

Eastern Orthodox Christianity and American Higher Education: Theological, Historical, and Contemporary Reflections

Ann Mitsakos Bezzerides

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EASTERN ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY *and* AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Theological, Historical, and Contemporary Reflections

Edited by Ann Mitsakos Bezzerides and Elizabeth H. Prodromou



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Theological, Historical, and
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Edited by

ANN MITSAKOS BEZZERIDES
AND ELIZABETH H. PRODROMOU

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C O N T E N T S

| | |
|-----------------|-----------|
| Acknowledgments | <i>ix</i> |
|-----------------|-----------|

| | |
|---|----------|
| Introduction: Piecing the Puzzle of Eastern Orthodox Christian Involvement in American Higher Education <i>Ann Mitsakos Bezzerides</i> | <i>1</i> |
|---|----------|

PART I. HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL ROOTS

| | | |
|-----------|--|------------|
| CHAPTER 1 | Education (<i>Paideia</i>) as Kerygmatic Value in the Orthodox Tradition <i>John A. McGuckin</i> | <i>55</i> |
| CHAPTER 2 | Wisdom and Education: An Old Testament Perspective <i>Michael C. Legaspi</i> | <i>80</i> |
| CHAPTER 3 | A Rhetoric Fit for the Gospel: Education in the Letters of Saint Paul <i>George L. Parsenios</i> | <i>102</i> |
| CHAPTER 4 | “Learn from Me”: Embodied Knowledge through Imitation in Early Christian Pedagogy <i>Bruce N. Beck</i> | <i>115</i> |
| CHAPTER 5 | Plundering the Egyptians: The Use of Classical <i>Paideia</i> in the Early Church <i>John Behr</i> | <i>140</i> |

vi Contents

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----|
| CHAPTER 6 | Orthodox Monasticism and Higher Education <i>Andrew Louth</i> | 155 |
| CHAPTER 7 | Thoughts from Orthodoxy's Modern Past: Theology, Religion, and the University in Russia (Late Nineteenth to Early Twentieth Centuries) <i>Vera Shevzov</i> | 167 |

PART II. ENGAGING THE CONTEMPORARY ACADEMY

| | | |
|------------|---|-----|
| CHAPTER 8 | An Orthodox University in Lebanon: A Rich Legacy and Insistent Calling <i>Georges N. Nahas</i> | 201 |
| CHAPTER 9 | An Orthodox College <i>Candace Hetzner</i> | 223 |
| CHAPTER 10 | Ecumenism in the Classroom: An Orthodox Perspective on Teaching in a Catholic University <i>Radu Bordeianu</i> | 241 |
| CHAPTER 11 | <i>Theosis</i> and Theological Literacy: Identity Formation and Teaching Theology to Undergraduates <i>Aristotle Papanikolaou</i> | 256 |
| CHAPTER 12 | Perspectives from the Academy: Being Orthodox and a Scientist <i>Gayle E. Woloschak</i> | 266 |
| CHAPTER 13 | Singing the Lord's Song in a Foreign Land: Teaching Orthodox Liturgical Music in Non-Orthodox Contexts <i>Alexander Lingas</i> | 279 |
| CHAPTER 14 | In the World, for the Life of the World: Personal Reflections on Being a Professor and Priest in a Public University <i>Michael Plekon</i> | 315 |

| | | |
|------------|--|-----|
| CHAPTER 15 | The Absence of Eastern Orthodoxy in American Academia and Its Possible Relevance for an Integral Vision of Reality <i>Kyriacos C. Markides</i> | 331 |
| CHAPTER 16 | Reflections on Political Science and the Study of Orthodox Christianity in the American Academy: Thoughts on Mainstream and Margins <i>Elizabeth H. Prodromou</i> | 343 |
| CHAPTER 17 | The Transfiguration <i>Polyeleos</i> , Textbooks, and Polyphonic Learning <i>Roy R. Robson</i> | 365 |
| CHAPTER 18 | Vocation, Poetry, and Prayer <i>Scott Cairns</i> | 379 |

AFTERWORD

| | | |
|------------|---|-----|
| CHAPTER 19 | Faith and Learning in Higher Education: Historical Reflections for Contemporary Challenges <i>Andrea Sterk</i> | 393 |
| | List of Contributors | 421 |
| | Index | 427 |

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INTRODUCTION

Piecing the Puzzle of Eastern Orthodox Christian Involvement in American Higher Education

ANN MITSAKOS BEZZERIDES

Over the last two decades the American academy has engaged in a wide-ranging discourse on faith and learning, Christianity and higher education. Among the Christian voices that have weighed in on these topics, Orthodox Christians are not merely underrepresented; they are not represented at all. This is not because no one has cared to listen but because scholars of the Orthodox tradition have rarely participated in these conversations. The first question that provoked the compilation of this volume is the simple one, why are the Orthodox absent? Why is it that when Orthodox Christians—who trace their spiritual and theological heritage back to the earliest Christian schools of thought—immigrated to the United States, they did not set out to build their own set of colleges?¹ A generation or so later, when Orthodox Christians had reached a measure of financial success and the ability to be philanthropic, why did they not contribute widely to funding professorships and chairs at colleges and universities?² In broader terms, why do we not find among Orthodox theologians and scholars in America a robust and sustained discussion around the relationship of faith and learning—especially within the last

several decades, when Protestants and Roman Catholics have been hard at work in these areas?³

The questions become even more interesting—and the stakes in an Orthodox response potentially even higher—when we observe the current contours of the literature on the relationship between faith and knowledge, religion and the academy in the United States. From this literature, questions and ideas emerge that highlight that this topic is not a quaint idea meant for dusty library volumes, but is pressing for anyone involved in twenty-first-century higher education. This introduction begins by highlighting key elements of this wide body of scholarship in a way that helps illumine the importance of the conversation today. It next turns to how and why this particular collection of essays emerged, and offers historical responses to our initial questions. The third section suggests some themes that surface from the essays organically and gives a rough outline of some key issues that the Orthodox naturally address on this topic. The conclusion looks at where we go from here, suggesting where the conversation might next lead.

CURRENT SCHOLARLY LANDSCAPE

Since the 1994 publication of George Marsden's *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Disestablishment to Established Nonbelief*, the academy has produced well over fifty volumes on the relationship between faith, religion, and higher education. A few of the volumes describe the demise of the relationship between faith and higher education—for both religious higher education and the relationship of Christianity to the secular academy—but most of the volumes offer new models and insight with intellectual rigor.⁴ In 2000, the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University sponsored a conference entitled “The Future of Religious Colleges”; the introduction to the proceedings begins, “A student of religious higher education could describe the last decade of the twentieth century as a time of revitalization.”⁵ Over a decade later, the revitalization continues: 2012 saw Oxford University Press publish *No Longer Invisible: Religion in University Education*, in which Douglas and Rhonda Hustedt Jacobsen convincingly demonstrate the “return” of religion to

higher education based on their visits to more than fifty campuses across the United States.⁶ In the academy today, the conversation about the relationship between faith and learning, religion and higher education is gaining increased attention and traction.

How Is the Story Told?

Over the last two decades, a recurrent topic in the scholarship is the main-line Protestant heritage of “pace-setting” universities—such as Harvard, William and Mary, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, Brown, University of Pennsylvania, Rutgers, Dartmouth.⁷ These institutions had founding missions that were clearly designed to support a vision of a Protestant Christian nation and produce pastors to lead this effort—institutional missions that many academics at these institutions today might find surprising.⁸ Indeed, as one scholar notes,

Perhaps the most peculiar of contemporary academic biases concerns religion. In many scholarly circles, religion is generally regarded as one of two things: a matter of personal preference, like one’s taste in clothes; or else, embarrassing evidence of a mind not quite trained in . . . “twentieth-century modes of thought.” As far as many faculty are concerned, religious convictions are well and good, so long as the believer understands that they are on the same level as a desire to eat chocolate.⁹

Amidst this bias, Protestant scholars spearheaded the recent effort to re-examine this heritage, yet not with a wishful hope to reinstitute a Protestant establishment but rather with a tempered, self-critical approach. This historical reckoning does not then lead them to advocate for the ultimate retreat of Christianity from the academic sphere. Rather, it finds them opening doors to the possibilities of new varieties of the ways in which faith and learning may relate. With this, the literature not only raises issues that should resonate with Orthodox academics, but actually asks for Orthodox involvement.¹⁰

The aforementioned study by George Marsden, professor of history emeritus at the University of Notre Dame, traces the dramatic change

from the strongly Protestant heritage of the pace-setting American universities to an academic landscape that has all but forgotten this legacy. He argues that the push to relegate religion to the periphery of American universities was justified essentially on academic grounds that trace their roots to Enlightenment ideals.¹¹ Religious viewpoints were seen to be not only unscientific, but also socially disruptive. There was an increasing realization that the Protestant establishment had excluded Jews, Roman Catholics, and others from the front ranks of American education in the name of building a united society.¹² Recognition of the discriminatory dimensions of faith-based higher education was one of the major factors forcing final disestablishment.

Marsden's aim is to present this disestablishment as "a good development with ironic consequences": the zeal led to an overcorrection that left higher education with inadequate ways to accommodate faith-informed scholarship.¹³ Marsden, a product of the Calvinist Reformed tradition, tells the story in a self-critical way. His analysis—as we shall see below—does not ultimately determine the faith-learning relationship to be fatally flawed, but opens new doors and raises new, perhaps better questions.¹⁴

In addition, scholars from a range of theological traditions are looking back in order to open possibilities for broader contemporary discussion. One important example of this is by a team of academics led by Douglas Jacobsen and Rhonda Hustedt Jacobsen, who examine the faith-learning relationship that prevailed among Christian colleges during the last half of the twentieth century. A commonly championed phrase of this era to describe the relationship was "the integration of faith and learning." The Jacobsens argue it stood for a model that "basically meant that faith has the right, and indeed the duty, to critique learning but that learning has no authority to critique faith."¹⁵ In order to open space for alternate understandings of the way the faith-learning relationship can be conceived, they critique this dominant model.

Scholarship of this kind often ends up being both derivative and pedantic. It is derivative because it waits for the academy at large to produce new ideas and then critiques them on the basis of Christian faith, and it is pedantic in its pose as the long-suffering teacher who must repeatedly instruct the recalcitrant academy in the folly of its ways. In its worst forms, this attitude can blend into what the Christian philosopher Merold Westphal has called the sometimes "criminal arrogance of religion" in the

realm of scholarship: the haughty illusion that our views of God, the world, and ourselves are both incontestably true and unquestionably God-blessed. Westphal recommends that a harsh hermeneutic of suspicion be applied to all such claims. While faith may provide Christian scholars with certain important clues concerning the deep nature of the universe that others lack, the ways Christians interpret those revelatory clues are as subject to error as the thinking of anyone else. There is no room for epistemological arrogance in Christian scholarship.¹⁶

The Jacobsens observe that the integration model promotes conflict rather than conversation, because in it the task of Christian scholarship is promoted as one of conquest: an antiseccular crusade for truth.¹⁷ It implicitly defines the singular path that all Christian scholarship should take regardless of a scholar's own understanding of faith or his or her particular discipline. Moreover, this approach contains an attitude towards Christian scholarship that is "hyperphilosophical," for it asks Christian academics to temporarily become philosophers—instead of being physicists, biologists, artists, engineers—whenever they want to attempt the specific activity of doing Christian scholarship.¹⁸

The Jacobsens critique this historical trajectory of the faith-learning relationship in order to open space for more possibilities and ways of conceiving of the relationship. They point out that most of the champions of the integration model have been Reformed, out of the Calvinist tradition, and while they have not broadcast their Calvinistic predispositions in their writings on Christian scholarship, that tradition undergirds the approach.¹⁹ Reformed theology emphasizes the radically fallen nature of the world; at its very roots, creation has gone wrong. Christians are supposed to model how God intended humanity to live, and are supposed to resubdue the created order, helping the world to acknowledge God and submit to God's will. The integration model is therefore part of the larger aim of bringing a distinctively Christian perspective to the effort to understand the created order. The Jacobsens argue that this Reformed vision—while posing a powerful and coherent picture of the way faith and learning should relate—is only one way of understanding the relationship:

Scholars from other traditions can gain insights from the integration model, but other Christian scholars—whether the Catholic, Wesleyan, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Anabaptist, or any other non-Reformed

tradition—will probably feel they are speaking a second language of sorts if they try to adopt the integration model in its entirety. Some of the core theological concerns of non-Reformed Christian traditions simply do not translate into integration-speak. Thus there is a need to acknowledge and nurture the development of other models of Christian scholarship that can stand alongside and complement the Reformed, integrationist approach.²⁰

As the Jacobsens suggest possibilities for future work, they mention the Eastern Orthodox tradition among others as having a theological tradition that, if taken seriously, will “produce visions of Christian scholarship that differ from the dominant model of integration.”²¹

The most dominant alternate model, of course, is the example of Roman Catholic higher education in the United States. While Roman Catholic higher education predated Protestant higher education in Europe, with the first universities evolving out of cathedral and monastery schools, it was a latecomer in the United States and was treated as distinctively second-class.²² Early Colonial vitriol towards all people and things Catholic was fierce. Thomas Albert Howard notes, “Like much else in American history, it perhaps all started in 1620 with the *Mayflower*, when William Brewster lugged across the Atlantic an English translation of the Venetian historian Paulo Sarpi’s venomous attack on the Council of Trent and the institution of the papacy.”²³ The Protestant establishment understood education as a way of assimilating other traditions into an American heritage and treated Catholics as second class for persisting in having their own schools.²⁴ Marsden notes that by the turn of the twentieth century there were many Roman Catholic colleges and universities, but these were small, having a total collegiate enrollment of less than seven thousand.²⁵ The character of these institutions was substantially different from Protestant colleges of the time, for they were staffed by members of religious orders and had not adjusted to American curricular patterns, typically offering six- or seven-year courses for boys only that combined preparatory and collegiate courses on a European gymnasium model. Rome was often heavy handed in asserting its control over both the colleges and their faculty.²⁶ It was not until the 1960s that Roman Catholic colleges and universities fully “shed the ghetto mentality” that was a strong marker of

Catholic life; they now strive to preserve a distinctively Roman Catholic character while fully integrating into the American academy.²⁷

As Roman Catholic scholars look back on their own history of higher education in the United States, they also critically appraise the mistakes of the Roman Catholic Church and its presence in American higher education. Mark W. Roche of the University of Notre Dame, in his essay “The Intellectual Appeal of Catholicism,” asserts at the outset the need to clearly assess the darker moments of the Roman Catholic tradition: “In defending the idea of a Catholic university, I seek to emphasize the highest dimensions of the Catholic tradition, those which have allowed the church to criticize its own most deficient moments and those which can foster a great university.”²⁸ We also see a keen interest in an active dialogue between Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars around the relationship between faith and learning for higher education.²⁹ Leading Roman Catholic institutions and scholars are moving the conversation forward in ways that should, at the very least, intrigue the Orthodox.

What we surmise from a cursory review of historiography is that Christian scholars are now looking back at their heritage in higher education not with a wishful hope to reinstitute a golden age of a Christian nation but rather with a tempered, self-critical approach—an approach which invites scholars today to be open to the possibilities of new varieties of the ways in which faith and learning relate in twenty-first-century American higher education. This not only allows Orthodox Christians to be more comfortable with the trajectory of the current conversation, but also specifically posits the Orthodox tradition as a source for significant learning, serving as an invitation to join.

What Is the Relationship between Faith and Knowledge?

Critical distance between faith, religion, and the academy is often seen as a sign of progress, especially given the ways in which they have related historically. Yet increasingly scholars are arguing that the modern dichotomy between faith and knowledge, while having certain positive ramifications, has had ultimately negative consequences for the academy.³⁰ The Jacobsens’ most recent book is in many ways the story of how the American academy is now recovering from the split.³¹

Douglas Sloan, professor emeritus of history and education at Teachers College, Colombia University, expounds on how the understanding of the relationship between faith and knowledge is slowly changing in the academy.³² An “onlooker stance in knowing” that dominated modern times has been

seriously challenged by participatory conceptions of knowing coming from many directions: from ecological studies, from women’s studies, from hermeneutics, and from quantum physics. The mechanistic worldview has been challenged by organic metaphors deriving from sources as diverse as Whiteheadian process thought, ecology (again), and philosophical phenomenology. Even the assumption that all genuine knowledge is sense-bound is being questioned in some quarters—by those, for example, who have discovered ancient paths of consciousness-science, and by health-mind-body research.³³

This is a massive shift, one that invites scholars to contemplate the possibility of a fundamental transformation in our ways of knowing. In many areas—modern physics, genetic engineering, and cognitive science—even while classical ways of knowing are being challenged, the old materialistic, mechanistic, and sense-bound assumptions about the world are virulent. Sloan asserts that ultimately, a genuine transformation will require not only new theories and categories, but new *capacities* for insight and understanding, perception and experience.³⁴

This change is also necessitated by the current global political climate, where there is a clear resurgence of religion. In the words of Roman Catholic scholar James Turner,

The assumption that faith is a waning force, a theory inherited from Victorian agnostics and once widely shared among European and American academics, is now seen to be patently wrong as a matter of practical fact—indeed dangerously wrong in today’s world. In consequence, scholars who are themselves secular in outlook are taking more interest in religion as a living force. And especially against the background of Islamicist radicalism, ultra-Orthodox Israeli nationalism, and weird Christian sects, like the Branch Davidians, ordinary Christianity no longer seems too musty and atavistic. Christianity is

not chic in many academic circles, but neither can it be consigned to irrelevance.³⁵

Put more severely, the assumption that religion and faith have no place in the academic halls of knowledge can have dangerous consequences. The Jacobsens highlight this as they reflect on the deadly violence of the religiously motivated terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001.

