

NEWSLETTER

No. 22, December 1997 - January 1998

22W415 McCarron Road

Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

www.helleniclinkmidwest.org

KRIKOS Midwest

A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC

LINK WITH GREECE

EDITOR: Constantine Tzanos

EDITORIAL BOARD: G. Alexopoulos

C. Prasinos, S. Sakellarides

Upcoming Events

Hellenism and Christianity

On Sunday, December 7, 1997, at 3:00 PM, at the Embassy Suites Hotel, 600 North State Street, in Chicago, KRIKOS Midwest presents the Very Reverent Dr. Demetrios J. Constantelos in a lecture on *Prodromes to the Interrelationship (Alleloperichoresis) Between Christian Orthodoxy and Hellenism.*

Dr. Constantelos and many other contemporary Greek Orthodox theologians believe that an *alleloperichoresis*, an interrelationship, has been achieved between Christianity and Hellenism to the extent that a schism between the two would mutilate both. The Greek Orthodox possess a consciousness and an ingrained belief that their faith and their cultural heritage of nearly four thousand years were conjoined from as early as the birth of Christianity and that the way for their interpretation had been prepared for nearly four centuries before the birth of Christ. In this respect, Greek Orthodox theologians follow the steps of Christian apologists such as Justin the philosopher and martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebios of Caesarea and Socrates Scholastikos the ecclesiastical historian, who considered Hellenism as one of God's Divine Economy instruments.

Early Christian apologists and Church Fathers supported the study of Hellenism's classical authors as necessary in a Christian education, not only for eloquence and the art of reasoning, but also because "there were many philosophers among the Greeks who were not far from the knowledge of God" as Socrates Scholastikos writes. The intellectual synthesis between Hellenism and Christianity was consummated during the first six centuries and it determined the attitude of Orthodox Christianity toward Hellenism through the Byzantine and post-Byzantine era, down to the present day. But who prepared the way, and where is the evidence confirming the interrelationship between Hellenism and Christian Orthodoxy?

In this lecture, Dr. Constantelos will attempt to answer this fundamental question. He will first examine the background of how Hellenism served as the prodrome to the

interrelationship between Hellenism and Christianity. Then, he will provide the evidence of the integration that the two achieved after the second century through the writings and the work of the great Church Fathers and Ecumenical Councils.

Dr. Constantelos, a retired priest of the Greek Archdiocese, is Charles Cooper Townsend, Sr. Distinguished Professor Emeritus of History and Religious Studies at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. He was born in Spilia, Messinia, Greece, he studied at Holly Cross Greek Orthodox Theological School (B.A., Th.) Brookline, Massachusetts and pursued graduate studies at Princeton Theological Seminary (Th.M.) and Rutgers University (M.A., Ph.D.). He has been awarded an honorary doctorate in theology by Hellenic College/Holy Cross. He taught at Rutgers University, Hellenic College, Boston College, the University of Dayton, Dartmouth College, Colgate University, University of California at Santa Barbara, John Carroll University, Bellarmine College, and before many professional, religious, academic, and civic organizations. He has presented papers at many professional conferences, has authored many studies, articles, and reviews which have appeared in more than forty journals, and he is the author or editor of thirteen books. Dr. Constantelos is an associate editor of the Journal of Ecumenical Studies at Temple University, and a member of the Revised Standard Version Bible Committee of the National Council of Churches in the United States.

The Celebration Of The New Year

The traditional KRIKOS-Midwest celebration of the New Year will take place on Saturday, January 24, 1998, at the Ambassador Banquets at the corner of North Avenue and York Road in Elmhurst, Illinois.

We will welcome the young New Year with the good company of friends, a fine dinner with Greek wines, vassilopites, Greek pastries, and dancing music for all tastes.

Tickets are \$25.00 for adults and \$15.00 for children under twelve. For reservations, please call (847) 498-3686 or any of the Board Members.

We look forward to seeing you at 6:00 PM.

In Brief...

National Krikos Board And Executive Committee

After the last elections, the Executive Committee of National KRIKOS is:

Constantine Efthymiou, President;
Panos Stavrianidis, Vice President-USA;
Petros Katakalos, Vice President-Canada;
Constantine Tzanos, Vice President-Greece;
Minas Logiadis, Secretary;
A. Koutsospyros, Treasurer.

The National KRIKOS Board Members are:

George Alexopoulos, Miltos Hiskakis, George Korfiatis, Chris Kossovitsas, Spyros Makris, Vassilis Morfopoulos, Katherine Stabile, Dimitris Staikos, and Demetrios Siderakis.

Holbrooke: US Bears Responsibility

US special presidential envoy for Cyprus Richard Holbrooke on November 11, 1997, said: "We believe that stability is an essential goal in the post cold war period and in my view the other issues between Greece and Turkey cannot be dealt with unless Cyprus is dealt with centrally, it is the core issue....The American history is not entirely clean, there are some things previous American administrations did in this area, particularly between mid-1960s and 1974, which I think were shameful. We bear certain responsibility for our role in contributing to certain events here which were tragic."

