

STUDII ȘI ARTICOLE

ARTICLES

Koinonic Evangelism: How Can We Evangelize Together?

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Abstract: At the end of the 20th century, the evangelistic task is still regarded by many as a kind of sermon addressed to the world. However, evangelism is better understood and served not by placing the Gospel over against the world, but by seeking ways of relating the Gospel to the existential needs of the world. In Orthodox liturgical practice, in which the Eucharist is central, the world is brought to the Church in the forms of the natural elements, the cultural riches of the local community, or the everyday preoccupations of the faithful. Our liturgical and sacramental tradition clearly indicates that the Church's mission is not literally throwing the Gospel into the face of the world, but rather seeking first to understand what every human being longs for, and then seeing how, through the Word and the Sacrament, the Church can respond to those needs or heal any infirmities.

Keywords: Evangelizing, pastoral theology, laics mission, koinonia, parish life, catechesis

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I began my journey into the study of evangelism after I had gone to my first assignment in Billings, Montana. I was given a seemingly simple charge: make the mission work. We had two years left on the grant, but there was no guarantee of income after that. It was a matter of grow or die which is not exactly the best evangelistic strategy. I needed a crash course on evangelism only to discover that one did not really exist in the Orthodox Church. There were some passages from the Church Fathers and some scattered writings by theologians but nothing that explained the mechanics or even the definition for that matter. The best advice came from experienced clergy who had similar experience establishing a parish but it was mostly "learn by doing". There began my journey to discover the Orthodox theology of evangelism--not from a burning desire for knowledge, but rather a matter of survival.

Father Alexander Schmemmann, a prominent 20th Century Orthodox theologian, posed the question which I needed to answer, "Can a Church whose life is centered almost exclusively on the liturgy and the sacraments, whose spirituality is primarily mystical and ascetical, be truly missionary?"² Would the Orthodox Church be viable in rugged, individualistic Montana, or for that matter anywhere in the United States, or we were just too different. Would we remain a small, exclusive, exotic (if not downright bizarre) expression of Christianity? Or were we to be the expression of Church that can really and truly connect with this world and provide for the needs of the community? The answer to that question posed by Fr. Schmemmann must be resounding because the very nature of the Church is to be missionary through precisely those elements he outlined.

So as such evangelism begins with the central element in the Orthodox Church, the Liturgy, and by extension then to the Eucharistic community. It is through that Eucharistic community that individuals are brought into the fullness of the Faith as the Body of Christ. The common understanding of evangelism as working with individuals to lead them into the Faith and presenting the teachings of the Faith in a systematic and coherent manner is the common paradigm (the commonly used phrase "teaching and preaching" is brought to mind), is only part of the equation. It is not enough to merely lead an individual into an understanding of God, Faith and the Church without integrating that person into the Eucharistic (worshipping) community. In biblical and patristic parlance this understanding of the Eucharistic community is revealed as *koinonia*. The Liturgy and the community intersects precisely at that point (communion and community), *koinonia*, but *koinonia* as properly understood not in weakly translated connotation of fellowship but rather strongly connected with Eucharistic community.

² Alexander Schmemmann, *Church, World, Mission*, Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973), 210.

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Acts 2:42-47 illustrates *koinonia* in its fullness and in its relation to building a community, "*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the communion (koinonia), to the breaking of bread and to prayer... All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need... They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.*" Without this *koinonia*, a community is just a group of individuals with the same beliefs, perhaps no different than a local club. However, when in a Eucharistic fellowship this gathering of individuals becomes the Body of Christ. Even into the modern times, the understanding of the centrality of the worshipping community as *koinonia* remains foundational. „Our personal Christian experience”, writes Archbishop Anastasios (Yannoulatos) one the greatest modern Orthodox missionaries, "is made steadfast and strengthened through our *incorporation in the mystical Body of Christ* [emphasis added]."³

It is also sadly typical that this understanding of the centrality of *koinonia* is often lacking in many Orthodox parishes. By viewing themselves as a collection of individuals of the same Faith and not as members of the Body of Christ, each with their own purpose and function actuated and actualized in the Eucharist, these parishes lack the foundation upon which to build. Evangelism in the parish needs to focus on incorporating the person into the local community which is the Body of Christ, which is centralized around the corporate and liturgical life of the community. As Fr. Ion Bria, wrote, "Prayer, worship and communion have always formed the context for the witness of faith, including evangelism, mission and church life. The missionary structures were built on the liturgy of the word and the sacraments; and since the beginning the great variety of liturgies and rites, creeds and confessions has been due to the diversity of missionary contexts."⁴

How Do Individuals Evangelize?

