

The Fellowship
of St Alban
and St Sergius

The Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius:

*Orthodox and Anglican
Ecumenical Relations
1927-2012*

By

Dimitrios Filippou Salapatas

Foreword by Dr Rowan Williams,
Former Archbishop of Canterbury

Cambridge
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To my parents and brother

'For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of God's holy Churches, and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.'

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25. St Theosevia's House, Oxford, a centre for Christian Spirituality, is where a part of the Fellowship library is located. By permission of Dimitris Salapatas.

FOREWORD

This is a book that has been long needed. The creation of the Fellowship of Saint Alban and Saint Sergius ninety years ago was a landmark in ecumenical affairs because it represented a fresh and wholly distinctive way of approaching the relations between Christians of divided confession – a way that has still, sadly, found surprisingly few imitators. From the beginning, the word ‘Fellowship’ was the key: the members of the Church of England and the Russian Orthodox Church who first gathered under the patronage of the two great national saints believed passionately that it was only in meeting and sharing worship that they would grow together as members of the Body of Christ. But in the climate of the early twentieth century, this was a vision that faced formidable challenges. Participants had to work out a pattern of practice that conformed to the disciplines of the churches they belonged to, yet would also open up mutual discovery at a deeper level than discussion alone. And the stress, especially in the first few decades, on life together and the sharing of practical tasks and activities (from ecumenical potato-peeling to ecumenical cricket matches) gave to the Fellowship conferences a quite unique flavour. How many colloquia on high-level theological affairs have had families and children running around? How many have nurtured two or three generations of participants from families committed to each other as well as to the ecumenical vision?

The Fellowship has, of course, changed greatly, though never beyond recognition. Less potato-peeling, perhaps, but the emphasis on informal and familial connection is still there, and the sharing of the experience of one another’s disciplines and traditions of worship. Over the years, the Fellowship came to embrace people from a far wider constituency than the original Anglo-Russian groups – Roman Catholics from the UK and elsewhere, members of the Free Churches in Britain, and of course Orthodox from the entire Orthodox world. The extraordinary first generation of Russian émigrés has passed away, and a new wave of Eastern European emigration has arrived, with new challenges to ecumenical relations. The Church of England has become even more diverse, and its official positions on various matters have sometimes taken it further away from its Orthodox friends. The assumptions that might have been made in the 1920’s about steady convergence between Eastern

and Western Christendom, even the assumptions of the great theologians of the years between, say 1935 and 1965 about at least the growing possibility of theological debate within a common framework, have not lasted well. The looming presence of a publicly secular discourse has sometimes drawn churches closer, but it has also sometimes prompted churches to withdraw into what is seen as secure ecclesiastical territory and the reaffirmation of ‘integral’ tradition.

Yet the Fellowship has survived and flourished and renewed itself again and again. It has nurtured and provided platforms for some of the most considerable names of the ecumenical world in the last couple of generations, especially among British Orthodox: not only Metropolitan Antony Bloom and Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, but that exceptional genius, Fr Lev Gillet, and of course the benign and fatherly presence of Nicolas Zernov, who, perhaps more than any other individual, was the guardian, decade after decade, of the original vision. In turn, Anglican scholars as diverse as Eric Mascall, Donald Allchin and Gerald Bonner have been standard bearers for this vision. The spread of the Fellowship to continental Europe and North America has been a major factor in the history of the network, and conferences have welcomed many of the foremost theological minds in the European and North American Orthodox world – from Georges Florovsky and Vladimir Lossky to Elizabeth Behr-Sigel and Dumitru Staniloae. The Fellowship’s journal, *Sobornost*, has published their work and the work of many more thinkers of note, and has in this way done exceptional service not only to ecumenical theology but to theology and theological scholarship at large in the English-speaking world.

My first visit to a Fellowship conference in 1972 is an experience I can still remember with excitement and gratitude. It put before me a model of how theology might be done and how ecumenical friendship might be sustained that has never left me, and I cannot easily say how much I owe to this exposure to the Fellowship’s distinctive charism. A study of its development and inspiration, the personalities, controversies and discoveries, has long been overdue: Demetri Salapatas has now given us just the survey we need to take stock more adequately of what this remarkable communion of hope and prayer has contributed to the life of the churches in Britain and throughout the world.

