

The History of the Fellowship of St. Alban & St. Sergius
A Historical Memoir by Nicolas and Militza Zernov (1979)

Preface

The origin of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius is, paradoxically, linked with the Russian Revolution. Indeed it would not have been founded without the catastrophe of the Leninist victory in 1917 and the ensuing massive exodus of Russian emigrants.

The fall of the St. Petersburg Empire had not only political and social repercussions, but a profound impact on the life of Christendom. The period of alliance between Church and State, started by Constantine in the fourth century, came to an end. Although this alliance had brought advantages to both partners, the Church had paid a heavy price, including the loss of its unity and its break up into rival confessions, often coloured by political and ethnic influences.

The new epoch which began in Russia in 1917 confronted all Christians with the urgent need to restore their unity as the spread of communism threatened the very existence of the Church. For along time the Russian Revolution was considered in Europe a local phenomenon, its importance confined to a remote and barbaric country. In Russia, however, there were at that time several outstanding prophetic figures who fully recognised the far-reaching consequences of the Marxists' assault on religion. Several of these leaders, who included men like Bulgakov, Berdyaev and Frank, were expelled from Russia in 1922 and 1923. As soon as they reached the West, they began to warn Christians of the impending danger, urging them to work for reconciliation. They were not only convinced of the pressing need of it in our times, but also vividly realised that freedom from state control offered Christians opportunities hitherto not available.

At first, the message of these Russian Christians met with little response from Church leaders in the West. But slowly and gradually this attitude began to change and the Russians in exile found friends and supporters both in Europe and in America. The Fellowship is one of the fruits of this creative encounter.

Antecedents

The story of the Fellowship and its contribution to the work of reunion between Eastern and Western Christians in general, and between Anglicans and Orthodox in particular, can be better understood in the light of their previous relations. The Anglicans, since their separation from Rome, had shown a sporadic interest in the Eastern Christians, who had succeeded in retaining their catholicity without being papalist.

This interest in the Christian East was particularly lively in the seventeenth century, when the Anglican Church was under pressure from Puritans. Several Caroline divines knew and appreciated Orthodoxy, and a number of scholarly works on the Eastern Church were published in England at that time. As a result of this concern, the Non-Jurors entered into correspondence with the Eastern Patriarchs with a view to the re-union of their Churches. Letters were exchanged between 1716 and 1725, but the gulf which separated the two sides was still too wide for their efforts to end in anything but failure.

In the 19th century the Catholic revival associated with the Oxford Movement renewed the desire of Anglicans to come nearer to Eastern Christians. William Palmer (1811-1879), a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and a deacon of the Church of England, dedicated his life to this

end. He undertook several visits to Russia and the Near East, and wrote books on Eastern Christianity, including a monumental six-volume study of the reforming Russian Patriarch Nikon (1606-1681)¹. Palmer entirely accepted the teaching of the Orthodox Church and consequently asked for permission to communicate at Orthodox altars. His request was, however, refused. Palmer was so far ahead of his time that he met with no support from his own Church and with only surprise from Eastern Church leaders. He ended his life as a convert to Rome. The unwillingness of Palmer's successors to take up the challenge of his approach to reunion through intercommunion has been one of the factors contributing to a slow progress in this field.

Yet the interest in the Christian Orient continued. In 1863-4 "The Eastern Church Association " was founded in London, its purpose being to pray and work for reunion with the Eastern Church. The papal bull of 1870 (Apostolicae Curae), rejecting the validity of Anglican Orders, stimulated further discussion between Anglicans and Orthodox. In response to Anglican enquiries, both Greek and Russian theologians made studies of Anglican Orders. They varied in their conclusions; a prominent Russian theologian) Prof. v. Sokolov, expressed his opinion that from the Orthodox point of view the Apostolic succession had indeed been preserved by the Anglican Church. In 1906 a new society, called "The Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Churches Union", was formed in London by a group of Anglo-Catholic clergymen. Its purpose was to promote an interest in the Eastern Church among a wider circle of Anglicans and to establish personal contacts. Several of its members visited Russia and were welcomed there; moreover a Russian branch of the society was founded for the study of Anglicanism. This work was abruptly ended by the outbreak of the First World War. On the eve of it the old and the new societies amalgamated under the name of "The

Anglican and Eastern Churches Association".

The most important figure in the early post-war period was Canon John Douglas (1868-1956), from 1933 the Secretary of the Church of England Council on Foreign Relations. His main object in dealing with the Orthodox was to obtain from them official recognition of Anglican Orders. He was a skilful ecclesiastical diplomat and was not averse to using the prestige of the British Empire. He was only partially successful, for only three Patriarchates (those of Constantinople, Alexandria and Jerusalem, together with the Church of Cyprus) made a favourable pronouncement. Later in 1936, the Romanian Church came to a similar conclusion. The rest of the Orthodox world, in the absence of the Russian Church which had been silenced under the Communist regime, refrained from committing itself either way.

In summarising past relations between Anglicans and Orthodox, three characteristics emerge: (a) the initiative in the negotiations came from the Anglican side; (b) interest in the Christian East had been confined to a narrow circle of High Churchmen and, later, Anglo-Catholics; and (c) since the beginning of the 20th century, the main concern had been the recognition of Anglican Orders. The Fellowship brought into this field a new vision and anew vigour.

The Beginnings

The Communist Revolution had driven several hundred thousand Russians from their native land. In the course of 1920-1922 colonies of these refugees appeared in many parts of Europe. Among them were a number of young people of student age who tried to resume their studies under the hard conditions of exile. The tragic experience of civil war and religious persecution had helped them to realise the significance of their Church. These young Russians formed study circles in almost all capitals of Europe debating religion, philosophy and politics. One such circle was

.in Belgrade. Its members, enthusiastic Orthodox, were at the same time highly suspicious of the Christian West, which in their eyes was not only the dupe of Leninist propaganda, but also contaminated by heresies, both Roman and Protestant. It was, therefore, with deep misgivings that this Belgrade circle grudgingly agreed to receive a visit from Ralph Hollinger, (1887-1930), a secretary of the American Y.M.C.A., while he was on tour in the Balkans. The result of the encounter was unexpected. Hollinger, who anticipated a meeting with rather immature Christians, ignorant of their Bible, was greatly impressed by the zeal and theological understanding of the Russians; they in their turn were conquered by the sincerity of his evangelical faith. Hollinger secured invitations for them to attend various interconfessional student conferences; and so it

was in 1923 that two members of the Belgrade study circle, one of whom is the author of this memoir, went to attend the British Student Christian Movement Conference at Swanwick.

