

Letters to the Editors

In the lead article of *The Wheel's* first issue Father Cyril Hovorun states what must be a fundamental truth for many or most Orthodox Christians, namely that the Orthodox Church is the self-sufficient one true Church established by Christ and continuing without disruption or deficiency since apostolic times.

It therefore stands apart from households of faith with inadequate statements of faith (heretical churches) or inadequate doctrines and celebrations of the Eucharist (schismatic churches).

Father Hovorun states that both Orthodox and Roman Catholics deny that together Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Pentecostal, and Evangelical churches constitute the whole Church. They also both deny that "the unity of the Church [is] something to be achieved in its fullness only in the eschatological perspective." Despite these contentions he concludes his article with a hope for continuing dialogue between the Orthodox and other Christians.

Father Hovorun's dispassionately argued presentation raises important questions. For example, if the Orthodox Church is the one true Church what kind of conversations can its members have with Protestant, Evangelical, and Catholic Christians? Indeed, since heretics and schismatics are not members of the one true Church, can they be considered Christians? If they are not Christians, why should Orthodox Christians seek dialogue with them, except, perhaps, to witness to the Eastern tradition as the article implies?

Father Hovorun raises other important questions: For example, in what way is the Orthodox communion the one true church? What constitutes faithfulness to Christ and the Gospel? Does the survival of Christian households of faith in a hostile or indifferent world provide any cause for mutual dialogue? Is fidelity to Christ and the Gospel more important than survival?

There may be more important questions than these, but these might be a beginning for readers of *The Wheel* and its contributors. Given Father Hovorun's experience and reflection in the ecumenical world, he must have considered the questions raised in this letter. Perhaps in a future article he could share his answers.

Rev. Carl Scovel, Boston, MA