+Rowan Williams

Cambridge, Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, 2017

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Firstly, I would like to thank my family, my parents and my brother, for their immense support during my research. This book would not exist without them. It is fair to say that they have contributed towards this book, being a family project and not only mine. That is why I dedicate this book to them, for their love and support during my whole life and towards this book.

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I am grateful to Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia, Former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, Fr Stephen Platt and Dr Tim Grass who accepted my invitation to be interviewed for this project, allowing for the further examination of Anglican-Orthodox Relations. I

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Finally, I would like to thank icon-painter Mr Theodoros Vogdanos, for permitting me to use his beautiful Byzantine icon of St Alban and St Sergius as the cover to this book; also the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius and Veronique Magnes, from Ainos Cultural Society in Athens, for their permission in publishing their pictures for this book.

ABBREVIATIONS

AECA	Anglican and Eastern Churches Association
ICAOTD	International Commission for Anglican – Orthodox Theological Dialogue
IOCS	Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies
OTEP	Oxford Theological Exchange Programme
OTRF	Orthodox Theological Research Forum
R.C.S.M.	Russian Christian Student Movement
ROCOR	Russian Church Outside of Russia
S.C.M.	Student Christian Movement
S.P.C.K.	Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge
S.P.G.	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
SVSP	Saint Vladimir’s Seminary Press
WCC	World Council of Churches
Y.M.C.A.	Young Men’s Christian Association

INTRODUCTION

It is evident that the long history of Orthodox contacts with the non-Orthodox, and specifically regarding the Anglican Communion, shows an outstanding association and connection that has matured. The desire for a future union between the two Christian traditions has been demonstrated in many significant ways; however, it also has developed “out of a sense of need, our own needs, the world’s needs, Christ’s needs,”¹ leading to an anticipation of a future unity of Christendom into one single body.

Relations between the Orthodox Church² and the Anglican Communion have existed since the seventeenth century.³ However, the twentieth century took the relations to a new level, resulting in the establishment of the Official Dialogue between the two churches.⁴ This century has become known as the Age of Ecumenism, “the age in which Christians of all

¹ Addleshaw, G.W.O., “Our Domestic Difficulties”, *Sobornost*, No. 11 (New Series), September, 1937, p.22.

² The Orthodox Church in this book is defined as being the Eastern Orthodox Church, meaning those Churches which are in communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate. For a list of Orthodox Churches (in Greek) in communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate visit: Ecumenical Patriarchate, <https://www.patriarchate.org/patriarchates-autocephalous-churches>, accessed 11/08/2015, 17.21 and for a list of churches under the Ecumenical Patriarchate visit: <https://www.patriarchate.org/administrative-structure-of-the-ecumenical-patriarchate>, accessed 11/08/2015, 17.23. This, therefore, does not include churches such as the Oriental Orthodox, the British Orthodox Church or other Orthodox churches which are not in communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate. These last churches will not be examined in this book.

³ For a general examination of Anglican-Orthodox Relations since the seventeenth century until today see: Salapatas, Dimitris, “Anglican-Orthodox Relations: A Dead-End or a Way Forward?”, *Koinonia, Journal of the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association*, New Series No.63, Ascensiontide 2014, pp.15-31.

⁴ In this book the terms Church and church represent two different entities. The first (with a capital C) will represent the Orthodox Church; the second (with the small c) will insinuate the other churches or a group of churches including the Orthodox Church, in respect to the relations and the dialogues. This will also apply with the terms Tradition and tradition, whereby the first implies the Orthodox Tradition, whilst the second will describe other ecclesiastical traditions.

denominations became aware of the scandal of disunion, and attempted to do something to bring it to an end.”⁵ We live in a globalised world and epoch; it is inevitable that this would have affected the relations between the churches on a global level, taking us away from the isolation of the past within which the churches and the people existed. It is crucial to understand why this has happened now, the dialogue between Eastern and Western Christianity, where it has headed, where it might lead and most importantly how the churches achieved this relationship. The importance of the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, which is based in Oxford, is immense in preparing the way for the current dialogue.

The Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius has been an unofficial body promoting relations between Anglicans and Orthodox; “it numbers among its members some eminent theologians and Church leaders”⁶ and therefore it is considered to be “one of the most important international forums for Orthodox theology.”⁷ It does not “conduct any official negotiations; its members are not committed to any particular scheme of reunion. Its purpose is to help Christians to acquire mutual trust and understanding,”⁸ and thus prepare the way for the future union between East and West. “The Fellowship shows the one life of the Church overcoming division,”⁹ it is a sign of future unity, wished by everyone who is involved in the Ecumenical Movement.