Greece Will Built The Largest Solar Power Station

The Greek government is supporting the construction of the world's largest solar power station in Moires on Crete's southern coast. The 50 megawatt plant will dwarf the largest photovoltaic (PV) plant currently in operation - a 3.3 megawatt facility in Italy. It will provide enough electricity for some 100,000 residents by 2003. It will be built and operated by Enron Solar of the United States. The European Union and Greece will fund 55 percent of the capital cost.

It is expected that the cost of the solar power station of Crete will be one fourth of the current average cost of photovoltaic facilities. The price of electricity produced by this station is expected to be roughly the same as of that produced by conventional stations in Crete. When the project was announced by Development Minister Vasso Papandreou, Thilo Bode, the executive director of Greenpeace International, said : "Today is a very important day for the environment. It could even be called a historic day." The importance of the Cretan experiment lies in that it is a bold step in the direction of lowering the production cost of photovoltaic cells. Greenpeace claims that " if the world builds the equivalent of eight of these power stations, we can create a \$27-billion market for solar PV and create 100,000 jobs." Greenpeace is hoping to use this project as a banner in its global crusade against fossil fuels.

Food For Thought

Professor George Kourvetaris published recently *Studies on Greek Americans* (Columbia University Press, New York), a collection of studies on Greek Americans.

Greece, The Holy Land Of The West

What does Hellenism mean, what is the relation of modern Greece to Hellenism, what is the contribution of modern Greece to the world? These are question that come up many times. **Jacques Bouchard**, director of the Modern Greek Studies Program at the Universite' de Montreal, provides some very insightful answers to these questions in his Essay *Philhellene Street*. Here we present some excerpts from the *Philhellene Street*:

For me Greece represents Hellenism's anchorage through the ages and the holy Land of the West.

I keep returning to Greece as though it were my own homeland, to the wellsprings of the Greek culture I've absorbed since my studies in the classics, with Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, Demosthenes, and Plato as my constant

companions. Early on I became aware that western civilization was indebted to Greece for its arts, its literature, its philosophy, its science and political system-and above all, for its humanism. Finally, Hellenism is that: to believe in man and to magnify him in all his dignity, as in this chorus of **Antigone**:

Wonders are many, and none is more wonderful than man...

As we look more closely at the shaping of their civilization we appreciate just how the humanism of the Hellenes evolved - by progressively discarding primitive beliefs in dark powers, banishing from the sensory world the capricious interventions of the Olympian gods, and transforming this earth, now exorcised of its demons, into the domain of man. **Pindar**, too, sings of the nobility of man's early destiny.

*Dear soul of mine, for immortal days,
Trouble not; the joy that is to be had
Drain to the last.*

Our classical education - it is true - chose from among the offerings of Greek civilization. It preferred the Apollonian vision of Hellenism, setting up an ideal of human perfection based on measure and harmony: maximum development of the intellectual virtues, concern for the aesthetic, individual ethics combined with a sense of collective responsibility, and a cult of the beautiful and healthy body. Our respect for these values makes us true proponents of Hellenic culture. Those who share our culture are called Hellenes, Isocrates said. From the Hellenistic Greeks we have inherited the consciousness that we possess culture as our common heritage, and our conviction that this precisely, is what makes man human. Pindar reminds us of our true calling when he tells us, "*Become what you are-knowingly.*" In its discovery of humanism, Greece acquired its unique place in human history.

Hellenism is grounded in the power of human reflection, in a fertile worldview which generates heterodoxy and pluralism of opinion; Christianity is a divine revelation of what "is the Truth," which would impose upon all its own dogma. Hellenism stands for the integral development of man and holds that he should live by natural law in order to find happiness in this life. Christianity offers renunciation, mortification, and prayer as the means to a felicity of another life it claims as eternal, a life after death. Hellenism sets liberty, defined by the philosophers and defended by the citizens, as its guiding principle. Christianity proclaims the kingdom of God through the exemplary lives of saints and ministry of the clergy. The final goal of one system is democracy; that of the other, theocracy.

Christianity, they say, brought with it the idea of love, an element missing from Hellenism. But I believe we find an identical love of one's neighbor in what the Stoics called *philanthropia*.

Tourists in a hurry may wonder whether it is still possible to speak of Hellenism today. After all, to call contemporary Greeks "*Helleno-Christians*," as some have suggested would be to create a self-contradiction hybrid.

