



BOOK REVIEW

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TITLE: *Facing the World: Orthodox Christian Essays on Global Concerns*

AUTHOR: Archbishop Anastasios (Yannoulatos)

Archbishop Anastasios is a noted theologian, missionary, and currently Primate of the Orthodox Church of Albania. *Facing the World* is a collection of his essays published over the past three decades concerning globalization, human rights, culture, and Orthodoxy's relations with other religions. The reader will be very familiar with these subjects since they have a global impact and are discussed in the media on a daily basis. Archbishop Anastasios helps us to understand these issues in the context of Holy Scripture and Orthodox Christian theology in order to formulate a Christian reaction.

The theme of "becoming a neighbor to every human being" runs throughout the entire book. Archbishop Anastasios exhorts Christians to take the entire world as their field of vision and field of action in order "to press on with their 'ministry of reconciliation' (2 Cor. 5:18-21)". He writes that "secular forces that have been crucial in bringing people around the world closer together have at the same time created new and powerful inducements for people to become more isolated and divided". Instead of seeking a homogenized global community driven by economic and technological forces, the Orthodox Church offers the alternative of a communion of love rooted in her experience of the Holy Trinity, especially in the love and redemption found in Jesus Christ's Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection. The Eucharist is the means of creating this communion, whereby Christians become incorporated into the Body of Christ, transcend their individual limitations, and realize their eschatological goal of the Kingdom of God. Because Christians can recognize the image of God in their neighbor through the Eucharist, they can work towards social and economic justice, a better understanding of human rights and an ethical culture, and improved relations with other cultures and religions. Two essays of interest are "The Dynamic of Universal and Continuous Change" (reflections of the Three Hierarchs on personal renewal and the connection between asceticism and ministry to the poor and needy) and "Dialogue with Islam from an Orthodox Point of View". Finally, a short essay titled "Instead of an Epilogue" was added to this collection as an exposition of Archbishop Anastasios' vision of the Orthodox Church's future global ministry, which should also guide our individual and community's ongoing efforts towards ministry and outreach.

Reviewed by Mark Vassilakis

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