It was our first contact with the Christian West. England stirred us profoundly. The apparent stability of this country was far removed from the horrors of the Russian Civil War, the Red Terror, and the famine and disease which accompanied the collapse of the Russian Empire. Yet we experienced an unexpected unity with the British students in our common Christian faith. I, in particular, was so impressed by the affinity I discovered between the Anglican tradition and my own that I rashly proposed a special conference at which further points of contact might be explored. This suggestion, made in my broken English to Miss Zoe Fairfield (1878-1936), then a S.C.M. secretary, greatly surprised her. She could see no justification for such a meeting, for the S.C.M., as a member of the World Student Christian Federation, was opposed to all confessional and national distinctions among students. Furthermore, the Orthodox Church was practically unknown at that time and the Russian refugees represented an apparently lost cause. 2. Four years later, however, the same Zoe Fairfield, together with Canon Tissington Tatlow (1876-1957), the General Secretary of the British Student Movement, became one of the sponsors of the Anglo-Russian Student Conference which was held at St. Albans in January 1927.

Two events had taken place during these intervening years. The autumn of 1923 had seen the birth of the Russian Christian Student Movement in Exile. Its inaugural conference took place in Prerov in Czechoslovakia, where two generations of Russians met and understood each other; these were the students and the leaders of the Religious Revival started in Russia on the eve of the Revolution. In 1925 the Theological Academy of St. Sergius was founded in Paris, gathering together outstanding theologians of the Russian Church.

The decision to convene the first Anglo-Russian Conference had been taken in August 1926 at the General Committee of the World Student Christian Federation at Nyborg Strand in Denmark by the

leaders of both British and Russian Student Movements. The vital factor in this decision was the support of Dr. G. G. Kullmann (1894-1961) for this project. He was an influential liaison officer between the Russian Student Movement and the American Y.M.C.A.

In the autumn of 1926 I spent a month in England visiting Oxford, Cambridge and various Anglican theological colleges. As a result some twenty students and tutors agreed to attend the conference. The Russian delegation, which numbered about twelve, consisted chiefly of professors

and students from the newly founded Theological Academy of St. Sergius in Paris.

On the 11th January 1927, an unusual group descended from the train at St. Albans station. It included bearded clerics in flowing robes, an Indian, a Copt, several Anglican monks from Mirfield and Kelham. The average British student was in the minority. For five days (11th -15th January), this incongruous community lived in St. Albans Retreat House, praying together, debating theology, and trying to understand each other's point of view.

There were many obstacles to overcome. None of the English knew any Russian and the English of the Russians was inadequate. But these linguistic difficulties concealed a far greater stumbling block. The Russians had already witnessed the collapse of Christian civilisation and experienced the beginnings of totalitarianism, while the English were still optimistic, believing that the League of Nations could eliminate war and that the establishment of a world-wide system of social justice based on Christian principles was at hand. The Russians and English were also divided in the sphere of theology. The British were interested in Biblical criticism, the Orthodox in meta-history and the mystery of the Church. Mere theological debate would probably have resulted in failure. Both sides spoke on their own wave length and found it difficult to grasp the problems of the other. But a realisation of their brotherhood in Christ came in the Chapel, where every morning Orthodox and Anglicans together worshipped the same Saviour. There the linguistic, theological and ideological barriers were removed and the gift of their oneness was experienced.

It was Fr. Sergius Bulgakov (1871-1944)³ who proposed to have alternate Anglican and Orthodox celebrations of the Eucharist on the same altar, a revolutionary idea in its time but one which has now become an established Fellowship Conference tradition. It was his conviction that participation in Eucharistic worship is an important step towards reconciliation between the confessions. The Orthodox accepted such an innovation because Fr. Bulgakov's authority stood so high.

The Russian delegation included among others Sergius Bezobrazov (1892-1965), Professor of New Testament Studies (later to become Bishop Cassian), and Professor Lev Zander, (1893-1964). The leading figure of the Anglican delegation was Bishop Gore (1853-1932), who deeply impressed the gathering by his spirituality. I was the Orthodox Chairman of the Conference, being at that time the General Secretary of the Russian Student Christian Movement; the Anglican Chairman was the Rev. O. F. Clarke (b. 1898). The Conference was so successful that it was unanimously resolved to hold a similar meeting the following year.

The second Conference at St. Albans (28th December, 1927 -2nd January, 1928) attracted some 70 people. This conference was an even greater success. The Rev. William Tindal (1898-1965), a Scottish Presbyterian,

then secretary of the Student Christian Movement, expressed the common desire for the formation of a Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius.⁴ Originally it included only the participants of both conferences; later, it became open to all interested in its work. Two Presidents were elected: Evlogy, the Russian Metropolitan of Western Europe (1866- 1946), an old friend of the Anglican Church, and the Bishop of Truro, Walter Frere (1863-1938). Fr. Bulgakov became Vice-President. Walter Frere, a member of the Community of Resurrection, was the first monk to become a diocesan bishop since the Reformation in England. A distinguished theologian and fine liturgiologist he had exceptional know-ledge about the Russian Church. He visited Russia in 1912, where he lectured in Petersbourg and Moscow on the Anglican Church. He subsequently published "Some Links in the Chain of Russian Church History". The Orthodox felt instinctively drawn to him.

The first number of the quarterly magazine, called "The Journal of St. Alban and St. Sergius", appeared in June 1928, its first editors being Zenia Braikевич and the Rev. Ambrose Reeves, -later Bishop of Johannesburg (b. 1899). Thus did the Fellowship begin its existence. 5.

The First Period (1928 - 1939)

The history of the Fellowship can be divided into five periods, of which the first lasted twelve years. The main feature of this period was the conferences conducted on a high theological level. They were divided into two parts: one for the students, the other for the members of the Fellowship.

