case with the second emigration, which came to the West in the aftermath of World War II. Because of Stalin's policies concerning the Church, many of them, especially the youth, had had neither a religious upbringing nor a church life before their flight. In the camps, they came into contact with the Russian Orthodox Church for the first time and decided either to be baptized or to take an active part in the Christian life, from which they had previously been barred. This also applies to the current émigrés: dissidents, Jews and other émigrés who often find the Russian Church for the first time in the West, whom those in the Church

Abroad are readily prepared to accept. The Church Abroad's parish in Vienna has been able to bring numerous new émigrés to the Church. These people are often a mixture of Jewish and Russian, or Russian and non-Russian, who were granted an exit visa. Generally, these émigrés had had almost no direct contact with the Church. After having become acquainted with the life of the Church as manifested by the Church Abroad, adult and young people alike decide to be baptized.⁷ Likewise, the Patriarchate's church in Vienna was rejected by the émigrés in most cases because it is identified with the Soviet regime.

In most countries in which the Church Abroad has been represented since 1920, there are also local Orthodox communities. In these converts predominate. In a few countries -- such as in the U.S.A., France and Holland -- their own the Netherlands, Orthodox missions and churches have been established. Many monks and nuns, priests and bishops, who were tonsured or ordained by the Church Abroad, come from this group of people: Bishop Mark (Dr. Michael Arndt), Metropolitan Seraphim Lade, Bishop Philip von Gardner, Bishop Jacob (Akkersdyk), Archbishop Jacob (James Tooms), Bishop John (Moses Shleman) and Archimandrite Lazarus (Moore), are the best known among these converts. In the monasteries of the Church Abroad today, there are three times as many non-Russians as Russians: Arabs, Greeks, Americans, Englishmen, Germans, Frenchmen, Spaniards and the Dutch are the largest groups among them. In addition to these non-Orthodox representatives -- not including the Orthodox Greeks and Arabs -- there are also many Orthodox faithful from Eastern Europe, who have been separated from their Mother Churches under Communist dominion: Romanians, Bulgarians, Serbs, Estonians and Latvians have in part joined themselves to the Church Abroad in the West.⁸ The Church Abroad developed its most extensive mission in the church province of the Far East. In 1915, there were an estimated 5,587 Orthodox Chinese⁹ whereas in the 1960s, 20,000-30,000 faithful are estimated to have been members of the Chinese Orthodox Autonomous Church.⁹ Thus, the Church Abroad must have conducted a significant mission among the native population in order for a Church of this magnitude to have developed. From 1924-25, over 400 Chinese were reportedly baptized yearly. In the 1930s, in Manchuria, approximately 50-60 Chinese and Japanese were baptized.¹⁰ Bishop John (Maximovich) of Shanghai and the Chinese priest Nicholas (Li) baptized 102 Chinese in 1936 during a visit to the Diocese of Shanghai.¹¹ From this sparse data, one can, of course, infer

nothing about actual missionary activities after 1918. With the help of these statistics and the data on the Chinese Orthodox Autonomous Church of the 1960s, however, one can make certain inferences about the missionary work. If one takes the number of 400 baptisms in China and 50 baptisms in Manchuria as a constant for each year from 1920-1950, then a total of some 14,000 Chinese must have been baptized in order to at least get to 20,000 faithful because approximately 6,000 Orthodox Chinese had already received baptism by 1920. The number of baptisms decreased after the Communist seizure of power; many who had been baptized before 1918 had long ago died (one must also take into consideration the Sino-Japanese War and the Chinese Civil War, which both had many victims), the number of actual baptisms yearly must have been at least 800 (1920-1950: 24,000 baptisms). Otherwise, one would not come up with 20,000-30,000 faithful in the 1960s. Because this is a missionary church, one must also count on a relatively high death rate, because many were baptized as adults. The majority of Orthodox Chinese might have accepted the Christian Faith, when the Mission in Peking was subject to the Church Abroad. Also, many Chinese lived and studied in the monasteries in China and Manchuria, as well as in the Theological Seminary in Harbin.¹² From 1932, the diocesan administration in Harbin had its own mission council.¹³ The Peking Mission published literature in Chinese, and there were also schools for Chinese Orthodox children. In Peking, Shanghai, Tientsin, Sindao, and Mukden. Regular catechism classes were instituted for the native population. At the Ecclesiastical Mission in Peking, four out of nine clergymen were Chinese.¹⁴