So clearly there are two elements to evangelism. One is the personal: how do I as an individual evangelize those around me? The second, and the more important, is communal: how do we as a community evangelize those around us? Both are important and both lead into the other. We as faithful Orthodox Christians must present our Faith and we as a faithful Orthodox Christian *koinonia* must integrate those people into our community. So let's start with the individual.

³ Anastasios Yannoulatos, *Mission in Christ's Way: An Orthodox Understanding of Mission* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Press, 2010), 113.

⁴ Ion Bria, *The Liturgy After the Liturgy: Mission and Witness from an Orthodox Perspective* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996), 9.

1. *Kerygma: To Proclaim*

Kerygma can be defined as the external teachings of the Church but its root is based on the Greek word for "proclaiming". It is a very public act that announces the Christian message just as a herald would proclaim important news to the public. It is also the foundational element in all of the methods of evangelism. "The first and most important element is focus on the central message of salvation – the conviction that the Church has a message to proclaim, a *kerygma*, a heralding of good news."⁵

2. *Kerusso: To Preach*

Very often this is thought of as the most common manner of evangelism. One must preach the word of God. It is so often thought of as the singular method of evangelism that it is not uncommon to find street corners filled with "evangelists" preaching about repentance or the end of the world. Yet that is not at all what is meant. Rather the out loud, verbal preaching is meant to bring people into the fold, to strengthen those in the fold and to call those who have strayed back into the fold. Preaching must be positive and edifying and enable people to hear the Good News.

3. *Martyria: To Witness*

Martyria is the literally translated as "witness" and has taken on many forms. However, the basic understanding was that a witness had to come forward to testify to the truth of what they had seen. Witness can be either active or passive. Active witness is to bear the truth of Christ. This may be through words and deeds, and some cases this witness is taken to an extreme level where one is called to actually give up their life. As the Apostle Paul writes in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.*" (*Hebrews 12:1*) The Church has always produced these clouds of witnesses and they have been some of the most successful evangelists.

4. *Didaskalia: To Teach*

Didaskalia is "teaching or instruction". Certainly Christ's ministry was based around great teachings such as the Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer and other well-known parables. It was a common method of imparting knowledge and this continued through the New Testament and into the present age. Volumes of teachings exist from the Church Fathers which delved into some of the most difficult theological issues. They defined the Faith and sought to impart a deeper understanding of the great mystery of Christ. But most importantly, the teachings unified the Faith in order to

⁵ Theodore Stylianopoulos, „The Gospel in the Parish: Discovering the Orthodox Evangelical Ethos”, in *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 48, no. 1-4 (2003), 183.

prevent schism and heresy. Hence the title of Orthodox as "correct praise or teaching". Evangelism requires teaching. One cannot just proclaim and witness the Gospel but one must connect these with the greater teachings of the Church. Otherwise the Gospel can become confusing or divisive as demonstrated by the many divisions of within Christianity. The Gospel message must be properly explained in order to be properly understood.

5. *Apologia: To Defend*

There is perhaps not greater need in today's "post-modern" environment than to utilize apologetics. *Apologia* is defined as "defense" and it has been employed from the earliest times of the Church. But the usage of such a method is fraught with dangers. *Apologia* can quickly turn aggressive and judgmental. It may not always form a positive approach to Christianity but rather can become divisive. While Christians must make a defense of their beliefs, they must do so out a spirit of love. The Church Fathers always sought to point to the proper behavior of a Christian while defending their beliefs. Perhaps the best way to look at *apologia* is as a dialogue. All Christians are encouraged to dialogue about their faith and beliefs. As such apologetics becomes a powerful tool of evangelism precisely because it allows for conversation.

