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ORTHODOX EVANGELIST

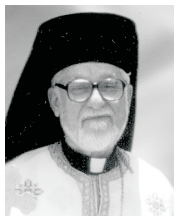
“Do the work of an evangelist” - 2 Tim 4:5



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The Hidden Small Remnant

By Archimandrite Fr. Eusebius Stephanou Th.D

Is it possible for the genuine light of Christ to depart from the church? The very thought of this occurring can scare you, as it did me in my earlier years, even as a priest.

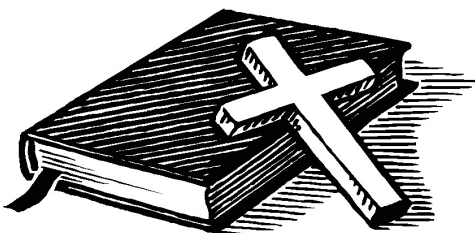
But the answer comes right out of the mouth of our Lord. Remember the warning found in Revelation 2:5 against the church at Ephesus: *“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent to do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place unless thou repent.”*

Jesus in Matthew 5:15 speaks of the candlestick” (Gk. *Iychnia*) upon which is placed the lighted candle “that it may give light unto all those who are in the house.” The removal of the light of the candle or candlestick is a direct reference to a church whose witness is no longer visible.

It is a dead organism, despite the glitter and splendor of the Persian mitres worn by our hierarchy and the imperial vestments they don, borrowed from the emperor of Constantinople. When will some church prelate have the boldness to refuse this attire alien to a shepherd's calling and get back to the original simple vestments worn by the clergy in the early church?

God has given us ample warning in advance. However, the Lord made good His warning, when as recently as 1922, He unleashed

the fury of the Turks against the Greek Christians in Asia Minor and allowed all seven churches of the Apocalypse to be wiped off the map. *“Because ye have not heard my words.... Remember from whence thou art fallen”* (Rev. 2:5).



When the church deteriorates into a dead organism, it is obvious that the light that lighteth every man that comes into the world” is no longer visible. It helps to call to mind the Lord's indictment pronounced upon the church of Sardis: *“I know thy works, that thou has a name that thou livest and art dead”* (Rev. 3:1).

Sleeping in Their Religious Cradles

It is no longer rare to hear of some wealthy church member donating millions of dollars to his or her local parish. Building programs

absorb much of the church's life. One parish tries to outdo the other parish in size and architectural splendor of the temples of worship they erect. It almost appears as if our churches don't know what to do with the surplus in their coffers.

God, however, is not impressed by the material wealth of the church. What did you say Jesus? *“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich...”* (Rev. 3:17).

If we are serious about the church on earth being truly the Church Militant, then she must be expected to be tried in fire. It is normal for her to be subjected to the attacks of adversaries and to be engaged in a spiritual conflict with the powers of darkness. The true Church of Christ is never at peace with the world and the world system. **Only a church that compromises the Gospel of Jesus Christ enjoys harmony and peaceful coexistence with this world whose prince is Satan, as God's word explicitly states (John 12:31).**

Those in the church who continue to sleep in the comfort of their religious cradles better wake up very soon. Some in the clergy would prefer they stay in the cradle, since, if they grow up and mature spiritually, they will be asking too many questions. Why invite problems? The pastors can preserve their comfort zone, while they secure that of their parishioners by rocking their cradle.

Is it not time rather to rock the boat and stir the stagnant waters? We are living in a time of God's

preparation for the Last Day. God will no longer put up with the sins of the “great whore” (2 Tim. 2:20). “The Lord knoweth them that are His”. Could the Bride of Christ “not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing... holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27) be progressively turning into the Great Harlot? “Her sins have reached unto heaven and God hath remembered her iniquities” (Rev. 18:5).

If there was ever a time when our Orthodox Church needed an outreach of revival and evangelism it is now.

When we don't let Christ govern the Church as her Head, only evil of every description can follow. When man usurps the position that belongs to Christ, then only Satan will take over and work out all his pernicious purposes.