The Korean Mission also developed favorably. This was founded in 1897 and was subject to the Bishop of Vladivostok from 1908-1923. From 1923, it was subject to Archbishop Sergius of Japan. Thereafter, however, the Church Abroad maintained its own mission in the north of the country, which had much missionary success in the 1930s. In any case, the "the interest for Orthodoxy amongst the Korean population was great."¹⁵ From 1925, Archimandrite Theodosius was in charge of the Church Abroad's Mission. In 1933, its direction was transferred to Archbishop Nestor, who thereafter bore the title of Archbishop of Kamchatka & Seoul. The South Korean Mission was under the direction of Archimandrite Polycarp.¹⁶ After the partition of Korea, there was a paradoxical situation: in the northern

part of the country, the Church Abroad had its mission and in the southern part of the country the Patriarchate had its mission. The authorities of the country closed both missions. A few years later, the South Korean Mission became subject to the American Metropolia.¹⁷

Little is known about the fate of the Mission in Urmia. It was founded in 1898, when Bishop Jonah and 20,000 Nestorians joined the Russian Church. From 1914, Bishop Abun-Mar Elias was head of the Mission. In 1918, together with the other members of the Mission, he was evacuated to Hamadan, but returned to Urmia in 1920. In 1921, he made contact with the Synod of Bishops and, together with his faithful, joined the Church Abroad. Upon his death in 1928, his post at first remained vacant. In 1931, Archimandrite John (Moses Shleman) was consecrated Bishop of Urmia & Salma. He headed the Mission until 1945, when he retired due to old age. He then lived in retirement in the U.S.A. and died in 1962, at the age of 105, at the Convent of Novo-Diveevo, where he had spent his final years. As representative of the Mission, he participated in the Second Pan-Diaspora Council in 1938.¹⁸ Upon his retirement, it seems that ties between the Church Abroad and the Mission in Urmia were broken; this was no doubt connected with the flight of the Synod from Karlovtsy and the confusion prevailing during the years immediately following the War.

In southern India, a completely new missionary territory opened up to the Russian Church. This consisted of Syrian-Monophysite Christians, also known as Jacobites.¹⁹ This branch of Syrian Christians is comprised of some 500,000 faithful. A group of 100,000 faithful was subject to the Patriarchate of Antioch; the second largest group separated from Antioch in 1925, because they desired more autonomy. They had founded the "Eastern Orthodox Syrian Church," which was headed by the Catholicos Basileos Gregor. Subject to the Catholicos were a metropolitan, two bishops, and 470 churches with an active parish life.²⁰

Hieromonk Andronicus (Elpidinsky) was their contact with the Church Abroad. He had been a cleric at Belfort (France) in the early 1920s and had decided to go to India in order to care for the 300 Russian émigrés there. Finally, Fr. Andronicus settled in Travancore in southern India and established a hermitage. Besides Fr. Andronicus, Hieromonk Constantine also lived in the area; he was a Russian monk from Mount Athos. He had

set up his skete in the middle of the jungle and lived there in complete solitude, because no one dared to visit him in a region where leopards and tigers abounded. It was reported of Fr. Constantine that at his skete lived a leopard, which was supposedly completely tame.²¹