The Fellowship is one of many organisations that promote relations between the two Christian traditions. However, its members, its way of life and its achievements within the Ecumenical Movement make it, if not the most important organisation, then one of the most significant bodies promoting Anglican-Orthodox relations. Lossky, on the other hand, understands the Fellowship as “a prophetic vision,”¹⁰ rather than a real

⁵ Bonner, Gerald, “Divided Christendom: The Contemporary Background”, *Sobornost*, Series 5: No. 7, Autumn 1968, p.511.

⁶ Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius Booklet, Fellowship Archives, p.4.

⁷ Gallaher, Anastassy Brandon, “*Great and Full of Grace*”: Partial Intercommunion and Sophiology on Sergii Bulgakov, in William C. Mills (ed.), *Church and World*, (Orthodox Research Institute, Rollinsford, 2013), p.81.

⁸ Zernov, Nicolas, *The Reintegration of the Church*, (London, SCM Press, 1952), p.118.

⁹ Thompson, Patrick, “The Prayer of the Fellowship”, *Sobornost*, No. 17 (New Series), March, 1939, p.20.

¹⁰ Lossky, Andrew, “The Fellowship Conference”, *Sobornost*, No. 16, December, 1938, p.11.

society. Although, the Fellowship has been prophetic¹¹ it has also been a Society where members of both churches have the opportunity to discuss reunion.

This book will endeavour an in-depth analysis of the rapprochement efforts of some of the most influential and important theologians and ecclesiastical figures of the twentieth century. It will identify the failures, not achieving unity and intercommunion, but also the achievements made within the Ecumenical Movement, such as mutual understanding and respect. The fact that today many Anglican churches contain at least one icon,¹² thus returning the Church in England to one of its own traditions, dating from the sixth century, whereby “places of worship were heavily decorated with painting and mosaic (and embroidered curtains), and pictures on wooden panels”¹³ depicting Christ, the Virgin Mary and Saints, emphasises the improving relations that have affected the theology and practice of the church. However, the history of the Fellowship’s role is one of idealism and optimism (especially in the beginning of the relationships), of philanthropy (in regards to political and theological relations between the members of both Churches), political and social acceptances, and personal and public disputes (primarily on theological topics such as intercommunion between the Anglicans and the Orthodox). This book will emphasise the significance of this part of the Ecumenical Movement,

¹¹ For example Bulgakov’s intercommunion ideas, the liturgical aspect of the conferences, as will be evident in the history of the organisation, in chapters 1 and 2.

¹² The Eastern Orthodox understanding of icon is that it is a sacred image, a window into heaven. They are not merely art, they play a significant spiritual role within the life and practice of the Church, as Christos Yannaras explains: “Byzantine iconography does not “decorate” the church but has an organic, liturgical function in the polyphony of the Eucharistic event, existentially elevating us to the hypostatic realization of life.” Yannaras, Christos, *The Freedom of Morality*, (New York, SVSP, 1996), p.258.

St John of Damascus, when defending icons, in order to show their importance for the Church, explains: “What the book does for those who understand letters, the image does for the illiterate; the word appeals to hearing, the image appeals to sight; it conveys understanding.” St John of Damascus, *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*, Behr, John (ed.), (New York, SVSP, 2003), p.31. Additionally, St John promotes the Orthodox belief, in regards to veneration, explaining: “I do not venerate matter, I venerate the fashioner of the matter, who became matter for my own sake . . .” Ibid., p.29. The veneration of icons was also validated in the Seventh Ecumenical Council, due to the iconoclastic period.

¹³ Williams, Rowan, *The Dwelling of the Light – Praying with Icons of Christ*, (Norwich, The Canterbury Press, 2003), p.xii.

which is not only a European issue, but also a global one, while Orthodox and Anglican faithful live side-by-side in many parts of the world. All of these elements separately and together facilitated in forming the relations, which still exist today, and which consequently led to the Official Dialogue between the Anglican Communion and the Orthodox Church, which has endured since 1976.

The existence and prevalence of the relations between the two distinct ecclesiastical bodies emphasise the fact that “we who are many are one body” (1 Corinthians, 10:17).