Most of these conferences were held at High Leigh, Hoddesdon; this Conference Centre became closely associated with this first pioneering period of the Fellowship history.

To these summer gatherings came an increasing number of leading theologians. From Paris came

Nicolas Berdyaev (1874-1948), Anton Kartashov (1875-1960), Fr. Sergy Chetverikov (1867-1947), Fr. Georges Florovsky (b. 1893), V. V. Zenkovsky (1881-1962), G. P. Fedotov (1886-1951) and V. Weidle (b. 1895). From Poland came Prof. N. S. Arseniev (1888-1977).

The Anglican spokesmen were Bishop Headlam (1862-1947), Canon Oliver Quick (1885-1944), and Rev. Professors V. A. Demant (b. 1893), N. P. Williams (1883-1943), Leonard Hodgson (1889-1969), and H. L. Goudge (1866-1939). Among the young theologians were Michael

Ramsey, later Archbishop of Canterbury (b. 1904), Eric Mascall, later professor at Kings College, London (b. 1905), Eric Abbott, later Dean of Westminster (b. 1906), Geoffrey Curtis, C.R. (b. 1902), Harry Carpenter, later Bishop of Oxford (b. 1901), Algy Robertson (1894-1955), co-founder of the Anglican Society of St. Francis, Oliver Tomkins, later Bishop of Bristol (b. 1908) and John Ramsbotham, later bishop of Wakefield (b. 1906). A keen interest in the Fellowship was also shown by Fr. Talbot (1879-1940), Superior of the Community of the Resurrection, Fr. Gabriel Hebert, S.S.M. (1886-1963), and Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941).

The rank and file at the conferences were Russian Orthodox, English theological students and young clergymen. Gradually, however, others appeared at High Leigh: Orthodox from Romania, Serbia and Greece 6, as well as Lutheran Swedes and American Episcopalians. At this time the Fellowship was also engaged in work which it conducted in co-operation with the Russian Church Aid Fund. This society aimed at bringing before the English Christians the problems and needs

of the Russian Church. One of its tasks was to remind Christians in this country that the Soviet claim to have annihilated Christianity in Russia was propaganda and the Orthodox Church, though driven underground, remained a living and vital factor in the lives of the people. Many members of the Fellowship offered their help to the Russian Church Aid Fund; at the same time, those who attended its meetings became interested in the Fellowship.

In 1934 I was appointed lecturer and organiser to the above mentioned Fund and was able to combine this work with that of being part-time secretary of the Fellowship. In this dual capacity I addressed meetings and preached in churches on subjects related to both reunion and the state of the Church in Russia. During these years I delivered many hundreds of such addresses. Another type of work in which I was engaged at that time was the teaching of Orthodox theology. A number

of theological colleges, both Anglican and Free Church, invited me regularly to give their students a course of lectures on Eastern Christianity. I was also Honorary Lecturer at Kings College, London, and the School of Slavonic and East European Studies. All these activities gave me the opportunity to acquaint an ever-widening circle with the aims of the Fellowship.

The young Society began to expand. It penetrated into the parishes and many keen lay people joined its ranks. One of the fruits of this collaboration was the organisation of local conferences, which lasted usually one or two days and included the celebration of the Orthodox liturgy. These were held in many different towns, including Birmingham, Shrewsbury, Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford, Cambridge, Oxford, Leigh-on-Sea, Winchester, Leicester, Wakefield, Grantham, Hertford, Newquay and Leamington.

A special place in the work of the Fellowship belonged to the Journal. First it was stencilled, but from December, 1933, (No.22) under the editorship of the Rev. O. F. Clarke, it began to be printed. In March 1935 it was renamed "Sobornost". From June 1936 (No.6 New Series), the Rev. Patrick Thompson (d. 1978) became the second assistant editor in addition to Xenia Braikewitch. In December 1937 (No. 12 New Series) Eric Mascall accepted the post of editor; his assistants were the Rev G. Florovsky and the Rev. P. Thompson.

The Fellowship also became responsible for the visits of Russian students to Britain. Every summer some 50 or 60 young Russians from Paris spent their holidays either in theological colleges or with English families, acquiring first-hand knowledge of the Anglican Church. Later, students from Romania, Serbia and Greece were included in these arrangements. The Fellowship also sponsored return visits of Anglicans to Russian Student Christian Movement camps in the South of France

and to theological colleges in the Balkans. In addition, Fellowship pilgrimages took place to Romania and Estonia. 7.

As a result of these increasing contacts between Anglicans and Orthodox, the need for a permanent centre was growing, a centre which, it was suggested, should be called after St. Basil. 8. But financial and other obstacles postponed the realisation of this plan to a later date. However, Nadejda Gorodetzky, one of the Russian leaders of the Fellowship, was more successful in securing a house at Selly Oak in Birmingham for Orthodox women students. This was to be named after

St. Macrina 9 the learned sister of St. Basil, but the war prevented its opening.

The most controversial event of this period occurred in 1933 when Fr. Bulgakov, at a Fellowship Conference of which the subject was 'The Eucharist and Church Unity', made a challenging proposal. He believed that those Anglicans and Orthodox who were in agreement on major

doctrinal issues should ask their respective Bishops to sanction their communion at each other's altars. The episcopal blessing given to those who were ready to take part in this action would signify repentance for the sin of division and the desire for divine assistance in repairing the

breach between East and West. 10.

Underlying Fr. Bulgakov's proposal was the conviction that the restoration of Eucharistic fellowship between Christians who recognise their doctrinal and liturgical unity would prepare the ground for formal

reconciliation between their respective confessions. He also believed that a diocesan bishop had the authority to sanction such intercommunion. He was advocating a return to the pre-Constantinian order, according to which, as St. Ignatius of Antioch taught, 'where the bishop is) there is the Church'.

Father Bulgakov's proposal profoundly stirred members of the Fellowship. The majority opposed his view, but it was nevertheless agreed that there should be a thorough study of the doctrinal, liturgical and canonical implications of his suggestion.