The lives of both these hermits made a strong impression on the Christian population. Fr. Andronicus, who barely spoke English himself, had understood how to anchor in the consciousness of the faithful that the Russian Church is the heir of "true Orthodoxy." The Catholicos himself had expressed the desire to learn more about the life of the Russian Church and implored Fr. Andronicus to intercede. He, in turn, first turned to Metropolitan Eulogius for assistance. Eulogius asked the Ecumenical Patriarch for help, but the latter showed no interest.²² Next, Eulogius turned to the Serbian Patriarchate and declared himself prepared to "entrust Andronicus to the Serbian Church."²³

The Catholicos had in the meantime undertaken a trip to Palestine, where he met with Archbishop Anastasius, whom he asked to dispatch missionaries. After his return to India, there was an assembly of the episcopate of the Jacobite Christians, which decided to enter into contacts with the Church Abroad, in order to negotiate for union. In response, the Karlovtsy Synod of Bishops decided to send Bishop Demetrius (Voznesensky) to Southern India in order to study the situation of the church.²⁴ The Serbian Patriarchate financially subsidized Bishop Demetrius' trip and declared its readiness to give the Russian Church further material support, if the union seemed to be achievable.

Bishop Demetrius traveled to India in February of 1936 and visited the communities and institutions of the church. He was quite impressed by the vibrant and active church life of this group of Christians. For all classes -- from the simplest people to the intelligentsia — the Church and the parish formed the center of their lives. The parishes were, as a rule, well-organized and had parish schools and charitable institutions. Clergy were educated at the church's own seminary, and at Travancore there was a monastery with 20 monks and a small convent.²⁵ Bishop Demetrius remained in the country for two weeks and gave many lectures (in English) on Orthodoxy and the Russian Church. He particularly addressed the differences with the Monophysites and made it clear that a union would only be possible if the Syrian Christians accepted all the Ecumenical Councils (they

recognized only the first three) and would thereby give up the Monophysite dogma. His lectures aroused much interest. In any case, it was asserted that as many as 5,000 faithful attended one lecture.²⁶

Metropolitan Dorotheus of Zagreb (from the Serbian Church) used the meeting of the YMCA in India to visit these southern Indian Christians as well.

For further negotiations, Archbishop Nestor (Anisimov) was sent to India. He traveled there together with Archimandrite Nathaniel (Lvov). They had decided to make a stop in Colombo [Ceylon, now Sri Lanka], because there were Jacobite Christians there also. During their journey, they made the acquaintance of an Anglican clergyman who offered them his church in Colombo for an Orthodox service. At this service, 20 Anglican clergymen were said to have taken part, who promised Nestor financial support for his missionary work. On account of Bishop Nestor's illness, departure for India was delayed. Meanwhile, several native Anglican and Catholic priests declared their interest in Orthodoxy, which corresponded to the mentality of their faithful more closely than that of Western Christendom. The Catholic priest, J. Alvarez, declared his readiness to place his church at the disposal of the Orthodox for a mission church and signed it over to Bishop Nestor. So, before his departure, this church was declared an "Orthodox Mission." It was supposed to serve as the center and departure point of a mission to Ceylon. The prerequisites for such a mission were, however, most unfavorable: it lacked missionaries, money, icons, church utensils and service books.²⁷

From Ceylon, Archbishop Nestor and Archimandrite Nathaniel traveled to Travancore, where they sought out the Catholicos immediately upon their arrival. During their stay, they visited many church institutions, celebrated the divine services together, took part in sessions of the synod, and visited the grave of the church's 4th century founder. On their return journey, they both visited Ceylon again in order to convince themselves of the progress and developments of the mission. They were accompanied by Fr. Andronicus, who was selected as head of the Mission. In the meantime, there had been a change of opinion: part of the Syrian Christians rejected union with the Russian Church. This reversal was alleged to have been provoked by the Anglican and Catholic missionaries, who saw in the Orthodox a difficult opposition.²⁸ Archimandrite Nathaniel wanted to remain in Ceylon as a missionary in order to give the mission a firmer foundation. On account of the financial situation — during their three-month stay, the money was almost all spent — Archbishop Nestor pressed him to leave. Thus,

this mission was left to its own devices, but was supposed to receive financial help and manpower as soon as they were in the position to send it.²⁹