Across the nation, people asked how this could have happened. How could the American government and its intelligence-gathering organizations have so completely misunderstood the world situation? How could the negative consequences of religion been so overlooked? Religion could no longer be ignored—not by politicians or the military, and not by the academy. Although many scholars had dismissed religion as tangential to the quest for geopolitical understanding, that attitude was changed in a day. Like everyone else in the nation, educators had received an unwelcome wakeup call. It was time to start taking religion more seriously, and it was time to learn how to “manage” religion on campus more effectively. This was a matter of national security and political necessity; it had to be done. What might have been a gradual process of re-engaging religion on campus suddenly became a matter of grave urgency.³⁶

With increasing necessity, the academy must find robust ways of understanding the relationship between faith and knowledge.

Roman Catholic scholars are eager to weigh in on this area, pointing to the elevation of reason in the Roman Catholic intellectual tradition, while recognizing that in the United States Roman Catholicism has frequently been viewed as anti-intellectual. The idea that faith and reason may function in higher harmony is traced back to Roman Catholic medieval thought.³⁷ In 1990, Pope John Paul II issued *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (“from the heart of the Church”), an apostolic constitution on Roman Catholic higher education that focuses its first section on themes related to the task of reconciling faith and knowledge—presenting a vision for Roman Catholic scholars, colleges, and universities. It articulates the ideal that the Roman Catholic university strives to dedicate itself to the cause

of truth; faith and reason converge in the pursuit of truth. Related to this is the importance of the “integration of knowledge” over and against the fracturing and compartmentalization of knowledge as is common within individual academic disciplines. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* asserts that a Catholic university “has to be a ‘living union’ of individual organisms dedicated to the search for truth. . . . It is necessary to work to a higher synthesis of knowledge, in which alone lies the possibility of satisfying that search for truth that is profoundly inscribed in the heart of a human person.”³⁸ This very idea of a higher synthesis of knowledge runs counter to the ways in which much of the academy currently proceeds with its task of knowledge acquisition and transmission. Yet because of the concomitant contemporary attention to alternate ways of knowing and the geopolitical climate, new spaces are opening for attention to such possibilities.

Efforts to recover from the split of faith and knowledge are important not only for the academy but also for the church. Sloan argues that the split left the churches unprepared to respond to the increasing challenges to the understanding of nature and the human person that are aggressively asserted by a scientific and technological culture.³⁹ As a result, “in reaction to what are perceived and felt as threats to faith, meaning, value, and life, the resort to dogmatic assertions of faith—often presented as alternative worldviews to scientific naturalism and materialism—has become strong in all the churches, as in all religions worldwide.”⁴⁰ In essence, Sloan sees the modern dichotomy of faith and knowledge as contributing to the rise in religious fundamentalism. He suggests that a radical transformation in knowing, in addition to being a contribution to the academy, will lead to a necessary renewal in Christianity.

In varying ways, Protestant and Roman Catholic scholars and institutions are emerging in the twenty-first century as posing a significant countercultural challenge to the long-standing split between the nature of knowledge and the nature of faith and religion.⁴¹ They present a formidable challenge to the notion that progress meant relegating faith and religion to outside the walls of the academy.

“Religious Scholars in the Academy: Anachronism or Leaven?”

If there is room for faith and knowledge to relate within the academy, then this raises a series of questions about individual scholars and their

scholarship.⁴² Indeed, the Harvard conference in 2000 focused on such questions: what is then the place of religious scholars in the academy? And how do we define “religious scholars”? They began to answer this question by asking another: is there a place in the American academy for “faith-informed scholarship”? In his essay “Beyond Progressive Scientific Humanism,” George Marsden argues for this term “faith-informed” after publishing a book, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*, where he frequently used the term “Christian scholarship.” He explains that what he meant by the term was “scholarship by persons who are Christian and who self-consciously relate their faith to what they say or write.”⁴³ He contends that “faith-informed” is more helpful than “Christian” because the latter sets off all sorts of alarms—from being potentially imperialistic to being associated with the religious right, theology, expressions of piety, or witnessing. He has no interest in Christians taking over academia or in advocating for some kind of Christian imperialism. In choosing “faith-informed” he wants to suggest on the one hand that faith has some real impact on scholarship and on the other that the faithful scholar should also be abiding by some broader scholarly standards.⁴⁴ To explain his perspective on faith-informed scholarship, he writes:

My perspectives on reality, and hence on scholarship, are shaped at least in part by my theological commitments. In this respect I see the case as little different from that of the feminist whose scholarship is shaped in part, but not entirely, by feminist commitments. Such commitments, in turn, shape the way one will evaluate and narrate history. An easy example to understand of the *sort* of thing I have in mind with respect to religious perspectives is this: if one were a Mennonite who believed God forbade the participation in warfare, that would shape the way one would narrate and evaluate America’s participation in World War II. Nonetheless the Mennonite who narrated a war from that perspective could also be an excellent technical historian.⁴⁵

Marsden challenges the assumption that a scholar must suspend religious beliefs to participate in the scholarly craft well. In reality, multiple commitments shape every scholar’s work. And there is the distinct possibility

that one's theological commitments may allow a certain outlook on a topic that is of substantive value to the field, to cross-disciplinary approaches to a topic, to public life.⁴⁶

Marsden surmises that religious commitments and traditions are likely to influence the *evaluative* dimensions of scholarship. At least five important questions are important for the scholar to ask: "(1) What do I think important enough to study? (2) What questions do I ask about it? (3) What currently fashionable interpretive strategies are compatible with my religious outlook? (4) How do I, implicitly or explicitly, evaluate various developments as positive, negative, or something in between? (5) How do these evaluations shape my narrative?"⁴⁷ He also offers three provisos that are essential to understanding the extent of the influence of "religiously based evaluative standards": First, religious perspective will change some things, but not everything. Second, for religiously based evaluations to be operative there is no requirement that the evaluations be unique. And third, it is critical to bear in mind that there is no *one* Christian perspective.⁴⁸

Furthering Marsden's observations, in her essay in the 2004 volume edited by the Jacobsens, Crystal L. Downing argues for a paradigm of the relationship between faith and learning that reflects our postmodern times and also reflects different religious traditions than the dominant Calvinist model, which she sees as ultimately modernist. She argues for the idea of the "imbrication" of faith and learning, drawing on the way "imbrication" is used by architects to refer to the overlapping shingles on a house; imbrication also describes the scales of a pinecone. This idea opens room for the reality that we all have multiple vocabularies to talk about our faith to different audiences, and that Christian scholars will vary in the vocabulary they each use to relate faith and learning. In her words, "To imbricate faith and scholarship, then, is to acknowledge that one's Christianity does not always overlap with one's discipline, that many times scholarship will mention nothing of faith issues." In other venues, a Christian professor might clearly talk about the overlap of faith with her love for her particular subject. Downing explains that her understanding of imbrication is similar to a concept of "heteroglossia"—divergent tongues—put forward by the Russian (and Orthodox Christian) philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin.

For Bakhtin, every self is imbricated differently, due to each individual's situatedness not only in time and space but also in relation to others; he calls this the "architectonic" of the self. For Bakhtin, "architectonic privilege" . . . implies that we have a responsibility toward all that is "other" than the self because our individual imbrications will respond to and hence affect the other uniquely—whether the other is a self or a scholarly topic; and vice versa: other selves and subjects affect each one of us differently. . . . Bakhtin advocates the "unfinalizability" of "becoming" as the various imbricated discourses of the self take on new shapes through genuine dialogue with vocabularies of the "other."⁴⁹

Whereas the idea of integration implied the attempt to reconcile dissonant discourses, the notion of imbrication ultimately offers a freedom in this unfinalizability.

The Jacobsens further flesh this out, proposing that "the soil in which Christian scholarship typically grows is not the soft loam of ideal logic but the gritty ground of our full personhood."⁵⁰ They draw on the work of the Princeton University sociologist Robert Wuthnow. When Wuthnow asks whether it is possible to combine a deep personal commitment to the Christian faith with the life of the mind, his answer is that it is indeed possible, and that the best way is by "living the questions" of intelligent faith.⁵¹ Faith does not give easy answers about how faith and learning are supposed to relate, but rather open-ended questions about how they *might* relate. Drawing on the work of Jesuit political philosopher David Hollenbach, the Jacobsens note that the end result of this process will not be a neatly articulated Christian scholarly worldview, but will be what he calls a "'fragile achievement'—a tentative and provisional understanding of the connections of faith and learning that is rooted in one's way of life as much as it is an expression of one's life of the mind."⁵² Ultimately, this kind of Christian scholarship allows for the messy complexity that is the mystery of life.⁵³

The Jacobsens further this point as they reflect on how this type of Christian scholarship will actually minimize the supposed differences between the secular academy and the realm of Christian faith, for there will be shared humility in the face of truth and shared mystery at the wonder

of life.⁵⁴ They probe the thinking of Ernest Boyer, who argues out of the Anabaptist tradition that the ultimate purpose of Christian scholarship is to celebrate the majesty and wholeness of God's creation. Therefore, Christian scholarship, according to Boyer, is "at its best when it is humbly and almost invisibly immersed within the larger academy, tincturing the world of scholarship as a whole with a deepened sense of the unity of reality and of our responsibility to serve others, especially those least able to help themselves."⁵⁵

Mark Roche discusses Catholicism's sacramental vision as he shares the distinguishing features of Notre Dame; this vision clearly applies to the work of the scholar. He argues that the Catholic tradition holds fast to the view of God's presence in the world. "Even among Catholic thinkers who rightly stress that the mystery of God is inexhaustible, there is greater recognition of the presence of God in the world and greater optimism about our ability to make discoveries about God."⁵⁶ Divine truth, beauty, and goodness are reflected in this world; the incarnation gives rise to this sacramental vision, and the Trinity includes the idea that the Holy Spirit infuses this world with divinity in ways that extend beyond the singular appearance of Christ. God's presence in the world then offers a higher justification for the scholar's work in any field.⁵⁷

If the historiography gives Orthodox Christians the room to recognize there is space for them at the table, and the questions about the relationship between faith and knowledge challenge any epistemological resistance to understanding the value of the conversation, then this discussion about paradigms of relationship between faith and learning should open the door for Orthodox scholars to recognize some significant value in the trajectory of the contemporary conversation, noting elements that sound surprisingly consonant with the Orthodox theological tradition.

IS THERE A PLACE FOR RELIGIOUS COLLEGES?

Finally, we turn to the question, is there a place for religious colleges in today's world, and if so, what is it? Scholars who engage this question often have ample experience with people's visceral negative reactions to Christian institutions. Samuel Schuman shares one such example in

his 2010 publication *Seeing the Light: Religious Colleges in Twenty-First-Century America*. During his time as chief executive of the University of Minnesota there was a question around the school's changing its sports division, which would mean joining a division that included religiously affiliated institutions. He remembers a colleague of his questioning, with sarcasm and bitterness, whether they wanted their school to be associated with "a bunch of two-bit bible colleges." When Schuman later asked the colleague if she had ever been to any of the slighted institutions, she responded that she had never visited any of them, for she did not need to in order to know what kind of places they were.⁵⁸

Schuman sees too many secular academics maintain the perception that religion, religion on campus, and religious colleges are simple or simpleminded. One of the reasons he launched a broad study of religious colleges was to address the very ignorance and even hostility with which nonreligious academia approaches overtly religious institutions. A related reason is the "spectacular success" that many religious colleges are currently enjoying—a point that is corroborated by Naomi Schaefer Riley in her 2005 book *God on the Quad: How Religious Colleges and the Missionary Generation Are Changing America*.⁵⁹ Schuman's points help highlight that fair engagement of the question itself requires some personal reckoning around prejudices about religious colleges.

Marsden takes a helpful bird's-eye view in his analysis. In his Harvard address, he makes the following provocative statement regarding faith-informed scholarship and its relationship with the world: "Christians are at their best when they live in constructive tension with the dominant culture. They are often at their worst when they are an establishment."⁶⁰ So he sees religious colleges as having a viable potential in the world today not as some anachronistic hope at becoming the establishment, but rather as potential leaven for the wider academy.

The place for religious colleges is directly related to what Marsden calls "traditionally religious perspectives." He specifies "traditionally" because in some senses, all scholars are "religious" in the ways they profess commitments to some highest ideals without being affiliated to any religious group. By "traditionally religious" he means persons who profess highest commitment to the God of an organized religious faith and is specifically *not* referring to the "vague interfaith deism of American civil

religion.”⁶¹ He maintains that in the American academy, broadly speaking, there are enough places where traditionally religious perspectives can foster new critical outlooks. To do this, these traditionally religious perspectives often must buck political, ideological, and economic pressures for a religiously homogenized public life. And so for this reason, Marsden sees such critical outlooks as best developed in religiously affiliated colleges that have maintained some sense of separate identity from the American mainstream. His sum of his sense of the value of the presence of religious colleges is worth citing in full:

Because many . . . religious colleges are doing their jobs well, they are becoming increasingly well accepted in American society. If scholars at such schools continue to do their jobs well, and if the schools themselves provide time and resources for public scholarship, there is good potential for the scholarship emanating from such schools to win at least grudging recognition in the academic mainstream. More importantly, such schools will be training students to be thinking critically from religious perspectives in whatever professions they pursue. And so such schools will be helping to provide valuable lay leadership that will leaven not only mainstream academia but also their religious communities and the larger American culture.⁶²

In his vision, religiously affiliated colleges work well when the institution and the scholars within the institution do their jobs well. They provide lay leadership for both their religious communities and mainstream society. To do so, they maintain a certain separate identity that enables them to foster this critical approach, but do it well enough that they are providing public scholarship.

Mark Noll picks up on this theme in his essay “The Future of the Religious College,” musing that “the most interesting possibilities for the future lie between the Scylla of sectarian separation and the Charybdis of secular effacement.”⁶³ From his own experience teaching at institutions of higher education that seek to combine the “moral nurture of the old-time colleges with the academic excellence of the twentieth century’s elite liberal arts colleges,” Noll explains that he is

perhaps too much aware of the hurdles blocking such a path (low endowments, high student-faculty ratios, residual distrust of the academy from intensely religious constituencies, learning conceived as ideological armament for culture wars, needlessly precise theological formulas inherited from the fundamentalist era, restraints on community left over from ethnic origins, and so on). Yet if such institutions can walk the tightrope strung between intellectual achievement and Christian conviction, if they can find enough money, and if their leaders can fix on to the classically Christian (as opposed to shortsightedly sectarian) possibilities of their institutions, especially in a cultural moment desperate for personal and intellectual integrity, they may do more for good than their relatively marginal positions would predict.⁶⁴

Noll acknowledges the practical difficulties that many religious colleges face, the challenge of balancing intellectual achievement and Christian conviction, and the marginalized positions they have within the wider culture. And yet, despite this, he sees the potential for the ability of religious colleges to do disproportionate good today, for this country, through the people they shape.

What, then, of the question of academic freedom—the notion that faculty members are protected for total freedom of inquiry, a prime virtue of the university? A stumbling block for many when it comes to the relationship between faith and learning in the academy is this question: Can the faith-informed scholar be simultaneously academically “free” to say what is true within her field—which might include posing challenges, whether real or perceived, to her institution’s faith tradition—and still in good conscience uphold the mission of (and remain employed at) the institution? Does the presence of a higher religious authority (a creed, statement of faith, set of sacred texts, ecclesiastical body) challenge the very notion of academic freedom itself? Can religious institutions be places that support academic freedom? These questions are alive and well among the scholars of faith and the academy, and will be an increasingly important topic for religious scholars and institutions in the decades to come, especially as issues around the legal boundaries of religious freedom in the United States become central in the public eye. In William C.

Ringenberg's recent monograph on this topic, *The Christian College and the Meaning of Academic Freedom*, George Marsden, in his foreword, gives us a glimpse into the complexity of the conversation. He lists some of the challenges Christian institutions face to their own institutional freedom. He then notes,

One reason why such academic freedom issues are so intractable is that "freedom" itself is such an elusive concept. Practically everyone in our culture celebrates the value of freedom. Yet the simple fact is that one person's freedom is often other person's enslavement. . . . If we recognize that principle, then we will recognize that we cannot get very far in dealing with our differences if we talk simply about freedom. Rather, we need to recognize that freedom, while unquestionably a value, is not an absolute. It is always subordinate to something higher that people value their freedom for.⁶⁵

Marsden invites us into a rich place of thought and exploration beyond simplistic assumptions. Once again, this literature points to the many open questions around the relationship between faith and academic freedom rather than deeming the relationship fundamentally flawed.

A word here must be said about the unique situation of Roman Catholic colleges and universities, for there are distinct similarities and differences between their theological and ecclesiastical context and that of Orthodox institutions of higher education. In her address at the Harvard conference, Monika Hellwig, an internationally known Georgetown University theologian who served as president and executive director of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities from 1996 until her death in 2005, denoted four factors that make the Roman Catholic context unique: "the role of vowed religious congregations in the colleges; the global extension of the Catholic church and of its network of higher education; the continuing impact of the Second Vatican Council; and the recent legislation of the Holy See." The last half of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first have seen significant exploration of the question of whether or not an institution must be under the direction and authority of the hierarchy in order to be Catholic. Existing patterns varied from country to country, and even within countries such as the United

States. Some schools began as episcopal initiatives, while others began without formal relationship to the hierarchy, although both clergy and laity broadly accepted them as Catholic.

A major difference between the Roman Catholic schools and their Protestant counterparts has been the relationship between the Roman Catholic institutions and religious congregations of persons committed to their congregation for life. Among the Roman Catholic schools in America, each school has generally had its own unique character based on its relationship with a religious congregation—for example, Boston College with the Jesuits, Providence College with the Dominicans, St. John's College with the Franciscans. The relationship to the institutional church was then taken for granted, although little or no control was exercised by the hierarchy in practice.⁶⁶

Historically, this guaranteed a supply of trained people formed in the spirit and tradition of each institution; today, those numbers of committed religious persons are dwindling, and significant influences are now forcing Roman Catholic colleges and universities to rethink their missions—one factor, for example, is the rapid professionalization of college teaching, administration, and financing, and the installation of lay boards to deal with such factors. This move meant schools often had to separate into two corporations, the college and the unit of the sponsoring religious congregation, with legal responsibility for the college vested in its largely lay board. Hellwig notes, “As the higher education enterprise had become so expensive, this was necessary if only to shield the assets of the religious congregation, which in many cases had a much smaller budget and endowment than the college.”⁶⁷ Rome, however, perceived this change as a challenge to its authority and control regarding the higher education enterprise, church property, and lack of canonically guaranteed Roman control of the laity on the boards.

