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Perpetual Embers: A Chronicle of ROCOR's Missionary Efforts in India

Introduction

The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia,¹ although founded as the church of the post-revolutionary Russian diaspora, also served as the custodian and guardian of the scattered pre-revolutionary Russian Orthodox missions in various parts of the world. From these, some quarters of ROCOR inherited and maintained a missionary spirit that has resulted in Orthodoxy flourishing in places where there had previously been no preaching of Christ's saving message. Some of these missions have continued to blaze like a fire amidst the growing darkness of our secular age while others have remained 'perpetual embers,' steadily glowing through the toils of dedicated missionaries yet never reaching their full potential; God's will for their full fruition seemingly delayed until He deems it meet.

One such mission field is India: the great subcontinent, birthplace of two of the world's most significant religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, home to one of its largest Muslim populations, and native land to one of the most ancient eastern Christian communities – the Saint Thomas Christians of Kerala.² ROCOR has been present in India, to some extent, throughout most of ROCOR's history, particularly in the years immediately before and after the Second World War. A number of ROCOR luminaries – including some who later became bishops and first hierarchs– were involved in the small Indian mission at one time or another, but few, with certain very notable exceptions, made India their home for any considerable period of time.

¹ Referred to as ROCOR from this point on.

² Kerala is a province in south-west India which is the home of the majority of the Malayalam-speaking Mar Thoma Christians, whose communities date back to apostolic times. They are currently divided into a number of factions, with Uniates, Monophysites, and Nestorians being the most prominent.

Although there have been a number of Indian clergymen who have served in ROCOR, few of these were actually the result of direct missionary work in India and the majority of these clergymen, both major and minor, served in countries other than India.³

With the 2016 cessation of ROCOR's most recent missionary activities in India, it is now possible to view the full chronology of the eighty-five-year attempt at establishing a permanent and lasting Russian Orthodox presence in India, as carried out by ROCOR.

The mission in India's history is in four phases: the first is the eighteen years spent in India by Father Andronik (Elpidinskii), who was sent to India with the blessing of Metropolitan Evlogii (Georgievskii)⁴ in Paris and spent eighteen years in the country from 1931 to 1949. Although technically not a part of ROCOR proper,⁵ the most fruitful and intense part of Father Andronik's work in India came during the reconciliation of the various parts of the Russian Church in diaspora and was conducted in close collaboration with ROCOR bishops and clergy, not least the future Metropolitan Anastasii (Gribanovskii)⁶, at whose behest two delegations were sent. The second and third phases overlap one another: the second is the work of Father Lazarus (Moore), who spent the best part of twenty years (1952 – 1972) labouring in various locations across India, and the third is the attempt made by Father George Tharian to unite his movement of former Jacobites to the Orthodox Church,

³ At the time of writing, it is limited to one priest serving in Australia and a handful of Subdeacons and Readers in the United States and Europe. There are two Indian priests of the Moscow Patriarchate serving in India. If we are to include the entire former British Raj, ROCOR has one Pakistani priest serving in Pakistan and one in the United States, while the Moscow Patriarchate has one in Pakistan.

⁴ Metropolitan Evlogii (Georgievskii) (1868 – 1946) of Paris and Western Europe. During the tumultuous 1930s, he moved between ROCOR and the Ecumenical Patriarch, becoming the first Archbishop of the Russian Orthodox Exarchate of Western Europe. Following the Second World War, he returned to the Moscow Patriarchate.

⁵ At the time of the mission's beginning, Metropolitan Evlogii was under the Ecumenical Patriarch and Father Andronik always held Metropolitan Evlogii to be his bishop, as opposed to the Synod of Bishops based in Sremski Karlovci in Serbia, which formed the core of what we now know as ROCOR.

⁶ Metropolitan Anastasii (Gribanovskii) (1873 – 1965) of Kishinev. He was the administrator of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem and later the second First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. He was an enthusiastic torch-bearer for the Indian mission until his repose.

which took place during Father Lazarus' time in India. The fourth phase is the short-lived mission of Father Silouan Benedict in Bangalore from 2013 to 2015.

Using sources taken predominately from the Russian perspective, we are able to construct a detailed outline of the missionary work, including support from Church authorities, the intentions of the missionaries, and, in particular, the reason why the missionaries were sent in the first place. In all cases, it is because ROCOR was contacted by church authorities or persons in India who either wished to unite with the Orthodox Church or be received as individuals. With only limited sources from the Indian perspective, it is not yet possible to ascertain their reasons for seeking union with the Orthodox Church, and the Russian Orthodox Church in particular, with the exception of the individuals who were actually received by the Church. While it might be argued that they were seeking 'recognition' from the Orthodox Church, it can be seen from the sources that the Indian church was far too self-assured of its own apostolicity and orthodoxy to be seeking mere recognition in the way that the Anglican Church can be accused of this. The only possible reason that they might be seeking external recognition or validation could be as an additional support in the legal dispute between the two factions of the Indian church. To answer this question, it is necessary to do further research, which would need many more sources from India.

The story of ROCOR's mission in India is one frustration, missed opportunities, and unfortunate errors, as well as great piety, ascetic struggle, and witness to the Gospel precepts, with the characters that come and go ranging from great examples of faith and holiness to the shady and downright bizarre. It is nonetheless a story worth telling, a story of how ROCOR, that small band of faithful émigrés and their fellow travellers that discovered the Orthodox faith in their midst, sought to bring Orthodoxy to a nation of almost one billion people.

Pre-Revolutionary Encounters

Unlike in places such as Japan, Korea, China, Persia, and Alaska, where the Russian Empire had considerable influence in assisting the organising of missions with the Russian Orthodox Church, India had always remained outside the Tsar's sphere of influence. Undoubtedly, this lack of political involvement in India was a direct result of the 'Great Game' between the Russian and British Empires. Any kind of Russian overtures towards the Indians in either secular or religious spheres would have been seen as a violation of the British sphere of influence, especially after the establishment of the Raj – British rule over the subcontinent. Because of this, the most notable 'interaction' between Russia and India was Tsar Paul I's proposal to send a large corps of Cossacks to India during his alliance with Napoleon. To the shared regret of Bonapartists and Russian imperialists alike, Tsar Paul's 'Indian March' was cancelled after his assassination in 1801.

Away from the 'Great Game,' there has been a smattering of smaller, humbler points of contact made between Russia and India on the subcontinent itself, with the famous account of Afanasy Nikitin, the fifteenth-century Tver merchant who spent many years in India trying to regain his stolen fortune, as detailed in his fascinating work *Voyage Beyond Three Seas*,⁷ being one of the most famous. Nikitin's work details his many encounters with Muslims and Hindus during his long years in India, but there were never any meetings with the Saint Thomas Christians.

The then-Tsarevich Nikolai Alexandrovich Romanov, the future Tsar-Martyr Nicholas II, also visited India as part of his journey around East Asia in 1890. It is not known if a Russian Orthodox chaplain accompanied him on this journey, but his diaries from the time do mention that he visited the Greek Orthodox Church of the Transfiguration in

⁷ Nikitin, Afanasy, *Хождение За Три Моря Афанасия Никитина 1466-1472* (Moscow/Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk, SSSR, 1948).

Calcutta⁸ and encountered the Armenian community⁹ in the same city, who received their priests from the Catholicate of Etchmiadzin, at that time located in the Russian Empire.

Despite the relative dearth of political-cultural encounters, there were still attempts by the Indian Christians to make contact with the Russian Orthodox Church. From the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries, the Saint Thomas Christians initiated a policy of ‘reaching out’ to other Christians outside of the subcontinent, especially those who, unlike the Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Protestants, were not causing ecclesiastical divisions among the native Christians of India. Beginning in 1851, the Indians approached the Russian Orthodox Church on several occasions with the intention of establishing union. In that year, representatives of the Indian Church met with the Russian ambassador in Constantinople and tried to initiate negotiations for rapprochement with the Orthodox Church, but the Crimean War soon put an end to the dialogue.

Undeterred, a second attempt was made in 1898, when an Indian archbishop¹⁰ sent a message to the Most Holy Governing Synod in Saint Petersburg, asking for the Russian Orthodox Church to receive his flock, numbering fifteen thousand souls, on account of the difficulties facing the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch in fulfilling their obligation to provide the Indians with suitable hierarchs. According to the testimony of the traveller A.I. Vygornitskii, who was the intermediary of the message, the Indians had become acquainted with the Russian church by means of the priests who were attached the ships of the Russian merchant navy. The archbishop had requested that the Russian Church send a priest that

⁸ This parish is still active today under the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. The parish oversees an orphanage and has a small number of nuns attached. One of the recent rectors now serves as a missionary bishop in Africa under the Patriarchate of Alexandria. There are no extant records of any contact between ROCOR’s missionaries in India and this parish.

⁹ Armenians have over 2,000 years of history in India, dating to the era of Alexander the Great. Today, there remain around six hundred people in the once-formidable community. They currently have a college and seven parishes in India.

¹⁰ He was never named in the articles published by Vygornitskii.

speaks English to India, following which they would make the necessary concessions and accept Orthodoxy. A petition was sent, witnessed by the Russian consul, but, possibly due to political considerations, no response from the Holy Synod was ever recorded.¹¹

One final unsuccessful attempt was made in 1904, when a member of the “Syro-Chaldean Church in India”¹² approached the Russian Orthodox priest in London, Mitred Archpriest Evgenii Smirnov,¹³ asking for his church to be received under the protection of the Russian Church. Father Evgenii contacted Metropolitan Antonii (Vadkovskii) of Saint Petersburg,¹⁴ who told him that it was not possible to send any clergy to India at this time, again most likely due to political considerations. The archbishop also informed him that the man could not be ordained either, because he did not know the Orthodox typikon. His suggestion was that the man either go to the Russian Orthodox mission in Urmia, Persia, where a large number of Nestorians had been received into the Church and were serving in Syriac, and use that as a connection for the Indian church, or that he be received into Orthodoxy as an individual in London.¹⁵ Nothing more is known about the Indian enquirer after this.¹⁶

¹¹ Русский Миссионер В Индии – Архимандрит Андроник Елпидинский (stavrokrest.ru/content/russkij-missioner-v-indii-arhimandrit-andronik-elpidinskij – accessed 10/31/2018)

¹² This most likely refers to the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch – 1904 being prior to the formation of the autocephalous Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church - and not the Nestorian group commonly known as the Chaldean Syrian Church.

¹³ Father Evgenii Konstantinovich Smirnov (1845 – 1923) was the long-term priest of the Russian embassy church in London and pastor to the first wave of post-revolutionary refugees that arrived in Britain.

¹⁴ Metropolitan Antony (Vadkovskii) (1846 – 1912) of Saint Petersburg and Ladoga. Metropolitan Antony was a church reformer whose work laid the foundations of the 1917 Moscow Council. As a seminary professor, he was a major influence on his students, the future Patriarch Sergei (Stagorodskii) and Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitskii).

¹⁵ This meeting and the subsequent exchange of messages between London and Saint Petersburg is recounted in Birchall, Protodeacon Christopher, *Embassy, Emigrants, and Englishmen: The Three Hundred Year History of a Russian Orthodox Church in London* (Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Publications, 2014) 170.

¹⁶ It is worth noting that active in London at this time was Father S.D. Bhabba, a medical doctor, former Anglican, and priest of the Syriac Orthodox Church’s Indian branch who was serving as his Metropolitan’s

On the other side of the spiritual spectrum, India was host to the well-known Russian occultists Helena Blavatskaia¹⁷ and Nikolai Roerich.¹⁸ Both of them travelled extensively in India, seeking hidden knowledge and the mysteries of the cosmos. From the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, their many followers and disciples would make similar journeys to seek spiritual enlightenment among the gurus and sadhus of India. Fortunately, a number of Russians who were led astray by Blavatskaia's teachings were later reconciled with the Church.

Closer in history to the eventual arrival of Russian Orthodoxy in India is the presence of an obscure Russian Mennonite Brethren mission in Hyderabad state, originating in the 1890s and having considerable success among the Telegu-speaking peoples there. Of course, these Russian Mennonites were actually German-speaking people, so the eventual foundation of an authentically Russian religious mission in India fell to the post-revolutionary missionaries of ROCOR.

representative in England. Although there is no evidence to suggest this, it is an interesting possibility that the initial contact may have been instigated by him, as he was the senior member of the Indian church in England and responsible for missionary work there.

¹⁷ Helena Petrovna Blavatskaia (1831 – 1891), founder of the Theosophical Society, a group that promoted the syncretic and occult religion of Theosophy.

¹⁸ Nikolai Konstantinovich Roerich (1874 – 1947), artist, architect, adventurer, and Theosophist. He spent many years in India after the Russian Revolution and was involved in the exploration of the Himalayas and Tibet. Father Andronik writes that he exchanged several letters with him, but does not mention the subject of their correspondence. Given Father Andronik's missionary heart and love for Orthodoxy, it is very possible that he was trying to win him back to the Church.

The Indians Make Contact with ROCOR

The 1930s were the key decade in the establishment, not only of the mission in India, but also of serious and prolonged communications with the Saint Thomas Christians, namely the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, which had separated itself from the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch, also known as the Jacobite Syriac Orthodox Church in India, in 1912. The above-mentioned policy of ‘reaching out’ by the hierarchs of the Indian church eventually led, on September 24th 1934, to the meeting between Catholicos Baselios Geevarghese II¹⁹ and the then-Archbishop Anastasii in Jerusalem in which the catholicos expressed a desire for unity between his church and the Russian Orthodox Church. The catholicos requested that the Russian Church send missionaries to India and carried letters to Archbishop Anastasii from Hieromonk Andronik (Elpidinskii), a Russian priest already present in India since 1931, indicating that Father Andronik was in support of this.²⁰ During his time in the Holy Land, Catholicos Geevarghese was received with patriarchal honours and traditional Russian hospitality, which was reciprocated in later years when Russian and Serbian bishops made visits to India. Upon his return to Kerala, the catholicos convened a synod of his bishops, who agreed to approach ROCOR and begin negotiations for the eventual union of the two churches.

In response to the Indian bishops, the 1935 council of representatives of the Russian Church, which had been called by Patriarch Varnava (Rosič)²¹ of Serbia with the intention of reuniting the various factions of the Russian diaspora, led by Metropolitans Antonii

¹⁹ Catholicos Baselios Geevarghese II (1874 – 1964), third Catholicos of the East. He united the offices of Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan during his Catholicate.

²⁰ Elpidinskii, Archimandrite Andronik, *Партии католикоса и патриарха в Восемнадцать Лет В Индии* (Buenos Aires, 1959).

²¹ Patriarch Varnava (Rosič) (1880 – 1937) of Serbia was a graduate of the Saint Petersburg Theological Academy. He was tonsured and ordained deacon and priest in Russia before spending several years in Constantinople. He died under unclear circumstances after successfully opposing a Concordant between the Yugoslav government and the Vatican.