In 1936 the Fellowship held its conference in Paris. The sense of unity between Anglicans and Orthodox reached a notable climax during this gathering. Bishop Frere was invited by Metropolitan Evlogy to sing an English Office in the St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral. In full episcopal attire and in a building packed with Russians he conducted a service from a stand in the middle of the church reserved for the Orthodox bishops. This was the first occasion on which Anglican worship had

taken place for a Russian congregation in an Orthodox church. It signified the liturgical recognition by a Russian diocesan bishop of the Anglican bishop as being his brother.

This conference was prepared by the Paris Branch of the Fellowship, which involved a large group of the young Russian Orthodox, among whose leaders were Fr. Bulgakov, Fr. Florovsky, Dr. G. P.

Fedotov and Sophia Zernov. The belief that the restoration of Eucharistic Communion could be achieved was the inspiring force.

The high hopes raised by the Conference of 1936 were not fulfilled. Several factors contributed to this. Bishop Frere, who had been a key figure in these discussions, began to suffer from ill health. He died in 1938. Fr. Bulgakov underwent an operation for cancer of the throat and was prevented from attending the conferences. The election of the new Anglican President, Bishop Rawlinson of Derby (1884-1960), almost coincided with the outbreak of the war, which brought to an abrupt end

this first period in the history of the Fellowship.

The Second Period (1939-1954)

The Second World War

The outbreak of hostilities in 1939 made doubtful the survival of the Fellowship; but the "phony" war of the winter of 1939-40 encouraged the Fellowship committee to try to continue its activities, though the only assets were £100 in the bank and my readiness to carry on the work until I was called up for military service. A letter was sent to all our members asking whether they were prepared to support the work of the Fellowship during the war, and 243 responded by sending £206. The Russian Church Aid Fund closed down so I moved the office of the Fellowship to our two-roomed flat, and Rachel Hotham volunteered to act as my honorary secretary. To everyone's surprise the invitations to speak in churches, colleges and various societies poured in. Never before

had there been such a demand. Interest in Russia and her church was, in particular, shown by the public schools.

The first winter of the war was so deceptively calm that there was even a scheme to have a small conference in the summer of 1940 with Russian delegates from Paris. All these hopes were shattered by the German invasion of France in May 1940. At this critical moment Mercy

Collinson made a vital contribution by offering to organise a "camp" to help farmers at harvest time as a substitute for our conferences. Some sixty people attended for six weeks at Haynes in Bedfordshire. An entirely new experience, this 'Camp' combined liturgical worship,

theological discussion, domestic chores and work in the fields. Most of the members slept in the local school, others in farmhouses. The school was not only dormitory but also kitchen, dining room and lecture hall. Each morning began with the celebration of the Eucharist in a neighbouring church, Anglican and Orthodox on alternate days. Most of the day we were harvesting; in the evening there were lectures, concerts and debates.

This venture proved a great success and incidentally earned us some money. Such camps, with an increasing number of participants, were held every year during the war, once at Berden, twice at Abingdon, once in Oxford and once at Denstone, Staffordshire. In these remarkably happy and informal gatherings senior theologians and young people met on a truly family footing. This was largely due to the participation of two priests, the one Orthodox, Fr. Alexis van der Mensbrugge (b. 1899) and the other Armenian, Fr. Tiran Nersoyan, both of whom later became bishops.

Despite the war, the St. Basil's House project was finally realised in 1943, The freehold of 52, Ladbrooke Grove, was bought for £2544. 11. In the face of desperate odds it was repaired and equipped with secondhand furniture. Militza Zernov, its first Warden, inaugurated the 'At

Homes" in spite of the black-outs and with meals improvised from meagre rations.

During the years of the war, when the very survival of the nation was threatened, British Christians showed more desire to know about other Churches than they had in times of peace and security. The state of the Russian Church and its relation to the communist government during those fateful years were particularly enigmatic. Biased propaganda exalted Stalin as a great leader and even a protector of the Christians. The Fellowship was one of the few sources of better informed views on the decisive events which were taking place in that part of the world. It drew a distinction between the Russian people who heroically defended their country and the Communists who exploited them for the sake of their system: a distinction which most English people were unable to make.

The work of the Fellowship expanded to such an extent that in April 1942 the Rev. Martin Pierce (1912-1973), who had spent a year in Romania before the war, was appointed the Second Secretary. In the following year he was succeeded by the Rev. John Findlow (1915-1970)¹²

an Anglican priest married to a Russian, Irina Kaigorodova.

The war years had seen a great change in the life of the Fellowship. When peace was restored, our society had its own headquarters, a full-time paid staff, and a balanced budget. Its magazine, *Sobornost*, had continued without interruption. The Rev. Eric Mascall remained its editor. He was assisted by the Rev. Patrick Thompson and the Rev. Alexis van der Mensbrugghe from December, 1941, (No.24 New Series) until November 1946. The S.P .C.K. published a number of books under

the auspices of the Fellowship, some of which have continued to be reprinted until the present time. 13.

The Third Period (1946-1958)

The Christian Church b the post-war period was marked by two developments -the inauguartion of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam in 1948, and the emergence of the Moscow Patriarchate to play a prominent part in inter-church relations.

The World Council of Churches voiced the desire of Christians to maintain and strengthen the sense of unity which had been felt by members of different denominations under the stress of war, and particularly in occupied countries. A more immediate impact on the Fellowship had already been made by the restoration of the Moscow Patriarchate in 1943. After a lapse of 18 years, Metropolitan Sergei (1861-1944) ascended the patriarchal throne, to be succeeded in 1945 by Patriarch Alexis (1877-1970). At first the official position of the Russian Church was hostile to the ecumenical movement. A conference of the heads of the Orthodox Churches, held in Moscow in 1948, passed resolutions criticising the W.C.C. and the Roman Catholic Church. However,

Stalin's death brought a change in policy. In 1956 an Anglican delegation headed by the Archbishop of York, Michael Ramsey, met Russian theologians in Moscow and had fruitful discussions with them. In 1961 the Moscow Patriarchate joined the W.C.C. during its Assembly at New Delhi. Other Orthodox Churches under communist rule soon followed this example. This emergence of the Russian Church vindicated the belief that the Communists had not been able to annihilate the Church in Russia. The Russian Church arose from its ashes as a vigorous body

with 72 dioceses, 20,000 parishes, 10 theological schools (2 academies and 8 seminaries), and some 60 or 70 million members. On the other hand, the Russian Church still found itself in the grip of the Secret Police, so much so that some of its bishops were forced to speak with the accent of the totalitarian state.