“The divided Christians are everywhere in retreat, but the growing awareness of this urgency of their reconciliation gives hope that the battle for survival has not been lost. Only together, united by faith and charity, can the Christian Community face the challenge of the modern world.”¹⁴

However, how does each church perceive the other within the Ecumenical Movement? The Orthodox Church understands ecumenism as the return of the “splinter groups”¹⁵ to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and not as the meeting of various other churches. It is understood as a form of missionary work, as explained by the current Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria, Theodoros II,

“Within the scope of the theological dialogues with the other Christian Denominations [the Orthodox Church] does not seek to discover the Truth, because she has it; thus, she witnesses the Apostolic Tradition and the unscathed Teachings of the Fathers towards all of those, who with a genuine disposition, look to trace the roots of the right Christian faith. Here its mission is focused, to pass on the light of the true faith to the nations.”¹⁶

Therefore, the Orthodox Church needs to continue its missionary work within the Ecumenical Movement and show the importance of the Bible, of Tradition, of the Fathers and of the life of the Ecclesia. The Anglican Communion, on the other hand, understands Ecumenism through its own Tradition of the branch theory (an idea which was popularised especially

¹⁴ Zernov, Nicolas, *The Russians and their Church*, (London, S.P.C.K., 1978), p.183.

¹⁵ Geffert, Bryn, *Eastern Orthodox and Anglicans, Diplomacy, Theology, and the Politics of Interwar Ecumenism*, (Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), p.5.

¹⁶ Kykkotis, Seraphim, Metropolitan of Zimbabwe, Romfea, <http://www.romfea.gr/patriarxeia/patriarxeia/patriarxeio-alexandrias/17163-2013-05-22-19-48-19>, Accessed 24th May 2013, 19.05.

through the Oxford Movement), whereby everyone is part of the One Church, a belief not followed by the Orthodox Tradition and Ecclesiology. John Henry Newman explained that the Catholic Church, as understood by the Anglicans, “consists of three branches, growing from one trunk, the Eastern Orthodox, the Roman and the Anglicans.”¹⁷

In the Dublin Agreed Statement (1984) between the Anglicans and the Orthodox we read,

“The Church is one, because there is ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all’ (Eph. 4, 5) . . . Nevertheless, we find ourselves in an abnormal situation. We are a disrupted Christian people seeking to restore our unity. . . Anglicans are accustomed to seeing our divisions as within the Church: they do not believe that they alone are the one true Church, but they believe that they belong to it. Orthodox, however, believe that the Orthodox Church is the one true Church of Christ, which as his Body is not and cannot be divided. But at the same time they see Anglicans as brothers and sisters in Christ who are seeking with them the union of all Christians in the one Church.”¹⁸

The last statement is not believed by many who are against ecumenism. However, the statement identifies the difference in ecclesiology between Orthodox and Anglicans. Nevertheless, it is crucial to highlight the fact that ecumenism, as an idea and a reality, has had a difficult course even within Anglicanism, especially during the first decades of the twentieth century, when ecumenism was beginning, due to the contacts created on a global level (specifically after World War I). However, this was a limited reaction to a new actuality, which was later embraced by the Anglican Communion. Adrian Hastings explains this on the matter of ecumenical contact during the 1920s:

“Very little would be done by Church leaders beyond expressions of polite good will. They knew well enough that the folk in the pews did not desire it. The form of most men’s Christian loyalties remained so tightly bound to particularities of belief, ministry and worship, and these particularities drew so much of their sense from the historic Sunderings of the religious past that an appeal upon general grounds to a new unity from leaders or theologians, with all the generous concessions inevitably required therein,

¹⁷ Fouyas, Methodios, *Orthodox, Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism*, (London, Oxford University Press, 1972), p.67.

¹⁸ Hill, Henry and Methodios, Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain (eds.), *Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue, The Dublin Agreed Statement 1984*, (London, SPCK, 1985), pp.10-11.

met with next to no sympathy from the common church and chapel-goer...The ecumenical wind would continue to blow but it would mostly be felt for the next couple of decades not so much within the churches themselves as in a growing range of new movements and institutions.”¹⁹

This of course is the reality, when examining groups such as the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius and the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association. However, due to the expansion of the British Empire and its influence on a global level, ecumenism became the religious branch of this expansion; therefore, Anglicanism became pro-ecumenical, in contrast to many Orthodox who are still, to this day, sceptical towards this reality. That is why the branch theory (whereby the One Church consists of the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican churches) has been anathematised by the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, together with the ‘heresy of ecumenism,’ through the Council of Bishops of 1983, claiming:

