

EDITORIAL

This issue presents papers from the annual meeting of CAREE, held in New York on March 5. The two central themes were a preliminary ecumenical reading, both critical and appreciative, of major documents that emerged from the August 2000 Jubilee Sobor (Council) of the Russian Orthodox Church. Secondly, in light of initiatives by Paul Mojzes toward inter-faith dialogue in the Balkans, especially within Macedonia, to review recent developments.

One action from the Jubilee Sobor made headlines globally. It was the canonisation of the last Tsar and his family. In the long run, this was probably the least newsworthy action taken at the Sobor. In the editor's opening paper, he points to the fact that the Council's actions seemed to be directed toward resolving the split within Russian Orthodoxy between the Russian Patriarchate (ROC) and the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (usually referred to as ROCOR), that stemmed from acting Patriarch Sergei's desperate attempt to preserve a minimal church structure by announcing unconditional submission to Soviet power in 1927. There are of course other schisms within Orthodoxy, and many of the sectarian movements emerged in dissatisfaction to it over the past four centuries. Nevertheless ROC and ROCOR seemed poised to effect a re-union in that millennium year, but it has not yet happened.

The major attention of the writers in this issue is to take seriously major statements by the ROC on social doctrine and on ecumenism, which may well be points of reference for decades to come. The editor's assessment of the ecumenism document is to point out, in spite of quite unecumenical assertions in the early foundational paragraphs of the document, that one must give it a charitable reading. It is addressed to bishops mostly, to provide them with a systematic way of approaching the many distinct agendas that they need to be informed about, when relating to other churches. One can detect significant ecumenical movement if one reads carefully, especially the appendix.

Two other papers by Charles West and Joseph Loya offer Presbyterian and Roman Catholic reflections on the implications of major sections of the social doctrine statement. What they have in common, together with many others, is deep appreciation for an attempted statement, when there has never been a comprehensive social doctrine articulated for Orthodox before. West offers insights on the distinctly Russian character - taking culture seriously - dimension of the doctrine, while wondering how to relate it to the Russian Orthodox scholars -

theologians and philosophers such as Berdaev, Florovsky - whose work is not cited but through whom Western scholars were introduced to Russian Orthodoxy. Loya concentrated on the global context for any Christian social ethics statement. His paper offers interesting responses from Russian Orthodox intellectuals not sure they want to own the statement, compares what needs to be addressed on the issue of globalization as understood by Catholics, with what appears in the Social Doctrine. In addition, Loya added a statement from Archbishop Kondrusiewicz, head of Russian Catholics, responding to charges of Catholic proselytism.

James Payton's survey of recent developments on violations of religious places, especially in Kosovo, presents an angle of perspective that is apparently too rare. The long statement from Keston Institute director Larry Uzzell includes the observation that the OSCE office in Pristina had only one publication on religion in Kosovo. Could it be that diplomats on the ground lack the wherewithal to inform themselves about the religious culture when religion is so relevant to the conflict they are sent to address?

Walter Sawatsky