When we forget that the Church is the Body of Christ and not some kind of social institution, then we will end up polluting His Body. When man takes over, then the Church as the Bride of Christ is doomed to emerge as the Great Harlot Church of the Apocalypse!

We are living, beloved partners, in an age of fulfillment and not only expectation. We are seeing in our own generation what is foretold in the Bible for the last days just before the close of the age. Jesus warned us

that in the end times “iniquity will abound”. It is weighing upon my heart as a heavy burden that we must intensify our efforts to get the message of repentance and reconversion to Christ to all our people. There is no time left for complacency.



perish.”

Let's study the text of the related scripture. In the Gospel of St. Luke we read: *“There were present at that season some that told Jesus of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, do you suppose that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered these things? I tell you, No. But, unless you repent, you shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, do you think they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, No. But, unless you repent you shall likewise perish”* (Luke. 13:1-5).

When it's Time to Worry

God is trying to get our attention by permitting Wars, Financial upheavals and natural disasters to happen on a larger scale. But I wish to ask this question, is anyone listening? When no prophetic voices appear to warn the Church following these disasters, it's time to worry! It is a sign of ultimate judgement.

Jesus revealed to us in His word once and for all generations that the reason for which God allows tragic disasters to occur is simply this – **to call those who have survived or spared to turn to Him in repentance. The key word here is Repentance.** He made it emphatic to those who have been spared: *“Unless you repent, you shall likewise*

Is it possible that God has given up on us Orthodox? After all, we need to remember how many of His prophets have we rejected in the past and those sent by God we have persecuted and ostracized as villains and subversives of Orthodoxy.

Theoretically the Church represents the presence of Christ in the midst of His covenant people. But too often it appears in reality that the visible institutional Church hardly reflects the character of Christ and His apostles. Tragically, however, the Church lacks the awareness that – not the secular world but – she herself has come under divine judgment. “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God, and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? (1 Peter 4:17).

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The True Testimony of the Martyrs

by Joseph Abbate / President

We here in America have been so blessed to live in a land in which there are no persecutions. Yet, many Christians around the world have been giving up their lives today than any other point of time in history. We often forget these current events taking place, only rarely hearing about them over our televisions and radios on the news broadcast. But that should not be the case!

In the Epistle of Hebrews we read: *"Remember those who are in prison, as being in prison with them, and those which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body"* (Heb. 13:3). Just as in the days of the early church period, Christians are once again being ridiculed are persecuted in record numbers. Many thousands of Christians in North Korea are in concentration camps simply for professing Christ.

In other parts of Asia and the Middle East, Christian communities are being decimated. All of this has been happening as the U.N. and America have been sitting back and doing barely anything to help. The movie **"The Promise"** recently came to the movie theaters. The movie show how the Turkish Ottoman Empire had wiped out two thirds, or one and a half million of the Armenian population. The nation of Turkey still denies that this Genocide has even taken place. The very word "Genocide" originated from this event to describe the obliteration of the Armenian Christian community.

Yet, over the past several years, most nations, namely America, has not brought in many of these persecuted Christians in the country for refuge. Because the U.N. and America had not halted the rise of the terrorist groups, such as the group known as ISIS, when

they had the chance to stop it in its beginning stages, Europe has been flooded with refugees, and the Christian communities in Syria and Iraq have now almost become non-existent. Most Christians in that region are now in refugee camps, unable to get out of the area.

To make things worse is the alarming views of America's younger generation. It is a generation which has been raised with a void of "Western Christian Ethics." Not that previous generations were perfect, but at least the previous ones liberated nations in



two world wars and sacrificed to prevent others from being overrun by godless Fascism and Communism. They also abolished slavery in Western countries and defended freedom of speech and of the press.

Many of today's generation riot to prevent views and speech which they don't like, even burning down cars and buildings. Yet they claim to be the most tolerant of all people. Instead of institutions of higher learning, our colleges have become hot-beds of anarchy. Many students who come out of school gain a hatred of the country and free market. I have personally seen them demonstrate while waving the old Soviet Communist flags, a flag which represented a system of government

which murdered almost 100 million people. Think of it!