“Those who attack the Church of Christ by teaching that Christ’s Church is divided into so-called “branches” which differ in doctrine and way of life, or that the Church does not exist visibly, but will be formed in the future when all “branches” or sects or denominations, and even religions will be united into one body; and who do not distinguish the priesthood and mysteries of the Church from those of the heretics, but say that the baptism and eucharist of heretics is effectual for salvation; therefore, to those who knowingly have communion with these aforementioned heretics or who advocate, disseminate, or defend their new heresy of Ecumenism under the pretext of brotherly love or the supposed unification of separated Christians, Anathema!”²⁰

Therefore, it is apparent that the Anglicans and the Orthodox have a very different ecclesiology. The Anglicans promote the branch theory, thus explaining their support and protagonistic role within the Ecumenical Movement; whilst the Orthodox Church believes and promotes the idea that the Orthodox Church is The Church. The Orthodox Church is the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, founded by Jesus Christ and His Apostles. It is “organically and historically the same Church that came into being at Pentecost”²¹ (Acts 2). As Fr. Sergius Bulgakov²² claims,

¹⁹ Hastings, Adrian, *A History of English Christianity 1920-2000*, (London, SCM Press, 2001), p.99.

²⁰ Vitaly, Archbishop of Montreal and Canada, “The ROCOR’s Anathema Against Ecumenism (1983)”, http://orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/ecum_anath.aspx, Accessed, 21/08/2013, 17.04.

²¹ Breck, Fr. John, “What is the Orthodox Church?,”

“Orthodoxy is the Church of Christ on earth.”²³ Nevertheless, it is important to point out the fact that despite the difference in ecclesiology, which inevitably means differences in Christology, Theology and Biblical Studies, the two denominations wish to be in a state of dialogue, in order to achieve unity. However, this unity is also understood differently by both traditions: the Anglicans identify a future unity of all churches on an equal level, introducing a new church; whilst the Orthodox can only accept a return to the Orthodox Church, the Church promoted within the Creed.

Before continuing with the history of the Fellowship, it is crucial to understand how the two churches, which are the key focus of this book, perceive each other. Through this it is made clear how diverse and distinct these two groups are, pointing out the significance of the continuation of the relations and the determination for a future union.

The Orthodox Church has been criticised by the other churches who are in the Ecumenical Movement for its nationalistic identity, being seen as one negative factor by, for example, the Anglican Communion, which would need to alter if union were to be realised between the two. For the non-Orthodox, Orthodoxy does not seem as united as it wants to believe, it appears “divided along ethnic-jurisdictional lines even where the ethnic groups are all found in a common land speaking a common language”²⁴ (for example in the United Kingdom or the USA).²⁵ “The Anglicans perceive Orthodoxy as an ethnic labyrinth in which no foreigner can long survive . . . To them, Orthodoxy is a strange, forbidding mystery, a world which no westerner can hope to understand.”²⁶ This is a very critical point, especially within the context of the current Ecumenical Movement and the numerous Official Dialogues presently taking place. However, it is worth specifying that this is not only an Orthodox issue. The Bishop of London explains that “nationalism in parts of the Christian Church is a problem

<http://www.antiochian.org/node/25458>, Accessed 04/07/2013, 23.01.

²² Fr. Sergius Bulgakov was one of the protagonists and founders of the Fellowship.

²³ Bulgakov, Sergius, *The Orthodox Church*, (New York, SVSP, 1988), p.1.

²⁴ Grass, Tim (ed.), *Evangelicalism and the Orthodox Church*, (London, Evangelical Alliance, 2001), p.87.

²⁵ This was also pointed out by former Archbishop Rowan Williams, when interviewed. He stated: “. . . people talk to me about the undivided witness of Orthodoxy; I do occasionally think hmmm. . . Just how many Orthodox Churches are there in this town [Cambridge]?” Williams, Rowan, 2, p.18.