Meanwhile, the Fellowship was also entering a fresh phase in its history. The main new factor was St. Basil's House. Its importance soon became evident: it served as a headquarters for the Fellowship administration; it had a library and it offered hospitality to members, especially those coming from overseas.

The chapel was to become the centre of the Fellowship's prayer for reunion. It was decided to make it also an expression of our artistic aspirations. A gifted iconographer, a Russian religious painter, a disciple of Fr. Bulgakov, came from Paris. She was delighted to make her contribution to the Fellowship by decorating the entire chapel on a single theme - the mystery of the Church. The image of the Saviour on the iconostasis is a masterpiece of contemporary iconography. The five main panels of the lower row of the wall frescoes represent the visible manifestation of the Church as illustrated by groups of saints - Byzantine, Latin, Oriental, British and Russian, with the corresponding architecture in the background. The upper row of frescoes depicts the heavenly destiny of the Church, symbolised by scenes of the Creation, followed by episodes from the Book of Revelation - Sister Joanna's original creation. 14. The Chapel was hallowed by Metropolitan Germanos of Thyateria (1872-1951) on 28th April, 1949. It contains not only the Orthodox sanctuary, but also an Anglican altar, so that it can be used by both Churches.

In the years following the end of the war, the officers of the Fellowship gradually changed. In 1946 John Findlow was appointed Assistant Secretary of the Church of England Council on Foreign Relations at Lambeth Palace, and Helle Georgiadis, a Greek mathematician educated in England (b. 1916), became secretary in his place. In 1947 I was elected Spalding Lecturer in Eastern Orthodox Culture at Oxford University, so I, too, resigned my Secretaryship and Joan Ford was chosen as the Second Secretary with special responsibility for St. Basil's House. In January 1949 there was an important addition to the staff when Fr. Anthony Bloom (b. 1914) 15 became Chaplain to the Fellowship, a post which he held for a year until he was nominated parish priest of the Russian Church in London. At the same time Eric Mascall, who had edited *Sobornost* for 10 years, was succeeded in the Spring of 1947 by Patrick Thompson and Helle Georgiadis. In 1955 Bishop Rawlinson relinquished the Presidency of the Fellowship, but consented to remain the Honorary President. Bishop Michael Ramsey of Durham was elected President. 16.

This was a period of transition from the war years to peacetime. With great intellectual vigour Helle Georgiadis made contacts and organised meetings, conferences and publications. In this field she inaugurated anew activity by making the Fellowship a publisher of booklets and pamphlets, 17 and prepared for publication collected papers of two Fellowship conferences: "The Mother of God" and "The Angels of Light and the Powers of Darkness", as well as other addresses delivered at the conferences. 18. Joan Ford proved to be an excellent hostess of St. Basil's House, meeting the ever increasing demands of hospitality with efficiency and generosity.

The post-war conferences took on a new shape. Held regularly at St. Helen's School, Abingdon, (except for one at Eastbourne in 1948), they combined their pre-war, largely theological, character with elements gained during the war-time "camps". They ceased to be predominantly clerical, included a much wider circle of laity, and welcomed families with children. The centre of inspiration remained Eucharistic worship. The more specifically theological debate was usually concentrated on two or three days, the whole gathering lasting two or three weeks. Parallel to the conferences, the Fellowship held yearly retreats at Pleshey, conducted on alternate years by an Anglican and an Orthodox. One of the Orthodox was Fr. Lev Gillet, two of whose inspiring addresses were later published under the titles of *The Shepherd* (1963), and *The Burning Bush* (1971).

Conferences were also held outside England. In the summer of 1957, 18th -24th July, the Russian branch of the Fellowship in Paris organised a successful Anglican-Orthodox meeting at Moulin de Senlis near Paris. This chateau was an orphanage for Russian refugee children founded by Sophia Zemov, with an Orthodox chapel and accommodation for about 120. During the Conference, members visited the Theological Academy in Paris and attended services in numerous Russian churches. 19 The new Fellowship branches in Sweden and

Denmark also held their conferences, at which Anglicans, Lutherans and Orthodox discussed their theological problems. 20. Fellowship Chapters were also active in the U.S.A. and Canada.

Another change in the Conferences was in the membership of the Russian delegation. The Russian Church in France was divided into three jurisdictions. The majority of Russian emigrants followed Metropolitan Evlogy, who recognised as his superior the Patriarch of Constantinople. The second group remained under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate, and the third, strongly opposed to the Moscow hierarchy, proclaimed its independence, considering itself the only legitimate

remnant of the Russian Church. Before the war only that section which was under the Metropolitan Evlogy had taken part in the work of the Fellowship, but after the war the Russians under the Moscow Jurisdiction expressed their willingness to co-operate.

While the Fellowship had lost many pre-war Russian leaders either by death or migration to America 21, it gained two important personalities, both belonging to the Moscow jurisdiction and both destined to play significant roles in its life. They were Fr. Anthony Bloom and Prof. Vladimir Lossky.

Fr. Anthony's presence among us was the beginning of his long association with the Fellowship, which enriches the liturgical and spiritual growth of our society. If Fr. Bulgakov could be described as the inspirer of the Fellowship in the pre-war period, this was the role of Fr. Anthony in the post-war years. Whereas Fr. Bulgakov was deeply concerned with the restoration of the sacramental union between Orthodox and Anglicans, Fr. Anthony's message was addressed to individual Christians, calling them to discover the reality of their spiritual life.

Vladimir Lossky (1903-1958), the author of the *Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, introduced Palamite theology into the discussion between East and West. He attended regularly the post-war conferences and his arguments with Dr. Eric Mascall, who represented Neo-Thomist theology, for several years provided the intellectual fireworks of the meetings. Lossky's premature death at the age of fifty-five coincided with the end of the third period.