Yet the Second Vatican Council, 1962–65, has had the lasting effect of a rising role of the laity for the work of the church in the world. A question emerged: must a Roman Catholic institution be run directly or indirectly by the hierarchy? It was in part to respond to this question that *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* was promulgated in 1990. The first, aforementioned section of the document offered the general philosophy of higher education based extensively on the work of the International Federation of

Catholic Universities; the second section required bishops' conferences around the world to draft application documents for higher education institutions in their own regions. There were substantial difficulties with this for the Catholic colleges and universities in this country, which are integrated into a larger system in terms of charters, accreditation, curricula, and various associations of higher education and professors' degree and licensing requirements, so it took until May 2000 to reach a final approved document. It represented a tightening of hierarchic controls over Roman Catholic colleges, and yet with ambiguity as to how this control should be exercised in each situation.⁶⁸

Roman Catholic scholars and institutions have responded variously to this tightening control, with some colleges quietly withdrawing from calling themselves Catholic and others welcoming the tighter relationship with the hierarchy. Hellwig notes, "The largest group of colleges have both presidents and faculties that are troubled about the possible implications and repercussions of the many canonical requirements without being inclined to distance themselves from the Catholic church."⁶⁹ This is true, she asserts, for the simple reasons that Catholicism to them is more than an institutional structure, but is rather a faith, a way of worship, and an intellectual, cultural, and aesthetic heritage to which they are deeply committed. There are now many associations and initiatives that support and enhance this vision.⁷⁰

As we will see below, Orthodox Christians may easily relate to the skepticism regarding the place of religious colleges in today's world—the notion, even among people of faith, that religious colleges are simple or simpleminded; the questions around negotiating intellectual rigor and Christian conviction; concerns over ecclesiastical control versus academic freedom. And yet simultaneously, there are some robust and well-thought-out reasons for religious colleges in the United States today that the Orthodox can rigorously explore: the idea that they are the best places for traditionally religious perspectives to foster new critical outlooks for church and society; the importance of training grounded lay leadership for both religious communities and society; and perhaps most persuasively, the idea that religious colleges are the places where a faith tradition continually works out—by its scholars in community—how it will avoid being overrun by secularism while refusing to retreat to sectarianism.

ENTER THE ORTHODOX

The preceding sections should highlight that the questions this volume raises—the relationship between Orthodox Christianity and higher education, why the Orthodox have been silent in the conversation, and what the Orthodox might have to say in this realm—are important questions to ask. In 2002 Hellenic College, the only accredited Orthodox Christian college in the Western hemisphere, became one of eighty-eight church-related liberal arts colleges to receive a grant from the Lilly Endowment for the “theological exploration of vocation.” The Endowment asked schools to begin or enhance programs that would help students relate faith commitments with career choices, consider ministry as a potential career, and enhance the capacity of faculty to teach and mentor students around vocation.⁷¹ The Lilly Endowment has long been committed to exploring the salience of the interaction between religion and higher education; more broadly, it believes that healthy religious communities are essential for fostering a humane society.

A natural and essential by-product of the grant’s focus on students was the need to engage the college itself in a conversation around the religious roots of its institutional mission. As discussions began at Hellenic College, it was a struggle to find Orthodox Christian sources that directly address Orthodox views on faith, learning, and the academy. In conjunction with the Orthodox Theological Society in America, Hellenic began hosting consultations on the topic of Orthodoxy and higher education, inviting Orthodox scholars and theologians to explore the historical reasons for the lack of attention to this topic and to offer fresh insights in light of the Orthodox theological tradition. This volume emerged from these essays.

As a contribution to the ongoing conversations about religion and higher education, faith and learning in the United States, the essays in this volume offer readers insights into these topics from Orthodox Christian perspectives. With the exception of the afterword, which is a clear and welcome voice from a Protestant scholar, Andrea Sterk—a historian of late antiquity, ancient Christianity, and Byzantine civilization who has also published on the intersection of faith and learning—all of the essays

are written by Orthodox academics. These Orthodox teachers and researchers hail from a diverse set of institutional and disciplinary backgrounds; they are scholars of religion and of the humanities, sociologists, political scientists, and theologians from a wide range of theological schools, public universities, secular liberal arts colleges, and religiously affiliated colleges and universities.

The volume is structured into two sections. The first section sheds light on the historical experiences and theological traditions that inform and explain Orthodox approaches to the topic of religion and higher education. The second section offers essays that both problematize and reflect on Orthodox thought and practice in the context of colleges and universities today. Included are philosophical questions about the relevance and application of Orthodox ideas in the religious and secular academy, as well as cross-disciplinary treatments of Orthodoxy as identity marker, pedagogical frame, and teaching and research subject.

The essays illumine that there are good historical reasons why Orthodox Christians in the United States have not, to date, given significant attention to the questions of faith and higher education. In the opening essay of the volume, John McGuckin, professor of early church history at Union Theological Seminary, explains the chief historical reason: the simple fact that the history of persecution within traditionally Orthodox regions has crippled the development of Orthodox higher education. He explains, "The cultural devastation of five centuries over all the Orthodox world apart from Russia, yet allied to the savage breaking of Russia throughout almost all the twentieth century, is not something one can get over quickly." During the centuries that Western Christendom was developing its systems of higher learning, Ottoman Turks ruled most Orthodox lands. McGuckin notes that it was not solely foreign rule that prohibited growth of universities, but the consequent absence of patrons to support every aspect of a school's flourishing: building libraries, affording faculty salaries, refining standards, and soliciting a new generation of experts. Without the possibility of patronage that comes from the simple reality of material wealth—Mark Noll referred to this as essential for religious colleges even today—the Orthodox simply could not fund universities.

In the case of Russia, we might expect Orthodoxy to have held substantial influence within its higher education system before the Bolshevik

revolution. Vera Shevzov, professor of religion at Smith College, illumines this aspect of Orthodox history. The modern university in Russia emerged in the eighteenth century as a secular institution and was staffed largely by European scholars. As a result, the Russian Orthodox Church, in order to preserve the integrity of Orthodox theology, consigned its teaching to Moscow's Slavic-Greek Latin Academy, and later to its four theological academies. Consequently, within the secular academic world in Russia, the study of Orthodoxy, and theology in particular, remained largely marginalized. Subsequent attempts to integrate its study into the university curriculum in the nineteenth century were often motivated by the state's political concerns to curb unrest and growing antiecclesiastical sentiments, which in the eyes of many Orthodox thinkers compromised Orthodoxy as a subject of study. As a result, the secular origin of the Russian university, Orthodoxy's function as a state religion, and the intellectual challenges of modernity "all contributed to Orthodoxy's tenuous position as an academic discipline within Russia's universities."

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many of Russia's trained academic thinkers began to give considerable attention to the question of the relationship between Orthodoxy and the university. Shevzov notes it was "a moment when social and political pressures finally pushed the Orthodox Church to embark on an in-depth examination of all facets of its institutional life with hopes of major reform." Theological journals routinely considered the theoretical and philosophical questions associated with the topic—religion and science, faith and knowledge, Christianity and modernity, "secular scholarship" and religious literacy. In preparation for the All-Russia Council of 1917–18, the issue was raised in preconiliar church meetings in 1906 as part of a broader discussion of Russia's theological academies. Ultimately, the Bolshevik Revolution cut short the often heated debates over these issues, and it is only in post-Soviet Russia that these nineteenth- and twentieth-century debates have enjoyed renewed scholarly attention.

A related factor contributing to the dearth of contemporary Orthodox engagement of the faith-learning question is a thread of anti-intellectualism found in Orthodox thought. McGuckin notes that with regard to the direction religious and theological studies have taken, the movement to set apart theology as a venerable subject, fit only for the ascetic and experienced, has been a historical shackle. In some patristic

sources one finds the notion that theology is only for a very few. John Behr, professor of patristics at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, notes that Tertullian's second-century query—"What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?"—is still an attitude encountered in present-day Orthodoxy regarding the relationship between faith and learning. And yet Behr challenges this notion by arguing that this attitude was not a straightforward formulation of the relationship between faith and learning in the second century. He addresses the significant difference between those who adopt this posture today and the ancient figures. Tertullian, and others like him, knew and were well trained in the rhetorical culture of their day; while they presented a rhetorical stance against it, they continued to use it. They were highly educated intellectuals and knew intimately the philosophical and rhetorical culture in which they lived. Tertullian's statement was a hyperbolic statement to make a point, Behr asserts, but should not be taken straightforwardly.

Andrew Louth, professor emeritus of patristic and Byzantine studies, University of Durham, makes a similar point in his essay "Orthodox Monasticism and Higher Education." He challenges a traditional account of opposition between monasticism and higher learning, or between Greek learning and the spirit of the gospel, seeing the positions as a largely rhetorical construction, a construction that did not actually reflect reality. Rather, the reality that lies behind the rhetorical positions was much more complex, and the elements described as opposites coexisted in symbiotic relationship. If there are vestiges of anti-intellectualism in Orthodoxy today that utilize these ancient sources as rationale, Behr and Louth argue that this ignores the wider context in which they were produced.

Orthodox Christians in the United States have had to overcome other internal reasons for the lack of significant Orthodox presence in American higher education. Kyriacos Markides, a sociologist from the University of Maine, notes that Orthodox Christians immigrated to the United States late in the formation of the country and remained relatively small in number; consequently, they were not part of the shaping of the country's basic institutional structures. Most often they also held deep ties to their ethnic identity, which made collaboration among Orthodox Christians a challenge. What is the logical amount of time it takes, in the words of

McGuckin, for “Russians, Greeks, Romanians, and others [to] care more for their commonality as Orthodox than for their differentiation by nationalisms”? In addition to the brute reality of ethnic and language differences, each Orthodox nationality would tell its own story of the extent to which assimilation became a key objective of its life in America. For many Greek immigrants, for example, it was a sign of achievement for their children to attend the best universities in the country. Moreover, unlike Roman Catholics, as a whole they did not face intense religious discrimination by the Protestant establishment, and therefore did not have the same kind of incentive to start a system of parallel schooling. According to McGuckin, Orthodox immigrants also lacked the ability to “lean on the resources of an international array of skilled teaching orders, of religious men and women who offered their skilled services to the church at nominal cost.”

Several aspects of Orthodox Church leadership have also affected the current state of affairs for higher education. Markides reminds us:

Orthodoxy does not have a universally recognized leader, like the pope or the Dalai Lama of Tibet, who can speak on behalf of the faith. A possible unifying leader, like the patriarch of Constantinople, the “First among Equals,” regardless of how charismatic he might be, is virtually a “prisoner” of the Turkish state. He remains at a disadvantage to offer a dynamic form of leadership for all Orthodox that could impact Orthodoxy’s presence in the world and, by extension, in American universities.

Candace Hetzner, associate dean for academic affairs at Boston College, aptly connects how most Orthodox Church hierarchs in the United States have little personal experience with church-related or faith-based higher education themselves, and so have offered little leadership or direction concerning the creation of Orthodox colleges here in the United States. Interestingly in this regard, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, predominantly lay Orthodox theologians also often found that the church empathized little with their creative efforts to engage the intellectual and philosophical challenges that modernity posed for the academic study of Orthodoxy in the modern world.

The two most prominent Orthodox Christian seminaries in the United States—Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts, and St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, New York—were not founded until 1937 and 1938, respectively, each with the chief aim of training future Orthodox clergy. Both had initiatives in undergraduate education, but neither with anywhere near the kind of deliberate educational philosophy that their Protestant and Roman Catholic counterparts drew on for their efforts. From the beginning, St. Vladimir's was designed to prepare undergraduate-aged men for the priesthood. Originally located in New York City, it had a five-year joint program leading to a BA from Colombia (or, later, other undergraduate programs in the area) and a diploma from St. Vladimir's. In the 1960s, St. Vladimir's became a graduate-level school of theology, at which point various pressures led to a decreased emphasis on and the eventual curtailment of its undergraduate component in the late 1980s.⁷² Ultimately the involvement of St. Vladimir's in undergraduate education might best be described, in the words of historian and former dean John Erickson, as “peripheral and accidental.”⁷³

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology was more deliberate about its interest in undergraduate education. In a 2009 conference paper, “Hellenic College: The Enduring Vision,” Thomas Lelon, former president of the school (now vice-chairman of its board of trustees), notes that in the opening ceremonies of Holy Cross in 1937, the Greek ambassador to the United States, Demetrios Sicilianos, stated, “Our good Archbishop Athenagoras and I envision that this School will some day in the future develop into a university for Greek Americans.”⁷⁴ It took thirty years and a generational transformation for this to happen, years that both helped and hurt the idea of such an institution. On the one hand, by the mid-1960s several Greek Orthodox lay patrons moved forward the establishment of Hellenic College (1968) under the active leadership of a visionary Greek Orthodox primate of the time, Archbishop Iakovos. On the other hand, Greek Americans had by this point succeeded in entering mainstream higher education, and many questioned the need to invest in a separate institution of higher learning. Since its inception, the college has struggled with a “roller coaster experience” of expansion and contraction for a related host of reasons, none of which would surprise scholars

of small religiously affiliated intuitions: a contested relationship between the college and church hierarchy; the challenge of garnering substantial ongoing philanthropic support; the primary role of the institution as a seminary for training future clergy and the concomitant question around differing missions of the college and graduate school, particularly as they relate to student formation; and the conflict created between an emphasis on preservation of ethnic traditions and language, on the one hand, and a vision rooted in Orthodoxy's spiritual and theological heritage on the other.⁷⁵ It has not helped that Orthodox Christians were bereft of a tradition of faith-related higher learning for the historical reasons noted above; there has been little by way of inherited vision for such an institution.

More broadly, many of the scholars in the volume bemoan the relative marginalization of Orthodoxy in American higher education today. In a few isolated institutions, of course, Orthodoxy has managed to have a presence and voice, but these are far from the norm.⁷⁶ Alexander Lingas in his essay on the place of Orthodox liturgical music in the Western academy speaks to this marginality, noting the woefully small number of scholars with permanent posts in Western European or North American universities currently publishing historical or ethnographic research on Orthodox liturgical music. He provides a remarkable account of the musical traditions of Eastern Orthodoxy throughout history, chronicling the interface with historical musicology, ethnomusicology, and the applied musical arts of composition and performance. Lingas's summary confirms the marginality of Orthodoxy's musical traditions within the academic sphere.

Elizabeth Prodromou, visiting associate professor of conflict resolution at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, notes that in her field of political science, Orthodoxy has fared worse than if it had been simply left out of the picture: examination of Orthodoxy worldwide had been scripted by a secularization-modernization agenda that has dominated the field of political science and international relations until very recently. She argues that "the writing of Orthodoxy" in political science scholarship has been "built on intellectual models and ideological perspectives and policy preoccupations that utilized and perpetuated outmoded and/or incomplete histories." But the Orthodox are not only

victims in this situation: Orthodox scholars, too, often themselves concede to the logistics of secularism and assume that the study of religion, in general, and Orthodoxy, more specifically, belongs to the silo of the discipline of theology. Prodromou problematizes both notions and shows the epistemological space that is now slowly opening to renarrate Orthodoxy, stating that possibilities for broadening narratives must include interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration between political scientists, theologians, historians, and scholars of religion.

A great irony in the overall discussion is that while discussions about faith and learning among the Orthodox have only begun in the United States, as we invited essays for this volume, a leading perspective emerged from an unforeseen place: Lebanon. Georges N. Nahas, vice president of the University of Balamand, offers the remarkable account of starting an Orthodox university in a small country where the past sixty years have seen frequent internal factions and war. Launched in 1988 amidst significant political, financial, and security risks, the University of Balamand focuses on dialogue and education through pursuing academic excellence, community engagement, and human development. With a student body today of 3,800 students, the university is designed to be an Orthodox institution where students of a wide variety of confessional backgrounds feel at home, and with the strong position that Lebanon should be unified and free for all.

Ultimately, the essays in this volume attest to the fact that, while the Orthodox have substantial historical reasons for not contributing substantial faith-learning scholarship and institutions here in North America, this does not indicate that Orthodox Christians cannot or will not engage the questions. In fact, the very enthusiasm with which all these scholars responded to either a conference call for papers or a personal invitation to contribute an essay indicates a certain ripeness for the discussion. Orthodox Christians did not immigrate to the United States and immediately found colleges because there was no real tradition of them having done so in their lands of origin in the centuries prior. For related reasons, American Orthodox scholars have not engaged the broader national discussion on the relationship between faith and learning in the academy. The conversation has not historically happened; that does not mean it should not.

EMERGING ORTHODOX THEMES

Several themes naturally emerge among these essays that have clear touch points to the broader literature reviewed above. This conversation is new enough that it would be hubris to claim them as defining markers of an Orthodox approach to higher education; rather, these serve simply as guideposts that help give some shape to the Orthodox contributions in this volume.

Traditionally Religious Sources and the Academic Enterprise

For those familiar with the Orthodox theological tradition, this first theme should come as no surprise: Orthodox Christian academics naturally turn to traditionally religious sources—scripture, patristics, and liturgical texts—for the academic enterprise. They deeply trust that these sources have a profound relevance, worth revisiting over and over. This is the very pattern of Orthodox theological inquiry, and it will stretch to be a defining factor in Orthodox thought more broadly.