²⁶ Billerbeck, Franklin, “Orthodoxy and Ethnicity”, *Anglican/Orthodox Pilgrim Newsletter*, Vol.2, No.1, Winter 1993.

that unites both East and West.”²⁷ Therefore, we identify this in some churches within the Anglican Communion, which are in many respects very English and hence ethnic, chiefly the Church of England. Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia comments on this topic, claiming:

“The Anglicans are united (for the most part) in outward organization, but deeply divided in their beliefs and in their forms of public worship. The Orthodox, on the other hand, are divided only in outward organization, but firmly united in beliefs and worship.”²⁸

Additionally Nicolas Zernov believed that, in respect to the issues which separate East and West,

“It ought to be remembered that the Anglican and the Eastern Churches are national Churches. This is both the source of their power and the cause of their limitations, for it brings them into a position when they are forced to follow and not lead the policy of their nations.”²⁹

Fr. Bulgakov gives an interesting definition of the Orthodox Church, explaining that it is “a system of national, autocephalous Churches, allied one with another.”³⁰ This means that despite having jurisdictional and national differences, its theology and its doctrines are the factors which unify Orthodoxy, since they are common elements within the whole of Eastern Orthodoxy. However, when in dialogue with non-Orthodox, a common front should be formed, where accepted issues are discussed and pointed out. As Fr. George Florovski revealed, when speaking in relation to the Orthodox participation in the Ecumenical Movement, there existed “the great danger of “provincialism” when nationalist sentiments were combined with the autocephalous freedom of local Churches.”³¹ Nevertheless, this could be the first step in actually dealing with and resolving disputed matters within the Orthodox world, such as the role of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, whether his Ecumenicity is accepted by everyone, or the role of the Moscow Patriarchate within the Orthodox Church. Nationalistic and historical pride dictates that these issues will

²⁷ Chartres, Richard, “Ecumenism-New Style Reflections on the Situation of the Churches in the Twenty-first Century-part 1,” *Orthodox Herald*, October-November-December 2014, Issue 313-315, p. 27.

²⁸ Ware, Kallistos, Bishop, *The Inner Kingdom*, (New York, SVSP, 2000), p.20.

²⁹ Zernov, Nicolas, “Obstacles and Opportunities,” *Sobornost*, No.17 (New Series), March 1939, p.15.

³⁰ Bulgakov, 1988, p.187.

³¹ Ford, Joan, “The Fellowship at Eastbourne August 4th-25th”, 1948, *Sobornost*, Winter 1948, Series 3, No.4, p.152.

most probably never be resolved or their solution will be a chronic endeavour; nevertheless, in spite of this, the Orthodox need to illustrate unity between themselves towards the non-Orthodox when taking part in the Ecumenical Movement. It seems that, and this is understood by the other churches, the Orthodox lack unity when in the Official Dialogue of Ecumenical Relations. This is undoubtedly the result of political, social and ecclesiastical (jurisdictional) issues that divide them. Nonetheless, it seems that this issue might be solved in the future, due to the existence and increasing influence that the Orthodox Diaspora has all around the world, and primarily in the West.

On the other hand, the Anglican Communion³² is not fully understood by many Orthodox, who perceive it as being a Protestant body. The following is an official statement, formed during the Lambeth Conference (1930) explaining the nature and status of the Anglican Communion:

“The Anglican Communion is a fellowship, within the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, of those duly constituted dioceses, provinces, or regional Churches in communion with the See of Canterbury, which have the following characteristics in common:

a. They uphold and propagate the Catholic and Apostolic faith and order as they are generally set forth in the Book of Common Prayer as authorised in their several Churches;

b. They are particular or national Churches, and, as such, promote within each of their territories a national expression of Christian faith, life and worship; and

c. They are bound together not by a central legislative and executive authority, but by mutual loyalty sustained through the common counsel of the bishops in conference.”³³

Many have tried to give the Anglican Communion a specific label,³⁴ in order to approach it and familiarise themselves with this Church.

³² In this book the terms Anglican Communion and Anglican Church will alternate. The latter, not expressing fully what the Anglican Communion is, is nevertheless a term used by the Anglicans and the Orthodox, as seen in countless publications of both churches and representatives. However, it is more correct to refer to the Anglicans by their official name, namely the Anglican Communion, which reveals the diversity on various matters of tradition and theology within Anglicanism.

³³ The Lambeth Conference, Resolutions Archive from 1930, Published by the Anglican Communion Office, 2005, Resolution 49.

Khomiakov, after coming into contact with William Palmer³⁵ in Russia in the middle of the nineteenth century, illustrated Anglicanism “as a narrow ledge of dubious terra firma beaten by the waves of Romanism and Protestantism and crumbling on both sides into the mighty waters.”³⁶ This extreme impression has never been established within Orthodox circles.