6. *Diakonia: To Serve*

"The *kerygma*, i.e. the proclamation of the message about Christ in words written or spoken, is always the indispensable means of mission. Yet, it has to be accompanied by service, *diakonia*, that meets the various concrete needs of people and expresses the love of God for all people in tangible ways. Jesus is the model of the mission of the church: "*As the Father has sent me, I send you*" (*John 20:21*). The rich variety and comprehensiveness of Jesus's ministry toward people, with special care for the poor and marginalized, should also characterize the church's mission... where suffering and marginalization are still stark realities."⁶ *Diakonia* means "service" and it is through the service to others that makes it one of the most influential witnesses to Christianity. A Christian should be someone who lives for the other. This has been true from the earliest times of the Church where often Christian service provided the stark contrast with the pagan religions. This sometimes cost the believer their lives. Tertullian wrote in his *Apology* in the 3rd century about how the pagans would marvel at the love the Christians showed. "Look, see how these Christians love one another."⁷

⁶ Tomad Engelsviken, „Three Missiological Perspectives: What Testimony?“, in *International Review of Missions*, 95 (2006), 332.

⁷ Tertullian, „Apology“, Chapter 39, Paragraph 6, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume III, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 1995).

This love for one another is still a powerful method of evangelism. A true Christian who serves, whether it be Mother Maria Skobtsova to the poor in Paris to the neighbor who cares for the person next door, demonstrates the true love of a Christian.

7. *Homologia: To Confess*

Homologia is defined as a "confession" or "profession of faith". It is different from the act of teaching and preaching in that it is more of a personal act. It is the agreement (often in public) to what one believes and adheres to as a member of the Church. These public professions of Faith are powerful witnesses to the changes one has in one's life. "*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession [homologia] in the presence of so many witnesses.*" (1 Timothy 6:12) The activity of *homologia* may be in response to challenge (like *apologia*) but often it is a public profession by a person. There are numerous writings by the Church Fathers which bear the title *Homologia* and are meant to be that public profession of Faith.⁸ In this sense there is a need for all members of the Church to have that same belief in order to be part of the same Body of Christ. The word *homologia* literally means „same words. This is so vital that there be that one belief that, as the Orthodox Divine Liturgy states "Let us love one another that with one mind, so that we may confess. Father, Son and Holy Spirit! The Trinity, one in essence and undivided!"⁹ This oneness of mind and belief must be on par with the same oneness of the Holy Trinity. The Church literally calls the Body of Christ to publicly confess the same Faith.

How Do Communities Evangelize?

Evangelism may involve personal actions, but it is a communal activity. This activity takes on many forms, but is most powerfully realized in the worshipping parish community. Without this community, the context of evangelism, which draws people to worship, is lost. Likewise without this community, the goal of evangelism, which is the integration into the Body of Christ, is also lost. Archbishop Anastasios reflects, "The local Church, the diocese, the parish, but also every other form of expression of ecclesial life, such as monasteries, religious organizations, missionary societies, various small informal missionary groups and communities constantly remain open and fulfill their duty within society to radiate the love and glory of Christ

⁸ Such as Gennadius Scholarius 15th century response to question on Christianity by Mehmed II.

⁹ From the Orthodox Liturgy after the Catechumens are dismissed, before the Creed is recited and the gifts consecrated.

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to the whole of humanity for the sake of the entire human race (*oikoumene*), always receiving and offering the Gospel."¹⁰

In short, this is what Orthodox *koinonic* evangelism is about. It is the nurturing and practicing of a faith through the most elemental of Church organizations, the parish, which in turn reaches out into the surrounding community. It is worth repeating the observation of Archbishop Anastasios: „Our personal Christian experience is made steadfast and strengthened through our *incorporation into the mystical Body of Christ*. Our confession draws strength from the experience of the Church. Therefore, in the final analysis, the individual, personal witness for Christ is *ecclesiastical*. When we confess the Lord, we do so mainly as members of a community, the Church which carries on His work. "Because it is only in the Church that the kingdom of heaven is preached, and every goal of the Gospel of salvation looks thereto. [Eusebius, *On the Inscription of the Psalms*]"¹¹.

Ultimately, evangelism in the Orthodox Church cannot be divorced from an examination into parish life as they are completely interconnected. As David Bosch wrote in **Transfiguring Mission**, "The witnessing community is the community in worship; in fact the worshipping community is in and of itself an act of witness... This is so, since the Eucharistic liturgy as the basic missionary structure and purpose and is celebrated as a 'missionary event'."¹²

The praxis of *koinonic* evangelism in the parish comes down to seven critical areas that form the heart of a theology of evangelism. These basic principles are applicable in a host of situations and contexts. However, it is important to remember that these principles are uniquely manifested in the Orthodox Church through its liturgical tradition and theological context. A parish or mission may have incredible people in their midst doing wonderful work but the community but can fail them when a seeker comes into the church and the community is unwilling or incapable of receiving them. The person may be ready but the community is not.