We find this perhaps best demonstrated by an interesting network of relationships that surfaces in four of the essays in this volume. McGuckin, Behr, Louth, and Aristotle Papanikolaou each ruminate on the work of two fourth-century patristic writers, Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian (also known as Gregory of Nazianzus). We easily see why they would consult these fourth-century authors as sources: Basil and Gregory both wrote texts that dealt with the relationship between secular learning and Christian faith. They also wrote letters to each other that wrestle with such topics as the relationship between the active and contemplative life, the manner of learning, and the role of community in the process. Together they composed an anthology of the writings of Origen as a tribute to a great theologian and educator before them.⁷⁷

Our essayists turn to these thinkers for insight not only into the history of the relationship of faith and learning, but also for contemporary inspiration. They highlight that Basil and Gregory differ on their perspectives on the topic at hand, and our essayists themselves differ slightly in their interpretations. They consult ancient teachers who are themselves

consulting an ancient teacher. The very habit of returning to Basil and Gregory, by four different authors at different institutions, shows an Orthodox manner of approach—examining traditionally religious sources with contemporary academic questions.⁷⁸ It is a pattern very much ingrained in the way of knowing for the Orthodox.⁷⁹ This way of knowing is not, generally speaking, a dry academic endeavor, for the thinkers whom the Orthodox consult are often embedded in the Orthodox liturgical tradition, where hymns are rhetorically structured to address believers in the present.⁸⁰ The celebration and veneration of Saints Basil and Gregory is part of the Orthodox liturgical cycle. So by engaging these ancients not only for the task of history writing but for the goal of understanding, Orthodox Christian scholars are having living and often critical conversations with them—with an openness to both spiritual and intellectual formation.⁸¹

Of course while Orthodox Christians can be stereotyped as valuing tradition over and above scripture, most Orthodox theologians today will say that is an unhelpful dichotomy, and that the best way to understand tradition is to see it as scripture rightly interpreted.⁸² And so we find Orthodox biblical scholars making the unabashed claim, as did some modern Orthodox biblical scholars in prerevolutionary Russia, that scripture can and must be a source for the Christian scholar. Moreover, the Orthodox more or less avoided the confines of the historical-critical approach to the Bible that dominated much of Protestant thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and became a destabilizing force in the relationship of faith and higher education in US history. As Hetzner aptly articulates in her essay, “Having, by and large, missed the Enlightenment and, therefore, the opportunity to oppose it, the Orthodox Church has less historical overcoming to do.” Readers will not find the Orthodox authors in this volume engaged in defending themselves on how or why their reading of scripture is Orthodox. Their intent is not to present emphatically distinct ways of seeing scripture from an Orthodox perspective. Rather, the idea is to provide perspectives for this contemporary conversation that are the thoughtful offerings of Orthodox biblical scholars, who will each in varied ways bring their Orthodox context to their analysis.

In his essay, Michael Legaspi, associate professor in classics and ancient Mediterranean studies at Pennsylvania State, argues that the theme of wisdom in the Old Testament offers Christian scholars rich insights

for their work in teaching, research, and scholarship in the university. George Parsenios, associate professor of New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary, focuses on the way the apostle Paul employs “secular” learning and Jewish theological learning in his task as an apostle. Bruce Beck, assistant professor of New Testament at Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, traces an early pedagogical paradigm of imitation from Jesus to the apostle Paul to John Chrysostom, in order to reflect on the phenomenon of embodied knowledge and suggest applications for contemporary educators. Beck’s article shows how Orthodox scholars commonly follow a strand of thought from scripture to later sources—that which becomes tradition as an embraced interpretation of scripture.

We find that this pattern of utilizing traditionally Orthodox religious sources is not relegated solely to textual sources. Roy Robson, professor of history at Penn State Abington, focuses his essay on a liturgical moment that is celebrated on the evening of the Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ each year—a moment that encompasses fragrance, light, movement, text, image, music, and local tradition—as a source for academic inspiration. He uses the language of Mikhail Bakhtin to describe the liturgical moment as polyphonic, multiperspectival, and ultimately transfiguring. As such, Robson argues, it offers important guidance for education, and he describes how he specifically used this polyphonic model in writing a world religions textbook for college students.

Candace Hetzner presents some practical implications of this pattern of Orthodox relationship with traditional sources. Students today often arrive on college campuses alienated from most of the key institutions of our society—government, business, church. They yearn for direction, and yet have no place to turn. An Orthodox college culture, Hetzner argues, would have among its objectives an appreciation of genuine authority, that is, the willingness to learn from those who possess greater knowledge and insight, and a valuing of traditions and institutions of collective wisdom through time. For Orthodox institutions, a valuing of collective wisdom through time would emanate from the very patterns for Orthodox intellectual life.

A critical component of this habit of treasuring wisdom must not be left out: for Orthodox Christian academics, the continual consulting of traditionally religious sources is itself a scholarly, academic affair. Such

engagement requires reading texts with the best critical acumen. Both Behr and Louth “deconstruct” the face-value reading of rhetorical hostility between faith and learning; instead of narrowly condemning the very notion of deconstruction as antithetical to Christianity, they use the approach to illumine a deeper truth within the tradition. Gayle Woloschak, professor of radiation oncology at Northwestern University, in her essay on being Orthodox and being a scientist, notes the Orthodox tendency to succumb to ideologies that are often idolatries—namely worshipping “being ancient” over being truthful. Indeed, the gift of the Orthodox academic to the wider church is the very ability to approach the traditionally religious sources both faithfully and critically, to help the church discern what is of enduring value. Ultimately, this habit of revisiting traditional sources is, at its best for the Orthodox, an act of living the questions.

*“Between the Scylla of Sectarian Separation and the
Charybdis of Secular Effacement”*

A second recurrent theme in the essays is the notion that it is the responsibility of the Orthodox academic to lead the way in charting a middle course between—to borrow Noll’s terms—sectarian separation and secular effacement. Several authors name some of the key temptations for the Orthodox in this regard, and turn to the tradition for guidance.

George Parsenios acknowledges the options that exist for the Orthodox in the West who find themselves in an essentially foreign intellectual, political, and social environment: one option is to resist any Western influence at all; the other is to completely capitulate. He looks to the apostle Paul as a model of one who avoids polar extremes as he seamlessly uses Greek and Roman rhetorical tools and techniques in a way that allows him to further the mission of the gospel. This, Parsenios asserts, is our invitation to avoid easy oppositions between the world and the church in the realm of higher learning.

Indeed, we find the recurrent notion among the authors that Orthodox involvement in higher education provides important fodder for Orthodox churches to resist retreating to sectarian separation. Georges Nahas points to the tragic habit among some Orthodox of reducing

church witness by limiting it to maintaining a liturgical life within the context of Orthodox Church services. He maintains that though the life of the Orthodox is certainly and deeply liturgical, it is very outward looking in its theological dimensions; the church is responsible for the world, and Nahas believes this responsibility is a divine duty. Through higher education, the church as “annunciator” must deliver the message of life and hope, being proactively involved in the problems of our age and participating in possible solutions. Michael Plekon, an Orthodox priest who has served on the faculty at Baruch College at City University of New York for over three decades, offers his own reflections on how he sees his “day job” as a professor at a diverse public institution as ministry itself—not as a way of proselytizing, but as a way of inviting students to think more deeply and respectfully about religions and people of religious faith. He bases this spirit of openness on the work of the “Paris School” of émigré Russian Orthodox theologians associated with St. Sergius Institute in Paris. He cites the work of Orthodox theologian Nicholas Afanasiev (1893–1966), who argues against the notion that the church’s mission in the world is to preserve its sanctity in order to bring it to the time of fulfillment. This would presuppose that there is one road from the world into the church, but no road from the church into the world—a notion that would be correct only if the church could leave the world. But the church does not lead her members out of the world or leave her members in the world alone. Rather she faces the world, abides in and builds the world until “the fullness of time.” An openness to culture, a genuine engagement with learning and art, politics and society, and a desire to serve those in need, all are seen as a renewing of Christian discipleship.

Papanikolaou argues that the vocation of Orthodox scholars is to challenge the anti-intellectualism of some of contemporary Orthodoxy, exemplified in the “silly dualism” between mysticism and reason promoted by some Orthodox theologians. Moreover, he argues that it is the responsibility of Orthodox scholars to convince other academics that we will not make fundamentalism go away by marginalizing religion “but by encouraging more critical discussion and debate about religious ideas, and by increasing theological literacy.” Hetzner points out that the church benefits from the challenges posed by intellectual dialogue on the college campus. These challenges give the church an opportunity to look at itself

critically, providing an avenue to reflect on a changing world and what changes the institution is being called to.

The authors are also inclined to engage pressing contemporary issues for our society at large. They call attention to stereotypical extremes and offer alternatives. Echoing some of the modern Orthodox thinkers discussed in Shevzov's essay, Gayle Woloschak focuses on the interface between science and religion, highlighting the prevalence today of extreme views: the scientist who believes that a war must be waged on religion, which represents humanity's "irrational religious" past; the Christian who believes all science is bereft of any spiritual dimension, and all scientific theories are necessarily godless. Woloschak argues that such extremes—full of ideologies more stereotypical than accurate—leave us without the critical tools needed to engage everyday science-religion issues that need our attention: genetically modified crops, global climate change, in-vitro fertilization. She sees interdisciplinary discussion and collaboration across fields as essential not only for pastoral care within churches, but also for science and the academy.

Prodromou, who in her own professional career has effectively lived in this important "between" space by serving on the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, illustrates that both sectarian separation and secular effacement would ultimately be a tragedy when Orthodoxy is considered in the fields of political science and international relations. She shares hope and vision for the future, noting that "the end of the Cold War has enabled the emergence of a globalized, transnational community of Orthodox Christian scholars conducting research in political science, offering the possibilities for comparative analyses of the internal pluralism of global Orthodox Christianity." Her essay illumines her claim that Orthodox Christianity in American higher education can contribute to "making sense of and respecting the distinctions and connections between one's religious commitments and one's scholarship."

Papanikolaou illustrates how he brings the concern for religion on the world scene into the classroom. His point of departure is student perception in a required theology course he teaches at the Roman Catholic Fordham University. To address student resistance to the theology requirement itself—out of a feeling that religion is a matter of private, subjective opinion—Papanikolaou structures the first part of the course as a

sociological, historical, and philosophical exploration of secularization in the United States before turning to examine fundamentalism as a prominent face of modern religion. His goal is to make students more critically aware of the context within which they construct their own ideas about religion and theology, in order to open space for them to think otherwise about these fields. There is, across these essays, a congruity of vision regarding the Orthodox academic vocation to chart a middle course for both the church and academy—this springs from the historical experience of the church and its theological vision of being outward looking for the life of the world.

Yes, Mystery and Unknown, but Also Word and Narrative

Related to this careful balance between sectarian separation and secular effacement is the Orthodox stance towards mystery and the unknown. Indeed it is this stance that the Jacobsens directly refer to in their brief suggestion that the Orthodox have something to offer the conversation: “The Eastern Orthodox tradition has a long history of apophatic theology—an approach that stresses the fact that the most important truths about God cannot be put into words.”⁸³ We do find the authors of these essays discussing distinctive ways apophatic theology can positively impact the academic enterprise. Hetzner argues that Orthodoxy offers important guidance for students by helping to resolve relativist-absolutist tensions because Orthodoxy is clear about what we may know with certainty and what remains unknown—apophatic or ineffable. This emphasis marks a significant departure from much Christian absolutism. With it, a college culture would have as one of its foundational objectives “believing that human beings can know many things but not everything.”

This theological point provides a corrective to some contemporary intellectual currents. Markides advocates that apophaticism, “the hallmark of Orthodoxy,” is an important offering to help loosen the bonds of historical materialism and reductionism. For Orthodox academics, it can also become the spirit in which they pursue scholarship and teaching. Belief in the apophatic nature of God requires the cultivation of humility, with the constant reminder of the limits of human knowledge. Scott Cairns, the poet and professor of English at the University of Missouri,

describes how this unknowability transfers directly to his craft, especially as he teaches it to students: “The pursuit of art becomes utterly worthless when it is reduced to being the expression of what we know, or of what we think we know.” Rather, poems that may be called Orthodox reflect a sacramental or mystical poetics; they insist on the reader’s participation in making something *of* them, and it is in that space of the unknown—with the shared experience of attention to the words—that meaning is made. For Cairns, apophaticism provides the very manner in which understanding is pursued.

Cairns’s joint emphasis on both the space of the unknown and the attention to words is critical, because while Orthodox apophatic theology is often seen as a distinctive marker of the tradition, to emphasize it to an exclusion of the place of attention to word and narrative would do injustice. John Behr illumines the power that the early church fathers gave to words—in Greek *logoi*, or *logos* in the singular—and specifically as related to the teaching-learning relationship:

It is *logos* that differentiates us from brute animals; it is by *logos* that we become human (and as Saint Irenaeus [c. 130–c. 202] reminds us, we must first become human before we can be deified); it is *logos* that we have in common with God; it is through *logoi* that we communicate with each other; it is with his words that a teacher teaches and a spiritual guide guides, words that are demonstrated to be trustworthy by the manner of life of the speaker—yet words that also persuade us of his trustworthiness.

Behr summarizes that given this importance, our greatest task as human beings is to study the art of words, and his essay addresses how and why this is so according to patristic writers, given that Christianity is essentially a revealed religion. McGuckin argues for the centrality of narrative for understanding the history of education in the Orthodox tradition. Christ’s saving *kerygma* is taught chiefly in the medium of story; the church is a coming together to hear the story; theology is narrative expression. The tradition is clear that the church’s duty is to be attentive to the story of the Word.

Louth, in his discussion of Orthodox monasticism and higher education, notes the difference between the pursuit of monasticism, or Christian discipleship, and the pursuit of learning. The goal of the first is attentiveness to the Word of God. For the pursuit of learning, Louth notes that the fathers believed that there are ways in which the created order speaks to us of God. He gives the example of Maximos the Confessor, who, in his *Ambigua*, finds a close parallel between the Word manifest to us in the words of scripture and the Word manifest to us in the words, the λόγος, of creation. Louth focuses on the contemplative life as a shared root of both monasticism and higher education, and how it is in danger of being lost in higher education: “Teaching is no longer concerned with developing a capacity in students for seeing things as they are, but with providing them with skills that will make them attractive in the marketplace.” Higher education, Louth argues, has a certain calling to develop in faculty and students habits of attention and contemplation.

Theological emphases on both the importance of the word and unknowability are foundational to the Orthodox academic enterprise. They require attentiveness, the goal of which is contemplative wisdom, the ultimate end of all knowledge. This wisdom is achieved only by detachment from the self and from any attempt to exploit what it is we are seeking to understand. To this end, humility is not a nice attribute to which a scholar should strive, but rather an essential precondition, a foundational requirement.

Education as Holistic, on Theoretical, Personal, and Ecclesial Levels

This emphasis on wisdom and humility leads us to a fourth and final theme. The essays in this volume repeatedly emphasize that education in the Orthodox tradition naturally strives to be holistic on both theoretical and personal levels. For Legaspi, to return to biblical understanding of wisdom is to fight for what is steadfastly holistic. Wisdom holds together life in its metaphysical, cosmic, social, and personal aspects. Scholars oriented towards wisdom will refuse to compartmentalize forms of inquiry. Within the various disciplines of higher education, wisdom resists fragmentation and will manifest itself in the “disciplined search for meaningful connection.”

Shevzov shows how the idea of unity formed the basis of the thinking of many of Russia's academic Orthodox thinkers at the turn of the twentieth century when they defended theology's place in the university curriculum. Higher education should embrace "the totality of knowledge" and strive for an "integral consciousness" over and against the fragmented knowledge demanded by the systematic classification and specialization within the fields of contemporary science. Striving for this integration was a sacred task from an Orthodox anthropological standpoint, and as a result no form of knowledge should be excluded. From this perspective, these thinkers argued that a university curriculum without offerings in theology remained incomplete. Theology ultimately offered a unifying link that harmonized the otherwise fragmented realms of knowledge.

Kyriacos Markides, following his teacher Pitirim Sorokin, Russian émigré and founder of the sociology department at Harvard, also advocates for an "integralist truth" which aims to cultivate three strands of knowledge—the senses, the mind, and intuition—in order to attain a more balanced, holistic, and integral vision of reality. Behr illustrates that in the early church, education was both an intellectual affair and concerned with spiritual formation. "It would have been inconceivable to separate these two aspects of *paideia*. It was not enough to be able to speak about a subject: the student had to strive, Gregory [the Theologian] recalled, to attain 'the practical accomplishment of the thing expressed.'"

Not surprisingly, we find among the essays a deep concern for the holistic formation of students in the American academy today. As Hetzner maintains, speaking of the digital revolution which is the waters all students swim in, "In this environment, to speak of souls is almost quaint, but an Orthodox college must do so." In Papanikolaou's essay we find his concern for helping students understand that being "religious" has to do with formation of the person to *be* in a certain way—to transform one's mode of being in the world. Christian practices such as fasting, therefore, are seen as ways of forming the whole person. "Christianity is a *being* that is realized in and through particular practices that are time tested in the Christian ascetical tradition."

This vision of the holistic encompasses the very hope for the union among Christians that Radu Bordeianu argues for in his essay, "Ecumen-

ism in the Classroom.” Following the Romanian Orthodox theologian Dumitru Staniloae (1903–93), Bordeianu asserts that ecumenism is an intrinsic aspect of Orthodox teaching and that Christians must strive to repair brokenness and restore unity, including the visible unity of the churches. He addresses how teaching, research, and the service endeavors of academic life can be ecumenical. His own students are assigned extensive research to discover differences among various Christian denominations, and may form opinions about the degree of unity in diversity that Christianity can achieve today. Moreover, he invites them to engage in some type of service as a part of the course requirement and reflect theologically upon their experience. This challenges students to resist making a common mistake of ecumenism: splitting the agenda in two opposite directions, church unity and work for justice. Through their own research and service, Orthodox professors of theology or religious studies have the opportunity to contribute to the cause of Christian unity.

Striving for this unity and holism is ultimately an act of wisdom. And Christian wisdom, asserts Legaspi, is to see the unity of all things, “not in nakedly intellectual terms, as something fully transparent to human reason, but rather as embodied and actualized in the One who unites humanity and divinity, strength and humility, holiness and power.” Beck helps us further understand, in ruminating on Christ as teacher in Matthew, how Christ, as the ultimate source of our faith, calls disciples not to knowledge as the word is typically used, but to a way of learning that continually imitates him and leads to acts of mercy towards others. This way of learning leads to the phenomenon of embodied knowledge that we find in the person of Christ. Jesus integrates learning with doing, content with mentorship, high standards with mercy.