(Khrapovitskii),²² Evlogii, and Feofil (Pashkovskii),²³ decided to send Bishop Dimitri (Voznesenskii)²⁴ to India in order to assess the state of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. The Serbian Orthodox Church financed the bishop's journey to the sum of twenty thousand dinars and agreed to provide further support to ROCOR if the visitation proved fruitful.²⁵ Prior to this decision being made, the council of bishops had heard a report from Archbishop Anastasii and had read a letter from the Indians, in which they explained their confession of faith. Archbishop Anastasii responded to them and stated that the council found their confession of faith to be the same as that as confessed by the Orthodox Church, although further clarification was required regarding their acceptance of later ecumenical councils.²⁶

Bishop Dimitri, one of ROCOR's bishops in Manchuria, was met by Father Andronik upon his arrival in India in February 1936 and, during his three weeks in the country, he discovered a church that had around five hundred parishes, five bishops, a monastery with around twenty monks in Travancore, a small convent, a seminary in Kottayam, and a network of parish schools and charitable institutions. Accompanied by Father Andronik, who served him as translator, he met with the catholicos at his residence in Kottayam. According to Father Andronik, there were no dogmatic disagreements between Bishop Dimitri and the

²² Metropolitan Antonii (Khrapovitsky) (1863 – 1936) of Kiev and Galicia. A noted theologian and teacher as well as a popular hierarch, he was the first First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia.

²³ Metropolitan Feofil (Pashkovskii) (1874 – 1950) of San Francisco. A former married priest, he was tonsured after he became a widow and succeeded Metropolitan Platon (Rozhdestvenskii) to become second Primate of the American Metropolia.

²⁴ Archbishop Dimitri (Voznesenskii) (1871 – 1946) of Hailar. A former married priest, he was the father of the future First Hierarch of ROCOR, Metropolitan Filaret. Following the Second World War, he joined the Moscow Patriarchate.

²⁵ Elpidinskii, *Епископ Димитрий*.

²⁶ GARF, File 6343/1/257.

assembled Indian bishops, although the question of recognising all seven of the ecumenical councils proved to be a barrier to further progress in discussion.²⁷

During the course of his visit, he gave several lectures to the Indians, including one which was attended by up to five thousand people, in which he explained the differences between the Orthodox faith and the monophysite faith held by the Malankara Church. He insisted that union could only be possible if they accepted all seven ecumenical councils, instead of only the first three. Although he was well-received by the Indians, there was considerable hostility towards the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon, a remnant of their centuries-long association with the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch. Bishop Dimitri responded by promising to send them a book about all seven councils which would explain everything to them that they needed to know. Later developments would show that this deep-rooted hostility to the Council of Chalcedon would be a consistent barrier in negotiations with the Malankara Church.

For the lone missionary, Father Andronik, the visit of the bishop was of utmost spiritual importance, as he was able to confess to the hierarch, as well as serving alongside him at his skete near Travancore. Bishop Dimitri, supportive of the mission, left Father Andronik with a large sum of money - hidden inside a copy of the writings of Metropolitan Antonii - after his departure to China and wrote positively of the work taking place in India in his diocesan journal, *Bread of Heaven*.²⁸

Based on the reports that Bishop Dimitri made to the Synod, the Bishops' Council of the Church Abroad adopted a resolution stating the need for further negotiations and work in India, and to send the necessary materials for instructing the Indians in Orthodoxy. Igumen

²⁷ Elpidinskii, *Епископ Димитрий*.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

Filaret (Voznesenskii)²⁹ from Harbin, the son of Bishop Dimitri, was assigned to lead this work but, due to Archbishop Nestor (Anisimov)'s³⁰ letter to the Synod stating that Igumen Filaret had no missionary vocation, nothing materialised. Abbess Evgenia from the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem was also instructed to take some nuns to India to establish a convent and orphanage,³¹ but she was unable to do this due to the Second World War and lack of funds. These resolutions show that the Russian bishops were taking the situation seriously and were committed to trying to bring the Indian church back to Orthodoxy, although their best intentions were thwarted by circumstances.

The Synod also responded to Father Andronik's desire for a swift reunion by writing a letter informing him that this would be impossible, as all other local Orthodox Churches would need to be involved in the decision, not to mention that the Indian Christians had not yet explicitly recognised all seven ecumenical councils.³² Copies of the decrees and definitions of the seven ecumenical councils were sent to the Indian catholicos, as promised by Bishop Dimitri, but this gesture did not help much in removing the stumbling block of Chalcedon and later councils.

²⁹ Metropolitan Filaret (Voznesenskii) (1903 – 1985) of New York, third First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia. He left China after the Second World War and followed his flock to Australia before being elected Metropolitan.

³⁰ Archbishop Nestor (Anisimov) (1884 – 1962), later Metropolitan of Kirovograd and Nikolaevsk after his reception into the Moscow Patriarchate following the Second World War. He became a missionary after receiving the blessing of Saint John of Kronstadt and spent most of his life serving in Manchuria.

³¹ GARF, File 6343/1/258.

³² *Ibid.*

Metropolitan Dositej of Zagreb and the Serbian Connection

The initial visit of Bishop Dimitri to India, which had the blessing of the Serbian Orthodox Church, opened up another connection between the Orthodox Church and the Malankara Church.³³ The Serbians had become interested in the situation in India and, in the winter of 1936/1937, they had already sent their own representative there in the person of Metropolitan Dositej (Vasič).³⁴ He visited the small Russian mission there under Father Andronik, whom he gifted two antimensia from Patriarch Varnava and elevated to the dignity of archimandrite at the request of Metropolitan Evlogii.³⁵ He attended the World Conference of the Young Men's Christian Association in Mysore, which was his primary purpose in India, from January 2nd onwards and later visited Kerala, along with Feodor Pianov,³⁶ a leader in the Russian Student Christian Movement³⁷ and employee of the YMCA. He also left Father Andronik with a substantial sum of money when he departed and helped maintain the mission financially until the beginning of the Second World War.³⁸ Inspired by the mission in India, the well-known Bishop Nikolai (Velimirovič)³⁹ also contributed financially. He later

³³ The main source of information for the Indo-Serbian relations is the article by Dr. Meledath Kurian Thomas, *Eighty Years of Indo-Serbian Orthodox Relations and Saint Dositej Vasič of Serbia* in *The Orthodox Dilemma* (Alappuzha, Kerala: OCP Publications, 2017), 284-292.

³⁴ Saint Dositej the Confessor (1887 – 1945), Metropolitan of Zagreb. He graduated from the Kiev Theological Academy in 1904. During the Second World War, he was imprisoned by Croatian police and tortured, later dying from his wounds at the Convent of the Ascension in Belgrade. He was glorified by the Serbian Orthodox Church in 1997.

³⁵ Elpidinskii, *Митрополит Досифей*.

³⁶ Feodor Timofeevich Pianov (1889 – 1969) was a Russian émigré who was closely involved with the Parisian part of the émigré Church. As well as his leadership in the RSCM, he was a central figure in Orthodox Action, the movement founded by Mother Maria (Skobtsova). Pianov spent time in Buchenwald concentration camp during the Second World War.

³⁷ The Russian Student Christian Movement (RSCM) was founded in 1923 in Czechoslovakia before moving to Paris. It is often associated with the 'Paris School' of Russian religious thought. It exists today as l'Action Chretienne des Etudiants Russes – Mouvement de Jeunesse Orthodoxe (ACER-MJO).

³⁸ Elpidinskii, *Митрополит Досифей*.

met Father Andronik in America and told him of Patriarch Varnava's great love for the Russian missionary in India.⁴⁰

During the two weeks he spent in Kerala, Metropolitan Dositej stayed at the Old Seminary in Kottayam as a guest of Catholicos Geevarghese. As a result of the friendship formed on this visit, Metropolitan Dositej arranged for the Indian catholicos to make an official visit to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, by which time Dositej was locum tenens of the patriarchal throne of the Serbian Orthodox Church, following the death of Patriarch Varnava.

In September 1937, exactly three years after the Jerusalem meeting, the catholicos arrived in Yugoslavia as part of the twenty-five year anniversary celebrations of his church's autocephaly, where he visited monasteries, parishes, and even addressed over one thousand Serbian Orthodox clergymen, including a number of bishops. When the catholicos left Yugoslavia on September 30th, he was seen off at the railway station in Belgrade by half a dozen bishops, with his old acquaintance Metropolitan Anastasii, by this point First Hierarch of ROCOR, among them. Prior to his arrival in Yugoslavia, the catholicos had met with Metropolitan Evlogii in Paris, where he had served a memorial service for the recently-reposed Patriarch Varnava of Serbia, and had worked in association with the Russian Orthodox party at the Faith and Order conference in Edinburgh.⁴¹

³⁹ Saint Nikolai (Velimirovič) (1880 – 1956), Bishop of Ochrid and Zhicha. A well-regarded preacher and author, he taught Saint John (Maximovitch) of Shanghai and San Francisco at seminary in Serbia. During the Second World War, he spent time in Dachau concentration camp. He later served the Church in America and taught at a number of seminaries.

⁴⁰ Elpidinskii, *Митрополит Досифей*.

⁴¹ Thomas, 289.

Father Andronik and the Beginning of His Mission in India

Now, the small Russian mission of Father Andronik actually predated the initiation of contact between the Indians and ROCOR, having commenced with the arrival of Father Andronik in 1931.⁴²

A well-travelled man, Father Andronik was born Andrei Iakovich Elpidinskii in 1894 in Petrozavodsk, Olonets province, the seventh child of Iakov Semenovich Elpidinskii, a church historian, graduate of Saint Petersburg Theological Academy and teacher at the Olonets Theological Seminary for over thirty years. In his memoirs he recounts how he, the grandson of a priest on both sides of his family, had a pious upbringing with both father and mother teaching him the law of God, prayer, and fasting. Undoubtedly, he was prepared for his future missionary labours by his adventurous youth, in which he participated in a number of sports and outdoor activities, including fishing and mushroom picking, which later came in helpful.⁴³

Following the family tradition, Andrei attended Olonets Theological Seminary, and after six years of study, including one at the Tauride Theological Seminary in south Russia, where he went to improve his health, he graduated in 1916. He was not to go directly into the service of the Russian Orthodox Church upon graduating, however, as he ended up spending almost ten years trying to survive the vicissitudes of the Great War, the Russian Revolution, the Russian Civil War, and impoverished life in the diaspora. Immediately after graduation, he joined the Land Union⁴⁴ and served until January 1917 in Galicia and Romania. Following this, he was enrolled as a student at the Petrograd Theological Academy but was soon

⁴² The main source for Father Andronik's life and activities in India are his memoirs, *Восемнадцать Лет В Индии*.

⁴³ Elpidinskii, *На Родине*.

⁴⁴ The Land Union was the Imperial Russian equivalent to the Red Cross.

enlisted into the army reserves, serving until the end of the war and eventually being appointed as an education officer.

Following demobilisation, Andrei survived through the Civil War by finding various teaching jobs in Petrozavodsk, Petrograd, and Murmansk. Following the war, he escaped to Finland, spending two weeks in prison in Helsingfors before working in a paper mill. He subsequently moved to Germany where he qualified as an electrical technician while working at a shipyard. Dreaming, however, of serving the Church, in 1923 he made his way to Paris, the heart of the Western European Russian émigré community.

In Paris, he soon encountered Metropolitan Evlogii and the Russian Christian Student Movement that had been formed by young Russian refugees. He later enrolled in some of the first classes at the Saint Sergius Theological Institute that had been founded and on November 2nd 1925, he was tonsured a monk at the Sergievo Podvor'e in Paris, being ordained a hieromonk two weeks later. Father Andronik hoped to start his own monastery, possibly in Canada or South America, but instead found himself serving in a small parish in Belfort, where a number of Russians who worked at the Peugeot plant lived.⁴⁵

Having had a desire to serve in India since his time at seminary, where he read of the Saint Thomas Christians in a church history textbook, Father Andronik asked Metropolitan Evlogii for a blessing to depart for the east after serving in Belfort for just under six years. He had worked at the Peugeot plant alongside his parishioners, so was able to fund the trip himself. Already in 1929, he had made contact with some Russians in India, who had categorically told him to stay in France if he knew what was good for him, but later, another of their number sent him a letter telling him to hasten to India. He eventually set off from

⁴⁵ Elpidinskii, *Париж*.

Marseilles in the steamer Generale Messenger July 3rd 1931, arriving in Colombo, Ceylon⁴⁶ by way of Egypt and Djibouti, on July 20th 1931.⁴⁷

During his voyage to the east, Father Andronik met and conversed with some Ethiopian monks in Egypt who were enroute to the Holy Land and one of his cabin mates was an Indian Muslim merchant from Bengal who told him that he and his family were interested in converting to Christianity. Father Andronik later wrote to the merchant, receiving no response; he wryly noted in his memoirs that he only realised after several years in India that he perceived that Indians will say such things or make certain promises either for some benefit, or simply for the pleasantness of the conversation.

Following his arrival in Colombo, Father Andronik travelled on to India, where he was met by Spiridon Fedorovich Kirichenko, a former White Army officer, who took him to his farm, not far from Bangalore. The Kirichenko farm was to be the first operating base for Father Andronik's mission in India. He lived here for some eight months, working on the land with hired Indian farmhands, learning English, and serving several times a week at a small chapel he established on the premises.⁴⁸

Reflecting in his memoirs, Father Andronik wrote that he did not feel capable of being the one that would bring Orthodoxy to the Hindus; instead, he felt that he would be best used trying to mediate the return of the Indian Christians to the Orthodox Church. To this end, very early in his stay in India he made contact with the various factions that were present in Kerala. In October 1931, he visited Travancore and Kottayam in order to become acquainted with them and ended up befriending some of the major figures in Indian Christianity.

⁴⁶ Modern Sri Lanka.

⁴⁷ Elpidinskii, *Дорога в Индию*.

⁴⁸ Elpidinskii, *Кириченко и его ферма*.

His first meeting was with Catholicos Geevarghese, who received him warmly at the Old Seminary in Kottayam, which was his residence. The catholicos was head of the ‘catholicos party,’⁴⁹ that part of the Malankara Church that had separated from the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch in 1912 and would later reach out to ROCOR in both the 1930s and 1950s, seeking union. It is interesting to note that, at the time of their first meeting, the catholicos asked Father Andronik if he was an Armenian monk, as he did not know any other Orthodox monks besides Armenians.⁵⁰ It seems that, prior to the meeting with Father Andronik and his later encounter with the Russian mission in Jerusalem, the catholicos had little to no knowledge of the Russian Orthodox Church. Father Andronik and Catholicos Geevarghese became close and he usually stayed at the seminary when he was visiting Kottayam. He also met and befriended some of the seminary teachers and answered the many questions of the seminarians, who were undoubtedly intrigued by the arrival of their strange guest.⁵¹

During this same trip, he was also introduced to the head of the ‘patriarchal party,’⁵² who at that time was the Syriac Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch Elias III⁵³ himself, on a visit to India, accompanied by a retinue of clergy from Syria and Iraq. At this time, Father Andronik was uncertain of the ecclesiastical state of Middle Eastern Christianity and, when he asked the patriarch if he was the same Patriarch of Antioch that the Russians and Greeks were in

⁴⁹ Now known as the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, it is an autocephalous church of the Oriental Orthodox (monophysite) communion, headed by the Catholicos of the East.

⁵⁰ Elpidinskii, *Встреча с Католикосом*.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Now known as the Jacobite Syriac Church of India, it is an autonomous church under the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and part of the Oriental Orthodox (monophysite) communion, headed by the Catholicos of India.