I would add another very significant point and one that many parishes do not yet quite understand. Times have changed with the abundance of material in both books and on the web. People have more information on the Orthodox Church than ever before. Some of it is very good and frankly some of it is very bad and damaging. A community must be prepared for the reality that many of the seekers have read themselves to the Orthodox Church. They have a plethora of knowledge that may even surpass people who have been Orthodox all of their life. And frankly their "hypocrisy meter" is finely tuned. If what they read does not match what they are experiencing

¹⁰ Yannoulatos, *Mission*, 149-151.

¹¹ Yannoulatos, *Mission*, 113.

¹² Bosch, *Transforming*, 208.

then they will simply leave. The two areas that draw them to the Church is the Liturgical life and the stability of the theology.

But also remember this a community can be a wall to seekers. These seven areas are areas which not only advance the *koinonic* evangelistic community but also are what people are examining as they seek the Orthodox Church. Far too many times, people come into the Church for the first time and are frankly „turned off” what they see or are put off by the attitude and comments of the parishioners. The community has now acted in the exact opposite of what it should be doing. Others receive a warm welcome and immediately sense a loving Christian community focused on Christ. That is the goal of these seven areas.

1. Be Rooted in the Liturgical Life

The first is that in order to be effective, *koinonic* evangelism must first be centered on and strongly rooted in the liturgical life of the parish, most specifically in the Eucharistic participation that unites the members to one another. Fr. Bria is correct in assessing, "Prayer, worship and communion have always formed the context for the witness of faith, including evangelism, mission and church life. The missionary structures were built on the liturgy of the word and the sacraments; and since the beginning the great variety of liturgies and rites, creeds and confessions has been due to the diversity of missionary contexts."¹³ This is palpably obvious in all effective parishes, so much so that parishioners may take that foundation for granted. When Fr. Schmemmann poses the question as to whether a Church whose, "life is centered almost exclusively on the liturgy and the sacraments, whose spirituality is primarily mystical and ascetical, be truly missionary?" the answer is firmly affirmative.¹⁴ In fact it is so critical that it can be no other way, since truly liturgical Church MUST be missionary as that is the very purpose of the Liturgy.

So the Liturgy must be done correctly, reverently and in the proper order as outlined by the Church. People are not looking for innovation but an authentic WORSHIP experience. The church building and setting may be modest, the icons and church articles may be questionable, and the choir may not be the best, but the worship is done with beauty and reverence. The priest must serve with dignity, his sermons well delivered and the Liturgy well run and in order. Likewise, the parishioners must also be attentive and reverent, with joy and love. They must actually want to be there and to actually worship. The whole point of the gathering is to worship. Special care must be taken to ensure a prayerful place and a prayerful liturgical service. Do the services and do them properly.

¹³ Bria, *Liturgy*, 9.

¹⁴ Schmemmann, *Church*, 210.

2. *Be Deeply Relational*

The second principle is that *koinonic* evangelism is deeply relational. What draws people into the Church and keeps them in the parish are relationships. A strong congregation has a deep relationship with the clergy, a communal relationship among the parishioners, and a strong relationship with the surrounding community, all of which is reflective of their relationship with God. There is very little disconnect and all relationships are genuine, organic, and embedded. The effective parish intentionally, though naturally, draws in and welcomes outsiders into these relationships. A refrain heard in effective parishes is, "We love each other and we welcome anyone who comes through the door." Fr. Ion Bria writes, "As a place of gathering for praying and sharing the body and blood of Christ, every local parish is also a point of departure into the world to share the joy of the resurrection. The worshipping community is sent as the evangelizing community."¹⁵

These are not just words but must be repeatedly validated by the parishioners. The people really are friendly and really do welcome people. Relationships begin at the head, and the importance of the priest cannot be overemphasized. The priest sets the tone in the parish, ensures the atmosphere is welcoming, that the services and the sermons are relevant, prayerful, and reverent. The priest teaches and practices evangelism in every available forum. They are always available and involved and the parish takes care of them because they knew the priest cares for them. The priest leads in love and service and the people follow. John 10:14 states, "*I am the good shepherd; and I know my sheep, and am known by My own.*"