These themes cannot be definitively called “the Orthodox approach to faith and learning” because, once again, this is just the beginning of an exploration of this topic. But they present enough of a picture for us to get an overall sense of the way faith-informed Orthodox scholars will engage their academic task. The themes are an invitation to academics today to consult traditional religious sources for contemporary inspiration; to chart a middle course between sectarian separation and secular effacement for both the church and the academy; to prioritize attentiveness to word and narrative, and to the ultimate limits of all human knowledge; and to

strive for a holistic vision in their educational task—resisting fragmentation and searching for unity within ourselves, unity of knowledge, even the unity of churches.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Reflection on the historiography of the relationship between Christianity and higher education in the United States and the contours of the current scholarship opens important space for alternate models of the relationship between faith and learning in higher education. In this space, there is room for the Orthodox to be authentically Orthodox—to plumb our traditionally religious sources for contemporary inspiration *and* to do so in conversation with those in the wider academy, living in the productive tension between sectarian separation and secular effacement. Orthodox Christians may enter this conversation that is a strong thread within American Christianity.

The Protestant and Catholic scholars mentioned at the beginning of this introduction all make excellent conversation partners for the Orthodox. They are self-critical in a way that Orthodox should appreciate. They highlight temptations that are relevant for Orthodox Christians: epistemological arrogance, the notion of Christian scholarship as an antiseccular crusade for truth, a “hyperphilosophical” approach, and the stricture of the notion that Christian scholarship must follow a singular path, regardless of a scholar’s own academic discipline or understanding of faith. Additionally, they help illumine the issues around the modern dichotomy between faith and knowledge on American soil.

The wider conversation regarding faith and learning can assist Orthodox Christians in the American academy today with the process of gaining some thoughtful language and questions with which to engage the challenging task of relating faith and learning. Particularly helpful is Marsden’s insight into the idea of faith-informed scholarship and the ways religious commitments and traditions are likely to influence the evaluative dimensions of such scholarship. Boyer’s notion of Christian scholarship “tincturing the world of scholarship as a whole with a deepened sense of the unity of reality and of our responsibility to serve others” is a vision worthy of aspiration.

Striking commonalities emerge from both the mainstream literature and the Orthodox voices in this volume. There is shared concern about the rise in fundamentalism, and therefore about the critical importance of faith-informed scholarly work for the very future of the Christian faith. The perspective that Christian scholarship typically grows out of full personhood, not by sheer rationality or logic, and that it should aim to celebrate the wholeness of God's creation, sounds strikingly similar to the Orthodox emphasis on education being holistic. We find in both sets of writers the notion that combining deep personal commitment to Christ and to the life of the mind is a matter of "living the questions."

Our best hope is that the volume provokes among its readers recognition of the lacuna, and therefore the finest result would be a flurry of response with additional perspectives, nuanced critiques, and further explorations. It is worth here suggesting three: a broad need, a narrow project, and an institutional necessity. First and foremost, there is the project of widening the scope of Orthodox thought by seeking more input from abroad. This includes the project of translation: there are scholars within traditionally Orthodox countries that have thought and published on this topic of faith and learning, faith and knowledge. English translation of the best of these publications is needed for the Orthodox in the English-speaking diaspora and for the ecumenical conversation. Additionally there is the necessity of increasing research on and collaboration with Orthodox schools abroad. While the bulk of Orthodox institutions of higher education abroad are seminaries, graduate theological schools, or theological faculties attached to universities, there are a few institutions with broader aims in their missions. In addition to the University of Balamand, several other Orthodox universities have opened within the last half-century. Perry Glanzer of Baylor University has done some preliminary work on this topic within the context of Christian higher education globally. In his essay "Resurrecting Universities with Soul: Christian Higher Education in Post-Communist Europe," for instance, he discusses the opening of St. John Orthodox University in Moscow in 1992 (whose founder, Father Ioann Ekonomtzev, told the *New York Times* in 1998, "Our purpose was to bring about a synthesis between scholarship and faith, and religion and morality, because scholarship without morality at its core is dangerous") and St. Tikhon's Orthodox University in Moscow in 2004, which grew out of underground Bible

courses offered during the communist era.⁸⁴ St. Tikhon's University in particular has become a premier training ground for lay Orthodox academics—male and female—who in many ways are raising the bar for the next generation of Orthodox scholars.

Second, a specific project: a sociological study of American Orthodox youth and their undergraduate experience, examining where they go to college, what they study, what level and distribution of degrees they earn, and what percentage remain active members of an Orthodox church during college. What role does higher education play in young people leaving (or entering) the Orthodox Church? This project would help the Orthodox Church in the United States understand itself as well as help a wider audience understand Orthodox Christian college students.

Third, the institutional necessity: on a very practical level, this volume hopes to provoke further work from and for those Orthodox institutions in North America that have faith and learning as one of their aims but have not, to date, had much Orthodox scholarly literature to support their endeavors. Simultaneously, the editors hope that this volume will help the Orthodox Church celebrate the vocation of its academics across the disciplines, and make use of them to help the church chart a wise middle course in meeting the twenty-first-century needs of its people.

The Orthodox should not feel alone in this challenge. In the 2001 publication *As Leaven in the World: Catholic Perspectives on Faith, Vocation, and the Intellectual Life*, Thomas Landy grounds his introduction in an experience that could be easily rewritten as precisely reflecting that of Orthodox academics:

Today, young Catholic scholars often tell me that they find themselves in a double bind: their academic colleagues have no interest in talking about religion except to caricature it; other Catholics seldom can relate to the academic work as potentially valuable from a religious point of view. When they ask people in ministry for help figuring out how to be disciples in the world, they are often sent away from intellectual pursuits, to volunteer in some sort of social service. Few of them are helped to explore deeply how the disciplinary work they are dedicating their talents to could also be a vocation.⁸⁵

If this has been the experience of Orthodox scholars, this volume should give them the raw material to radically rethink their academic gifts as vocation. To put it more strongly, as McGuckin does: for first-world Orthodox in America, our sociological and financial position *requires* this of us. It is simply the vocation of Orthodox Christians in American higher education to use their academic talents for a deeper reflection on the pressing needs of the world and the church for this century.

NOTES

This essay has benefited immensely from the thoughtful feedback of a number of readers. Particular thanks to James Skedros, George Behrakis, Charles Ajalat, and Vera Shevzov.

1. For overviews of the Orthodox Christian tradition, see John Anthony McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Its History, Doctrine, and Spiritual Culture* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008); Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, rev. ed. (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 2015; first published 1963); Theofanis G. Stavrou and Bryn Geffert, eds., *Eastern Christianity: The Essential Texts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016). Regarding the Orthodox not establishing their own colleges, if we are tempted to see it as a numbers issue—arguing that Orthodox Christians simply did not have the critical mass to support any endeavor in higher education—one simply has to compare this with Mennonite Church USA, which provides denominational oversight to five colleges and universities (and two seminaries) in the United States. As of 2013, it was reporting a membership of fewer than one hundred thousand. Hellenic College (founded in 1968), the only accredited Orthodox Christian college in the Western Hemisphere, can be seen as an interesting and important exception to this; see Thomas C. Lelon, “Hellenic College: The Enduring Vision” (paper presented at Orthodox Theological Society in America Annual Conference, Cenacle Retreat Center, Chicago, June 12, 2008). Yet Hellenic College’s own limited growth over the last five decades illustrates a certain absence of a collective vision among Orthodox Christians to commit institutional resources and secure the philanthropic support. There is, however, new momentum around the topic—see “Emerging Orthodox Themes” in this introduction.

2. Study of Orthodox theology in the United States has been relegated almost exclusively to Orthodox seminaries or graduate theological schools. An interesting comparison is the case of Jewish Studies in the United States, where as early as the 1960s it was heralded that there was “a spread of Jewish studies as

an accepted academic discipline in the American liberal-arts colleges and universities.” Kristen Loveland, “The Association for Jewish Studies: A Brief History,” in *Association for Jewish Studies: 40th Annual Conference, December 21–23, 2008* (New York: Association for Jewish Studies, 2008), <http://www.ajsnet.org/ajs.pdf>. As for comparison with the Roman Catholic tradition, according to the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, there are currently thirty-six Catholic colleges and universities with Catholic studies programs (most majors, a few of these minors) and seven Catholic studies programs at non-Catholic universities. Washington, DC: Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, 2015, <http://www.accunet.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageID=3914>. The founding of chairs and centers in Orthodox theology has finally begun quite recently at institutions apart from Orthodox graduate schools and seminaries. The first chair in Orthodox theology at any undergraduate institution in the country was established in 2009—the Archbishop Demetrios Chair in Orthodox Theology and Culture at Fordham University. It was preceded significantly by the 1987 founding of the Alexander G. Spanos Chair of Eastern Orthodox Christian Studies at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, but an important caveat for this present volume is that the home of this chair was within a *graduate* school of *theology*. In 2011 the University of Notre Dame established an endowed chair, the Archbishop Demetrios Professorship in Byzantine Theology. Both Fordham and Notre Dame chairs were named in honor of Archbishop Demetrios Trakatellis, who has the unusual distinction as an Orthodox hierarch of studying on scholarship at the Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, receiving a doctorate in New Testament and Christian Origins as well as a ThD in theology from the University of Athens. While serving on faculty from 1983 to 1993 at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts, he also taught at Harvard Divinity School as Visiting Professor of New Testament (1984–85, 1988–89). As is noted in Candace Hetzner’s essay in this volume, Orthodox bishops by and large do not have substantial experience with university education and university systems. The important exception of Archbishop Demetrios, the current primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in America, is already proving to change the landscape of Orthodox theological studies in the United States.

3. One volume on the topic was produced in the twentieth century: James Steve Counelis, *Higher Learning and Orthodox Christianity* (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 1990). Counelis, a professor of education of the University of San Francisco, published the volume’s essays between 1963 and 1989 in various church or scholarly journals or newspapers. There are only two reviews of his book. In one 1990 review, Orthodox professor Charles B. Ashanin, late professor of early church history emeritus at Christian Theological Seminary in

Indianapolis, supports the notion of Counelis's book appearing in a vast lacuna, for he complains of "abysmal ignorance" on the part of both Orthodox and Protestant scholars on the topic. The second review, by Orthodox theologian and ethicist Stanley Harakas, longtime professor at Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, gives a good summary of what Counelis is trying to accomplish. He insinuates that the weaknesses of the volume are that the essays span three decades, are intended for significantly different audiences, and use terms from a wide variety of worlds in which Counelis works. Indeed, Counelis's use of theological language and terms would seem a bit strange to today's Orthodox Christian theologian or lay reader, and as far as I can tell, the volume has had scant circulation among Orthodox academics. However, for Harakas (and me) it does offer "valuable affirmation of the view of the Cappadocian Fathers and St. John Chrysostom that true knowledge and true faith not only *can*, but also *should* walk together."

4. In the words of Mark Noll, "The recent flourishing of scholarship on religion in American higher education has altered the dynamics of historiographical concern with remarkable effect. Increasingly, the displacement of religion from higher learning is viewed as a contingent rather than an inevitable occurrence." Noll's description of James Burtchaell's book *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from Their Christian Churches* is succinct: "The religion of America's historic Christian colleges and universities has undergone slow evisceration over the course of the twentieth century because the piety in these institutions was intellectually shallow, their ecclesiology was self-destructively low-church, and their administrators all too often acted with craven short-sightedness." Mark A. Noll, "The Future of the Religious College: Looking Ahead by Looking Back," in *The Future of Religious Colleges: The Proceedings of the Harvard Conference on the Future of Religious Colleges, October 6–7, 2000*, ed. Paul John Dove (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 75.

5. Dove, *Future of Religious Colleges*, ix.

6. "All told, we visited more than fifty campuses, ranging from Brown University to Brigham Young, Vassar College to Cal State Bakersfield, MIT to Ave Maria, Penn State to Pepperdine, the University of Miami to Pacific Lutheran, Yale to USC, and the United States Air Force Academy to Soka University (a Buddhist-influenced school in southern California)." Douglas G. Jacobsen and Rhonda Hustedt Jacobsen, *No Longer Invisible: Religion in University Education* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), viii.

7. "Pace-setting" is Marsden's term. For a helpful chart of colonial colleges and their denominational affiliations, see the Jacobsens' ch. 2 in *ibid.*, 18. Note that Harvard was founded in 1636, a mere sixteen years after the first arrival of Pilgrims.

8. "The American university system was built on a foundation of evangelical Protestant colleges. Most of the major universities evolved directly from such nineteenth-century colleges. As late as 1870 the vast majority of these were remarkably evangelical. Most of them had clergymen-presidents who taught courses defending Biblicist Christianity and who encouraged periodic campus revivals." George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 4.

9. Ryan J. Barilleaux, review of *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*, by George Marsden, *Catholic Social Science Review* 3 (1998), http://catholic-socialscientists.org/cssr/Archival/vol_iii.html.

10. Throughout this introduction I use the term "Orthodox academics" to describe Orthodox Christian scholars of any discipline who naturally see the relationship between their faith and their professional work . . . or, in the words of Elizabeth Prodromou, scholars whose research sometimes deals with Orthodoxy but who are always scholars who are Orthodox. For where wider literature asks for Orthodox involvement, see note 21.

11. "A unified and universal science would provide an objective basis for a united society." Marsden, *Soul of the American University*, 429.

12. Marsden explains, "Liberal Protestants justified these exclusions not only on the negative grounds that traditional Christian beliefs were unscientific, but also by the positive rationale that cultural development advanced the Kingdom of God." Ibid. Marsden also shows how Catholic education evolves from these discriminatory attitudes.

13. Marsden, "Beyond Progressive Scientific Humanism," in Dovre, *Future of Religious Colleges*, 48. "Laudable zeal to ensure that no *one* religion be established eventually led to an overcorrection that left the academy with inadequate ways to accommodate varieties of faith-informed scholarship."

14. Some of these questions are raised later on in this section. For a fascinating analysis of the shift in question-asking, see the Jacobsens' chapter "A Framework for Better Questions," in Jacobsen and Jacobsen, *No Longer Invisible*.

15. Douglas G. Jacobsen and Rhonda Hustedt Jacobsen, *Scholarship and Christian Faith: Enlarging the Conversation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 23.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. And has "spawned perhaps more sustained reflection on faith and learning than any other Protestant theological tradition" (26).

20. Jacobsen and Jacobsen, *Scholarship and Christian Faith*, 26.

21. Ibid., 28. See also Thomas Albert Howard's introduction to *The Future of Christian Learning: An Evangelical and Catholic Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008), 17, where he mentions Eastern Orthodox as an important future conversation partner.

22. Georgetown University was founded in 1789; Notre Dame in 1842; Catholic University of America, 1887.

23. Howard, *Future of Christian Learning*, 7.

24. Marsden, *Soul of the American University*, 5.

25. Ibid., 272.

26. See Marsden's section on Catholic Authoritarianism in *ibid.*, 270–76.

27. James Turner, "Enduring Differences, Blurring Boundaries," in Howard, *Future of Christian Learning*, 76.

28. Mark W. Roche, "The Intellectual Appeal of Catholicism," in Dovre, *Future of Religious Colleges*, 165.

29. Many recent collections of interdisciplinary essays on faith and scholarship include Catholic voices. Thomas Albert Howard edited a 2006 dialogue between Mark A. Noll and James Turner held on the campus of Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts, and noted, "That such a dialogue on such a topic between a leading American evangelical scholar and a leading American Catholic scholar would take place at an evangelical college in the heart of New England reflects changes that have been and remain underfoot."

30. Douglas Sloan, "Faith and Knowledge: Religion and the Modern University," in Dovre, *Future of Religious Colleges*, 22. Sloan summarizes that during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, three assumptions about knowing and knowable reality increasingly dominated thinking and consciousness: an objectivistic assumption derived from the now notorious Cartesian split between subject and object, or "onlooker consciousness"; the epistemological assumption that we can know only that which is given through our ordinary physical senses and abstractions from sense experience; and the metaphysical assumption that reality is ultimately quantitative. He refers to the work of French sociologist Jaques Ellul to list the three great positive effects this had on modern Western culture: technical reason, an emerging sense of individuality and of individual worth, and the possibility of genuine freedom. But he then goes on to explain that when leading Protestant theological-educational reformers went to study the positives and negatives, they found the negative consequences of the assumptions of modernity were threatening the survival of the positive. Ibid., 4–5. Sloan references Jacques Ellul and Matthew J. O'Connell, *The Betrayal of the West* (New York: Seabury Press, 1978).

31. Jacobsen and Jacobsen, *No Longer Invisible*. See in particular chapter 7, "Framing Knowledge."

32. His books include *Faith and Knowledge: Mainline Protestantism and American Higher Education* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), and Douglas Sloan and Charles F. Kettering Foundation, *Insight-Imagination: The Emancipation of Thought and the Modern World*, Contributions in Philosophy (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983).

33. Sloan, "Faith and Knowledge," 25.

34. Ibid.

35. Turner, "Enduring Differences, Blurring Boundaries," 97–98.

36. Jacobsen and Jacobsen, *No Longer Invisible*, 6.

37. Roche, "Intellectual Appeal of Catholicism," 175–76.

38. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, part I, A, 1, sec. 17, website of the Holy See, 1990, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_15081990_ex-corde-ecclesiae.html. See also Joseph M. Herlihy, "Reflections on *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*," in Dove, *Future of Religious Colleges*, 285.

39. Sloan, "Faith and Knowledge," 22.

40. Ibid.

41. For an excellent discussion of the differences and commonalities, see Turner, "Enduring Differences, Blurring Boundaries."

42. The subhead of this section, "Religious Scholars in the Academy: Anachronism or Leaven?," was used as a subhead by Paul John Dove in his introduction to *The Future of Religious Colleges: The Proceedings of the Harvard Conference on the Future of Religious Colleges, October 6–7, 2000*, ed. Paul John Dove (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), v.