⁵³ Patriarch Mor Ignatios Elias III (Shakar) (1867 – 1932) of Antioch. At this time, he was on an extended visit to India to try and heal the rift that had developed between the two factions of Syriac Christians in Kerala. In 1987, he was canonised by the Syriac Orthodox Church.

communion with, the patriarch replied positively.⁵⁴ Father Andronik became suspicious once he realised that their liturgical celebrations were not at all like that of the Russian Church, something he held to be strange since a previous Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch had graduated from theological academy in Russia. Having later come to the realisation that there are five competing Patriarchs of Antioch,⁵⁵ he writes in his memoirs that he forever remembered the patriarch, who evidently did not impress him, as a “fat liar.”⁵⁶ Father Andronik believed that the patriarch was telling people in India that he was in communion with the Greeks and Russians as a way of raising his authority in a time when his Indian flock had been divided into several factions. Patriarch Elias III died shortly after this meeting and was buried in India.

Following his encounter with the Jacobites, the last group to make Father Andronik’s acquaintance on this initial expedition was the Mar Thoma Syrian Church,⁵⁷ whose leader, Metropolitan Titus,⁵⁸ hosted him. Father Andronik quickly came to the conclusion that this group had more or less become protestant and he did not stay around to attend their services.⁵⁹

On another, later, visit to Travancore, Father Andronik was also to make the acquaintance of the local hierarch of the Chaldean Syrian Church,⁶⁰ Metropolitan Mar

⁵⁴ Elpidinskii, *Якобитский патриарх*.

⁵⁵ Current claimants include: Greek Orthodox, Syriac (Jacobite) Orthodox, Melkite Greek Catholic, Syriac Catholic, and Maronite Catholic. There is also a Roman Catholic Patriarch of Antioch, but this see is currently in abeyance.

⁵⁶ Elpidinskii, *Якобитский патриарх*.

⁵⁷ The Mar Thoma Syrian Church is a “reformed oriental church.” Theologically it is Calvinist, but it is episcopal in polity and worships according to a modified East Syriac rite. It is in communion with the Anglican Communion and maintains close relations with the Old Catholics and Lutherans.

⁵⁸ Mar Titus II (1866 – 1944), Mar Thoma Metropolitan.

⁵⁹ Elpidinskii, *Другие части Сирийской Церкви*.

⁶⁰ The Indian branch of the Assyrian Church of the East (Nestorian). It currently forms the largest archbishopric of the Assyrian Church and is headed by a Metropolitan.

Abimelek Timotheos,⁶¹ who became a friend of his and taught him how to make inexpensive wine from locally-produced dry grapes, a very useful skill for a missionary like Father Andronik.⁶² Although they were able to have warm relations and the Nestorians even softened their position at times, by the end of Mar Abimelek's life, he had become hardened in his Nestorianism and told Father Andronik that the entire Russian Orthodox Church needed to accept this doctrine.⁶³

During his two-week stay in Travancore, Father Andronik was introduced to Father Alexios,⁶⁴ the abbot of Bethany Ashram, a monastery of the catholicos party, and was invited to stay here by both Catholicos Geevarghese and Father Alexios.⁶⁵ With the subject of union between the Indian and Russian Churches having already come up, Father Andronik sought the blessing of Metropolitan Evlogii to proceed with this task. Unfortunately, this was a time of crisis for the Russians and Metropolitan Evlogii's requests to the Patriarch of Constantinople went unanswered. Realising that there was little hope of starting a mission at the Kirichenko farm, Father Andronik accepted the offer and moved to the monastery in March 1932.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Metropolitan Mar Abimelek Timotheos (1878 – 1945) was a firebrand bishop of the Assyrian Church who spoke out against the practice of hereditary succession to the position of Catholicos-Patriarch. He had been Regent for the boy patriarch Mar Eshai Shim'un XXIII (1909 - 1975) and refused to become a usurper when the opportunity arose. His memory is held in great esteem by the descendants of his Indian flock.

⁶² Elpidinskii, *Историяне*.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Metropolitan Alexios Mar Theodosios (1888 – 1965) of Kollam. He was a renowned missionary of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church and travelled widely. He visited Ceylon on a number of occasions and even travelled to England to make contact with a monastery that had been formed by persons associated with the Independent Catholic Mission. He also collaborated with the Anglican Church to train some Indian nuns for a new convent.

⁶⁵ Elpidinskii, *Переезд в монастырь о. Алексия*.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

Father Andronik at Bethany Ashram

Ultimately, Father Andronik spent around a year at the Bethany Ashram, which was in Vadasserikara, near Travancore. As the monastery had just undergone a large schism, with the majority of the brotherhood joining the Roman Catholic Church, Father Andronik found a small community of around eight monastics and twenty orphans.⁶⁷ During his time at the ashram, he gave the brothers a pleasant surprise by joining in with the common tasks, such as toiling in the garden, when he was not studying English. In his memoirs, he noted that he found the monastic life at the ashram quite different to that found within the tradition of the Orthodox Church: the services were quite shorter and more frequent, there was no strict austerity, no rite of tonsure, and no use of the Jesus Prayer.⁶⁸

Father Andronik noted that he did not exactly join in with the common services of the brotherhood, instead adapting his own monastic rule to fit the circumstances. He had everything required to serve the Divine Liturgy with him and, since the brotherhood maintained a parish nearby, leaving the ashram empty on Sundays and feast days, Father Andronik was able to serve Orthodox liturgies in the main monastery church on those days, as well as some other weekdays, with the occasional local stopping by to see what was going on.⁶⁹

The monks at Bethany Ashram conducted extensive work in the world: mission trips, lectures, retreats, etc. and Father Andronik was taken along on some of these occasions, in which he was able to make more contacts with the Indian Christians. On one occasion, he was asked to give two lectures about Orthodoxy to an audience of around five thousand

⁶⁷ Elpidinskii, *В индийском монастыре Бетани Асрам*.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

students.⁷⁰ Upon completion, the local bishop, Metropolitan Philoxenos,⁷¹ declared that it should be translated into the local language and printed for distribution. It seems like, at this point in time, there was a genuine desire for unity at all levels of the Malankara Church, and Father Andronik was told that his lectures allowed the people to stand more firmly in their Orthodoxy, especially in light of continued Roman Catholic and Protestant proselytism.⁷² Many sermons of the period mentioned that the Indians stood alongside the Russians, Greeks, Serbians, Romanians, and Bulgarians in Orthodoxy, as well as the Copts, Ethiopians, Armenians, and Syrians, showing that there were still some misunderstandings in the theological sphere.

In terms of missionary work, Father Andronik's year in the ashram was not particularly productive. Although he accompanied the brotherhood on their preaching missions, all subsequent catechism and baptisms were carried out by the Indian clergy, with Father Andronik's flock consisting solely of the dispersed Russians in India. Nonetheless, it was not without notable incidents: Father Andronik was contacted by an Englishman, Reverend James Yorke Batley,⁷³ who claimed to have been consecrated by an unnamed Assyrian prelate.⁷⁴ In fact, Batley had previously served as Vicar General for Mar Jacobus (Ulric Vernon Herford),⁷⁵ "Metropolitan of India, Ceylon, Mylapore, etc. of the Syro-

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Metropolitan Geevarghese Mor Philoxenos (1897 – 1951) of Thumpamon.

⁷² Elpidinskii, *В индийском монастыре Бетани Асрам.*

⁷³ Reverend James Yorke Batley (1880 – 1971) was a former Anglican minister and distinguished scholar who later joined the Society of Free Catholics and sought ordination from Herford before following him to India.

⁷⁴ Elpidinskii, *В индийском монастыре Бетани Асрам.*

⁷⁵ Reverend Ulric Vernon Herford (1866 – 1938), later consecrated as Metropolitan Mar Jacobus I by Mar Basilius Soares in 1902. He served as a Unitarian minister in Oxford, England in the 1890s before seeking consecration by the Nestorians. He formed the Evangelical Catholic Communion as a means of uniting Christians of various confessions. His life is detailed in Metropolitan Seraphim, *As Far as the East is From the West: Sidelights on Assyrian Church History* (London, England: Seraphic Press, 2018).

Chaldean Church, Patriarchate of Babylon and the East.” This obscure group had started as part of the Syriac Synagogue in Madras, a Western Rite mission of the Malankara Church, founded by the missionary Padre Luis Mariano Soares,⁷⁶ which later separated and became part of the Evangelical Catholic Communion.

Batley had established some missions in the south of India and, desiring to return to his native England for health reasons, requested to hand over the entire mission to the Russian Orthodox Church, possibly believing that the Russians would support the mission financially. Father Andronik wrote to Metropolitan Evlogii about the situation, but he received no reply.⁷⁷ It could be that the reply from the Metropolitan was simply lost or that he found the group’s claims to be dubious and chose not to get involved. Either way, this turns out to have been for the better, since both Herford and Batley had roots in very unorthodox movements: Despite being consecrated bishop by Mar Basilios Soares (the former Padre Luis Mariano), who was by then a metropolitan of the Chaldean Syrian Church, Herford’s past was in the Unitarian Church in England, while Batley had previously been a part of the so-called Society of Free Catholics, something of an Oxford Movement within the Unitarian Church that mixed Unitarianism, Catholicism, and socialism.⁷⁸

India was awash with fragments of various vagante⁷⁹ groups such as this and Indian Christianity to this day remains a minefield of such activity. One of the recurring themes in

⁷⁶ Padre Luis Mariano Soares (1858 – 1903), later Mar Basilios Soares, Metropolitan of India, Ceylon, Goa, and Mylapore, was an early leader in the Independent Catholic Mission but later left them in 1899 in order to be consecrated a bishop by Metropolitan Antonios Abd Isu of the Chaldean Syrian Church.

⁷⁷ Elpidinskii, *В индийском монастыре Бетани Асрам*.

⁷⁸ Unsurprisingly, Batley himself was later consecrated to the episcopate by a reader (!) from his parish in England, who himself had been secretly consecrated by another *episcopus vagans*.

⁷⁹ *Episcopus vagans* (pl. *episcopi vagantes*), literally ‘wandering bishop,’ refers to the activity of self-proclaimed bishops with spurious consecrations, claiming apostolic succession, sometimes from a number of ‘lines of succession,’ but without any connection to legitimate historical ecclesiastical hierarchies. Although such persons have existed almost as long as the Church has, the phenomenon has increased substantially from the late 19th century to contemporary times.

ROCOR's history is its frequent encounters with such groups, not only in India, but elsewhere in the world, some of which have led to successful reception into the Orthodox Church and others which have been disastrous.

It was this incident that led to Father Andronik's departure from the Bethany Ashram. Viewing Batley's group optimistically, he thought that something good might be able to come from their reception into the Church but the Indians, who were in the process of trying to consolidate their church and bring these small fragments back into the fold of the catholicos, preferred that Father Andronik back off. Father Alexios told him that, as a guest, he should be obedient to them and not get involved in such matters. Feeling that he would be putting material benefit and convenience ahead of his independence as a missionary if he stayed, Father Andronik decided that it would be best if he moved on.⁸⁰ He left the ashram on good terms with the abbot and brethren, and returned occasionally for visits, always being welcomed with warm hospitality and love from his good friends.

⁸⁰ Elpidinskii, *В индийском монастыре Бетани Асрам*.

Life on the Mountain

Departing from Bethany Ashram, Father Andronik moved onto Pathanapuram, where he settled at Saint Stephen's School, an English establishment led by a Malankara hierodeacon named Thomas.⁸¹ Father Andronik had befriended Father Thomas at a conference and was given some land at the school on which he could live and support himself. Also on site was a small convent that Father Thomas had founded, which had around ten sisters. After Father Thomas was ordained to the priesthood, Father Andronik often accompanied him on preaching and missionary trips and gave talks and homilies at the Sunday meetings held in the houses of parishioners.⁸²

Not too long after his arrival in Pathanapuram, Father Thomas took Father Andronik to the village of Pattazhy near Madura Mala – the Sweet Mountain – and helped him establish himself near the peak on some land purchased from the local Malankara priest, Father John. Here, surrounded by tigers, snakes, monkeys, elephants, and a whole host of other exotic creatures, Father Andronik lived an austere monastic life in a wooden hut that had coconut leaves for a roof. By August 1933, he had eight acres of land and had built a small church where he could serve the Divine Liturgy. Father Andronik was not completely isolated at his skete, however, and occasionally preached in Pattazhy's Malankara parish.⁸³

Being only five miles from Pathanapuram and well-connected, Father Andronik was able to travel often to Travancore, as well as Calcutta, Bombay, Bangalore, and Goa, where he served the needs of the Russian émigré population. Around this time, Father Andronik

⁸¹ Elpidinskii, *Патананурам*.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Elpidinskii, *Патали*.

received an *ukaz* from Paris stating that he had been appointed the Russian priest for the whole of India, and therefore pastor to the entire Russian diaspora on the subcontinent.⁸⁴

It was during this period that Father Andronik had one of his most providential encounters. A young Anglican priest, Reverend Edgar Moore, who had been living at the Anglican ashram of Christa Seva Sangh in Poone, had become interested in Orthodoxy. He had met Father Andronik in Travancore and, deciding that he wanted to enter the Orthodox Church, sought him out at the skete and requested to live with him and study Orthodoxy. The two ended up living together for nine months, working in the garden and building the skete chapel. During the down time from work, Father Andronik spoke with Father Edgar about the Orthodox faith. They travelled often to go on preaching missions in the local area, being invited by the local Christians.⁸⁵

Due to the fact that his guest was an ordained Anglican priest, Father Andronik was unable to receive him into the Orthodox Church, as a bishop was required for this. Unsure of how to advance, their conundrum was finally solved when an anonymous benefactor sent a sum of money for Father Edgar to travel to Jerusalem and attempt to be received into the Orthodox Church by the Patriarch there.⁸⁶ The two friends met again in 1951 at the New Kursk-Root Hermitage in Mahopac, New York. By then, Father Edgar Moore had become Archimandrite Lazarus and was soon to return to India and eventually become not only Father Andronik's successor, but one of ROCOR's most well-known missionaries.

Throughout the rest of his time on the mountain, Father Andronik was assisted by a young man Samuel, who, judging from the account given by Father Andronik in his memoirs, seems to have been received into the Orthodox Church. Samuel stayed at the skete and helped

⁸⁴ Elpidinskii, *Мое хозяйство и постройку*.

⁸⁵ Elpidinskii, *Отец Лазарь Мур*.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

with the various household and garden tasks. He helped Father Andronik learn Malayalam and learned some Russian in return. Although Father Andronik served Vespers, Matins, and the Hours alone in his cell, Divine Liturgy was served in the chapel with Samuel chanting. He became proficient to a degree in Church Slavonic and was able to sing the responses to the litanies and prayers. Father Andronik mentions that the more complicated parts of the service, like the Antiphons, Cherubic Hymn, Creed, and the Anaphora, were translated into Malayalam and chanted according to Samuel's own melodies. He read the Epistle in Malayalam from his own Bible.⁸⁷

Samuel was a sickly young man and was often bedridden. On a number of occasions, during his illnesses, various saints appeared to guide him and heal his afflictions. Father Andronik recounts in his memoirs stories about the appearances of Saint Andronik, Saint Seraphim of Sarov, and Saint John Chrysostom to Samuel, all whom he recognised from icons in the chapel.⁸⁸ Eventually, after a number of years with Father Andronik, he left the skete to get married on the advice of the local Indian Metropolitan and nothing more is known of him.