3. *Be a Witness*

The third principle is the witness of the parish as well as the witness of the individuals in that parish. Time and again, the simple witness of being a Christian, living a Christian life, forming and belonging to a Christian community, proves to be one of the critical attractions to the Faith and to the parish. People realize when something is genuine and desire to be a part of that. It is this simple Christian witness that first attracted the first converts to the Church; it is this same simple witness which allowed the Church to grow, attracting followers from all walks of life. It was this same Christian witness that formed the foundation of the Orthodox Church as it spread throughout Europe, the Middle East, and across Russia, bringing the witness of the faith to North America through the great missionaries as St Herman of Alaska, St. Innocent of Moscow, and St. Tikhon of Moscow. There are too many connections with this word "witness" for it to be a coincidence.

This witness extends to all aspects of parish life. The goal of evangelism is not about numbers and proselytizing people into the Orthodox Church, rather it is about

¹⁵ Bria, *Liturgy*, 31.

witnessing to the truth that they believe and live. Bryan Stone writes on post-modern evangelism, "Is evangelism a *productive* activity, governed by the aims of reaching, conversion, or initiation, and thus the *making* of converts? If so, the skilled evangelist might employ whatever creative means will work to achieve that end. The practice of evangelism is then evaluated by an instrumental logic whereby the means and the end of the practice are *external* to one another. If, however, the logic of evangelism is not primarily the logic of production but instead the logic of bearing witness, we find ourselves talking about evangelism differently. Now the "end" of evangelism is internal to the practice (as a quality of character and performance) rather than externalized in its "product." Martyrs rather than the pastors of mega churches might now become our evangelistic exemplars...".

4. Be Focused on Activities Within the Parish Community

The fourth principle focuses on the activities within and without the community. A parish must be active within itself, knowing and serving its membership, but also taking care of those with whom they come in contact. Some examples of this care are visiting those in homes and hospitals, assisting a member that has fallen on difficult times, ensuring that parishioners can get to services, and so on. However, true caring extends beyond physical or material requirements, and must include spiritual needs. Therefore, the parish must nurture spiritual growth through Bible studies, Orthodox education, speaker programs, spiritual retreats, and a host of other activities. While there is a danger that the parish may become fixated on such activities, the guiding principle is that the priest knows his parish and their needs and then fills those needs.

A *koinonic* evangelistic parish is one that takes care of its own people spiritually, physically, and emotionally, and activates the community when there is someone in need. There are a number of stories from effective parishes about how the parish banded together to assist a particular person or family. There are stories about people coming to the leadership about the plight of someone outside of the church, and the leadership offers help to this stranger. That is because the leadership and the parish do not see others as objects but as subjects, persons, children of God, and all in need of God's love and mercy. It is reminiscent of the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), in that they do not pass by on the other side but care for those before them.

5. Be Focused on the Local Community

The fifth evangelistic principle is similar to the fourth but the focus is outward. An evangelizing parish reaches out to the local community and beyond. Every effective parish is involved in a variety of community activities and events. Some are as simple as having a booth at a festival, while others are as complicated as the operation of a coffee shop. The people in the parish are involved in food banks, clothing drives, delivering meals, assisting veterans, and the list goes on. They give a

percentage of their parish's income to charities, missions, international relief efforts, as well as to the Church. They are supportive of seminarian education, and in many cases send people to be trained at the seminaries. They sponsor foreign missionaries, orphanages, and homes. In other words, they give freely of their time, their talent and their treasure, even when it will not directly benefit their parish.

This involvement forces them to look outward and have a different perspective, one that connects them to the place where they are planted. They are known in the community, patronize the community, and are respected in the community. They create cooperative effort with other parishes, regardless of denomination.

6. *Be Responsible with Money*

The sixth principle is the issue of money. This principle may seem slightly mundane, but it is of incredible importance. Many good parishes fail over poor financial decisions or lack of support. There are more arguments and divisions in parishes over financial matters than any other topic. Large donors can often try to dominate the parish by virtue of their largesse and parishes can divide over „us versus them.” Poorly managed finances can destroy a parish more quickly than a bad priest.