The outbreak of the World War II prevented further negotiations with the Catholicos and the building up of the Mission on Ceylon. Only 15 years later, under changed conditions, did the Synod decide to take up the southern Indian mission. With the Synodal resolution dated 29 March/11 April 1952, the establishment of a mission in India was undertaken on account of the great importance of the Syrian Christians for Orthodoxy. Archimandrite Lazarus (Moore) took charge of the mission. He was a native Englishman, who had converted to Orthodoxy. In the 1930s, he was already living in India and had also met with Bishop Demetrius during his stay in Travancore. Fr. Lazarus had previously lived for a few years at the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem, where he had been made an abbot. As a priest there, he had cared for the Ein Karim Convent and the Bethany Convent. He returned to England after the outbreak of the Israeli-Arab War in 1951, resettling in the USA, where he lived in the Kursk Hermitage in Mahopac.³⁰ In 1951, he was elevated to the rank of archimandrite, and the following year he was entrusted with the direction and rebuilding of the Indian Mission.

Joining Archimandrite Lazarus in India in the mid-1960s were Brothers Leon and Mark and the nuns Maria, Gabriella, and Thomais. Except for Sister Gabriella, all the others returned from India after a year. Archimandrite Lazarus' mission received no financial support and had to get by on the most meager means. Fr. Lazarus had permission from the Synod to conduct negotiations on union, but under the conditions that the Jacobite Christians would recognize the Seven Ecumenical Councils, because only the three, as the Catholicos had proposed, would not be an acceptable basis. Archimandrite Lazarus headed the mission in Travancore for almost 15 years, but he only succeeded in converting individual believers to Orthodoxy, because the Catholicos and the clergy could not decide to accept the Synod's conditions.³¹

Missionary work in India failed because the mission of the Russian Church Abroad lacked the material means and manpower. Whereas in the 1930s, the Serbian Patriarchate's material support made the building up of a mission feasible, after World War II, the attempt depended upon the strengths of the Church Abroad. The outbreak of World War II interrupted the hopeful and not unsuccessful attempt of the 1930s. The renewed

attempt in the 1950s relied more upon the person of Archimandrite Lazarus, who, lacking support, did not succeed in continuing the work of the 1930s.³²

The Church Abroad had more success in establishing local Orthodox parishes in countries where it was represented by its own parishes. In France, England, Holland, Germany and America today, there are many parishes that have the Church Abroad to thank for their existence and that were founded by converts. These communities prove to be especially durable where they have a native priest available to care for them. Another prerequisite for a successful mission is the availability of translations of liturgical and catechetical literature in the community's own language, to facilitate the celebration of the divine services in the language of the country. The Church Abroad is paying more and more attention to, and is putting more value upon, the translations being not a simple rendering of the Church Slavonic and Russian texts, but rather the correct rendering of the solemn nature and liturgical form of such texts.³³

One of the first national Orthodox missions was founded in 1951 in the U.S.A. Bishop Jacob (James Tooms) was put in charge of the mission; in the same year, he received the title of Archbishop of the American Orthodox Mission. He was an American by birth and originally an Episcopalian. In 1923, he came into contact with Orthodoxy and finally became Orthodox in the 1930s, after having become acquainted with Archbishop Vitalius (Maximenko). The American Orthodox Mission was under his leadership and directly under the supervision of the Synod of Bishops.³⁴ The goal of this Mission was the spread of Orthodoxy among the English-speaking Americans. Thus, Archbishop Jacob requested that all the parish clergy give him the names of all the Americans who had married Russians but had not yet converted to Orthodoxy. He also asked for the names of people who were interested in Orthodoxy. In subsequent years, the Mission translated a number of liturgical books into English, thereby meeting the prerequisite for the establishment of English-language Orthodox parishes. Archbishop James retired in 1956. His successor as head of the Mission was Father Andrew Gerrick. Missionary work of this kind is continued by the Saint Herman of Alaska Brotherhood in Platina, under the leadership of Hieromonk Herman (Podmoshensky). This Brotherhood is made up primarily of English-speaking Americans. For years, they performed successful mission work among Americans.