Father Andronik lived an austere life at his skete, maintaining the monastic rule to the best of his abilities. He performed his prayer rule and the divine services during the night, when it was cooler, and spent the days labouring in the garden or constructing various buildings at the skete, including the church. After his departure from India, he handed his skete over to the local Indian bishop, Metropolitan Divanyasios.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Elpidinskii, *Самуил*.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Metropolitan Thoma Mar Divanyasios (1887 – 1972) of Niranam.

Russian Athos in India

Father Andronik was not the only Russian ascetic labouring on the Indian subcontinent. In 1936 there arrived from Jerusalem a certain Schemamonk Konstantin (Geshtovt).⁹⁰ Father Konstantin was the son of a general who had commanded the Preobrazhensky regiment and, like Father Andronik, had fought in World War One. Exiled to Constantinople from Crimea, he became a circus acrobat and later an extra in Hollywood after immigrating to the United States.

He later travelled to Mount Athos, spending three years there but never settling, although he was tonsured into the Great Schema at a cell in Karoulia. He subsequently spent three years in Egypt – possibly Sinai – and some time in Jerusalem. It was from Jerusalem that Father Andronik received a letter from him, expressing his desire to join him in India. Considering that he mentioned that he was penniless, Father Andronik did not expect him to arrive anytime soon, but Father Konstantin turned up at the skete only two days after the letter, having had an adventurous journey through Syria, Mesopotamia, and the Persian Gulf.⁹¹

The presence of Father Konstantin did not provide much assistance to Father Andronik and his mission. He had contacted some friends at the monastery of Saint Panteleimon on Mount Athos who confirmed that Father Konstantin was not a member of their brotherhood and had gone to India on his own accord - in other words, without a blessing.⁹² Eschewing the life of hard work at the skete, Father Konstantin relocated to another mountain around twenty-five miles away and took up residence in a cave. He shortly afterwards built a hut and, after it was robbed, he burned it down and moved deeper into the

⁹⁰ Elpidinskii, *Схимонах Константин Гештовт*.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

jungle. He often visited Father Andronik's skete, having walked through the night and, after spending the day there, walked the twenty-five miles back to his own dwelling place.

In his deep part of the jungle there lived a very primitive people, the Kanikkars. The Kanikkars had no medical care in their communities and died in very large numbers, which was a cause of great sorrow to Father Konstantin. Whatever influence that Father Andronik had over this schemamonk was lost as Father Konstantin took to wandering the cities of India, ostensibly raising money for the Kanikkar people, as well as for the Russian Orthodox Church. Father Andronik notes in his memoirs that he finds it unlikely that the money ever made it to either party.⁹³

As the years progressed, Father Konstantin's erratic behaviour was the cause of many issues for Father Andronik. While living at his own skete, Father Konstantin had started serving the Divine Liturgy, despite not being ordained. As he began to travel, this turned into a problem as Father Andronik heard reports of how he was hearing the confessions of the Russians and communing them at his liturgies. He was even known to baptise the children of the small Russian Orthodox communities. Father Andronik gave him a penance, which was carried out, but he was never sure if Father Konstantin was completely obedient to him. He informed the Russians that they were not to receive communion from Father Konstantin, while Saint John Chrysostom himself appeared to Father Andronik's assistant Samuel and chastised him for taking part.⁹⁴

During the Second World War, the wandering monk lived in a tent outside of an Air Force base near Bombay. He befriended some Americans, who later gifted him a small aircraft that he could use to fly around India on his fundraising journeys. It was this little plane that led to his untimely demise. In 1956, Father Konstantin crashed his aircraft into a

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

large passenger airplane arriving in Bombay from Karachi and crashed into the sea, ending his life. Father Andronik notes that he was a man of undoubted piety, however strangely it was manifest.⁹⁵

At the very same time that Father Andronik was dealing with Father Konstantin, he heard reports of another Russian Athonite schemamonk wandering the subcontinent and serving his own liturgies – Father Gavriil, also of Russian-German stock. Father Andronik writes in his memoirs that he was thankful that he never had to deal with him in person.⁹⁶ The problems that such characters would have caused Father Andronik can be compared to the numerous pseudo-orthodox vagantes and ‘True Orthodox’ that are today present in many of the Church’s areas of missionary work, including India, causing confusion and dissension in the fledgling Orthodox communities.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

The Second Delegation of ROCOR

In November 1937, the Synod of ROCOR sent its second delegation to India, with the firm intent of properly establishing a mission on the subcontinent.⁹⁷ The Synod chose Archbishop Nestor of Kamchatka to lead the delegation and he was accompanied on this missionary trip by Archimandrite Nafanail (L'vov).⁹⁸ Prior to their arrival in India proper and the arranged meeting with the catholicos, the delegation stopped in Ceylon in order to assess the situation there, as there were also a number of members of the Indian church living there.

It was in the capital city Colombo that the first contacts were made with people who expressed an interest in becoming Orthodox. These were a group of several native Anglican and Roman Catholic clergymen who stated that Orthodoxy was closer to their mentality than Western Christianity.⁹⁹ One of the Anglican priests, Reverend Basil Jayawardene¹⁰⁰ of the parish of Saint Paul the Apostle, arranged for the Russian delegation to use his church building for Orthodox services and it is reported that twenty-eight Anglican priests were present when Archbishop Nestor served the Divine Liturgy.¹⁰¹ Unfortunately, according to Father Andronik's memoirs, since both Archbishop Nestor and Father Nafanail were weak singers, the interested Anglicans were not to be edified by the presence of 'singing Russians.'¹⁰²

⁹⁷ GARF, File 6343/1/258.

⁹⁸ Archbishop Nafanail (L'vov) (1906 – 1986) of Vienna. Born into a noble family, he was educated, tonsured, and ordained in Manchuria. He later helped establish the ROCOR parishes in North Africa following the Second World War and served as abbot of Saint Job of Pochaev monastery in Munich.

⁹⁹ Seide, Fr. George, *Geshichte der Russischen Orthodoxen Kirche im Ausland von der Grundung bis in die Gegenwart* 4.6 (Wiesbaden, 1983).

¹⁰⁰ Reverend Basil Jayawardene was an Anglo-Catholic and noted friend of the Orthodox. He was known to have lent his assistance to both the Russian and Indian missions on Ceylon.

¹⁰¹ Elpidinskii, *Apkxuenuckon Hecmop*.

¹⁰² *Ibid*. It is doubly unfortunate that a proper hierarchical Divine Liturgy was not served with the full liturgical splendour of the Russian tradition, as the church building in question was modelled on the Hagia Sophia of Constantinople – very fitting for ROCOR's imperial legacy.

Providentially, prior to the delegation's departure for Travancore, Archbishop Nestor fell sick. It was during this delay that they were to meet another clergyman who was interested in joining himself and his flock to the Russian Orthodox Church – Padre Joseph Alvares.¹⁰³ He was so enthusiastic about the possibility of becoming Orthodox that he readily signed his church building over to Archbishop Nestor and registered it as an 'Orthodox Mission.'¹⁰⁴

Now, while Father Georg Seide writes that Alvares was a Roman Catholic priest,¹⁰⁵ it is almost a certainty that Alvares's parish was actually the Cathedral of Our Lady of Good Death ('Buona Morta') in Hultsdorf, Colombo and that his flock of around seventy people represented the remnant of the Independent Catholic Mission,¹⁰⁶ a group of around fifty parishes from Goa, South India, and Ceylon, led by Roman Catholic priest Padre Antonio Joseph Francisco Xavier Alvares,¹⁰⁷ that broke away from the Roman Catholic Church in the 1880s and sought refuge in the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church as a Western Rite mission. Alvares was consecrated as Metropolitan Mar Julius I and Padre Luis Mariano Soares, who is mentioned above, was also one of the other early leaders of this movement before joining the Chaldean Syrian Church.

¹⁰³ Believed to be the nephew of Mar Julius I, he died in 1949.

¹⁰⁴ Elpidinskii, *Архиепископ Нестор*.

¹⁰⁵ Seide, 4.6.

¹⁰⁶ More information about the Independent Catholic Mission can be found in Ajesh T. Philip & George Alexander, *Western Rites of the Syro-Malankara Orthodox Churches: The Mission Untold* (Kerala: OCP Publications, 2018). Many of the individuals encountered by ROCOR in India can also be found in the story of the ICM.

¹⁰⁷ Padre Antonio Joseph Francisco Xavier Alvares (1836 - 1923), later Mar Julius I, led the Independent Catholic Movement until his death. He was later canonised by the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. Incidentally, Mar Julius had participated in the episcopal consecration of Rene Vilatte, later Mar Timotheus I, an infamous *episcopus vagans* who had initially attempted to be received into the Russian Orthodox Church when he was pastor of an Old Catholic congregation in Wisconsin. The consecration took place on May 29th 1892 at the Buona Morta cathedral in Colombo.

By the time Mar Julius died in 1923, the ICM had already begun to disintegrate. Colombo had been the headquarters of the ICM after Mar Julius' relocation to Ceylon but he returned to his native Goa towards the end of his life, effectively leaving the main body of his flock without a leader. To this end, the local community in Ceylon petitioned the Malankara synod to consecrate them a new bishop, a request that was turned down. Father Andronik mentions in his memoirs that this group sought to be received by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1900 after having separated from Rome, but this is most likely confusion on his part.¹⁰⁸

The group had already left the Roman Catholic Church and been received by the Malankara Church in the 1890s, as has been mentioned above, but recent research shows that, in their attempt to find a bishop to pastor their flock of ten thousand faithful, the mission in Ceylon, represented by their lay leader Stephen de Silva,¹⁰⁹ petitioned the Independent Catholic Church of the Philippines, also known as the Aglipayan Church, to consecrate a bishop for them in 1903, another request that was turned down.¹¹⁰

Therefore, it seems quite likely that they may have also contacted the Ecumenical Patriarchate around this period of time for the very reason. Father Andronik writes that Constantinople proposed to receive them by rebaptism, an offer that was unacceptable to them.¹¹¹ In another twist to the tale of the ICM, the Malankara Church had actually sent some hierarchs on a long-awaited pastoral visit as recently as 1933 and 1937, when Catholicos Baselios Geevarghese II and Metropolitan Alexios Mar Thevodosios led a delegation that visited the ICM parishes and celebrated the Holy Qurbana¹¹² at the cathedral.¹¹³ With this in

¹⁰⁸ Elpidinskii, *Архипиускоп Нестор*.

¹⁰⁹ Stephen de Silva (1851 – 1916) was the second Lay-Trustee of the Independent Catholic Movement and one of the founding members of the movement.

¹¹⁰ Philip & Alexander, 34.

¹¹¹ Elpidinskii, *Архипиускоп Нестор*.

¹¹² The Syriac name for the Divine Liturgy.

mind, it cannot be ascertained what their true motives for being received into the Russian Orthodox Church were.

Following these encounters on Ceylon, the ROCOR delegation travelled to mainland India, where they met with Father Andronik at his skete. During their time in Travancore, they travelled extensively, celebrating the divine services, visiting local churches and institutions of the Malankara Church, and meeting with the catholicos and members of their Holy Synod. Archbishop Nestor explained to Father Andronik that his intention was to create a diocese that included India, Ceylon, and the Malay Archipelago, with the initial nucleus consisting of the four Russian Orthodox communities that Father Andronik ministered to.¹¹⁴

However, the positive experience that Bishop Dimitri had when he met with the Indian bishops was not to be repeated during the delegation's visit. According to Father Andronik, a certain coolness had developed on the part of a faction within the Indian Church which was no longer well-disposed towards union with the Russian Church.¹¹⁵ The creative discussions that Bishop Dimitri was able to have were replaced by formulaic answers and useless, repetitive conversation. Father Georg Seide's assessment of this is that the Anglicans and Roman Catholic missionaries, feeling threatened by the thought of a potential Orthodox mission being established in India, especially one with the cooperation of the local Christians, applied pressure on members of the Holy Synod in order to derail the negotiations.¹¹⁶

The question of the Council of Chalcedon also raised its head again. Archbishop Nestor wrote to the Synod from Kerala that the Indians had strong veneration for Dioscoros, Severos, and other monophysite leaders and that it would be very dangerous and difficult to

¹¹³ Philip & Alexander, 158.

¹¹⁴ Elpidinskii, *Архиепископ Нестор*.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Seide, 4.6.

combat it.¹¹⁷ Prior to the meeting between the Russian and Indian hierarchs, Metropolitan Anastasii had sent copies of the dogmatic decrees and definitions of the seven ecumenical councils to the catholicos, but there seems to have been no change in the position of the Indians and that they felt the first three to be sufficient and would recognise the other four only if they did not interfere with the first three.

Following the disappointment of the meetings with the Indian synod, the attempt at starting a mission had come to a crisis point. The three Russians travelled from Travancore to Ceylon to re-assess the situation of the mission its possibilities, keeping in mind that the community of Padre Alvares had already signed their property over to the ROCOR delegation in the hope of becoming the centre of a mission in Ceylon. Father Andronik had already been nominated as official head of the mission, a position he had held *de facto* since his arrival in 1931. However, things did not go according to the hopes of the delegates: the three-month trip had emptied their coffers, forcing Archbishop Nestor to return to Manchuria, leaving behind Father Nafanail, with whom, as Father Andronik recounts, he had many disagreements.¹¹⁸

Despite these setbacks, Metropolitan Anastasii still had optimistic hopes for the mission and encouraged the rest of ROCOR to assist in some way. While in England to participate in the Walsingham Pilgrimage the following year, Archbishop Nestor formed the Brotherhood of Saint Thomas, which had Patriarch Gavrilo (Dozič) of Serbia¹¹⁹ as an honorary member. The Brotherhood was committed to securing financial, material, and moral

¹¹⁷ GARF, File 6343/1/258.

¹¹⁸ Elpidinskii, *Архиепископ Нестор*.

¹¹⁹ Patriarch Gavrilo (Dozič) V (1880 – 1950) of Serbia. He attained his doctorate in Athens and lived on Mount Athos for a time before being elected bishop. He spent time in concentration camps during both World Wars. Patriarch Gavrilo died under suspicious circumstances during the early years of the Tito regime.

assistance for the Russian mission in India.¹²⁰ The Metropolitan also established the 25th December as a specific day for taking a collection for the mission in all parishes of the Russian diaspora. In order to facilitate the registration of the mission, Metropolitan Anastasii also tried to change Archbishop Nestor's title from Kamchatka to Ceylon and Colombo.¹²¹

Father Nafanail continued to work at building the mission from the new church in Colombo, but this quickly descended into something of a farce. The parish, having been a Western Rite mission that not only maintained the Roman Rite, but also some Roman Catholic observations and devotions, refused to switch their liturgical practices to those of the Russian Orthodox Church, causing a major disagreement between them and Father Nafanail.¹²² It is not known, however, if the people had officially been received into the Orthodox Church by this point, or if it was just their building.