Fedotov explains in an article in *Sobornost* (the journal produced by the Fellowship) that,

“The Anglican Church amazes us by its breadth, by what is called comprehensiveness. At first we do not understand how Protestantism, Catholicism and Orthodoxy can live together side by side within one profession of faith; many are inclined to regard this as a sign of indifference. But we soon become convinced that the tolerance springs not from coolness but from the deeply inculcated religious and social belief that true sobornost exists; from the old habit of serving and struggling for the truth together, from respect for the opinions of others, even though they be not absolutely right. The English social sense is that minimum of love (akin to courtesy), without which intercourse is impossible.”³⁷

Therefore, Fedotov explains the fact that the ideal of sobornost, of a communion in love (i.e. good communication and understanding) is evident within the Anglican Communion; moreover, it is considered a prototype for the Ecumenical Movement, where respect and love is shown for the other ecclesiastical bodies, in order to achieve the fundamental objective of Ecumenism and specifically of Anglican-Orthodox Relations: unity.

A brief historical explanation is vital, in order to outline its route to its current ecclesiastical model and structure. Until the sixteenth century,

³⁴ Fr. Andrew Louth explains the problem of labels, claiming that ‘labels are sometimes a problem. Nobody wants to be labelled, and yet we use labels all the time, as a way of simplifying the world in which we live, a way of introducing some order and identity’. Louth, Andrew, *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology*, (London, SPCK, 2013), p.xiii.

³⁵ William Palmer was a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and one of the first pioneers in the relations between the Anglicans and the Orthodox.

³⁶ Palmer William, Aleksei Khomiakov, W.J. Birkbeck, *Russia and the English Church during the last Fifty Years: Containing a Correspondence between Mr. William Palmer, Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and M. Khomiakoff, in the Years 1844-1854*, (London, Rivington, Percival, 1895), p.112.

³⁷ Fedotov, G.P., “Meeting the English”, *Sobornost*, No. 12 (New Series), December, 1937, p.15.

when the Reformation took place, the Church in England was under the Roman Catholic Church. Under Henry VIII this changed, whereby he broke all the ties between Rome and England, thus creating an independent church. With the passing of decades and centuries, the English Church advanced an individual outline of faith and church order, expanding also to other parts of the world, mainly due to the expansion of the British Empire. Hence the Churches which are in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury and accept him as *primus inter pares* and are all united with the Church of England, are all part of the Anglican Communion. Therefore, due to its history and understanding of its identity, as the Reformed Catholic Church in England, it makes “Anglicans see themselves, and be seen by others, as a bridge Church.”³⁸

Countless Orthodox academics have tried to identify the English Church, coming to the conclusion that it is split into a number of parties, commonly known as the High Church, Evangelical and Mainstream Church. This brings to mind that Anglicanism is a union, a confederation of churches, each with different emphases on theology, liturgical practice and hierarchy. Archbishop Michael Ramsey, who also played a key role in the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius’ life, defended the Anglican Communion by explaining,

“though there is High Church and Low Church, it is all the time One Church with a single life, and all the members of the Church of England share together in the Creeds, Holy Scriptures, the Sacraments, the rule of the Bishops and the Liturgy; so do not think of High Church and Low Church as utterly separate factions but as two aspects of the life of a Church which is all the time one.”³⁹

Many theologians, including Orthodox, however, maintain that the Anglican Church, especially the High Church, is not a Protestant Church; it is a reformed Catholic Church that has preserved its bond with the tradition of the undivided, ancient Church. That is why the Orthodox Church acknowledges Apostolic succession within the Anglican Communion, which it could not have if it were not part of the ancient Church. Germanos Strenopoulos, the first Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain, when speaking at the Gloucester Diocesan Conference on 1 June 1923, clarified that, “the Orthodox Church has always considered the venerable Anglican Church as a branch, in many

³⁸ Tanner, Mary, “The Church of England and its relationship with the Roman Catholic and Orthodox worlds”, *Sobornost*, Volume 19: Number 2, 1997, p.9.

³⁹ Fouyas, 1972, p.87.

particulars, in continuous succession with the Ancient Church,⁴⁰ referring not to the Branch Theory, which is alien to the ecclesiology of the Orthodox Church, but to the fact that the Anglican Church represents the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, as expressed in the Creed.