The Fourth Period (1958-1968)

The fourth period in the history of the Fellowship began with a change of secretaries. In 1958 Helle Georgiadis and Joan Ford (now Mrs. Rutt) resigned after 12 and 11 fruitful years of office respectively. Their immediate successors were the Rev. Eric Hampson, an Anglican priest from South Africa, and Rae Phillips. In 1960 Eric Hampson left Fellowship work to go to the Brotherhood of St. Barnabas in N. Queensland, and Rae Phillips married Clyde Whitney, an Episcopalian priest from the U.S.A. The Rev. Basil Minchin and his wife Margaret, two

long-standing members of the Fellowship, became secretaries.

During this period there were important developments in the Christian world at large. The most far-reaching was the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) which radically altered relations between Roman Catholics and other Christians. Hitherto the participation of the Roman Catholics in the work of the Fellowship had been limited. Prior to the Second World War the most prominent Roman Catholic member of the Conferences was Dom Clement Lialine, (1901-1958), a Russian Benedictine from Belgium. Later his place was taken by Dom Bede Winslow (1888-1959), the editor of the Eastern Churches Quarterly. Canon Ronald Pilkington (1892-1975), Fr. Bernard Leeming (1893-1971) and Barbara Fry (d. 1968) were among those Roman Catholics who took part

in the life of the Fellowship. In the ecumenically bleak fifties the Fellowship was one of the places where, because of the Orthodox participation, Roman Catholics were able to take part in the movement for the recovery of Christian unity, and train themselves for the opportunities offered

later to all Roman Catholics. After the Vatican Council an increasing number of them began to join the Fellowship and to attend its Conferences.

The second important event was the Pan-Orthodox Conference held on Rhodes from 14th September to 1st October, 1961, on the initiative of Patriarch Athenagoras (1896-1972). Its purpose was to demonstrate the unity and solidarity of the Orthodox and to prepare the programme

for a projected Orthodox Council. A message from the Archbishop of Canterbury was read and the Conference recorded its decision to place on the Agenda of the future Council "the study of the possibility of further rapprochement especially with the Anglicans in the light of their present positive attitude towards the Orthodox Church" 22. As a preliminary step it was decided to form a joint Doctrinal Commission: in this way the Fellowship's unofficial work found support from the highest Orthodox authority.

Another phenomenon of a different kind was the rise of radical theology which closely examined such fundamental doctrines of the Christian Church as the Trinity and the Incarnation. Although this movement began among Protestants, it also affected Anglicans and, later, even Roman Catholics. The Orthodox Church

by and large was not touched by it. Many Christians disturbed by this movement drew closer to the Orthodox Church. Some became involved in the work of the

Fellowship, which later reflected on this movement in its publication "Orthodoxy and the Death of God".

Against this background the Fellowship continued its activities. During the secretaryship of the Minchins, the Conferences were held at St. Stephen's School, Broadstairs. On the Orthodox side a leading figure remained Father Anthony, who in 1958 was consecrated Bishop of Sourozh and in 1966 appointed Metropolitan. On the Anglican side, Professor H. A. Hodges (1905-1976), the Rev.

Derwas Chitty (1901-1971), and Fr. Lionel Thornton, C.R. (1884-1960) made outstanding contributions. Two young Anglicans were also coming to the fore, the Rev. Donald Allchin (b. 1930) and Gerald Bonner (b. 1926).

Broadstairs was ideally suited to the family atmosphere of the post-war conferences. One of the most popular speakers proved to be Mrs. Rawlinson, the widow of Bishop Rawlinson, who with charming humour shared her experiences of Anglican parochial life. During this time local

Fellowship Conferences were organised at Durham, Edinburgh and Lincoln; they continued also in Scandinavian countries.

The main problem which confronted the Conference organisers was the decrease in the number of Orthodox participants. The Russian colony in Paris was shrinking and was no longer able to provide adequate new recruits. The Minchins tried to compensate for this by regular visits to

the Balkans in the hope of enlisting for the Fellowship conferences theologians from Eastern Europe. Political conditions were unfavourable and only a few were able to come to England. The Minchins were undaunted by these difficulties; three times they visited the Phanar (the

residence of the Ecumenical Patriarch) and they recruited Patriarch Athenagoras (1896-1972) as "an ordinary member" of the Fellowship; four times they went to Romania and Bulgaria, and frequently to Yugoslavia and Greece. Fr. Minchin lectured at Belgrade Theological Academy and at some monasteries, using a technique that combined the use of slides with taped commentaries in a number of languages. These travels made the Fellowship better known in the Balkans and brought

its message to those who were unable to leave their own countries.

Another development was an increase in the distribution of books dealing with Orthodoxy. The total value of books sold by the Bookstore at St. Basil's House increased from £30 to £1,500 per annum, and the profit from this trade benefitted the Fellowship budget. A new achievement inspired by the Fellowship was the foundation in Oxford of a sister House to St. Basil's. The House of Sr. Gregory and St. Macrina, at 1 Canterbury Road, was opened in 1959. This project was realised with the help of a substantial contribution received from the sale of St. Macrina in Birmingham. The centre contained a student hostel, a library, a room for meetings and an Orthodox chapel, where services were held in Slavonic, Greek and English. This offered an opportunity for Oxford students and visitors to share in Orthodox worship.

In the winter of 1960 Patrick Thompson resigned as the editor of *Sobornost* and was replaced by Donald Allchin. As usual he was assisted in this strenuous work by the Secretaries.

In 1968 the Minchins resigned after 8 years of valiant work, when Fr. Basil was appointed temporary chaplain at Goteborg in Sweden and subsequently Vicar of Lynsted in Kent. The Rev. M. Paternoster was elected as a Secretary.