To make matters worse, the Roman Catholics, from whom the ICM had separated around half a century beforehand, litigated against the Orthodox mission in order to try and seize back the property, which was located in central Colombo and worth many thousands of rupees. Father Andronik even recounts in his memoirs an attempt made by the Catholics at physically taking the property by force. Some lawyers who were parishioners of Saint Paul the Apostle Anglican Church agreed to assist Father Nafanail by defending him in court.¹²³

Not until after the Second World War did Father Andronik receive news of the final decision of the court, which awarded the property to Archbishop Nestor.¹²⁴ Unfortunately, by this time, Archbishop Nestor was a metropolitan in the Soviet Union and Father Nafanail was serving the Russian refugees amongst the ruins of post-war Europe as Bishop of Brussels, so

¹²⁰ GARF, File 6343/1/259.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Elpidinskii, *На острове Цейлоне.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

the opportunity had well and truly passed by. Today, the cathedral is in the hands of the Roman Catholic Church, as are the majority of the former ICM churches on Ceylon.

If the machinations of Roman Catholics and Anglicans could be offered as one reason for the ultimate lack of success at this stage in the mission, Father Andronik also offers another: Father Nafanail himself. It is quite obvious from reading his memoirs that he did not have a very high opinion of Father Nafanail, at whom he explicitly points the finger as a major factor in the mission's failure. At the onset of the court case, some Russians and Greeks who were living in Colombo helped Father Nafanail find another location to hold services and even arranged a salary for him. According to Father Andronik's memoirs, Father Nafanail undermined respect for himself by living in a manner unbecoming of a monk. Although he spares us the details, he alludes to "living freely."¹²⁵

Father Nafanail's aforementioned lack of musical ability also contributed to his subsequent departure: Father Andronik occasionally travelled to Ceylon to direct the choir when Father Nafanail served, but when Pascha came around in 1939, he had other commitments in Travancore and was unable to assist with the choir. By the time it came to serve Paschal Matins, neither Father Nafanail or anyone else could even sing the Paschal troparion.¹²⁶ Although this may be a somewhat exaggerated statement from Father Andronik, it nonetheless shows that the mission, while under Father Nafanail's leadership, was not functioning at a relatively routine level. The Greeks hastened to put him aboard a steamer to Venice and gave him five British pounds for the journey, thus ending the ROCOR mission on Ceylon.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ In his book *Русская Индия* (Moscow: Veche, 2010), the author Nikolai Nikolaevich Nepomniashii writes that Father Nafanail served as a missionary in Kerala from 1935 to 1936, where he became an archimandrite, and from 1937 to 1939 in Ceylon. This seems to be a case of conflating one Russian missionary with another and the dates given are almost certainly those of Father Andronik. Similarly, many articles mention that Bishop

Metropolitan Anastasii, following these developments, released Archbishop Nestor and Archimandrite Nafanail from the responsibilities of the Indian mission and tried once again to assign Archimandrite Filaret,¹²⁸ but his departure for India again failed to materialise. By this time, war drums were beating in Europe and the attention of the Synod was taken away from India.

Viktor (Sviatin) of Peking served as a liaison between the Russian and Indian churches between 1936 and 1938, but there is no mention of this in any primary sources from the period or location and it is my assessment that he never stepped foot on Indian soil.

¹²⁸ GARF, File 6343/1/259.

The Later Years of Father Andronik's Mission

Following the failed attempt to start the mission in Colombo and the departure of Father Nafanail, Father Andronik was once again left on his own to continue the lonely task of preserving the Russian mission in India. The episcopal visitations had been the high watermark of activity in India during Father Andronik's residence in the country and the decade following was one of quieter, much reduced activity in the Indian mission field, a situation undoubtedly exacerbated by the descent of much of the world into war.

With the fall of France in the spring of 1940, Father Andronik was cut off from his bishop, Metropolitan Evlogii, and by extension the rest of the Church, having little to no communication with anyone else. Remote and isolated, he continued to make friends with the Indian Christians and work on the farm at his skete.

The war ended up bringing more Russians to India, with the largest groups gathering in Bombay and Calcutta. Once the war had reached the Soviet Union and many began to flee the country, he returned to the Kirichenko farm for the feast of the Nativity of Christ and had around sixty Russians attend, who all received confession and Holy Communion. Among this group were many readers and singers who assisted in the service. Most of them were transiting through India enroute to South America and Father Andronik reflected in his memoirs that it was just like serving in Russia, such was the number of people.¹²⁹

The Anglican Bishop of Bombay also contacted Father Andronik and requested his help at an internment camp three hundred miles south of Bombay. Archbishop Sawa (Sovetov),¹³⁰ Orthodox chaplain to the Polish forces in Great Britain, had requested an Orthodox priest to visit the camp and minister to around one thousand Polish Orthodox

¹²⁹ Elpidinskii, *Русские в Индии*.

¹³⁰ Archbishop Sawa (Sovetov) (1898 – 1948) followed the Polish exiles to Great Britain at the beginning of the Second World War and ministered to the newly-founded Polish Orthodox communities. He worked closely with ROCOR clergy during and after the war.

Christians, many of whom were young women. Father Andronik served Divine Liturgy at the camp but, as he reports in his memoirs, there was considerable hostility towards him and the Russian Orthodox Church on the part of the Catholic Poles and many of the Orthodox were afraid to attend the services. Rocks were thrown at the chapel during services and even at Father Andronik as he came and went from the camp.¹³¹

The focus of Father Andronik's work was now ministering to the Russian refugees who were arriving in India during the course of the war. The Russian Orthodox community in Calcutta had around eighty people, with a decent choir, and Father Andronik used Armenian cemetery chapel for services, something that he had been doing on a non-regular basis since the 1930s.¹³² When he was not present, he encouraged the Russians to attend Divine Liturgy at the long-established Greek parish. In Bombay, the community was smaller but better organised and Father Andronik was also able to secure the use of the Armenian church¹³³ for his services. Father Andronik served these two communities, as well as one in Delhi, for the remainder of the war.¹³⁴

In 1947, noticing the need for Russian language instructors, Father Andronik decided to take up teaching, his former profession, at the Russian Department in the University of Delhi, hoping to be a point of contact for questions on Russian culture and religion.¹³⁵ He was to be disappointed, as there was little interest in this regard and the number of students shrunk to around thirty due to riots taking place in the city. Father Andronik was present in the city for India's independence and the almost immediate establishment of the Soviet embassy

¹³¹ Elpidinskii, *Русские в Индии*.

¹³² This chapel was most likely under Saint Gregory the Illuminator Church, the main Armenian parish in Calcutta, which still functions today.

¹³³ Most likely the Church of Saint Peter, which still functions today.

¹³⁴ Elpidinskii, *Русские в Индии*.

¹³⁵ Elpidinskii, *В университете в Дели*.

there. Father Andronik was an eyewitness to the civil strife and internecine violence that continued for the rest of the year and carried on into 1948, coming close to being shot on several occasions. After less than a year at the university, Father Andronik quit his position and went to live on the farm of a Russian man in the Blue Mountains, where he worked on the land and unsuccessfully tried to establish a Russian spiritual centre.¹³⁶

It is around this time, in June 1948, that reports began appearing in the religious press that the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church was on the verge of joining with the Moscow Patriarchate.¹³⁷ According to the reports, as he does not mention this correspondence in his memoirs, Father Andronik, hearing that religious freedom had been granted in the Soviet Union, sent letters to the Synod in Moscow encouraging them to actualise his hopes for union. With the Cold War beginning and India having just received independence, the ‘Great Game’ reared its head again and the British became very guarded. Father Andronik received word from the Saint Sergius Theological Institute in Paris that religious freedom in the Soviet Union was a myth and was encouraged to break off contact, which he did. Although the Indian church denied the rumours, it made the situation for the Indian Christians very tense for a short period, as suspicions about Soviet penetration were widespread.

In August 1948, he received a message from Bishop Ioann (Shahovskii),¹³⁸ possibly the same correspondence that told him to back off from the Moscow Patriarchate, telling him that the time was right to move on and recommending that he go to the United States. Father Andronik accepted his recommendations and began to prepare for his departure. He visited

¹³⁶ As Father Andronik had always been under Metropolitan Evlogii, who returned to the Moscow Patriarchate at the end of the war, we can assume that, by now, Father Andronik was *de facto* a part of the Moscow Patriarchate, whether he was aware of it or not, although this was not to last long.

¹³⁷ *The Christian Century*, 2nd June 1948, 21st July 1948, and 11th August 1948.

¹³⁸ Archbishop Ioann (Shahovskii) (1902 – 1989) of San Francisco. As an archimandrite under Metropolitan Evlogii, he served parishes in Germany during the war. He later transferred to the American Metropolia, which became the Orthodox Church in America, and served as a bishop.

Travancore one last time to say farewell to his friends, handed his skete over to the local Indian bishop, and began preparing his documents.¹³⁹ He received a blessing from Metropolitan Vladimir (Tikhonitskii)¹⁴⁰ to serve in the United States and spent several months in Madras awaiting his visa. During this time, he made several pilgrimages to the place of Saint Thomas the Apostle's martyrdom and was able to arrange with the local Armenian priest to serve Divine Liturgy in his church for the Russian community in Madras.

In May 1949, he boarded the cargo ship Dzhalakirti and took the slow route to New York, arriving in America in July. Father Andronik eventually served in both the United States and Canada and taught at Saint Tikhon's Seminary in South Canaan, Pennsylvania, later becoming abbot of Saint Tikhon's Monastery. He reposed in 1958, but his dreams for eventual union with the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church did not die with him.

¹³⁹ Elpidinskii, *Последний раз в Траванкоре*.

¹⁴⁰ Metropolitan Vladimir (Tikhonitskii) (1873 – 1959) of Paris was Metropolitan Evlogii's successor as head of the Russian Archdiocese of Western Europe.

Father Lazarus Takes Over the Indian Mission

Following the departure of Father Andronik, the missionary work of ROCOR in India ceased for a short period until one of his former partners in his missionary labours received an obedience to return to the subcontinent and revive the mission.

With the Synod of ROCOR having settled in Mahopac, New York in 1950, in the aftermath of the Second World War, it took a number of years for them to pick up where they had left off in terms of external missions. The situation was by now very different: a whole new wave of Russian émigré communities had spread across Europe, North and South America, and Australia after the fall of the former bastions of the Russian diaspora, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and China to communism.

Nonetheless, despite this situation of relative chaos and great suffering within the Russian diaspora, the Synod was still willing to respond to the appeals of those seeking to be united to the Orthodox Church. Archimandrite Lazarus (Moore), formerly Reverend Edgar Moore of the Church of England and temporary guest of Father Andronik at his skete, wrote a heartfelt letter¹⁴¹ to the Synod about the desires of the Indian Christians to be united to Holy Orthodoxy on 31st March 1952. He explained that he had been given a substantial donation towards this endeavour by an anonymous benefactor, which could support the mission for some years, and that the current situation in Kerala, in which the catholicos and patriarchal parties were involved in constant litigation over ownership of church buildings and other properties,¹⁴² called for immediate action. Thus, on 11th April 1952, the Synod restored the mission to India as The Russian Orthodox Malabar Ecclesiastical Mission, under the auspices of Father Lazarus.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, dated 31st March 1952.

¹⁴² Legal disputes over properties still flare up to this day in Kerala and continue to be a source of contention between the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church and the Jacobite Syriac Church of India.

¹⁴³ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50/645.

Edgar Harman Moore was born in 1902 in Swindon, England. Upon completion of his education at Elstree and Aldenham schools, he studied at the University of Reading Agricultural College before spending five years in Canada from 1921 until 1926, where he worked at variety of jobs, including farmer, lumberjack, and longshoreman. Upon returning to England, he attended Saint Augustine's College, an Anglican foundation established for the specific purpose of training clergymen to serve the Church of England across Britain's far-flung empire. Upon completion of his studies, he was ordained deacon and priest in 1930 and 1931 respectively, serving at All Saint's parish in Islington, London.¹⁴⁴

In 1933, after two years of parish ministry, Father Edgar felt the call to serve in India and was despatched to Poone, where he joined the recently-formed Christian ashram Christa Seva Sangh,¹⁴⁵ which had been founded by Reverend John Copley Winslow¹⁴⁶ under the auspices of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.¹⁴⁷ Father Edgar began his ascetic life at the ashram and became involved with missionary work among the Indian Christians of Kerala, which brought his attention to the world of Eastern Christianity and, eventually, Orthodoxy.¹⁴⁸ In 1934, he left the ashram and joined Father Andronik at his skete for nine months, which is detailed above.

Following his departure from India, Father Edgar went directly to the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem and, from there, to the ROCOR Synod in Yugoslavia and then to Saint Panteleimon Monastery on Mount Athos, where he spent seven weeks. In late

¹⁴⁴ The main source for Father Lazarus' life is the obituary *A Lifetime in Pilgrimage: Archimandrite Lazarus (Moore), 1902-1992* by Father Andrew Midgley, serialised in *Orthodox Outlook* in 1993.

¹⁴⁵ Christa Seva Sangh ashram, or the Community of the Servants of Christ, is an Anglican ashram founded as a way of indigenising the Christian message in India.

¹⁴⁶ Rev. John Copley Winslow (1882 – 1974) was an Anglican missionary and major proponent of “fulfilment theology.”

¹⁴⁷ Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) is an Anglican missionary organisation founded in 1701 for the purpose of missionary work in the British Empire.

¹⁴⁸ Midgley, *A Lifetime in Pilgrimage*.

1935, he was received into the Orthodox Church and subsequently tonsured into monasticism with the name Lazarus and ordained hierodeacon and hieromonk by Archbishop Feofan¹⁴⁹ at Milkovo Monastery, before being sent back to Jerusalem to serve in the Ecclesiastical Mission. He was to remain at the Mission until 1948, when he was forced to leave due to the Arab-Israeli War. He arrived in the United States in 1950, by then an archimandrite, to serve as the secretary to the Synod of Bishops at Mahopac in New York.¹⁵⁰

Having received the blessing to depart for India by the Synod, Father Lazarus arrived in 1952, after a delay in London, along with Novice Joseph (Stewart), Nun Maria (Domverg), and Novice Maria (Pavlenko). At this time, Metropolitan Anastasii sent a covering letter¹⁵¹ to the catholicos of the Indian church stating that he hoped to renew the discussions that had been abandoned due to the war and to complete the work of union that had begun in the 1930s with the visit of Bishop Dimitri. Father Lazarus had high hopes for the mission, he explained in a memorandum to the Synod, as the catholicos and the current generation of Metropolitans were “particularly pious” and a very dynamic group of individuals.¹⁵²

In the winter of 1953, Father Lazarus engaged in extensive dialogues with Catholicos Baselios Geevarghese II, Metropolitan Alexios Mar Thevodosios, and Metropolitan Thoma Mar Divanyasios, regarding the Christological controversy of Chalcedon. The outcome of this was a statement by the Theological Commission of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church which produced a statement that was very favourable towards the Chalcedonian definition,¹⁵³ but nevertheless insisted on a union based on the first three ecumenical

¹⁴⁹ Archbishop Feofan (Gavrilov) (1872 – 1943) of Kursk and Oboyan. He was responsible for the Kursk Root icon leaving Russia and was its guardian in Yugoslavia until his death.

¹⁵⁰ Midgley, *A Lifetime in Pilgrimage*.

¹⁵¹ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50/686, dated 19th May 1952.

¹⁵² Archive of the Synod, File 22/50.