In France there was a similar development to that in the United States. There, a group of former Catholics became Orthodox and founded the Western Rite Orthodox parish in Saint Geneviève near Paris. Archimandrite Irenaeus (Louis Wennaert) took over the direction of this parish from 1925 to 1937; he then, however, joined the Moscow Patriarchate. In 1937, Father Eugraphus Kovalevsky took charge of this parish, which had joined together with other smaller parishes to form the “Orthodox Catholic Church in France.” Father Eugraphus, with the majority of his faithful, broke with the Moscow Patriarchate in 1953. In 1960, the group entered into negotiations with the Church Abroad and asked to be received into its jurisdiction. Archbishop John (Maximovich) supported this union; he had always supported the establishment of national Orthodox Churches under the jurisdiction of the Church Abroad. At this time, some 5,000 to 10,000 faithful belonged to this (French-language) Church, which boasted 23 parishes and 15 priests and 7 deacons. The priests were educated at the “Seminary for Orthodox Theology”, which was recognized by the Paris Sorbonne as an institution of higher learning. Father Eugraphus was in charge of these active communities. He took monastic vows in 1964, and was consecrated Bishop of Saint Denis with the name of Jean [John].

After the death of Archbishop John (Maximovich), there arose differences between Bishop Jean (Kovalevsky) and the Synod, which ultimately led to his separation from the Church Abroad in 1967. His group then entered into negotiations with the Romanian Patriarchate³⁵ and asked to be received into its jurisdiction, which finally occurred in 1972. Five parishes, which did not follow the Western Rite, with as many priests remained canonically true to the Church Abroad, located in Paris, Lyon, Dijon, Montpellier, and Vichy; until a decade ago, all of these parishes were still in the Church Abroad.³⁶

Another active Mission Church was established in Holland. It originated in Orthodox parish in the Hague, which belonged to Metropolitan Eulogius until 1945. After Metropolitan Eulogius broke with the Moscow Patriarchate in 1946, the parish remained with Moscow. In 1948, the Patriarchate elevated the parish to the status of a Dutch Mission, which at first developed most successfully. By 1952, four Dutch Orthodox parishes belonged to the Mission, which were directly subject to Moscow as “stavropeghial parishes.”³⁷ The parishes published a periodical, *Herald of the Russian Orthodox Church in Holland (Vestnik Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi v Gollandii)*, which appeared on a regular basis from 1951 and reported mainly on

missionary work in the Netherlands.³⁸ In 1953, a part of the Haugue parish broke with Moscow and joined the Church Abroad. Its direction was entrusted to Hieromonk Jacob (Akkersdijk), whom Archbishop John, then ruling bishop of the Western European Diocese, had ordained. Hieromonk Jacob was elevated to the rank of abbot in 1956, and Archimandrite in 1962; in 1965, he was consecrated Bishop of the Hague & the Netherlands. Moscow's Dutch Mission was subject to Bishop Dionysius (Lukin) of Rotterdam, who had not separated from the Patriarchate but had only a few faithful. The Russian Church Abroad's Mission developed an active missionary and Church life in subsequent years. In 1969, a monastery and convent joined the "Netherlands Orthodox Church" ("Nederlands Orthodexe Kerk"). Both monastic communities were located in the same building, a former Catholic monastery in the Hague. Of the nuns, a few had first lived in the Lesna Convent in France and were immersed there in the monastic way of life before they were tonsured nuns. Two nuns from Holland were trained in iconography by the iconographer Mother Flaviana; they later painted many icons for the Dutch parishes. This monastic community's financial situation was secure because the monastics pursued their learned professions. Only Bishop Jacob devoted himself exclusively to spiritual tasks. In 1971, there arose differences between the community and the Synod. The Dutch wanted to celebrate Pascha according to the New Calendar and not according to the Old Calendar. When the Synod did not comply with this request and wavered in answering, Bishop Jacob announced that he and his faithful had joined the Moscow Patriarchate.³⁹