The Fifth Period (1968-1978)

This period coincided with changes in the Ecumenical Movement. The attention of the World Council of Churches had moved from doctrinal and liturgical problems to social, racial and economic issues. At the same time the Roman Catholic Church took the initiative in

establishing theological discussions with other Churches. The Anglican-Orthodox negotiations were also reopened. The official Joint Doctrinal Discussions between the Anglican's and Orthodox were inaugurated in Oxford in 1973; meetings in three separate sub-commissions were held in 1974 and 1975, and there were further plenary sessions in Moscow (1976), Cambridge (1977) and Athens (1978). Considerable progress was made in these official discussions, but an unexpected and serious obstacle appeared when some provinces of the Anglican Communion ordained women as priests. In spite of this difficulty both sides remain determined that theological dialogue should continue.

In the Fellowship there were changes in personnel. The Rev. Michael Paternoster, after two years in office, resigned in 1971 and was succeeded by the Rev. Gareth Evans (b. 1939), formerly Precentor at Bristol Cathedral. The Rev. Donald Allchin became Chairman of the Council of the Fellowship, and replaced Harry Byrom, who had held this post for ten years (1960-1970).

The Fellowship, whose membership by 1978 approached 3,000 was, already an important centre for the distribution of literature on the Orthodox Church. The work in this field expanded to such an extent that in 1978 the sales of literature totalled nearly £14,000, giving a net profit of over £5,000. Hospitality at St. Basil's House increased considerably, including buffet suppers, held especially after Fellowship Council meetings, when large numbers of guests would be invited, representing different denominations, missionary societies, and publishers of religious literature. These gatherings provided a golden opportunity for meeting those involved in ecumenical work.

The activities of some 30 Fellowship branches continued in many parts of the world. A new development occurred in 1978, when at the time of the meeting of the Anglican-Orthodox Doctrinal Discussions a branch of the Fellowship was founded in Athens, due especially to the efforts of the Anglican chaplain there, the Rev. Jeremy Peake. This was the first time that a regular branch of the Fellowship had been established in a traditional Orthodox country. 23.

The main event in the life of the Fellowship remained its summer conferences in England. They left Broadstairs and migrated to Durham, Bristol, Winchester, Liverpool and Birmingham, to end up at High Leigh once more after an interval of 35 years. The High Leigh Conferences of the present decade marked a further stage in the evolution of the Fellowship. They became shorter and more theological, but did not lose entirely their holiday spirit. At the same time they incorporated some

elements of a retreat. Papers on the spiritual life, prayer and mysticism were added to the programme. Fr. Lev Gillet's meditations on the Holy Scripture left, as always, a deep impression. The number of Roman Catholics continued to increase and the celebration of the Roman Mass

was added to the liturgical life of the conferences. One of their characteristics was the wide age range of the participants, with several generations of the Fellowship members meeting at the conferences: children, young people, middle aged and elderly mixing freely together. Both the international and interconfessional aspects of the Fellowship have been maintained, and numbers have greatly increased with up to three hundred people having to be accommodated. Gareth Evan's expert leadership and kind patience greatly contribute to the success of these conferences.

The greatest change has been in the nature of the Orthodox participants, with more and more of them of western origin -British, French, German, Dutch, Belgian and Danish. They have gradually outnumbered the Orthodox from Eastern lands. In 1977, at High Leigh, out of some 40 Orthodox only 8 were so by birth. In view of this number of converts it has not been surprising that some critics have accused the Fellowship of

proselytism. The best answer to such a charge is to consider the spirit of leading Orthodox who take part in the Fellowship's work, such as Metropolitan Anthony, Archimandrite Lev Gillet, and Kallistos Ware (b. 1934).

Metropolitan Anthony, who through his broadcasts, sermons and numerous publications has become a well-known spokesman of Orthodoxy in the Western world, in his lectures always aims at helping others to grow in the knowledge of God and in devotion to Christ within each and every tradition.

Archimandrite Kallistos, lecturer in Eastern Studies at Oxford University, though a convert from Anglicanism has never attacked western Christianity. His objective and friendly attitude to both the

Roman and Anglican Churches has secured wide recognition of his authority among Western theologians. His book "The Orthodox Church" has had a greater success as an introduction to Orthodoxy than any other book. He has exemplified the positive role which a Western Orthodox can play in the efforts to reconcile the Christian East and West. The passing of the Orthodox leadership into the hands of western converts could seem to undermine the very foundations of the work of a society which had been conceived as a meeting-place between Eastern and Western Christians. One could presume that the newcomers to Orthodoxy would have no interest in furthering closer links with western Christians. In reality, however, they, just as the Orthodox from the east, include both ecumenically minded Christians and those who are either indifferent or even hostile to reunion. It has become more and more evident that the Orthodox of western background have a mission in the work of reintegration of the Church :

1. They are better able to expound the spirit of Orthodoxy in terms and language familiar to the west.
2. Hitherto Orthodoxy has been seen as a specific form of Christianity restricted to the eastern nations. The presence of western Orthodoxy emphasises the universality of Orthodoxy.
3. At the same time the western Orthodox are called to create new expressions of Orthodoxy congenial to their own national character. This remains, as it always was, an Orthodox gift. Side by side with the Churches of the East, each with their unique contribution to universal Orthodoxy, there have begun to grow up young Orthodox communities, English, American, French, German, Dutch, Belgian, Mexican, etc., each with its particular character.

The Fellowship conferences, with their spirit of welcome and freedom, give to these new Orthodox an invaluable chance to meet and to know each other better. Friendship and co-operation with Christians of other traditions is an eye-opening experience for all.

Thus the Fellowship has moved from being engaged in a dialogue between East and West to a new stage. This has been apparent also in recent developments concerning Sobornost. In 1977 the Rev. Donald Allchin resigned as editor, and was replaced by the Rev. Sergei Hackel (Orthodox) with the Rev. John Seward and the Rev. Hugh Wybrew both Anglican.

In 1978 the Eastern Church Review, founded by Barbara Fry in 1966, was obliged for financial reasons to cease publication as a separate journal, and was amalgamated with Sobornost. At the same time the editorial board was expanded.

The Rev. J. Seward resigned, and four new editors were appointed: Dr. Sebastian Brock (Anglican), the Rev. Robert Murray SJ (Roman Catholic), the Rev. Norman Russell (Roman Catholic) and Fr. Kallistos Ware (Orthodox). The presence of two Roman Catholics among the

editors was a new departure for the Fellowship. It reflected the special emphasis of The Eastern Churches Review which was always strongly supported by Roman Catholics, but it also reflected the widening scope of the Fellowship itself.