¹⁵³ See Appendix I.

councils. Father Lazarus supported this move, although the Synod of ROCOR did not agree, telling him that common prayer and liturgy is only possible with the Indian church on the basis of their acceptance of the fullness of the Orthodox teaching, which specifically includes the seven ecumenical councils.¹⁵⁴

By this time, Brother Joseph had left Father Lazarus and, having first taught at a school in Darjeeling, went to live at an Anglican monastery in Calcutta, although he was still loosely attached to Father Lazarus' mission. Father Lazarus himself, having lived at the Indian monastery of Saint George for a time, was now living in the house of an Indian priest.¹⁵⁵ In addition to the work of the mission, Father Lazarus was also engaged in another work that would have profound significance for the world of English-speaking Orthodox Christianity: the translation of spiritual writings. During his time in India, Father Lazarus translated the *Psalter*, the *Jordanville Prayer Book*, *An Offering to Contemporary Monasticism* by Saint Ignatii Brianchaninov, and the *Ladder of Divine Ascent* by Saint John Climacus, as well as a number of short articles and sundry liturgical texts, services, and akathists.

In 1954, just before Great Lent, Father Lazarus attended another theological commission, this time including twelve Indian metropolitans and Russian theologian Dr. Nikolai Zernov,¹⁵⁶ who had been principal of the Catholicate College, a secular institution run by the Indian church, for over a year.¹⁵⁷ This commission had been formed at the initiative of Zernov while he was in India and it was his intention that Father Lazarus take

¹⁵⁴ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50.

¹⁵⁵ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, dated 12th February 1954.

¹⁵⁶ Nikolai Mikhailovich Zernov (1898 – 1980) was a Russian émigré theologian who taught at Oxford University. He was well-known in ecumenical circles for his work towards unity, especially as a member and secretary of the Fellowship of Saint Alban and Saint Sergius.

¹⁵⁷ Archive of the Synod, ref 22/50, dated 25th March 1954.

over from him after his departure, but Father Lazarus' subsequent moves from the area put an end to these aspirations.

With a stalemate having been reached in negotiations with the Indians, Father Lazarus made the first of several moves in India, relocating to the village of Kotagiri in the Nilgiri Hills region of the state of Tamil Nadu, just across the state border of Kerala. Almost immediately after arriving in the area, Father Lazarus befriended A.J. Appasamy,¹⁵⁸ an Anglican bishop from the Church of South India¹⁵⁹ who was active in the area. Bishop Appasamy recounts that Father Lazarus used to walk six miles to and from his place of residence in order to help him edit a book he was writing. Father Lazarus also translated prayers from the Orthodox service for the feast of Pentecost for churches in the Coimbatore diocese to use in both English and Tamil during the season of Pentecost. As a result of this cooperation, Father Lazarus made and maintained friendships with the local Anglican clergy and was often invited to preach in their churches on feast days, as well as to read learned papers at conferences and meetings.¹⁶⁰

The missionary work enters something of a quiet point at this stage and, from the records that are available, it seems like Father Lazarus dedicated most of his time to ascetic labours and translation work. The quietness of the mission was undoubtedly noticed by the Synod, which wrote to Father Lazarus in July of 1960, intending to recall him to the United States. Father Lazarus was able to convince them to allow him to stay as he had not only commenced learning Tamil, the language of the predominately Hindu locals, but the missionary brotherhood was beginning to be rebuilt, with two men, Novice Joseph

¹⁵⁸ Bishop Aiyadurai Jesudasen Appasamy (1891 – 1980) was a prominent Indian Christian theologian. He was part of the Rethinking Christianity Group that sought to synthesise Christianity and Hindu philosophy. The story of his relationship with Father Lazarus can be found in his autobiography, *A Bishop's Story*.

¹⁵⁹ The Church of South India is the result of the 1948 union of several Protestant denominations in South India, including the Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and others.

¹⁶⁰ Appasamy, A.J., *A Bishop's Story* (1969), 143-146.

(Yavorskii) and George, now living with him and another, Albert, due to arrive.¹⁶¹ Novice Joseph was a Ukrainian from Canada who had muscular dystrophy and was effectively a cripple, while George was an Indian and a member of the Church of South India who was interested in Orthodoxy. Nothing is known about Albert other than that he was Belgian.

Father Lazarus was later able to report that some Hindus from the local village were willing to become Christian, but that their village was too much of a distance away for it to be practical.¹⁶² The following year, he wrote to Metropolitan Anastasii asking for a blessing to receive into the Orthodox Church another member of the Church of South India, Sevak V.C. George, who was leader of an Anglican ashram in Varkala, Travancore.¹⁶³ The man intended to live with the missionary community following his reception into the Church. It can be assumed that the blessing was given, but nothing more is heard about him in later correspondence from India. Likewise, there are no further reports from the period that mention further interest from the local Hindus.

The major highlight of the Kotagiri period of the mission is, from the perspective of the Synod in New York, Father Lazarus' visit to New Delhi to take part as an observer in the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1961. Father Lazarus received this obedience from Archpriest George Grabbe,¹⁶⁴ who intended for him to gather information on the activities of the Moscow Patriarchate's delegation. Father Lazarus attended a number of sessions and wrote a report back to the Synod which was rather critical of both the Orthodox Church and the World Council of Churches. Within two years, Father Lazarus and the mission would be on the move again.

¹⁶¹ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, dated 24th August 1960.

¹⁶² Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, dated 12th November 1960.

¹⁶³ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, dated 11th October 1961.

¹⁶⁴ Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) (1902 – 1995) of Washington. After many years as Chancellor of the Synod, Father George received monastic tonsure upon the death of his wife and soon became a bishop.

The Mission Moves to North India

Frustrated with his lack of success in the negotiations with the Indian bishops and the lack of progress among the Hindus of Tamil Nadu, Father Lazarus eventually decided to leave the Kerala area and relocate to the north of India, an area where the Christian population is dramatically lower than the south and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church has less of a presence. In 1963, he moved to the Sat Tal Ecumenical Ashram¹⁶⁵ in the state of Uttar Pradesh, where he formed a small Orthodox community initially consisting of Novice Mark (Meyrick),¹⁶⁶ Novice Leon (Liddament),¹⁶⁷ and Sisters Mary, Lilya,¹⁶⁸ and Thomais.¹⁶⁹ The ashram was owned by the Methodist Church in India, who later ordered everyone off the property, with the exception of Father Lazarus.

Sister Lilya, later to become well-known as Gerontissa Gavrilia, noted that there were a number of locals who had converted to Orthodoxy and formed a small parish around Father Lazarus, who became distinguished by his bright white riasa.¹⁷⁰ She writes that Father Lazarus celebrated the Divine Liturgy every day and that many of the local Hindus were enamoured by the rituals of the Russian Orthodox Church.

¹⁶⁵ Sat Tal (Seven Lakes) Ashram was founded in 1930 by Rev. Dr E Stanley Jones (1884 – 1971) and Ethel Turner (1871 – 1953). It was founded by the Methodist Church in India and remains a Methodist institution.

¹⁶⁶ Archimandrite David (Meyrick) (1933 – 1993) was a clergyman and missionary of the British diocese of ROCOR. After spending time in India with Father Lazarus, he was ordained to the priesthood, later going on to found the missionary Brotherhood of Saint Seraphim of Sarov, which was based at a small chapel in Walsingham, Norfolk, England, as well as founding the Saint George Orthodox Information Service. He later left ROCOR to join the Moscow Patriarchate diocese of Sourozh.

¹⁶⁷ Leon Liddament (1943 – 2010) was the co-founder of the Saint Seraphim Brotherhood, but did not remain as a monastic. He was an accomplished iconographer and continued to produce icons after the dissolution of the Brotherhood.

¹⁶⁸ Gerontissa Gavrilia (1897 – 1992) was a Greek Orthodox nun, originally from Constantinople, who was involved in missionary work across the world throughout the twentieth century.

¹⁶⁹ Midgley, *A Lifetime in Pilgrimage*.

¹⁷⁰ Gerontissa Gavrilia, *The Ascetic of Love: Nun Gavrilia* (Athens, Greece: Talanto, 1999), 100.

Regarding life in the Orthodox community at Sat Tal, the daily schedule included a wakeup call at five o'clock in the morning, followed by silent prayer, the reading of the Gospel, and various obediences. There was an hour's study of the Holy Scriptures at noon, followed by discussion and then two hours of silence. In the evening, Vespers was celebrated, followed by a meal and conversation with visitors about spiritual topics.¹⁷¹

It can be assumed that, like Father Lazarus' time in Kotagiri, that monastic labours and translation work took up the majority of Father Lazarus' time at Sat Tal, as there is no available correspondence between him and the Synod to indicate that the mission work taking place in the area was very productive, although a young man named Alan was sent to Father Lazarus by Gerontissa Gavriilia. He was received into Orthodoxy with the name Hadrian and became a missionary, although it is not known where or for which jurisdiction. The exception to the lack of progress on the missionary front is the case of Father George Tharian, detailed below, which occupied central place in Father Lazarus' activities between 1964 and 1969. He was also able to make a short missionary journey to Kenya, where he assisted for a time in the work of the Patriarchate of Alexandria.¹⁷²

Ultimately, although he mentioned many times in his letters that he intended to patiently see his work through to the end, Father Lazarus departed for Greece in 1972 after the local police gave him two months to vacate the premises of the ashram or face imprisonment.¹⁷³ Upon receiving this news, Father Lazarus decided to embark on a water fast until he received a revelation about where to go next. After nineteen days, he received an invite to go to Greece to conduct Bible studies, thus ending twenty years of missionary labours in India on behalf of the Russian Orthodox Church. Father Lazarus was subsequently

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ No explanation is given for this in any of Father Lazarus' letters. It is possible that it may be related to conversions of Hindus, but this cannot be ascertained from the available documents.

invited to Australia, before moving on to California, and finally, Alaska, where he reposed in 1992.

Father George Tharian and the Search for a Bishop for India

Although negotiations with the prelates of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church had proved fruitless, an opportunity arose for ROCOR to unite at least a portion of the Indian Christians to the Orthodox Church in the form of the priest George Tharian and his followers in the reunion movement. Although Father Lazarus was involved with the process, it was Metropolitan Filaret and Father George Grabbe who played the key roles in trying to steer this movement into the arms of ROCOR.¹⁷⁴

Beginning in 1964, a group of clergy and laity from the Jacobite Syriac Church of India, led by Chorepiscop¹⁷⁵ Dr. George Tharian of Thariannagar near Kochincherry, began to correspond with Father Lazarus as they sought to enter the Orthodox Church. This movement had embraced the full faith of the Orthodox Church, including the council of Chalcedon, and had even purified their liturgical texts of references to monophysite saints such as Severos and Dioscoros.

In his first letter to Father Lazarus, Father George Tharian explained that his group, which consisted of six priests and several hundred faithful, had been trying to contact the Greek Orthodox from 1961 onwards, with little success.¹⁷⁶ In fact, their petition to the Ecumenical Patriarchate had met with outright rejection from Patriarch Athenagoras,¹⁷⁷ who ordered Father George to “cease dividing the Orthodox Syriac Church in Malabar and put an

¹⁷⁴ The research for this chapter was conducted simultaneously in America, at the ROCOR Synodal archives, and in India. The result of the research in India is the paper by Dr. Meledath Kurian Thomas, *In Search of a Russian: On the Trail of Fr. George, the First Eastern Orthodox from Kerala* (unpublished, 2018). The author is indebted to Dr. Thomas for making this as-yet unpublished paper available to him for use in this chronicle. The sometimes contradictory information coming from India has been added as footnotes when applicable.

¹⁷⁵ The Indian equivalent to an Archimandrite or Mitred Archpriest. In the Indian church, a chorepiscop can be married or celibate. This lack of a precise equivalent may account for some of the confusion regarding Father George’s marital status and his later claims to being a monk.

¹⁷⁶ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, dated 16th November 1964.

¹⁷⁷ Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I (1886 – 1972) of Constantinople. He was a noted ecumenist and was responsible for the lifting of the mutual excommunications by Constantinople and Rome.

end to the troubles and turmoil which you create in it!”¹⁷⁸ As the Indian church had long-term links with the monophysite See of Antioch, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch was their preferred option,¹⁷⁹ but, since Father Lazarus was first point of contact, he found himself in communication with ROCOR. The group’s title at this time was the ‘Greek Orthodox Church of India,’ although this was to change several times over the following years. Father George Tharian had been directed to Father Lazarus by Father George Thekedath,¹⁸⁰ an Indian priest who was allegedly planning to join the Orthodox Church and study at Saint Vladimir’s Seminary in the United States.¹⁸¹

Several months later, Father Lazarus reported back to Synod that the “reunion movement” now had around seventy-five priests and thousands of laity.¹⁸² Their urgent request was for a metropolitan to be sent to help the church properly establish itself which, according to Father George Tharian, would lead to many supporters of the catholicos party joining the endeavour.¹⁸³ It is evident from Father Lazarus’ letters that the Synod’s slow response to the situation was frustrating to him, but once Metropolitan Filaret responded, the situation began to move very quickly.

Metropolitan Filaret wrote directly to Father George Tharian, assuring him of his wish to assist to the best of his abilities. His main questions to the movement regarded their

¹⁷⁸ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, copy of letter dated 20th July 1960. It is interesting that this letter dates from 1960, while Father George Tharian claimed that he had been in contact with the Greek Orthodox Church only since 1961. He is also referred to as an archimandrite in the letter, although he did not receive his elevation to that rank until 1961.

¹⁷⁹ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, dated 16th November 1964.

¹⁸⁰ This is most likely Bishop Dr. Mar George Thekedath (1927 – 2012), an *episcopus vagans* who founded the Nazrani Orthodox Church. There are no documentary records of him ever having converted to Orthodoxy or having studied at Saint Vladimir’s Seminary.

¹⁸¹ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, dated 29th October 1964.

¹⁸² Dr. Thomas states in his article that he believes these figures to be highly inflated.

¹⁸³ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, dated 11th June 1965.

liturgical uses, their calendar, and fasting regulations. He recommended several books that included the canons of the seven ecumenical councils. Regarding the liturgy, as Metropolitan Anastasii had already decided that the Indians could maintain their own liturgical rites with whatever doctrinal modifications were necessary, Metropolitan Filaret requested, if possible, an English translation. He also expressed interest in translating the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom into Malayalam, so that it could be celebrated on certain days, in order to reinforce the unity of the churches.¹⁸⁴

Father George Tharian's prompt reply to the Synod contained a biography, from which we are able to glean the important details of his life. He was born in 1924¹⁸⁵ and studied art and medicine in Bombay before working as a medico.¹⁸⁶ He owned a large pharmaceutical plant in Bombay, which he sold in 1955, as well as a hospital and other businesses, and he produced several popular Christian films. Upon giving up the business life and activity in politics, he was ordained to the priesthood by Metropolitan Elias Mar Yulios¹⁸⁷ in 1960 and elevated to the rank of chorepiscop¹⁸⁸ in 1961, being appointed the Envoy Plenipotentiary of the Holy See of Antioch for the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁴ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50/1112, dated 19th July 1965.

¹⁸⁵ Dr. Thomas ascertains from his research that he was raised in a prominent Church of South India family before converting to the Jacobite Syriac Orthodox Church in the late 1950s, something which he never mentions to the Synod.