43. George Marsden, "Beyond Progressive Scientific Humanism," in Dove, *Future of Religious Colleges*, 44.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid., 45. "The big difference between feminist and religious faith-informed perspectives in relation to the academic establishment is not intellectual, but rather political. Feminism has been accepted because it has been associated with the very popular movement in the academy for equal opportunity for women. Traditionalist religious perspectives, on the other hand, are bucking strong political prejudices against the religious right and many ideological and economic pressures for a religiously homogenized public life. For those reasons, faith-informed perspectives have been developed best in religiously affiliated colleges that have maintained some sense of separate identity from the American mainstream." Ibid., 49.

46. Marsden says of his own work that he sees "the commitment to the historian's craft as only one of several traditions shaping [his] scholarship." Ibid., 45.

47. Ibid., 45–46.

48. For expansion of these ideas, see *ibid.*, 46.
49. Crystal L. Downing, "Imbricating Faith and Learning: The Architectonics of Christian Scholarship," in Jacobsen and Jacobsen, *Scholarship and Christian Faith*, 42.
50. Jacobsen and Jacobsen, *Scholarship and Christian Faith*, 45.
51. *Ibid.*, 46.
52. *Ibid.* Reference to David Hollenbach, "The Catholic University under the Sign of the Cross: Christian Humanism in a Broken World," in *Finding God in All Things*, ed. Michael J. Himes and Stephen J. Pope (New York: Crossroads, 1996), 283.
53. Jacobsen and Jacobsen, *Scholarship and Christian Faith*, 47.
54. *Ibid.*, 48.
55. *Ibid.*, 52.
56. Roche, "Intellectual Appeal of Catholicism," 173.
57. *Ibid.*, 173–75.
58. Samuel Schuman, *Seeing the Light: Religious Colleges in Twenty-First-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 3–4.
59. Naomi Schaefer Riley, *God on the Quad: How Religious Colleges and the Missionary Generation Are Changing America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005). Riley herself is a 1998 magna cum laude graduate of Harvard University.
60. Marsden, "Beyond Progressive Scientific Humanism," 47.
61. *Ibid.*, 35–36.
62. *Ibid.*, 50.
63. Noll, "Future of the Religious College," 91.
64. *Ibid.*, 93.
65. William C. Ringenber, *The Christian College and the Meaning of Academic Freedom* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), xiii.
66. Monika K. Hellwig, "Emerging Patterns among Roman Catholic Colleges and Universities," in Dovre, *Future of Religious Colleges*, 104.
67. *Ibid.*, 105.
68. *Ibid.*, 111.
69. *Ibid.*, 113.
70. *Ibid.*, 113–15.
71. To see the broad impact of this work, see Tim Clydesdale, *The Purposeful Graduate: Why Colleges Must Talk to Students about Vocation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015). See also David S. Cunningham, *At This Time and in This Place: Vocation and Higher Education* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). The Council of Independent Colleges now administers the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE), a nationwide network of colleges and universities formed to enrich the intellectual and theological exploration of vocation among undergraduate students.

72. It was not until 1966 that St. Vladimir's became a member of the Association of Theological Schools and received state authorization to award master's-level degrees. John H. Erickson, "St. Vladimir's Seminary and Undergraduate Education" (paper presented at the Orthodox Theological Society in America Annual Conference, 2008).

73. Ibid.

74. Lelon, "Hellenic College."

75. Ibid. Anton C. Vrame used the words "roller coaster experience" to describe this history of Hellenic College in the call for papers for the 2008 conference, *Being Orthodox in the Academy: Does It Matter? Should It Matter?*, cosponsored by the Orthodox Theological Society in America and the Office of Vocation & Ministry at Hellenic College.

76. In the past thirty to forty years a few influential scholars have bucked this trend and had long tenures as Orthodox faculty in public universities. Theofanis Stavrou has served on faculty at the University of Minnesota since 1961 in the Department of History, where he teaches courses and advises doctoral students on the history and culture of Eastern Orthodoxy. He has served as the founder and editor of the journal *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook: A Publication of Mediterranean, Slavic, and Eastern Orthodox Studies* (1985–) and has produced a remarkable number of publications on the topic. Michael Plekon, an Orthodox priest who has served on faculty at Baruch College of the City University of New York since 1977, reflects on his experience and vision in this present volume. Vigen Guroian began his academic career in 1978 at the University of Virginia, from where he also retired as professor of religious studies in 2015. James Counellis serves as a fourth example; see note 3.

77. Origen et al., *The Philocalia of Origen: The Text Revised, with a Critical Introduction and Indices*, ed. and trans. Armitage Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1893).

78. Scholars from outside the Orthodox tradition might ask why retelling the oft-told tale of Basil, Gregory, and Origen would make a more forceful impression on Orthodox practice now than it has in the past. The simple answer is that we don't find any notable, extended, influential references to these three *around the relationship of faith and learning* outside recent years by Orthodox writers. The story is not oft-told for the Orthodox, but rather a truly contemporary academic question.

79. James Turner argues that this had also been the pattern of the Catholic intellectual life through the mid-twentieth century. "Up to the 1960s at least, Catholic writers were as likely to interrogate Aristotle or Anselm or Aquinas as their own contemporaries. When the Second Vatican Council's spirit of *aggiornamento* opened the church's windows to the contemporary world, the winds of

change sometimes drowned out these voices of the past.” Turner, “Enduring Differences, Blurring Boundaries,” 94.

80. This habit has been compared to the Jewish midrashic tradition. See ch. 6, “Aural,” in Eugen J. Penttiuc, *The Old Testament in Eastern Orthodox Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

81. Margaret Mitchell’s study on the textual relationship between Chrysostom and the apostle Paul is worth studying for broadening understanding of this notion. She explains that Chrysostom’s own fundamental hermeneutical claim was that he understood the writings of the apostle so well because he loved him so much. Mitchell says of Chrysostom’s relationship with Paul, “He was acutely aware of the absence and distance of the apostle in the present, the inability to ‘see’ him now (though that was one of the eschatological rewards for which he longingly waited), yet he also felt that in touching the codex, in hearing the apostle’s words read, and in studying them carefully and preaching on them, he was in constant, lively conversation with him.” *The Heavenly Trumpet: John Chrysostom and the Art of Pauline Interpretation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 36–37. Moreover,

Chrysostom roots this hermeneutical claim in an epistemological principle, which is itself grounded in a friendship *topos*: “For what belongs to those who are loved, they who love them know above all others.” Thus for Chrysostom the reader must embrace the sacred author for meaning to be conveyed and apprehended (not surprisingly this is also the content of his exhortation to his hearers to prepare for Scripture study). His hermeneutics of love lead even to a hermeneutics of conformity, as in the interpretive conversation the two were conjoined in an unbreakable bond that was both spiritual and intellectual. (39–40)

I am indebted to the study of Hans-Georg Gadamer for this point, specifically regarding conversations with classic texts. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1989).

82. John Behr, *The Way to Nicaea*, vol. 1 of *The Formation of Christian Theology* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001).

83. Jacobsen and Jacobsen, *Scholarship and Christian Faith*, 28.

84. Joel Carpenter, Perry L. Glanzer, and Nicholas S. Lantinga, eds., *Christian Higher Education: A Global Reconnaissance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 171, citing Marina Lakhman, “Russia’s Church-Run Campus Has a Secular Goal,” *New York Times*, January 1, 1998, sec. 1, p. 3.

85. Thomas M. Landy, *As Leaven in the World: Catholic Perspectives on Faith, Vocation, and the Intellectual Life* (Franklin, WI: Sheed & Ward, 2001), xi–xii.

PART I

HISTORICAL AND
THEOLOGICAL ROOTS

CHAPTER ONE

EDUCATION (*PAIDEIA*) AS KERYGMATIC VALUE IN THE ORTHODOX TRADITION

JOHN A. MCGUCKIN

In the ancient world—that so-important cultural-placental context in which the Orthodox Church first emerged, and whose attitudes and pre-suppositions shaped it so forcibly (whether it conformed to them or fought against them)—it is important for us to remember that (at a fair guess) 95 percent of all men were illiterate; 99 percent of women were illiterate.¹ This did not make them stupid; and we should not fall into that common assumption of cultural superiority that textualists have over nontextualists, and moderns over premoderns. It simply made them express their deep native intelligence in ways other than the obsession with texts that we take for granted today. Our ready access to textuality has come at the cost of other forms of intelligence. In antiquity there was a widespread allegiance to narrative tales orally conveyed as a medium of understanding and expression. If one had a puzzle to resolve, it was not first and foremost to a text that one would turn (or an online reference, for that matter—oh the innocent days before Google and Wikipedia!). Rather, one would search for a story, preferably one with a good patina of history. We are not all that removed from the ancients, despite our

layers of postmodern textual sophistication. If we were to pass by a venerable elder and overhear, "A long long time ago, in a far distant land . . .," who among us would not stop and listen? Oral narrative for most of history has been king; and even if he is in disguise today, in the blizzard of stories and imagery whirling around us, his rule is not over.

THE CHURCH AS NARRATOR, THEOLOGY AS NARRATIVE EXPANSION

The Christians told stories from the beginning. Their stories were educational. They were important. Believers had more than enough mythic tales to entertain them in the surrounding society, which had taken mythic narrative to heights never seen before and never to be seen again until the twentieth century gaily dived into this sea once more.² They wanted to tell serious stories about freedom, cleanness of heart, joyful resistance, how to gain peace of soul, and what the journey of the soul in the afterlife would be like. They carefully pared myth, whittled it like clean white wood until a new form came out from the dense and pagan undergrowth. Their stories accumulated around the stories of the Great Storyteller, Jesus himself, whose choice to enshrine all his saving kerygma in the twin loci of symbolic deeds (his healings, exorcisms, his fearless braving of the Roman authorities) and parabolic wisdom sayings became a form of authority for passing on the saving kerygma of the Christian gospel chiefly in the medium of the story. We even "narrate" our most holy mysteries: cardinal sacred events in the church we also choose to describe by the Greek verb *myein* (noun: *mystērion*), which signifies the action of "keeping silence." We are inveterate narrators, so it seems.

The Gospels took shape in the latter half of the first century precisely as stories about Jesus' saving deeds and his wise words. Theology is there in abundance as well as much deep reflection from the evangelists and apostles. Fundamentally, all the literature we now call the New Testament is a sustained exercise in preaching the good news of Jesus' salvation; it arrived in print not because it was good literature, but rather because it was excellent narrative preaching that could be reused as a sermon by generations of liturgical preachers after the apostolic generation. It was

this constant use as story material that led to its compilation in text form and its eventual emergence as the canon of the New Testament. But it was authoritative preaching long before it was acclaimed as canon. Even to this day we Orthodox read the gospel to the faithful in church, proclaim it as story; we never suggest all the congregation “turn to page ten” and read silently to themselves. Jesus said: “Listen, you who have ears to hear” (Mark 4:9, my translation). From the very beginning, then, the church is a gathering, “a coming together to hear the story.” The word “gathering” in Hebrew is *qahal*, the assembly (of Israel); remembering this, the Greek Septuagint used *ekklēsia*—our root word for “church”—to connote the same thing. To be church is to gather around the Lord in order to hear his stories, believe them as true, thus believe in him as in the true Messenger (*malakh*) who preaches them, and so become enabled to pass them on through history—not as “rumors from a distant land,” but as living truth, out from which the church lives, in whose *energeia* of Holy Spirit the church subsists.

ORTHODOX EDUCATION AS MYSTERY, ILLUMINATION OF *PAIDEIA*

In short, from the beginning of the Orthodox Church’s existence it has been attentive (*prosochē*). To be church means to be attentive. Only from its attentiveness has it been enabled to hear the Word. Not all could listen to the story of the Word. Some were (and sadly still are) “on the outside,” and the story (even from the mouth of the Master Storyteller) came across to them as riddles (Mark 4:11) or appeared to them as foolishness (1 Cor. 1:18–23; 1 Cor. 2:14; Matt. 27:41–44). They had ears but they could not hear, and it remains the same to this day—part of the mystery of God’s dispensation of his mercy revealed to the humble of heart, but kept back from the proud and self-enlightened (Matt. 11:25). This is what Orthodox culture is rooted in and founded on. It is the jewel in the box of all Orthodox educational philosophy—that sense of the “mystery” of education—or *paideia*, as the ancients called it. And here I do not use the word “mystery” loosely—as so often we hear it bandied about in Orthodox discourse circles. I use it quite precisely and with the

theological freighting it bears in terms of a sacramental and holy thing (*to mystērion*). For among the Orthodox, at our best, we seek the illumination of paideia with the inner spirit of wisdom: a spirit of holiness which belongs to Christ as the Divine Sophia itself, passing on his wisdom in the aliveness of his church, through the grace of the Holy Spirit of God. Wisdom as we pass it on, in and through the church (the semantic root of the word “tradition” [*traditio*] means “to pass on”), is thus, in every sense of the phrase, a holy mystery. We are never authorized to treat it as less. Never for us, if we remain true to our Orthodox sensibility, could we evoke such a concept as “secular learning,” or liberal humanism, as our pedagogical goal. What we offer up, as Gregory the Theologian says, is “words and ideas in the service of God the Word”—which in his most elegant Greek is much more cleverly put: “*Logoi* in obeisance to the *Logos*.”³

Now this understanding of what being “learned” means implies that our educational goals, as Orthodox Church-men and -women, will be no less strenuous than the goals of the other learned ones of our age—people who operate schools that set standards that we ought to look to constantly to see whether we are in the same league or not, whether we have sufficient resources to justify our claim to offer a serious high-quality educational experience wherever we are located on the educational horizon, from grade school to university college. Constant reality checks keep us honest and solidly based. We must always want to make our missions (for any school we have is no less than an Orthodox mission) the very best we can possibly make them. Mediocrity is not a reverent option, any more than it would be to settle for mediocrity in liturgical celebration: such a settlement becomes, *de facto*, sacrilegious.

Many a time, in various places in the world, I have been in Orthodox schools whose self-promotional literature (and obvious self-originating identification) proclaims them as “world leaders,” while their product and support base actually tell a very different story. Who are we fooling, I wonder? Certainly not the outside world, whose educational standards have served to inspire us, not the other way round. So that leaves ourselves, I suppose. The old Russians had a word for this: *prelest*. And *prelest* (delusional pride) has so much to say to the issue of seeking a learnedness that is truly wise and spiritual, that we really ought to propel it to the forefront of our reflections on Orthodox paideia. Our goal for higher

education is harder and more profound than that of most secular schools today, which have often and largely given up on the ancient concerns, and have been more willing than at most other times in history to separate cleverness from being wise, to cut off knowing about things from knowing the how and why of things, to divorce living to learn from learning to live—and in the process have made so many of our campuses a veritable desert of spiritual and cultural life, even as they still aspire to be focal points of a nation's wisdom. This disconnect is staggering; but apparently it is not all that much of a concern that the emperor has no clothes.

Orthodox *paideia*, it seems to me, does not necessarily demand a cleverness of intellect from each believer (though certainly that should be expected of its elite intellectual faithful, and we ought to know in the church precisely what that would look like), but rather definitely demands a most profound sense of discernment—that native intelligence of the soul which is God given, and which is possessed by every child as well as the most well-read scholar. This is that which we call “wisdom,” and it is a divine gift: not cherished enough in the church, not honored enough, not demanded widely enough. This is the “spiritual intelligence” the early fathers used to call *nous*. English is “a very limited language” (as Gregory the Theologian once said of Latin!), and it does not have the range of words the patristic Christian Greek had with which to describe the various levels of different types of understanding, and different levels of soul perception, possessed by each of us. Because of this we translate *nous* as “intellect,” and often imagine it to be brain function. But when the fathers speak, as they do so often, of *nous*, it really means that spiritual acuity in the human being that is given to each as part of the divine image embedded in every human soul: that, in other words, whereby we are able to know God, on the principle of like to like. The Byzantines were unique in the annals of the history of philosophy, it seems to me, in positing this form of consciousness as the most acute area of human perception and the goal of the overall evolution (*epektasis*, they would say—or endless stretching out of the human instinct) of consciousness. Modern secular understandings of education have lost this ethos to a very large degree, and thus appear more and more to Orthodox as the Hellenic schools did to the fathers: places where cleverness is highly prized, but where wisdom is often an embarrassment.

The classic patristic doctrine of the image of God in the human being is entirely soteriological in function: it means that the nous, redeemed by the deifying presence of the Lord, is liberated from fraction and ignorance, and enabled to recognize reality in perceiving the presence of God once more. This fundamental patristic doctrine of salvation—one summed up in much Orthodox discourse as the theology of deification (*theiopoiesis*)—is nothing more (but by no means anything less) than the other great New Testament themes and stories that try to describe the self-same mystery in terms such as “atonement,” “redemption,” or “transfiguration.” This perception of God’s presence and action in our life is the very heart of what the Orthodox Christian means by “knowing salvation.” For to know God truly is to know him as Savior. And this is why Orthodox existence is at heart a fundamentally *noetic* experience. That is to say, it is not merely an “intellectual” experience, but the growing consciousness in correctly interpreting life’s realities; the life of an individual believer grows into union with the Lord—becomes “in Christ,” as the apostle Paul used to repeat so often. I think this noetic basis of the union between the soul and the Lord is why an Orthodox theologian should insist on describing the experience of union with God as “enlightenment” (*phōtismos*). I know that a few great fathers spoke, rather, of the meeting with God in terms of “divine darkness”; but they were few, and even then relying on the biblical idiom and story that the darkness enveloped Sinai to protect the Israelites from the blinding revelation of the Shekinah light of God’s glory. In Hebraic thought the *kabod*, the heavy weight of the storm cloud, was the chariot or carrier of the lightning flash of the Shekinah, which was more rightly the epiphany of the awesome presence of God addressed to his people.⁴

It seems to me, therefore, that Orthodoxy is, at its very heart, in its core understanding of redemption, a religion of enlightenment. It celebrates the opening of the eyes of mortals, and the opening of their minds to the wondrous presence of God as something sacred, mystical, unitive, delightful. Nothing so saddens me as to hear, occasionally, some of our believers taking delight in opposing Orthodoxy to “Enlightenment.” I know they often mean Deism by that. But just as often, it would appear, some among us seem to think that holiness is somehow served by obscurantism in place of clarity, bigotry in place of openness of mind and heart.