A good amount of these people claim that they wish to save the environment and defend people's rights, when at the same time they have murder in their very eyes, while throwing flaming cocktails and spraying people with mace. As Father Stephanou would often say: *"How can spiritually polluted humans save the environment?"* These people who state that they care about the planet seem to have an almost complete disregard for human life. *"Thinking themselves to be wise, they have become fools, loving the creation rather than the creator."* (Rom. 1:25). Today's generation has definitely driven right off the map of morality and common sense.

What is alarming is the lack of interest in the Church regarding the slaughter of Christian communities around the world.

Sadly, this fact transcends all denominations. Pastors barely teach about it and those in the Church hardly speak about it. Out of sight, out of mind. Unfortunately, people often don't think about these things until it happens in their own back yard, but by then it's too late! Let us not be caught spiritually sleeping. It is bad enough when powerful nations do not act to stop the atrocities taking place today, but when the Church does not act, then the warning in the Holy Scriptures have come to pass that: **"the salt is losing its savor."** *"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt have lost its savor, what use is there? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and be trodden under foot of men"* (Matt. 5:13). We must be aware of the times in which we are living.

Have Courage to Confess Jesus

by Gregory Doublas

In the Gospel of John, we read that many of the chief rulers of Israel had believed in Jesus during His ministry on earth, but because they were afraid their fellow countrymen may put them out of the synagogue, they did not confess their belief in Him.

Their actions showed that they chose the favor of men rather than to receive praise from God for acknowledging publicly His Son Jesus. And so we read in John 12:42 and 43:42 “Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: ⁴³For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God”.

How about you? Do you confess publicly the Lord Jesus among friends, coworkers, fellow businessmen, at school and elsewhere, or are you afraid that they may say that you are a Jesus freak; not professional; different; not cool, etc?

If you profess to be a “Christian”, know for certain that the Lord will bring you into such a situation in this life where you will be tested about this because God wants to see if you have the courage and faith to acknowledge publicly His Holy Son who suffered and died on the Cross for you. And Jesus spoke about this exactly thing. Here is what He said: ³²“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. ³³ But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32,33).

And what will happen if Jesus denies us? According to two verses above, If we deny Jesus in this life, He will deny us in heaven and that means we will not enter into His Kingdom, but instead, we will spend eternity in a place which He Himself described it as a place where “... there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:50); and this wailing and gnashing of teeth is the result of unending torture, agony, fear and hopelessness, and that's hell.

And so if you say you are a Christian and have denied the Lord Jesus because you are embarrassed to

(John 10:9). Also, we read in the Bible where Jesus told His disciples that He is the only way that leads to God and thus to eternal life (John 14:6). And so if we reject Jesus how can we expect to make it to heaven since there is no other way?

It is God's commandment that we believe in Jesus (John 6:29) who died on the cross for our salvation and when we reject Him, we reject the commandment of God. When King Saul did not follow the commandment of God, the prophet Samuel called Saul's action rebellion against God, and rebellion Samuel said, “is as the sin of witchcraft” (I Samuel 15:23). As Saul had rejected God's commandment, God in turn had rejected him. We too will face the same rejection if we rebel against the Word of God.

But there is a way back. If we confess our sins to God and repent (turn from sin), He will forgive us according to His promise in 1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, He

is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”. Second, it says in Romans 10:9: “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved”.

Where we spend eternity is a matter of enormous importance and I pray that you will consider changing and begin to confess the Lord Jesus as Lord of your life so that you will spend eternity with Him.



acknowledge Him before people you have in essence rejected Him just as someone who does not believe in Him and has rejected Him. If that's the case, you have rejected your Savior.

Scripture reveals to us that Jesus is the Word of God (Revelation 19:13); and this Word that you have rejected, the same will judge you on that last day (John 12:48).

Furthermore, Scripture teaches that Jesus is the door that leads to the Kingdom of God, and if any man it says, “enters by Him he shall be saved”

Gregory Doublas

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