¹⁸⁶ Dr. Thomas states that he was never a medical professional, but instead worked in the advertising industry before becoming involved in the production and promotion of medical equipment. Although everything Fr. George wrote to the Synod about his work in the medical field is true, he was never qualified as a medical doctor. Most of his medical work was conducted under the auspices of the Family Planning Association of India and the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

¹⁸⁷ Metropolitan Elias Mar Yulios (1881 – 1962) was the third patriarchal delegate of the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch to Malankara.

¹⁸⁸ He uses the term 'archimandrite,' which is not used by any Indian church.

¹⁸⁹ Archive of the Synod, File 11/35.

Prior to ordination, he had been married with one son, a situation that later caused some problems for his movement.

On the strength of his biography and several other materials supplied to the Synod, he was officially invited to the Synodal headquarters by the Chancellor, Father George Grabbe,¹⁹⁰ where he was to spend a month as a guest. At this point, Father George Grabbe took the lead in communicating with his namesake in India, and was to show much concern, patience, and optimism over the next three years.

On 2nd January 1966, Father George Tharian was received into ROCOR as an archimandrite by confession of faith and vesting at the Synod Cathedral of Our Lady of the Sign in New York.¹⁹¹ Two days later, Metropolitan Filaret and Father George Grabbe signed a document announcing the reception of his movement into the Orthodox Church, instituted as the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church of India,¹⁹² with Archimandrite George as administrator and an episcopal see to be filled, pending the election of a metropolitan.¹⁹³ It is not clear from the available documentation how Archimandrite George was to receive the people of his movement into the Church. It is possible that the Synod used a degree of oikonomia, similar to the reception of Saint Alexis Toth and the Uniates into the Orthodox Church.¹⁹⁴

With the mission now officially under the protection of the Synod, the search began for a bishop to shepherd the newly-received flock. Metropolitan Filaret's first choice, and the obvious candidate, was Father Lazarus, but he strongly objected to the notion, due his self-

¹⁹⁰ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, dated 24th August 1965.

¹⁹¹ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50/1959, dated 3rd January 1966. See Appendix II.

¹⁹² According to Dr. Thomas, there is no evidence of this being publicised in India.

¹⁹³ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50/1969, dated 5th January 1966.

¹⁹⁴ Saint Alexis Toth (1854 – 1909) of Wilkes Barre was a former Ruthenian Catholic priest that led a large number of parishes back into the Russian Orthodox Church in the United States in the late nineteenth century.

perceived unworthiness of the episcopal rank, in a letter sent to the Synod.¹⁹⁵ Also considered for the see was the then-recently ordained priest, Father Dmitri Alexandrov,¹⁹⁶ who had a working knowledge of Syriac and was learning Malayalam.¹⁹⁷ With the news of Father Lazarus's rejection, Father George Tharian reached out to Metropolitan Filaret to explain that he would be willing to become the Metropolitan of India, after discussions with the people in his movement. He stated that he was not fit or worthy, but would be willing if the Synod made such a decision.¹⁹⁸

The news of Father George Tharian's reception into the Church as an archimandrite and the search for a bishop was a cause for some concern to Father Lazarus. In a letter to the Synod, he raised the issue that Father George Tharian, who had been a married priest, was still living at the family home with his wife, who had not become a nun. Although the home consisted of two buildings, one for men and one for women, this was common practice in India and should be considered "living together." He suggested that no one be consecrated bishop for India, but that the Synod should instead send an experienced bishop who could effectively catechise the people and receive them into the Church properly.¹⁹⁹ The confusion could possibly be attributed to the fact that a chorepiscop can be either married or monastic. It may well be that Father George Tharian, when he referred to himself as an archimandrite, did not know that it was a specifically monastic role.

¹⁹⁵ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50/, dated 11th April 1966.

¹⁹⁶ Bishop Daniel (Alexandrov) (1930 – 2010) of Erie. Although he was not to play any role in the mission in India, he was later to become a central figure in ROCOR's re-establishment of the Old Rite.

¹⁹⁷ This is not mentioned in any documentation, but was recounted Bishop Jerome (Shaw) who was close to Bishop Daniel for many years.

¹⁹⁸ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, dated 26th April 1966.

¹⁹⁹ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, dated 11th April 1966.

Around the same time, Father George Tharian had been making contact with the Tolstoy Foundation,²⁰⁰ in order to secure financial support for the mission, as well as asking Father George Grabbe for donations of literature, vestments, and other necessities. He promised that a monastery, seminary, orphanage, and twenty-five other institutions would be formed by August 1967 if the aid was available.²⁰¹ The monastery and orphanage were to be located on a newly-purchased coffee plantation at Wynad on the Malabar Coast and named Moran Mar Anasthassi Monastery and Orphanage (Greek Church).²⁰²

In the autumn of 1967, Father George Tharian was officially invited to the diocese of Geneva and Western Europe by Archbishop Antonii (Bartoshevich),²⁰³ who gave his blessing for him to lecture in his parishes. This came after Father George Tharian returned from seven weeks in Greece and Lebanon, where he encountered Greek Old Calendarist bishops who wanted to consecrate him immediately.²⁰⁴ Father George Tharian reported to Father George Grabbe that the Old Calendarists had left a very bad impression on him due to their factionalism and extremism and that he wanted nothing to do with them.²⁰⁵ It was this letter to Father George Grabbe that renewed contact after more than a year of silence, which had left Father George Tharian concerned that he had been disowned by the Synod, a rumour that his enemies in India were spreading. He raised these concerns to Father George Grabbe, as well as asking about the status of Father Lazarus – was he under the new mission, or still

²⁰⁰ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, dated 4th June 1966.

²⁰¹ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, dated 20th July 1966.

²⁰² Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, Dated 21st July 1966.

²⁰³ Archbishop Antonii (Bartoshevich) (1910 - 1993) of Geneva. Archbishop Antonii was known as being committed to pan-Orthodox unity and very missionary-minded; he represented the moderate faction within ROCOR during the tumultuous 1980s.

²⁰⁴ Dr. Thomas' research indicates that he spent time in Greece in the spring of 1965. This could either be a different trip to Greece that he did not mention to the Synod in any of his extant communications, or a simple mistake in the date.

²⁰⁵ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, dated 29th November 1967.

directly under the Synod?²⁰⁶ At the same time, Father George Tharian's former wife, Mary George, wrote a letter to the Synod confirming that she had indeed separated from him at the time of his entry into monasticism and elevation to chorepiscop²⁰⁷ and was intending on entering a convent as soon as one was established.²⁰⁸ There are no available records in India to corroborate this, so the question of how and when Father George Tharian became a chorepiscop or archimandrite cannot yet be answered.

Contained in the letter to Father George Grabbe was a copy of the resolutions of the third general convention of the reunion movement, now known as the Saint Thomas Eastern Orthodox Church of India, which occurred on 27th and 28th of August 1967.²⁰⁹ The preamble stated that the group was "an independent, self-governing jurisdiction of the ancient Holy Orthodox Catholic Apostolic Church,"²¹⁰ although it was still without a bishop. No members of the council were named in the document, with the exception of the secretary, V.D. Arical. The resolutions included accepting the use of the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom as an occasional liturgy, as proposed by Metropolitan Filaret; petitioning the Synod to consecrate Father George Tharian as Metropolitan of India; petitioning the Synod to consecrate another metropolitan, who is not Indian, to remain in the United States for fundraising activities; petitioning the Synod to receive permission to enter in dialogue with the "National Church of India"²¹¹ and the Chaldean Syrian Church.²¹²

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.* Extant sources show no response to this question.

²⁰⁷ In her letter she uses the term 'archimandrite.'

²⁰⁸ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, dated 29th September 1967.

²⁰⁹ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, dated 27th and 28th August 1967.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ It is not known if they meant the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, the Jacobite Syriac Orthodox Church, or the Church of South India.

²¹² Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, dated 27th and 28th August 1967.

By the end of the year, Father George Grabbe had responded to Father George Tharian and confirmed that Metropolitan Filaret was happy to present him to the Synod as a candidate for episcopal consecration, provided that he deliver more substantial documentation to the Synod regarding the status of his wife.²¹³ Several months later, Father George Tharian received a decree from the Synod recognising his divorced status as valid,²¹⁴ thus removing the major barrier to his election as bishop. In September of that year, the Synod held a meeting to make a decision on the Indian mission and the vote was in Father George Tharian's favour to be consecrated as bishop for India. An *ukaz* was issued stating that there were a total of eleven votes for, two against, and nine absentees.²¹⁵ The bishop-elect was to come to the Synod in New York at an unspecified date to spend two months in preliminary preparations before being consecrated.

It is interesting to note that, of the three bishops that had met Father George Tharian – Metropolitan Filaret, Archbishop Antonii, and Bishop Lavr (Skurla)²¹⁶ – one, Archbishop Antonii, voted against. The other vote against him came from Archbishop Antonii (Medvedev) of San Francisco,²¹⁷ who advised against such a move in the wake of Kovalevsky²¹⁸ and the ECOF²¹⁹ schism.

²¹³ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, dated 23rd December 1967.

²¹⁴ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50/438, dated 20th May 1968.

²¹⁵ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50/736, dated 24th September 1968. See Appendix III.

²¹⁶ Metropolitan Lavr (Skurla) (1928 – 2008) of New York, fifth First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia. He was to lead ROCOR back into union with the Church inside Russia in 2007.

²¹⁷ Archbishop Antonii (Medvedev) (1908 – 2000) of San Francisco. He was the last bishop of ROCOR to have grown up in pre-revolutionary Russia.

²¹⁸ Bishop Jean-Nectaire (Kovalevsky) (1905 – 1970) of Saint-Denis. A former priest of the Moscow Patriarchate, he was consecrated a bishop by Saint John (Maximovitch) in 1966 and installed as first hierarch of the Eglise Catholique Orthodoxe de France (ECOF). After a dispute with the Synod, he broke away from ROCOR.

²¹⁹ Eglise Catholique Orthodoxe de France (ECOF), now known as Eglise Orthodox de France, is an independent Western Rite Orthodox movement in France. Received into canonical Orthodoxy in the 1960s by ROCOR, it later joined the Patriarchate of Romania before going independent.

This vote went ahead despite the letter received from Father Lazarus in the summer, in which he stated his opposition to the consecration of Father George Tharian as a bishop. He wrote that, despite Father George Tharian being a good and friendly man, he did not deem him suitable for the episcopacy due to several factors, notably his lack of theological education, his lack of knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and his lack of spiritual knowledge and ability to lead people in the spiritual life. He also mentioned that an unnamed Greek bishop had contacted him and asked whether or not it was wise to consecrate Father George Tharian as a bishop.²²⁰

Ultimately, Father Lazarus' view won out, as, not long after Father George Tharian became bishop-elect for India, the plans were abruptly cancelled, although not as a direct result of Father Lazarus's letter.

The Synod had received a copy of one of Father George Tharian's books, *Maitbuna Buthikal*, which contained images and content deemed inappropriate for a clergyman and medical doctor. Father George Grabbe informed him that it was decided, since the book had been sent by someone hostile to him, that it would be in the best interests of the church to cancel his consecration, as it would make the church vulnerable to its enemies.²²¹ It is possible that there is more to this than simply what was stated in the letter to Father George Tharian and, while there is nothing to suggest this from the extant documents, it could be that the nature of his medical work – family planning and contraception – played a role in the Synod's decision to cancel the consecration.

There is no more extant correspondence after this, so it seems like Father George Tharian ceased contact with ROCOR around this time. Nothing more is known of his activities after this point but it is known that Father George died in 1974, at the age of fifty,

²²⁰ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50, dated 21st June 1968.

²²¹ Archive of the Synod, File 22/50/1152, dated 27th January 1969.

so the Saint Thomas Eastern Orthodox Church of India most likely died with him. What is known is that he never renounced the Orthodox faith, although he was given a Church of South India burial at the CSI parish of Punnakkadu, due to the absence of Orthodox clergy to bury him.²²² So, it appears that he lived and died his last few years as a clergyman of ROCOR, although he did not appear to maintain communication with the Synod.

Father George Tharian is an interesting case, as many of his activities are highly suggestive of the behaviour associated with vagantism: regular name changes for his movement, elaborate promises to open institutions such as seminaries and monasteries, uncorroborated stories of large numbers of followers, requests for money and supplies, requests for autonomy, and indirect requests to be consecrated bishop. At the same time, from his correspondence it is clear that he turned down opportunities to be consecrated by Greek Old Calendarist bishops, never received consecration from anyone after his estrangement from ROCOR or even joined another Orthodox body, and was fairly modest in his financial requests, so the case for him being genuine in his wish to be united to the Orthodox Church is strong. Father Lazarus, who met him in person and spent time in South India with his community, was also very keen on receiving him into the Church and showed genuine optimism and enthusiasm for the movement.

Although Father George Tharian shares many traits with *episcopi vagantes* and was misleading in many of his statements to the Synod, the fact that he remained loyal to Orthodoxy and never sought consecration at the hands of an independent bishop after his rejection by the Synod is in his favour. The final judgement on Father George Tharian should come from his own diary: “many know me but nobody knew me,”²²³ an enigmatic statement if there ever was one.

²²² Thomas, *In Search of a Russian*.

²²³ *Ibid.*

The Years of Silence and the Re-establishment of ROCOR in India

With Father Lazarus having left India to pursue other activities and the cessation of talks with Father George's movement, silence fell over the ROCOR mission in India for over a quarter of a century. This silence was maintained until the mid-2000s, when voices from India again began to call out to the Russian Orthodox Church. The fourth phase of ROCOR's involvement in India begins with a young Anglican deacon reaching out to the Synod in the hope of being united to the Orthodox Church. Reverend Vishal Augustus was born in 1977 in Lucknow, northern India, and raised as a Roman Catholic. He later converted to Anglicanism and was ordained a deacon. By the mid-2000s, he had begun investigating Orthodoxy and exchanged correspondence with Archbishop Hilarion²²⁴ in Australia, who recommended that he apply to study at Holy Trinity Seminary²²⁵ in Jordanville, New York, but this was prevented by family illness.²²⁶

Eventually, Vishal was able to move to Australia in 2007, where he was baptised and given the name Adrian. He was ordained to the diaconate in 2009 and the priesthood in 2011, being assigned to the parish of Saint Michael the Archangel in Blacktown, New South Wales, where he still serves to this day.

His eventual involvement in the next phase of missionary work in India actually came by way of Pakistan, when a number of men who had left the Roman Catholic seminary in Pakistan contacted Archbishop Hilarion and requested to be received into the Orthodox Church. Father Adrian was dispatched to meet with them and, during his visit to Pakistan,

²²⁴ Metropolitan Hilarion (Kapral) (1948 -), sixth First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. His time as First Hierarch has been marked by a large increase in the number of parishes and missions of ROCOR, with widespread support for missionary work in Asia and among Western Christians.

²²⁵ Holy Trinity Seminary (established 1948), based on the grounds of Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, New York, is the sole seminary of ROCOR. Many ROCOR luminaries are graduates of HTS, including two First Hierarchs and numerous bishops.