But look more closely at modern Greece and study its development-the answer can only be affirmative. First, Christianity could have succeeded in pushing paganism aside only by responding to the deep aspirations of many Hellenes. The idea of divine providence founded on a unique relation between God and Self, combined with the promise of personal salvation, both flattered and exalted their visceral individualism. Contrariwise, Christianity propagated among the faithful the virtue of humanity, the common man's offshoot of the Stoic's *philanthropia*. Ultimately Christianity was only acceptable to the Greeks after its reformulation by the Fathers of the church in conformity with the categories of philosophical thought.

Humanism has fully reclaimed its entitlement among the very people who brought it into being and raised it to noble stature. Greeks of today take delight in enumerating those particularities which give their humanism its distinct trademark: *philotimo*, respect for human dignity; *meraki*, love of perfection in action; *levendia*, the gallantry of the generous gesture.

But for us, as Hellenics, modern Hellenism's essential contribution is undoubtedly to have brought into the open in all its power a long-observed but consubstantial element of Hellenism, one only imperfectly assimilated by the Western humanist tradition: the Dionysian spirit.

The impression is one of watching a people in a state of perpetual festivity - song and music, dancing and tavernas - an ongoing potlatch of vital energies. This insatiable appetite for life impels the Greeks toward creation, which is the negation of death. The Dionysian Hellenism of the people is able to flourish and to find expression via a range of artistic movements, even those of foreign origin, like Surrealism. Andreas Embirikos, in his poem *In Philhellene Street*, is right to praise "*...the glory of the Hellenes who first among all in this lowly world, transformed their fear of death into lust for life.*"

If there is one particularly modern Greek virtue, it is generosity, as omnipresent as a manner of being. This generosity marks not only the Greeks as a group, but the majority of those individuals who make up the group.

Of course eternal Greece throbs with the Greece of today - this is why the viewpoint of contemporary Greeks has been so precious. All who would claim Hellenic identity, be they citizens of Greece or citizens of the world, must first bring about within themselves this primal unity, live this philosophy to the full, the reconciliation of the Apollonian ideals with the Dionysian impulses.

FROM THE RICHES OF OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE

Poetry of George Seferis

Salamis In Cyprus

*Sometimes the midday sun, sometimes handfuls of light rain
and the beach covered with fragments of ancient jars.
The columns insignificant; only the ruined church of St. Epiphanius
revealing-dark, sunken-the midnight of the golden Empire.*

*Young bodies, loves and loving, have passed by here;
throbbing breasts, shells rose-pink, feet
fearlessly skimming the water,
and arms open for the coupling of desire.
The Lord upon many waters,
hereupon this crossing.*

*Then I heard footsteps on the stones.
I didn't see any faces; they'd gone by the time I turned.
But the voice, heavy like the tread of oxen,
remained there in the sky's veins, in the sea's roll
over the pebbles, again and again:*

*"Earth has no handles
for them to shoulder her and carry her off,
nor can they, however thirsty,
sweeten the sea with half a dram of water.
And those bodies,
formed of a clay they know not,
have souls.*

*They gather tools to change them;
they won't succeed: they only unmake them
if souls can be unmade.
Wheat doesn't take long to ripen,
it doesn't take much time
for the yeast of bitterness to rise,
it doesn't take much time
for evil to raise its head,
and the sick mind emptying
doesn't take much time
to fill with madness:
there is an island..."*

*Friends from the other war,
on this deserted and cloudy beach
I think of you as the day turns-
those who fell fighting and those who fell years after the
battle,
those who saw dawn through the mist of death
or, in wild solitude beneath the stars,
felt upon the huge dark eyes
of total disaster;*

*and those again who prayed
when flaming steel sawed the ships:
"Lord, help us to keep in mind
the causes of this slaughter:
greed, dishonesty, selfishness,
the desiccation of love;
Lord, help us root these out..."*

*-Now, on this pebbled beach, it's better to forget;
talking doesn't do any good;
who can change the attitude of those with power?
Who can make himself heard?
Each dreams separately without hearing anyone else's
nightmare.*

*-True. but the messenger moves swiftly
and however long his journey, he'll bring
to those who tried to shackle the Hellespont
the terrible news of Salamis.*

*Voice of the Lord upon the waters.
There is an island.*

Raven

*Years like wings. What does the motionless raven remember?
What do the dead close to the roots remember?
Your hands had the color of an apple ready to fall,
and that voice which always returns, that low voice.*

*Those who travel watch the sail and the stars
they hear the wind they hear the other sea beyond the wind
near them like a closed shell, they don't hear
anything else, don't look among the cypress shadows
for a lost face, a coin, don't ask,
seeing a raven on a dry branch, what it remembers.*

*It remains motionless just over my hours
like the soul of an eyeless statue;
there's a whole crowd gathered in that bird
thousands of people forgotten, wrinkles obliterated
broken embraces and uncompleted laughter,
arrested works, silent stations
a deep sleep of golden spangles.
It remains motionless. It gazes at my hours. What does it
remember?*

There are many wounds inside those invisible people within it.