None of these negative financial issues are evident in any of the effective parishes. This does not mean they don't struggle with financial matters, especially since all of them have some sort of expansion program in the works, but they all talk honestly about money. They are generous and support many different projects joyfully. They compensate their clergy fairly, in the understanding that long-term clergy commitment benefits the community. People simply give, and they give as a spiritual discipline. Children are taught to give as well so they grow up with a healthy approach to finances. The parishes support themselves on stewardship and not with a host of fundraising events, relying on others to pay their bills. They consciously decided to give money outside of the parish and any money they do raise outside of stewardship is for some outside charity, never for the operation of the Church. Hence, one does not see the endless rounds of dinners, raffles, festivals all to raise money for operating costs. The principle is basic as the passage in Matthew 6:21, "*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*" A *koinonic* evangelistic parish's heart is obvious because it where they put their treasure.

7. *Be a Unique Orthodox Church*

The seventh principle relates to the question of ethnicity. The historical record of the Church has demonstrated its struggle with the question of ethnicity. The Church seemed to always incorporate into the culture in which it found itself or the culture that arose out of the Church. However, sometimes the culture or the ethnicity became so powerful that the Church became more of an ethnic ghetto. "Much criticism", reflected Archbishop Anastasios, "some of it justified, has arisen in the past of the tendency of

many missions to establish spiritual colonies or annexes to their own Church rather than create new, living churches, rooted in the soul and life of the people."¹⁶

With this confusion has come the weakness of the Orthodox witness. Parishes have tendencies to retreat into themselves in the face of challenges. Some continue to advance the notion of the local parish as the repository of ethnicity. While some of these parishes will continue to exist in this atmosphere, others have clearly declined and faded. Despite the beauty of the Liturgy, the perceived strength of the theology, and even the tightness of a community, the Orthodox Church in many regions continues to decline and be closed to outsiders. Stamoolis writes, "The theologians write beautifully of the witness of the liturgy and the missionary structures of the congregation. But, if this is the case, , why, especially in the Diaspora, are some of the churches centers of social activity that exclude outsiders? Can Orthodoxy break out of its cultural mentality so that it can witness?"¹⁷

Conclusion

Fr. Hopko prophetically envisions such a parish, „These parishes, certainly in the United States and Canada, will be of a great variety of sizes, shapes, and styles, though each one, theologically and mystically, will be the very same Church of Christ. The parishes will be composed of different kinds of people. They will be of different cultures and traditions. They will have different emphases and possibilities in worship, education, pastoral care, and philanthropic and evangelical activity. None of them will claim they can do everything by themselves. All of them will admit that they need each other, being constrained by truth and love, to cooperate for God’s glory and the good of God’s people. They will all confess that to do God’s work they cannot compete with each other, but must complete each other in Christian service and ministry. They will know that the only way in which they should strive to outdo each other is in expressing godly zeal, brotherly affection, honor, and mutual respect (cf. Rom. 12:9-13).¹⁸

What evangelizing parishes have been able to do is in their own way reflect this optimistic vision of Fr. Hopko. They are diverse in the best sense of the word and they respect the many diverse traditions while fully understanding that these traditions, as important as they may be to some in the parishes, are subordinate to the Tradition of the Orthodox Church. They engage the surrounding community and are open to that community. They engage in all sorts of activity not because they are simply caring for their own, rather they care for all that God brings to them. They are a *koinonia*.

¹⁶ Yannoulatos, *Mission*, 32.

¹⁷ Stamoolis, *Mission*, 129.

¹⁸ Hopko, *Speaking*, 94-95.

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In conclusion, evangelism is about groups of people dedicated to the Orthodox Church, consciously choosing to be a part of the Church and living out a life in the Church. That is Christianity as meant to be, a life dedicated to a life in Christ; a communion of people seeking their salvation within a worshipping, liturgical community. It is through this *koinonia* that they discover Christ in such a powerful way that they simply desire to witness that to the world and to share that joy. This witness transforms them from a community to a church, from a parish to the Body of Christ. Fr. Schmemmann also wrote about *leitourgia* (liturgy or action) as "an action by which a group of people become something corporately which they had not been as a mere collection of individuals – a whole greater than the sum of its parts".¹⁹ In effect *koinonic* evangelism is just that a whole becoming greater than the sum of its parts.

¹⁹ Schmemmann, *Life*, 25.