It is to me one of the most depressing betrayals of the beauty of that icon of the Orthodox Church which we are meant to depict for, and in, our modern world, because Orthodoxy, at all times in history when it has been fully functioning, has consistently proven itself to be a religious tradition loving enlightenment: delighted by books, inspired by art and culture, tolerant of a wide range of other “learnednesses,” even when it did not find them exactly to its own prescript.⁵

And yet, to speak honestly, the church leadership has not always given good example in terms of encouraging that delight of the eye of the mind opening to the sense of God—what we might call the true and final goal of all human perception and sensibility. At times, in fact, it has definitely been a force for bigotry and narrow-mindedness. But overall, I think, the church’s record throughout its two millennia of history can show that it has always been (at least in the cases of its greatest and most spiritual teachers) one of the most profound forces for the education of a deep human civilization. It has loved learning. It has wanted to educate its people. It has told them luminous stories. It has produced countless books, at great cost of labor. It has loved (and invented) the codex. It has delighted in men and women of learning. But always, it has known where its learning was looking. It has, to repeat the axiom of Saint Gregory the Theologian, “put letters in obeisance to the Word,” his pun used on several occasions—whenever, in fact, he thought his audience had not heard it before.⁶ The saying has the elegance and weight to merit its incision in stone over the lintel of every Orthodox academy.

HISTORY OF PERSECUTION AS CRIPPLING FACTOR IN THE CONTINUITY OF ORTHODOX HIGHER EDUCATION

Some of our history, however, has not positioned the Orthodox as well, educationally speaking, as some of our other Christian contemporaries in the Catholic and Protestant traditions. Now let me save time here, and share the reply I would give immediately to anyone criticizing the Orthodox for their relatively “poor showing” in terms of intellectual standards and cultural achievements in the last few hundred years (a criticism that has been elevated in extraordinary ways in recent times by the likes of

Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" caricatures of the Orthodox as equivalent to a "closed mind-set," while the European West—apparently—has an "open mind-set"⁷). The real reason for the loss of any "Renaissance equivalent" in the Greek East is no cerebral cortex difference (this whole argument seems to me to have unhappy resonances in it of the earlier bankrupt science of the "measurement of skulls" of different races), but rather the story of the advance of the armies of Muhammad. Orthodoxy lost several things in that crucible period that saw the ascent of Western Christian higher education from the universities of the high Middle Ages to the new academies of the Renaissance: first in line were territories, second were incomes, third were imperial and aristocratic leadership, fourth were schools and libraries, fifth were civic and cultural institutions. The Orthodox world has had a long subjugation. Those who have not shared it can all too easily take for granted the more settled prehistory of their own intellectual establishments. They can even fall into a rather crass type of naivism (neocolonialism?) about their current superior status.

I was, some years back, in a renowned Orthodox theological school in Eastern Europe. We were a group of theologians including some Western feminist biblical critics. The exchange did not go well. The "Wall" had been down only a few years (1989), but it became clear there is more than one kind of wall. An American colleague, knowing me to stand in two worlds, Orthodoxy and Western university-level scholarship, expressed her frustration at the "dialogue" privately to me, somewhat short-temperedly, saying: "You Orthodox really need to catch up with the modern world." We were passing the academy's library at that moment, and I waved a hand to beckon her inside: a lovely and spacious room, whose plaster was mainly on the floor, whose metal bookcases still lined all the walls, capable of holding thousands of volumes, now sporting no more than three hundred titles, none of which were more recent than 1940, all in oxidized and tattered paper bindings. It had once published prestigious series of journals and monographs, and had earned an international reputation. I could not resist the sly remark: "They have been very careless with their acquisitions, don't you agree?"

So, why are we Orthodox so slow to get in the higher education race? An easy answer is that the cultural devastation of five centuries over all the Orthodox world apart from Russia, yet allied to the savage break-

ing of Russia throughout almost all the twentieth century, is not something one can get over quickly. I stand in wonderment at the capability and flexibility of our church in the face of its emergence from a persecution more savage and extensive than anything that was ever witnessed in the age of the early martyrs. We can live without an emperor; it is difficult for a school to live in the absence of aristocratic patrons, for they support the buying of libraries, the salaries of academics, the refinement of standards, the solicitation of new generations of experts. All the great schools of the West have been built on the riches of an ascendant merchant culture. Orthodox schools have been rebuilt on the pennies of the exiles, remade through the tears and sacrifices of societies brought to their knees by totalitarian despots. It will take time. In Russia, Serbia, Romania, the signs of intellectual spring are already there. One day Orthodox theological imagination will wake up, like some Sleeping Beauty, in Greece too. America, rich in resources and prospects, has a special vocation to lead the way, though it is not rich in some aspects of Orthodox cultural history, and cannot presume to model a path that it expects other Orthodox lands simply to follow. In Western Europe, Orthodoxy is so poor it can only hope to elevate isolated examples of learned Orthodox scholars to keep alive the flame of our reputation. All of this suggests that Orthodox higher education's new spring will certainly need to be a collaborative, pan-Orthodox affair if it is to be any use at all. We need to think outside of the old stiff boxes. So, if we look to diagnose the problem, let us not forget that the devastations of war and conquest explain more than a small amount of why a continuity of Orthodox higher education has been problematized. When Orthodox *paideia* carried a prison sentence of thirty years, it took courage to continue involvement in it in any form at all.

INTRA-ORTHODOX CHALLENGES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORTHODOX HIGHER EDUCATION

But persecution, extensive though it was, is not the only reason why Orthodoxy today might hesitate to engage in higher education outside the two channels that immediately spring to mind: ethnic cultural studies

(Hellenism, Russianism, or whatever) and theological training of ministers. Beyond these two starting points—then what? And how do we parse even these two important factors? Do we find Orthodox schools that situate Russianism in the medium of Hellenism, or approach Christian Hellenism for what it once was in its glory—a *lingua franca* (or *graeca*, should we say) for the whole world, not a single ethnic identity? The Byzantine experience, accurately assessed, is one that functions from the highlands of Ethiopia to the Saxon court in England, from the steppes of Russia to the Nestorians of China. This is the refined spirit that Christian Byzantinism made out of the raw grape of Hellenism.⁸ To reduce it once again to an ethnic cultural study, separated from the greater sense of the pan-Orthodox world, would be to falsify its greatest and most evangelical achievement. The future of Orthodox higher education can be bright only when Christian Hellenism and Slavism meet in peace in a truly internationalized culture of Orthodoxy, ready to share its resources and, by so sharing, increase their potency.

If hierarchs are not able to take the lead here, perhaps because of protocol or precedence issues, or simply by being caught up too much in the demands of ecclesiastical ceremonialism that became all the more symbolically important the more it signified politically less and less, then let the scholars do it. Let Orthodox intellectuals make visitations and collaborations with one another, across the national and ethnic Orthodox divides, between and among higher-level schools, as part of their faculty initiatives. Never has scholarship been so immediately transferable and internationally collaborative than in our own day because of the Internet. Orthodox intellectual association ought to be strenuously in the business of collaborative pan-Orthodox engagement. For Orthodox intellectual leaders, such engagement is the soul of their own development into what the concept of being an “Orthodox theologian” truly means (and certainly it is not just being a theologian who just happens to be Orthodox), as well as the core of their sacred mission on behalf of the church. To model a pan-Orthodox consciousness in our present higher education establishments (chiefly the seminaries at the moment) does not only make abundant common sense in the ongoing quest for higher standards of excellence, but is actually a pressing duty to represent to the outside world that we mean what we say about the church: that it is truly

catholic and apostolic, that Russians, Greeks, Romanians, and others care more for their commonality as Orthodox than for their differentiation by nationalisms.

And what of religious and theological studies in the Orthodox academy? Here is where we have a historical shackle around our ankles that might hobble us in ways that we cannot understand without some knowledge of our past. For one of the peculiar things that marked Byzantine *paideia* was that it revered theology so highly that it could not bear to see it included in the standard curriculum of the school system.⁹ It was heavily monasticized and thus came eventually to be the primary preserve of the clergy, or of those lay intellectuals whose “schools” were sustained by a circle of monastics and aristocrats—take, for example, the circle of Photius.¹⁰ From the first setting out of how the church ought to approach theological education, a program we see very clearly in the writings of Origen of Alexandria, theology was not so much the “Queen of the Sciences” as the “Soul of the Sciences.” One could arrive at the dizzying heights of *theologia*, according to Origen, only after the eyes of the soul had been sufficiently purified as to be able to bear the force of the divine light. To strengthen the nous in its ascent, one needed the gamut of studies in mathematics, astronomy, literature, and so on. *The Letter of Thanksgiving to Origen* by his graduating pupil Theodore (whom tradition identifies as Saint Gregory Thaumaturgos) shows us this program operative already in the mid-third century. Origen set out to build at Caesarea Maritima, in Roman Palestine, a school of higher Christian studies that would be worthy of the notice of the world. He did this in contradistinction to the more narrowly conceived episcopal school at Alexandria, and fled to Caesarea precisely at the invitation of Bishops Alexander of Jerusalem and Theoctist of Caesarea, who shared his vision that a Christian school of theology had to be far more than a simple catechumens’ training camp—or (we might add) a closed seminary.¹¹

The more refined version of this programmatic was set out more audaciously by a serious, but not uncritical, student of Origen, who represented the latter’s views on the meaning of *paideia* and served as the teacher of both Saint Gregory of Nyssa and Evagrius of Pontus. I mean, of course, Saint Gregory the Theologian (Gregory of Nazianzus). At the end of *Oration 27*, the first of his *Five Theological Orations*, he sums up

why people get theology wrong, in his opinion, telling his reader: "Theology is not for everyone, at any time, or in any context." He comes out with several memorable and telling points in these *Five Theological Orations* (*Orations* 27–31), which were once regarded, for most of Christian antiquity and the Middle Ages, as sufficient theological curriculum in and of themselves to represent the faith, but are now more or less entirely unread even by the Orthodox. Just as uproarious laughter would be "out of place," he says, at a funeral service, so too the "unseeing" should not presume to embark on theology just because they feel clever. He has in his gunsights, in his own day and age, "salon theologians," or Arians, who, like sophisticated lounge lizards, have the ear of the aristocracy and who market theological discourse in the form of popular evening lectures and adult education courses (fee-paying ones).

Gregory is appalled by this behavior. He calls for the theologian to take refuge in silence, to be sparing of words, since the task of theology is a "difficult word," not an easy or voluble form of speech. His method favors apophatic approaches (those that turn into silence in preference to dialectic) and a preferential option for an ascetic training, training that makes forays into theological speech consequent on years of refinement—moral and intellectual. To Gregory it mattered that if a person did not have an "ear" for a good line of Greek (in other words, could not act publicly as an advanced exegete of the intellectual cultural tradition), they should still dare to presume to make public statements about secret matters of the church's life. Part of this is coded language, calling on theology to be a reserved set of discourses—properly engaged in only by ascetic rhetorician-bishops such as himself, and definitely not by his arch opponents among the Arians, who relocated theological argument out of the liturgical setting of the churches and into the salons of the major cities. Gregory's program is a very important stage in the progression of Orthodox thinking towards the category of the "father of the church" as one of the sources of the authoritative tradition. Gregory is the first to "canonize" an actual "father of the church" in the form of his *Oration 21* celebrating the great Athanasius as model theologian. In the fifth century, Saint Cyril of Alexandria took this movement one stage further by drawing up, at the Ephesine Council of 431, authoritative lists (canons) of the major fathers who enshrined the authentic Orthodox faith. Patristic witness, of course, is only one of the several forms and channels that run to-

gether to make up the more variegated weave of the Orthodox tradition as such (we need also to add—with a primary stress—biblical precedent, conciliar consensus, liturgical grounding, canonical legislation, and international affirmation, or *sensus fidelium*). But the movement to sequester theology as a venerable subject, fit for the ascetic and experienced and for those highly advanced in other studies, more or less made it the case that the schools of Byzantium never included religious studies on their curricula.

This is both curious and startling when we consider how profoundly religious Byzantium was in all aspects of its life. Even the loaves of bread in the marketplaces, and the coins in their pockets, were stamped with images of Christ and the Virgin; but religious education had no place in their schools, which is why when one closely looks at the typical Byzantine course of studies, it looks puzzlingly pagan. This, however, is a surface illusion; because when we, as moderns, abstract from the surviving paper curriculum the paucity of religious texts explicitly studied, we tend to overlook the overwhelmingly liturgical nature of life in Byzantium, and consequently to forget the massive amount of biblical textuality and Christian symbolism conveyed by this medium, both in the churches themselves and in the ubiquitous street processions. Religious pedagogy was alive and well in Byzantium; it was just felt to be too sacred a thing to roll up with other subjects in the classroom. Theology for the Byzantines was best mediated to the faithful through the genres of liturgy and preaching, through hagiography, iconography, and hymnography. Theologians were to be trained at the patriarchal academy, chosen from out of those being trained for clerical advancement, but already separated out from the ranks of ordinary scholars at the schools where the ancient Roman quadrivium still formed the staple of a deeply literary model of education.¹²

LEGACY OF DUELING BYZANTINE EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES

Byzantium, with its immense stress on intellectual continuities, retained the antique Roman system of education through to the fall of empire in the fifteenth century—including a stricter separation of theology from

the rest of the curriculum than would ever be the case in the new schools of the high medieval West. The separation was partly because the Byzantines felt that sacred things ought to be followed in sacred spaces—not like the Arians performing “salon theology”—but also because with the rise of monasticism there was a strong sentiment that the pursuit of theology was inseparable from the pursuit of spiritual wisdom and from personal ascetical purification, and since the latter was possible only “according to the degree” of an individual’s capacity at different times of life, it was best pursued in the intimate situation of very small groups associated with spiritual elders.

When Byzantine and Latin theologians finally met up in the same room at Ferrara in the 1438 discussions preceding the Council of Florence, the Byzantines felt at a profound disadvantage in the face of scholastically trained theologians who had spent years systematically categorizing their theology in the light of literary and philosophical authorities. The Byzantines were out of their depth, methodologically. The antique system of their education had given them resources, yet had also limited their imaginative range. It had certainly drawn a ring fence around the articulation of theological topics. This same attitude has continued among us Orthodox to this day. It has given our theology a slower character, a more introverted cast, certainly a more liturgical and doxological coloration, which we treasure and would do well to defend; but it has also disconnected us from the increasing speed of scholastic taxonomies (the new “isms” that are so regularly appearing) that constitute the rules of discourse of other Catholic and Protestant religious academies, rules that we need to watch and understand (if not always heed) so as to be able to know, by wise judgment and not by mere prejudice, what we should learn from and what we should strenuously avoid.

In Byzantium (a pattern to be followed by the Slavic churches without much change), theology was reserved for the monastic schools and firmly set within the ascetical context. This took Gregory the Theologian at more than his face value (he had presumed a full secular education would be *de rigueur* for a theologian-bishop and severely mocked his successor at Constantinople, Nektarios, for not balancing deep secular and theological learning). These schools, instead of focusing on the great doctrinal debates of the late antique age, more and more turned all their

attention to the twin foci of monastic hagiography (which rises to be the definitive religious literature of the late Byzantine age) and canon law for prospective clergy. This was part of the narrowing of the sense of “ecclesial agenda” where clerics would be prepared for governance of churches and the application of purely ecclesiastical canons, while the nonclerical elites would be trained in rhetoric (the classics) and the administration of the civic legal code. In Christian antiquity the bishops of great cities were at one and the same moment the great litterateurs and theologians. In medieval times the bishops had all been exclusively monastically trained from their youth, and no longer could command the extensive background of *paideia* that marked out the antique episcopacy (the age of “the fathers”). In a real sense the monastic impetus narrowed the range of Byzantine education, and since monasticism was the “great survivor” of the political disasters that befell the Christian East, its more rigid and narrower view of “the world” became dominant in the second millennium of Orthodoxy.

The compass point was set for the slow sinking of the monastic schools into the twilight that they eventually arrived at, unable to think themselves out of the box they had lidded themselves into. There were notable exceptions, of course: monastics who were the leading intellectuals of the day, whose leaping intelligence and imaginative writing still commands our interest, men such as Maximos the Confessor and Gregory Palamas. But they are not really typical Byzantine theologians. They were throwbacks to the Greek fathers of the Late Antique Age; when they did emerge—like lightning-flashes out of the gloom of the monastic school system—it was usually because (like Paisy Velichovsky was to do in the eighteenth century, and Georges Florovsky was to do in the twentieth) they had fled back to the deeper harbors of the ancient fathers, running hard from the Babylonian captivity of an Orthodox educational system that in many ways had closed the door on truly wise learning, by restricting so severely the range of what it was felt appropriate to study. Only the Great Patriarchal School at Constantinople broke the mold. In the eleventh century, when it once more sprang into new life (it had a sporadic existence across many centuries), it had a parallel curriculum with a master (*maistor*) of rhetoric, who had under his direction grammarians who instructed in the arts of literary interpretation, and a *maistor* (we may

note with a raised eyebrow the use here of the Latin in Graecized form) for philosophy. The maistor of rhetoric replaced the quadrivium's earlier reliance solely on Homeric texts as material for exemplary instruction in fine speaking, with examples taken from the Gospels. Biblical episodes were lifted out to become occasions of speech making or text-critical comment.