As the Fellowship embarks on its sixth decade it embraces Anglicans, Orthodox, Roman Catholics, and many other traditions, all of them trying together to understand more deeply the problems preoccupying them, and meeting in a wider field with renewed confidence in the healing power of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

In August 1977 the Fellowship celebrated its 50th anniversary. This gave an opportunity for surveying the field of Eastern and Western church relations in this period and the place of the Fellowship in the work towards reunion.

Among many obstacles in the way of reconciliation the most obvious one on the Eastern side has been the present state of the Orthodox Church. Persecuted by the Communists, oppressed by the Turks, divided into rival jurisdictions, she has been unable to speak and act as a free and united body. On the Western side the doctrinal diversity of Anglicans has made negotiations inconclusive, whilst the Roman Catholic tendency to

rational overdefinition and legalism has created new barriers. But behind these complications lie other, much more serious, obstacles: the failure shared by the spokesmen of all Churches to distinguish between the essential and the inessential in their own and in other traditions, and their inability to conceive unity without uniformity. If one adds to all this the innate conservatism of each confession, fear of the unknown and general inertia, one cannot be surprised at the slow progress of the reunion movement.

Yet in spite of all these unfavourable factors there has been during the last fifty years a remarkable rapprochement between the Christian East and West. The brotherly embrace of Pope Paul and Patriarch Athenogoras, the lifting of the excommunications of 1054, the name of "Sister Church" used in official documents, partial intercommunion in specific circumstances authorised by the Vatican and the Synod of the Russian Church, all these are signs of the longing for unity. This finds

expression also in a wide recognition of the importance and vitality of Orthodox spirituality. Fifty years ago the Orthodox Church was virtually unknown among Western Christians. Today its theological works, its devotional literature and its art have a creative influence in the life of

both Catholics and Protestants.

The main contribution of the Fellowship in this field of Church reintegration is the Eucharistic approach to reunion. Fr. Bulgakov's vision of intercommunion has not been realised, but the Fellowship has enriched the Ecumenical Movement through its emphasis on the place of the Liturgy in its work. At the 1937 Conferences of Life and Work in Oxford, and Faith and Order in Edinburgh, members of the Fellowship presented a memorandum in which they suggested that the celebration of the Eucharist according to different rites should be included in

future conference programmes. At the Youth Conference in Amsterdam in 1939 this proposal was adopted : there were celebrations of the Eucharist according to the Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran and Calvinist traditions. These services made a strong impact on the gathering. Since then such celebrations have become a traditional feature of ecumenical conferences, whilst prior to Amsterdam worship on such occasions had been limited to informal prayer, hymns and Scripture reading.

The introduction of the Eucharist to the work of reconciliation has been of particular importance for the Orthodox Church, whose very name emphasises the unity between worship and doctrine. Before the days of the Fellowship, Orthodox theologians imitated the West by relying only on doctrinal negotiations. Thus they were not bringing the true contribution of their Church, which proclaims that the Eucharist is the sacred heart of Church life and that theology and worship are

intrinsically bound together.

Another contribution the Fellowship has made is in the sphere of literature. More than 40 books and pamphlets have been published under its auspices, as well as records and film-slides. Moreover, there are only a few books on the Orthodox Church which have appeared in any western language in the last 50 years whose authors were not members of the Fellowship. Sobornost, too, contains valuable material for the student of reunion, and it is no mean achievement that its publication has been uninterrupted for half a century.

The Fellowship has never been involved in official negotiations for reunion, but it has provided a precious opportunity for Eastern and Western Christians to get to know each other personally. Several thousand rank and file churchmen have met each other as members of the Fellowship, and become familiar with the thought and worship of other traditions. The future leaders of both Churches were helped to grow together in their understanding of the mystery of church divisions.

One of the by-products of Fellowship activities has been the foundation of the Spalding Lectureship in Eastern Orthodox Culture at Oxford, renamed in 1966, "Eastern Orthodox Studies". Oxford was the first English university to include a study of Eastern Orthodoxy in its syllabus, an innovation followed later by several other universities.

These achievements have so far mostly affected English-speaking Christians. The Fellowship has not been able to penetrate to the same extent into the homelands of Orthodoxy. Yet its work has left a distinct mark on the Orthodox world. The existence of the Fellowship has been an effective challenge to the claim of some Orthodox theologians that the canonical boundaries of their own Church coincide with the frontiers of the One, Holy and Apostolic Church, and that all those beyond these limits have to be regarded as "regrettably deprived of sacramental grace".

The corporate liturgical prayer at the Fellowship conferences is a living witness to the contrary.

The Fellowship has offered to the Orthodox the possibility of applying in practice the concept of Sobornost (togetherness and unity in freedom). 26. Sobornost is the very opposite of uniformity. It accepts divergency over points on which agreement has not been reached. The Fellowship conferences have been an important school of tolerance where Christians have come to listen to each other with forbearance and learn even from those with whom they disagree. Clergy and laity, scholarly and unscholarly, old and young, all have contributed in a spirit of sobornost to the life and work of our society.

The Fellowship was born when the Orthodox and Anglican liturgies were celebrated at the same altar at St. Albans. Its founders had a vision of sacramental unity among those who, in spite of schism, share a Common faith. Yet for half a century the Fellowship members have perforce restricted themselves to a "spiritual communion " when praying at the Eucharistic service of another tradition. The pain so acutely felt at first - has it become a habit? Has our prayer of fifty years been in vain? Man's time is not God's time, and patience as well as hope is required in this work. Yet there are many signs that in this fifth period the climate of inter-church relations has been changing. The high walls which used to separate one confession from another have been broken down in many places, greatly increasing the sense of oneness. At the Fellowship conferences the very nature of the encounter between its members gradually becomes deeper and more creative.

The Fellowship has been a pioneer, it has dared to tread unexplored paths. Its very existence is always in question. But it survives by the prayers of its members, living and departed, under the protection of its heavenly patrons, St. Alban, the proto-martyr of England, and St. Sergius, the Abbot of Radonezh.