Their reception into the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate was all the more surprising in that the Patriarchate celebrates Pascha according to the Old Calendar and has, for the most part, rejected the calendar reform up to the present day. Moscow's preparedness to compromise can only be explained by the fact that the separation of this Mission from the Church Abroad represented a welcome weakening of the Church Abroad's position in the Netherlands, and Moscow therefore seized its opportunity.

Today, only nuns remain in the Dutch convent, while no monks are left in the monastery. The Patriarchate named Bishop Jacob Archbishop in 1979.⁴⁰

Two other missions were established in 1972: a Spanish Mission under the direction of Jacob de Reval, now Archimandrite Hosius, and a Portuguese Mission under the direction of Manuel Fererda de Almada.⁴¹

In many other countries, including Germany, Switzerland, England, and South America, there are today Orthodox groups which came to Orthodoxy through the Church Abroad. The majority of these faithful attend the divine services of the Church Abroad, where there are also parishes which have services in the local language. In Germany, after World War II, a German-speaking parish came into existence in Munich. Priest Paul Zacharias was rector of the community. He had come to Orthodoxy from the Roman Catholic Church.⁴² In the 1950s, there were yearly meetings in the Saint Job of Pochaev Monastery in Munich. Archpriest Ambrose Backhaus and Hieromonk Zosima (Merz), both German, led these meetings.⁴³

Two other forms of missionary activities of the Church Abroad developed in Eastern Europe during the time between the Wars and after the outbreak of World War II. In Slovakia, the Church Abroad strove to bring the Uniates back to Orthodoxy. The Saint Job Monastery in Ladomirova was founded with the express purpose of conducting missionary work among the Uniates in eastern Slovakia. The brotherhood of the monastery supported the Mission of the Serbian Church, to whom the Orthodox there were subject. As already mentioned, the Saint Job Monastery nurtured zealous missionary activity by its publications. In addition, many priests and monks were educated there and were later sent forth to establish Orthodox parishes. The plan to prepare monks for a liberated Russia in a missionary school at the monastery was only partly realized, because the outbreak of the War in 1939 interrupted the project. Nevertheless, the monastery and its brotherhood served during the War to support the new parishes opened in German-occupied territories.

Despite its noteworthy missionary success, the Church Abroad has taken into its fold only those who were prepared to accept fully and unconditionally the dogmas, holy canons, and the Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Church. A union with the Jacobites would have been achievable if the Synod had made concessions. The Dutch Orthodox Church would not have left the jurisdiction of the Church Abroad had their request to introduce the New Paschalion been met. A collaboration with the Orthodox Ukrainians -- especially in Canada -- would have been possible if the Church Abroad had granted them an autonomous status and the right to use Ukrainian in divine services. However, the Church Abroad was always so closely bound to the practice and belief of the Orthodox Church of Russia, that to make concessions in these questions was a betrayal of Orthodoxy itself.

For the Church Abroad, the primary concern was the “children of the Russian Church.” The real missionary task in the eyes of the Church Abroad was the aforementioned internal mission. Archbishop Abercius once formulated this as follows:

We, the Orthodox Russian people, are today dispersed, just as Israel of old, amongst all nations of the earth. . . . God has separated us, so that all people of the earth through us may be acquainted with the true Christian Faith —Holy Orthodoxy — and thus we remain Orthodox. Many expect and even demand of us that we proselytize among those who are not our people. This form of missionary activity, however, we avoid, preferring to strengthen ourselves through faith and thereby become models for the non-Orthodox.⁴⁴

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