The distinctions which exist between the Anglican Communion and the Orthodox Church, inevitably state the existence of differing objectives, especially within the context of unity. “To the Orthodox unity is principally dogmatic; to the Anglicans it is principally hierarchical.”⁴¹ The diverse aims result in the use of distinct ways of achieving them; therefore, before unity can be achieved between the two parties, the aims and the methods need to be agreed upon, in order to progress within the Ecumenical Movement.

The Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius was established in 1927, after the initial years of contact between East and West, becoming one of the most important groups where theology was discussed on a friendly and unofficial level, allowing for further deepening and mutual understanding between Anglicans and Orthodox. This Society is the main focus of this book; however, the global and official interactions between East and West are also analysed, in order to show a general overview of the relations.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.88.

⁴¹ Brenchen, Kenneth, “Towards 1940”, *Sobornost*, No. 13 (New Series), March, 1938, p.5.

FELLOWSHIP JOURNAL

BOOKS ON THE FELLOWSHIP OF ST ALBAN AND ST SERGIUS

The literature needed for the undertaking and completion of the present book has been immense. Due to the vastness of the topic, the Fellowship, Ecumenical Movement, World Council of Churches (WCC), AECA, Nicolas Zernov, Metropolitan Kallistos, Rowan Williams, women priests, deaconesses, and icons within Anglicanism, the research had to be as great as the topics examined. This section is divided into two sections:

First, The Fellowship books and Journal and secondly, the non-Fellowship literature.

Where does this place this current book? If we were to imagine a bookstore, under which section would we find this research? The books on either side of this one would have as a central theme Ecumenical Relations, Ecumenism, Official Statements between the Anglican Communion and the Orthodox Church, theology of the twentieth century, books and papers on women priests, iconography, Orthodox and Anglican theology. However, a gap is evident, since a concise history of the Fellowship is non-existent, as is the case with its theology.

The Fellowship is the central subject of this book. Therefore, all of the above topics are analysed and examined within the context of this Society. Countless books and articles have been written within the wider spectrum of Ecumenical Relations; additionally, sources which relate to the Fellowship are also used, in order to understand the general relations between the Orthodox Church and the Anglican Communion.

The Fellowship was composed of many highly respected academics and representatives from both Orthodoxy and Anglicanism. This gave it a unique feature and significance. Thus, the history of this organisation is an important one. However, the history of this Society can only be found in two places: *Sobornost*, the Fellowship's journal, where many articles (such

as “The Ways of the Fellowship”¹ and the secretary’s notes give the history of the Society, and secondly, the books produced by the Fellowship (as is evident below).

The Fellowship produced the *Journal of the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius* since its first year of existence. It is a credible source of the theology and the discussions which were promoted during its conferences and which its members saw as significant and crucial within the Ecumenical Movement. The life of the journal can be split into different periods, to help understand its role and growth within the Ecumenical Literature.

During the first period, 1928-1934, the journal was entitled the *Journal of the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius*. During this period a number of topics were examined, primarily introducing numerous diverse themes, including politics, sociology, theology, ecclesiastical history and ecumenism. However, since its first years, it was evident that the journal was mostly going to examine Orthodox topics, especially since few Orthodox periodicals in the West were available during that period (another periodical being the *Christian East*, produced by the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association). Academic work was not yet part of the Fellowship’s journal, and, when prominent members wrote articles, they preferred to write in a catechetical manner, rather than a scholarly one. Furthermore, many articles examined the political situation in the Soviet Union, pointing out to its Western audience the difficulties under which Eastern Christianity was living.

The second period of the journal’s history, 1935-1978, coincides with its renaming. In 1935 the Fellowship’s journal was renamed, giving it its current name, *Sobornost*, the Russian word for Catholicity (καθολικός). *Sobornost* is not considered merely a journal on Reunion, “it is also the organ of a large and vigorous body of Christians, and must therefore be concerned with all the major issues of their life and thought.”² The title of this journal, however, was a mystery for many English readers; therefore an explanation, by the Russian members, was imperative. “*Sobornost*, as Fr. Florovsky has pointed out, is essentially qualitative and not quantitative.”³ It is a word with a complexity of meanings, being the

¹ Zernov, Nicolas, “The Ways of the Fellowship 1928-1958”, *Sobornost*, Series 3, No.24, Spring 1959, pp.636-642.

² Mascall, E.L., “Editorial”, *Sobornost*, No. 13 (New Series), March 1938, p.2.

³ Clarke, O.F. (ed.), “Editorial”, *Sobornost*, No. I (New Series), March 1935, p.3.