²²⁶ Interview of Father Adrian by Denis Grishkov (http://synod.com/synod/engdocuments/enart_orthodoxpakistan.html), accessed 24th November 2018.

large numbers of people expressed interest in Orthodoxy and were received into the Church.²²⁷

Around the same time that this was occurring, another Roman Catholic, Sunil Benedict from Bangalore, had discovered Orthodoxy through reading about the *Philokalia*²²⁸ and the Jesus Prayer.²²⁹ He reached out to ROCOR independently, and was received into the Orthodox Church, along with his wife and child, at the Russian mission in Thailand in August 2012, receiving the name Silouan. He later made contact with Father Adrian in Australia, seeking to come under his oversight as part of the larger missionary effort in Pakistan and India.²³⁰

In something of a repetition of history, Metropolitan Hilarion and Father Adrian travelled to Sri Lanka in January 2013 with the purpose of ordaining clergymen for several Asian missions. At a hotel in Colombo, three priests were ordained for the mission in Pakistan, a reader was tonsured for India, and a monk was tonsured for the Philippine mission. Immediately following this, Metropolitan Hilarion visited Mumbai, where he served the Divine Liturgy in the house of some resident Serbian Orthodox Christians and tonsured Silouan a reader.

Silouan was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood in 2013 at the Blacktown parish and established Saint John Chrysostom Orthodox Church in Bangalore. Although a number of people were received into the Orthodox Church through the mission, Father Silouan's work was plagued with the instability often associated with vagante movements and similar

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ The *Philokalia* ("the love of the good") is a collection of Orthodox spiritual and ascetic texts compiled by Saint Nikodemos the Hagiorite and Saint Makarios of Corinth in the 18th century. First published in Greek in 1782, it has been translated into dozens of languages and has been the cause of spiritual revivals among Orthodox Christians in Greece, Russia, Romania, the Middle East, and beyond.

²²⁹ One of the key spiritual practices found in the *Philokalia*. The Jesus Prayer consists of the repetition of the prayer "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner" or some variation thereof.

²³⁰ <http://orthodoxwiki.org/User:SunilBen>, accessed 24th November 2018.

organisations. After several requests for funding from the Australian diocese of ROCOR, which were turned down partly because Father Silouan already had a well-paid job, he left ROCOR to join a non-canonical Arabic group which later turned out to be Monophysite.²³¹

He later repented and returned to ROCOR, being reinstated as a priest in December 2014. This time he switched from serving the Byzantine Rite to the Western Rite, which has been a part of ROCOR's missionary outreach since the 1960s. Nonetheless, he was not to remain stable, and was later received into the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church²³² as a priest. For this he was finally deposed and excommunicated, despite his pleas to be received back into ROCOR. His ecclesiastical realignments did not end here, however, and, discovering that he was a zealot for Eastern Orthodoxy, he was re-baptised and re-ordained by an Old Calendarist bishop.²³³ He is now known as Father Thomas Benedict and serves at the parish of the Precious Belt of the Mother of God in Bangalore, assisted by Schemamonk John.

Following this debacle and the catastrophe that occurred in Pakistan,²³⁴ Father Adrian ceased involvement in any missionary work in India or Pakistan. The mission in India was closed and the one in Pakistan was reduced to a single priest, Father Joseph Farooq, who continues to diligently serve at the parish of Saint Sergius of Radonezh in Sargodha.

²³¹ From correspondence of the author with Father Adrian Augustus.

²³² The Syro-Malabar Catholic Church is an East Syrian rite Uniate church, based in Kerala.

²³³ Metropolitan Seraphim (Karam) of Lebanon, Exarch of All Phoenicia of the Genuine Orthodox Church. Formerly an Archimandrite in the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, he was consecrated a bishop in the Old Calendarist Avlona Synod before aligning with the Matthewites.

²³⁴ This is the 2014 deposition of two priests – Cyril Amour Shahzad and Anthony Shamaon Masih- who were accused of human trafficking and other crimes.

The Contemporary Situation of Russian Orthodoxy in India & Conclusion

With the latest attempt at a mission in India ending in disaster, ROCOR has again been left without a presence on the subcontinent and is no longer actively engaged in missionary work in India. This is not to say, however, that the larger Russian Orthodox Church has abandoned the area. Due to a large number of Russians moving to India after the fall of the Soviet Union, the Patriarchate of Moscow has hastened to establish parishes to minister to this new generation of émigrés, predominately located in New Delhi and Goa. Along with these parishes, another movement has arisen from among the Indian Christians to find the fulfilment of their faith with the Russian Orthodox Church. In 2012, traditional Anglican bishop Polycarp Nehamaiyah²³⁵ was received into the Russian Orthodox Church along with a number of his followers and several parishes. They now form the ‘Russian Orthodox Church in India’ under the Patriarchate of Moscow, the short history of which falls outside the scope of this work.

Viewing the entirety of the ROCOR mission in India, we can see that the Synod took the project very seriously at every stage and demonstrated both dynamism and caution in equal measure as it sought to reunite the separated Saint Thomas Christians with the Orthodox Church. Unfortunately, history was not on the side of ROCOR in this case and, unlike other missions which have flourished and continue to grow, the Indian mission never had enough momentum to develop properly and reward the optimism of the hierarchs and missionaries that were invested in the endeavour.

Unfortunately, one of the major problems with missionary work in India is the presence of numerous vagante, schismatic, and independent groups claiming false credentials, such as ordinations and qualifications, as well as people who are simply out to

²³⁵ Polycarp Nehamaiyah was the Indian reader tonsured by Metropolitan Hilarion in Colombo. Although he was a member of the Patriarchate of Moscow, recent years have seen substantial collaboration in the mission field between ROCOR and the Patriarchate of Moscow.

deceive Westerners in order to make money. All ROCOR missionaries in India reported these phenomena, to a greater or lesser degree. The history of Christianity in India, especially in Kerala, is filled with schisms and subsequent litigation, something that both Father Andronik and Father Nafanail experienced and which continues to trouble the two factions of Monophysitism in India.

Likewise the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon hung over negotiations between ROCOR and the Indian bishops at all times. As is demonstrated by the historical records, it was this council that proved to be the stumbling block in every case. Although the Indian bishops stated several times that they were willing to accept the dogmas of the Orthodox faith, their unwillingness to accept this council prevented any advances in negotiations. It is evident that, unless the Indian Church is willing to accept the fullness of the Orthodox faith *as defined by the seven ecumenical councils*, and not merely in theory, then the hopes for union with the Orthodox Church that they strove for in the 1930s and 1950s will never be realised.

Whether or not ROCOR will again attempt to establish a missionary presence in India remains to be seen, but it is certain that if there is to be another chapter in this almost-century old story, it will be as fascinating, colourful, and hopeful as the others and, God willing, without the disappointment. The embers have not yet been fully extinguished: all it takes is for the Spirit to blow where it wishes and the fire will rise.

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Appendix I**Statement by the Theological Commission of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church**

Catholicate Office, Devalokam,

Kottayam.

November 21, 1953.

After a long and most profitable discussion it was decided to accept the following statement:

According to the teachings of the Orthodox Syrian Church the Second Person in the Trinity, the Logos and the Son of the Father, Who has no beginning but is begotten of the Father, of one substance with the Father and the Holy Ghost, is uncreated. He, without any change from the Divine state, by the will of the Trinity for the salvation of mankind, took flesh and became man.

He truly suffered in body and was crucified, dead and buried, descended into hades and the third day rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father in Glory.

By becoming man He did not merely dwell in a righteous person who was born of the Virgin, but He Who is true God took flesh from the Virgin by the Holy Ghost and became perfect man. In the Incarnate Lord the two natures (i.e. human and divine) are inseparably united. In this union the divine nature did not get changed into human, nor the human into divine, nor did it get mixed or confused or anything new formed. One did not get destroyed by the other, but two natures (i.e. perfect divine and perfect human without sin) got inseparably and eternally united. This union is indeed most mysterious. After this union there cannot be any separation into two persons or division into two natures. He is one person and His nature is one. In Him there is one will and one operation. He is perfect man and perfect God. At his death His divinity did not leave either the soul or the body but was in both.

The great or the Byzantine Eastern Orthodox Churches define their belief in Jesus Christ as God-man by accepting the theological language formulated at the Council of Chalcedon in 452 A.D.

According to it the mystery of the incarnation can be best expressed by the use of four famous negations. These safeguard Christians from erroneous assertions and yet make no attempt to define precisely the character of the union between divine and human in the person of our Saviour.

The Chalcedon doctrine declares that Jesus Christ is one Person in Whom two natures, divine and human, are united without absorption or confusion, without admixture or change, without division and without separation.

This first negation stands as a barrier against those who teach that human nature in Christ is an inferior one and is consumed or absorbed in the fire of His Divinity.

The second refuted a more settled suggestion that manhood in Christ had to be changed before it could be brought into hypostatic union with God.

The third rejects the notion that in Christ divine and human are not united, but only co-exist in the same Person like two parallel lines which can never meet.

The fourth repudiates the idea that the Logos will discard His humanity after the last judgement and the incarnation will thus be brought to an end.

The Chalcedonian formula can be summarised as a teaching that human nature becomes hypostatically united with God in the Second Person of the Holy Trinity without losing however its finite creaturely character. This union elevates it to its greatest possible height of perfection and retains it on that level for ever and ever.

The Incarnation is a great mystery. What is a paradox to reason is a fact to faith. Just as it is impossible to understand the person of God except as triune – as three and one at the same time – so it is impossible to understand the nature of Christ except as mono-dio – as one

and two at the same time. Christ is Perfect God and Perfect Man with perfect nature of God and Man and with Perfect will of God and Man. The two natures and wills are so united and in such a harmony that we cannot say they are two without immediately asserting that they are one. And yet as one does not supersede the other we cannot say they are One without immediately asserting that they are two. Therefore, we believe Jesus Christ to be Perfect God and Perfect Man, with a human-divine nature mysteriously united and a human-divine will wonderfully harmonised without becoming a third nature or will, and without admixture or separation. We can only say that Jesus Christ is the God-Man.

Appendix II**The Office for the reception of Archimandrite George (Tharian) into the communion of the Orthodox Church**

Archimandrite George is brought before the Metropolitan and bows to him.

Metropolitan: Dost thou desire to enter and abide in the communion of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Faith?

Fr. George: I desire it with all my heart.

Metropolitan: Dost thou believe in one God, who is adored in the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; and dost thou worship him as the King and God?

Fr. George: I believe in one God who is glorified and adored in the Trinity, The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and I worship Him as my King and God.

(Low reverence to the East)

Fr. George: I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of his Father before all worlds; Light of Light, Very God of very God. Begotten, not made; Being of one Essence with the Father; By whom all things were made; Who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; and was Crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures. And ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets.

In one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the Resurrection of the dead, and the Life of the world to come. Amen.

Metropolitan: Blessed is God, who enlighteneth every man that comes into the world. Tell us of the other dogmas of our Orthodox Church, its traditions and ordinances; how thou holdest concerning them?

Fr. George: In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. I, the humble Archimandrite George, ask the Holy Catholic Orthodox Church for the love of God to accept me into communion as one of its faithful sons.

We accept its catholic doctrines and promise obedience to the Orthodox Church. Renouncing every erroneous belief we anathematise all heresies which were anathematised by the Holy Seven Ecumenical Councils and particularly by those of them which were previously unknown to us, and we accept those Councils;

The fourth Ecumenical Council assembled in Chalcedon in the time of Markian, which Council renounced the doctrines of Dioscorus and Euthichios that in Our Lord Jesus Christ there is one nature in unity.

The fifth Council, also the second of Constantinople, assembled in the time of Justinian and which Council anathematised Theodore and his doctrines.

The sixth Council, also the third of Constantinople, assembled in the time of Constantine and which taught that in Christ our Lord there are two natures and two natural actions and two natural wills. But those two wills are not in contradiction to each other; but his human will did not counteract his Divine will, but one the contrary was in harmony with it and obeyed it.

The seventh Council, also the second of Nicaea, assembled in the time of Constantine and Irina which has taught to properly honour and reverence the holy Icons, namely holy images and which has anathematised those who have cast aspersion on the Holy Church saying that allegedly it worships the holy icons as pagans worship their idols. However we, the sons of

the Church, honour them not to idolatry as it befits the creature to worship his creator, but only honour them in the same way as we honour the Cross of Christ and the Holy Gospel. We accept and confess the Apostolic and Ecclesiastical Canons, established at the Seven Holy Ecumenical and Provincial Councils, and the other traditions of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church of the East, its rules and ordinances; and we likewise will accept and understand Holy Scripture in accordance with the interpretation which the Holy Orthodox Catholic Church of the East, our Mother, hath held and doth hold.

We also promise to be in communion only with those with whom the Holy Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia has communion. And all those whom it regards as deprived of communion we will regard as deprived of communion.

I make this statement before Your Eminence and the assembled clergy in concord with other clergymen and faithful of the Church in India.

We believe that the Great High Priest Our Lord Jesus Christ is blessing this our endeavour. And in confirmation of this my true and sincere profession of faith, I now kiss the word and cross of my Saviour. Amen.

Metropolitan: (after Fr. George has kissed the Holy Gospel and Cross); Blessed is God who willeth that all men should be saved, and should come unto the knowledge of the truth; Blessed is he forever. Amen.

Then he saith to Fr. George:

Bow thy knees before the Lord God, whom thou hast confessed, and receive remission of the sins.

And while Fr. George kneels: Our Lord and God Jesus Christ committed unto his Apostles the key of the Kingdom of heaven, and bestowed upon them full power through his grace both to bind and to loose a man from his sins upon earth. May the same, through his unspeakable mercy pardon thee. And I by his almighty power, given unto me, an unworthy

Bishop, through his holy Apostles and their successors do pardon and absolve thee, my child, Archimandrite George, from all thy sins; and do unite thee unto the fellowship of the faithful, and unto the body of Christ's Church; and do communicate thee with the Divine Sacraments of the Church; in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then the Metropolitan sayeth unto Fr. George:

Rise, brother, and as a faithful servant of Jesus Christ pray thou unto him with us, that he will vouchsafe unto thee to receive the grace of the Holy Spirit.

(Archimandrite George then enters the altar, puts on vestments and further takes part in the Liturgy.)

Appendix III**Results of the Vote for Electing Archimandrite George (Tharian) as Bishop****For:**

Metropolitan Filaret of New York and Eastern America
 Archbishop Aleksandr of Berlin and Germany
 Archbishop Nikon of Washington D.C. and Florida
 Archbishop Savva of Sydney and Australia
 Archbishop Serafim of Chicago and Detroit
 Archbishop Filofei of Hamburg and North Germany
 Archbishop Vitalii of Montreal and Canada
 Bishop Pavel of Stuttgart
 Bishop Andrei of Rockland
 Bishop Lavr of Manhattan
 Bishop Nikandr of Sao Paulo and Brazil

Against:

Archbishop Antonii of Geneva and Western Europe
 Archbishop Antonii of San Francisco and Western America

Absent:

Archbishop Afanasii of Buenos Aires and Argentina
 Archbishop Leontii of Chile and Peru
 Archbishop Antonii of Los Angeles
 Archbishop Averkii of Syracuse
 Bishop Savva of Edmonton
 Bishop Nektarii of Seattle
 Bishop Seraphim of Caracas and Venezuela
 Bishop Nikodim of Richmond and Great Britain
 Bishop Konstantin of Brisbane