Something similar had already been modeled, of course, by Apollinarius the Elder and the Younger in the fourth century, and by Saint Gregory the Theologian at the same period, who set the biblical verses in newly coined classical Greek poetic forms, with an eye to using biblical narratives to teach young students the literary arts. Basil the Great, a friend of Saint Gregory, echoed the substance of the latter's program with his own *Discourse to the Youth* on how Christian educational philosophy should be inclusive and dynamic in scope: setting out to take what was useful from the Hellenes of the surrounding culture and reuse anything that could be turned to the service of the gospel. Basil (borrowing from Origen) dramatically called this the "despoiling of the Egyptians," using the analogy (or type) of the biblical story of the Exodus, where God commanded the fleeing Israelites to liberate the gold trinkets of their former masters. The maistor of rhetoric at Constantinople also superintended mathematical instruction. The religious curriculum was heavily based on a *fundamentum* of biblical exegesis, with separate professors of the Gospels, the apostle, and the Psalms. The liturgical rationale for this is immediately obvious—but it is also interesting to note how the first concrete example of a medieval Orthodox cathedral school, as it were, took the decision to base itself in all things on Bible first. Saint Gregory the Theologian, preferring a more elegant, less crude, image than Basil's "smash and grab" typology, redefined what he saw as this process of creating a theory of paideia to determine the church's relation to Hellenic culture, and elevated as an alternative the following lovely image (a rose grower himself, he nonetheless took it from Sappho): "Take the roses but clip the thorns." Monastic Orthodox scholars generally liked Basil's way. Intellectual Byzantine Orthodox preferred Gregory's more cultured openness. By the eleventh century the rival scholars were fighting on the streets of Constantinople, and in 1084, the learned Saint John Mavropous had to impose order by liturgically imposing on the schools the common cele-

bration of the Feast of the Three Hierarchs to stop intercollegiate bloodshed. It is not by accident that the Icon of the Three Hierarchs generally places Saint Chrysostom in the middle. He is pacifically keeping the other two safely apart!

Even in their own lifetimes, there were tensions between the two fathers. When Basil sets out his program for ascetic intellectual training in several early letters sent from Annesos to Nazianzus, Gregory replies by mildly making fun of rooms in the establishment named “Think-Room” and “Eat-House,” raising an eyebrow in his replies that the head of the house (Basil himself) apparently expected everyone to go out regularly in the field to plant turnips. Gregory’s idea of the intellectual life did not include manual labor. He had too many pages of Sappho to comment on before he had any space for that. Even if we no longer come to blows over the issue, like our medieval predecessors, Orthodox styles of higher learning and studiousness still bear the divide of these two iconic variant approaches, the Basilian and the Gregorian.

REPERCUSSIONS FOR GREEK ORTHODOX EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

In the recent history of the story of Greek immigration to the United States, we see clear vestiges of the Basilian approach and the Byzantine separation of theology from other curricula.¹³ When Greek Orthodox Christians came to America in significant numbers with the early twentieth-century immigrants, they continued the long-standing practice of the village communities under Ottoman *Turkokratia*, and tried to organize local (parish) schools wherever possible. The Greek village schoolteacher features in many (later) novels of the period of the Greek Revolutionary era, as one of the custodians of Hellenic values. The schoolmaster’s role was specifically to teach letters, while the priest conducted religious education in the church. Religion teaching outside the church, of course, was a forbidden activity and a dangerous one. Both Roman Catholic and Protestant iterations of Christianity in the Americas were striving for dominance on the religious educational scene, and neither was regarded by the Orthodox as a safe pair of hands for the

religious education of their children. When the Greek communities settled in America, the establishment of local parochial schools was a priority attended to carefully. They inhabited the church buildings, chiefly the parish hall where this existed, long before any attempt was made to establish a separate institution, and they were overwhelmingly concerned with the early stages of education.

These immigrants were poor and raised penny schools, just as the Irish Catholics did: but unlike with the Irish, these schools were tied to a sense of church and parish far more tightly than their Catholic counterparts. The Greek parochial schools often struggled, as did the parishes themselves, with very limited economic resources, resources that in the end attracted dedicated, but often limited ranges of teachers, who were more often than not wholly subservient to the direction of the local parish priest. In contrast, Roman Catholicism in America could lean on the resources of an international array of skilled teaching orders, of religious men and women who offered their skilled services to the church at nominal cost. This workforce, often highly qualified, covered all educational levels from infants to university. The Greek parish schools, on the other hand, centered more on the goal of instilling young Greek Americans with a sense of their ancestral heritage as Christian Hellenes. The curriculum was partly religious, with the priest again taking the leading role, but often dominated by specifically Greek cultural values (the glories of past letters, the golden age of Greek philosophy, and the noble tales of enduring Christian Romaiosyne), with Greek language regarded as the cornerstone of all things. In Orthodox religious minds (mainly the higher clergy who reviewed this scenario in the previous century) the catechetical tasks facing the young were sometimes presumed to be covered well enough by traditional village methods of the past ages: the liturgy would provide a context of understanding the faith, and the icons could serve as illustrations of the chief aspects of the Christian story.

In lieu of any urgently perceived need for a more rigidly developed curriculum across a decade or so of a child's educational life, many Greek American families preferred, in a sense, to allow the local public schools to provide the basics of education, feeling that the necessary supplements (Orthodox history and doctrine and Hellenic achievements) could be adequately provided by some supplemental education by the church and

parish priest. This was the strength of the system (in that it was deeply local and profoundly related to the spiritual aspirations of Orthodoxy) and yet also its fatal weakness (in that it had no room to grow and little conception of where it might grow to). Unlike the Catholic immigrants, anxious from early days for a separate and parallel educational system that would mark off their whole educational ethos from the Protestant majority in the United States, the Orthodox did not bring such old binaries from Ireland into play in the Americas; and this affected their interest (or rather lack of it) in establishing a separate system of higher educational establishments that were identifiably “Orthodox” in their global ethos. There was no such system, really, until the establishment in 1968 of Hellenic College, the undergraduate college adjacent to the seminary, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. In recent years a growing sense of need for more Orthodox educational establishments (with different ranges and excellences but largely focused on undergraduate education and now in a very conservative context of “religious values under threat in a secularized world”) has been noticeable. Initial notices suggest that these new Orthodox academies, struggling as they already are with the financial problems concomitant on such enterprises, may have come too late to the scene. Additionally, their vision of Orthodoxy as an archconservative force in educational philosophy may challenge their ability to attract a necessary quorum of support.

The overwhelmingly great majority of Orthodox scholars working in university-level education are to be found in non-Orthodox schools. In some senses, this presumption that this country’s system of education will suffice, except for places where it needs supplementing (especially in religious catechesis in a liturgical context), can be seen as a continuation of the Byzantine practice (post-ninth century) of forbidding theology to be placed in the university curriculum anyway.

THE DECLINE OF ORTHODOX HIGHER EDUCATION, THE CHALLENGE TO REBUILD

The Great Patriarchal School at Constantinople fell into steep decline all too soon. The precipitous loss of territories from the Christian empire of

the East, after the disasters in the eleventh century beginning with the defeat at Manzikert, dwindled Byzantium like a piece of phosphorus fizzing away in water. The reverses were unstoppable. The long twilight of the Byzantine world allowed many a partial renaissance (such as the Palaeologan revival in the thirteenth century), but the decline was felt all over the Orthodox cosmos. Schools, libraries, and professorial chairs are the very first to suffer in a hostile economic climate (as European universities are now being reminded and as American religion schools are also testifying). And so it was that by the end of Byzantium, and the entrance of Orthodoxy into long twilight years of resistance modality, the pattern had already been set—that of a strong separation of religion from the general curriculum and a preference for liturgical, canonical, and hagiographic studies over most else. When the Bible and the fathers were studied, they were, in a real sense, subordinated to become fodder for sermons; so had the arts of preaching the biblical kerygma of the faith dwindled too.

It was this long slow slope of educational decline in Late Byzantium (yes, illumined by some lightning flashes too—such as Mohyla's Academy at Kiev and the efforts of other learned hierarchs trying to stop the slippage they saw) that provided the immediate background for the late modern rise of the Orthodox academy in Russia, and then, in the nineteenth century, in newly liberated Greece.¹⁴ Ascendant Ottoman Islam more or less ruled out the appearance of this in so many other Orthodox regions, except in the form of quietly enduring local monastic schools, although the example of the Armenians at Jerusalem and Venice is a heroic one.¹⁵ The examples of Russia between Peter the Great and Tsar Nicholas II and of the academy in Athens established a trend, a certain preference, for schools to be rebuilt along the European model; but by that the builders largely meant European Protestant in preference over Catholic, which might have offered them a more fertile cultural example (if they had been able to get over their initial hostility caused by frictions along the fault line of Balkan proselytization). The Athens Faculty of Theology today is astonishingly Germanic in ways that even modern German religious academies are not. Thessaloniki has chosen to base itself in its religious provision more neutrally in historical and textual studies, and has rapidly developed an international reputation in these things. Athens, mean-

while, remains, so it seems to me anyway, primarily a renovated (yet paradoxically de-monasticized) form of the old monastic school model, largely focused inwardly and, if not simply producing clergy, producing a lay theological movement of a deeply clerical type. The Romanian, Serbian, Russian, Bulgarian, and other Orthodox schools are making rapid strides. But the sound of the hammer rebuilding the very fabric, and the massive demands of gathering in funds to secure libraries and teachers, mean that while these places are alive with energy, they cannot yet stand in that necessary broad space to offer a reflection of wider import, perhaps because the pressing demands to reassert themselves and meet the massive social needs of their newly emerging churches occupy the forefront of their efforts. The Russian, Romanian, and Serbian schools, nevertheless, will be powerhouses by the end of this century, if God gives them the space to avoid further totalitarian oppression and occlusion.

But for English-language and more ecumenically engaged matters, our attention rightly falls on the American Orthodox academy and that of the Greeks of the Southern Hemisphere. It is here that answers must emerge. This is the “New Empire,” sociologically and financially speaking. If we first-world Orthodox raise pleas of poverty, our family members in other lands will surely smile; tolerantly, one hopes. All is relative; but after one has lectured in an East European Orthodox school, and had the whole class move at dictation speed since there were no books in the library and no copying machines for producing handouts—one gets the point. America-Australia is the zone that needs to facilitate the discussion, nudge it, generally aid it, take the lead, not force a direction, but certainly call those most involved towards a deeper reflection on the pressing needs for the next century of Orthodox life.

A century. Such a small space of time for an ancient historian. Yet what a critical century it will be for the Orthodox world; important in its own way for higher education in our church as maybe no other has ever been since the fall of Constantinople. A century is laughably small; but, like a lifetime, like that *kairos* of which the Bible speaks—that time of grace and opportunity—time can pass easily enough. We can be wrapped in other concerns, given over to pressing tasks of building up our own yard, refurbishing our needy fabrics, and not have the space for standing back to think of such important pan-Orthodox issues as the formation of

whole-cloth plans for higher-level Orthodox education in a radically changing world. Times pass quickly and opportunities can just as quickly be lost in that passing. It is hard to get anyone excited by the idea of Orthodox higher education unless they have in their hearts that mystical confluence of love and illumination (the very confluence that excites most mothers and fathers about the education of their children in elementary school). To seize that excitement and seize upon it in the Orthodox world today is hard work. It is preaching to a small choir. It is, nonetheless, one of the most important charges that have been given to our own generation of the church; and historians of Orthodoxy in the future will look back on us, back on this present volume also in which this preliminary essay stands, and will surely make judgments.

At the end of the matter it comes down to something immensely important, something that was our initial starting point—the issue of our faithfulness to the evangelical kerygma. For being faithful to our educational mission means that we see the pressing need today to tell the church's story afresh, tell it truly and energetically, tell it so that its living truth penetrates the surface sophistication of a highly literate contemporary audience, but one (sad to say) perhaps unmatched in its illiteracy regarding religion. We do not need to worry about whether the message is relevant, or whether it still carries any power. These are the “things of the Spirit” that the Lord takes care of himself. We just have to tell the story faithfully and wisely. Then the Orthodox will shine again, not just as the “world's best-kept secret,” and not as liturgically exotic blooms, but rather as the world's well of clean water. We need the passion of faith to tell the story energetically and prophetically, but we so very much need a lively domain of Orthodox higher education to be able to nurture storytellers who can recite the tale skillfully, evangelically, convincingly, and in ways that truly advance the church's kerygmatic mission, its Great Commission.

NOTES

1. Men were trained in literary tasks solely if they were from the economic elite and destined for a career—defending their family's interests—in politics.

Thus rhetoric was the core of all ancient *paideia*, and remained so, unchanged in Christian educational theory, until the high Middle Ages. In Greek, pre-Christian culture, a number of educated slaves would also serve as basic-level educators (some of them, but very few, rose to eminence as thinkers when they achieved free status; one recalls the important philosopher and ex-slave Epictetus). But the norm was a few men of the elite classes. The vast majority dispensed with the need for literacy. As for women, only those who could command education by virtue of personal riches could hope to access a literary education. Some of the daughters of a rich household might avail themselves of the services of the tutors brought in for the family's sons, and we have some evidence to show a few elite women philosophers and poets. Hypatia the great Neoplatonic philosopher of Alexandria was one such example (murdered by an enraged Christian mob in the fifth century). Christianity has some claim to advancing the cause of women's literary education because of the extent to which women monastics needed literacy to serve the offices of prayer. From the third century we have evidence that Christian schools (Origen's at Alexandria) employed Christian female stenographers, and from the fourth century more evidence that Christian women commissioned texts to be composed for their use (the community of Syrian nuns who employed Ephrem the Syrian to write hymns, for example). But, all told, the ancient world, like many societies across the globe still today, was massively illiterate. Further, see W. V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

2. One easily thinks of the movie industry, as well as neo mythic narrative tales—new mythologies being created such as the Harry Potter phenomenon, the macro mythological narrative of a self-subsisting set of parallel universes (string theory) sustained by many serious cosmologists who do not realize they have transmuted into mythopoeic philosophers, etc.

3. For Gregory's ideas on literature, see his poem "On His Own Verses," *Carmina* 2.1.39 (PG 37:1329–36). Gregory conceived the relation of the church to the cultural aspirations of civilization as something integral. Not only did he define theology as "akin to poetry" (in his *Orations* 27–31), but he extensively argued that the poetic task is given to all educated leaders of the church as an inspiration of the Spirit, which marks out who has the mental *diakrisis* (we might render that "discernment" or "discretion") which fits them to lead, or shows them as unfit to judge. Further, see J. A. McGuckin, "Gregory: The Rhetorician as Poet," in *Gregory of Nazianzus: Images and Reflections*, ed. J. Bortnes and T. Hagg (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculaneum Press, 2006), 193–212.

4. Further on deification theology, see J. A. McGuckin, "Deification in Greek Patristic Thought: The Cappadocian Fathers' Strategic Adaptation of a Tradition," in *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of*

Deification in the Christian Tradition, ed. M. Christensen and J. Wittung (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2006), 95–114; also V. Kharlamov, ed., *Theosis: Deification in Christian Theology* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011); for further reflections on nous in Christian anthropology, see J. A. McGuckin, “The Shaping of the Soul’s Perceptions in the Byzantine Ascetic Elias Ekdikos,” *Sr. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (2011): 343–63.

5. The point was fought for in antiquity by Origen in his *De principiis*, by Saint Gregory Thaumaturgos in his “Address of Thanksgiving,” by Apollinaris the Elder in his rendering of the scriptures into classical meters (now lost), by Saint Gregory of Nazianzen in his extensive corpus of poetry and in *Oration 27*, by Saint Basil in his “Treatise to Young People,” by Saint Gregory of Nyssa in his “Catechetical Oration.” The correlation of true piety and wisdom (what Saint Gregory the Theologian called “clipping the thorns” of Hellenism’s roses) was so established among the Byzantines, even by the monastics, that it would have hardly been challenged. Saint Theodore the Studite established the practice of copying manuscripts (including numerous pagan literary and philosophical treatises) as the standard labor of monks prescribed in his *Typikon*; and the library of secular as well as religious texts in the collection of Saint Photios is demonstrative of this basic attitude. Only in times of civic collapse, after the Turkokratia especially, has the alienation from book culture sometimes been elevated as a religious value by some sections of Orthodoxy. Nevertheless, whenever it has its life and freedom, Orthodoxy generally shows its immediate desire to establish centers of cultural learning. The energetic rebuilding of libraries and schools currently apace in Russia and Romania is eloquent testimony to that.

6. “On His Own Verses,” *Carmina* 2.1.39 (PG 37:1329–36).

7. The argument was notoriously set out by S. P. Huntington in “The Clash of Civilizations?,” in *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 22–49, and further elaborated in his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

8. Further, see J. A. McGuckin, *The Ascent of Christian Law* (New York: SVS Press, 2011).

9. Further, see H. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1956); also A. Kazhdan, “Education,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. Kazhdan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 677–78.

10. Further, see Despina Stratoudaki White, *Patriarch Photius of Constantinople: His Life, Scholarly Contributions, and Correspondence, Together with a Translation of Fifty-Two of His Letters* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Press, 1982).

11. Further, see J. A. McGuckin, “Caesarea Maritima as Origen Knew It,” in *Origeniana Quinta*, ed. R. J. Daly (Leuven: Brill, 1992), 3–25.

12. The universities at Constantinople and Thessaloniki continued the Roman quadrivium, and Byzantine literature and legal, as well as philosophical, life continued to run on in manners parallel with antique *paideia*. Some of the achievements of Byzantine philosophy are significant. Its legal contribution to world civilization is undeniable. The often-repeated criticism that all intellectual life in Byzantium was stagnant after the fifth century cannot be sustained by the evidence, but it was certainly an intellectual life that saw itself as variations on a classical theme, and there can be no doubt that theological studies froze to a torpid state around the time of Saint John Damascene in the eighth century. Further, see E. Jeffreys, *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 827–906 (articles on Byzantine literature, hagiography, and theology by E. Jeffreys, A. Louth, and A. M. Talbot).

13. The Russian church under the Tsars has a longer established tradition of lay theologians, who were able to take over the establishment of several higher schools of learning, outside Russia, after the collapse of the Russian church's independence in 1917.

14. Further, see J. Skedros, "Greece: Orthodox Church of," in *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, ed. J. A. McGuckin (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 269–79.

15. Further, see J. A. McGuckin, "Armenian Christianity," in *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, 46–51.