



167. Jan. 4/17, 1975. Holy Seventy Apostles

Categories : [Letters](#)

Date : September 2, 2016

Dear Brother in Christ Alexey,

A brief note to accompany a new tape of Pomazansky — he just wrote us, by the way, that he's happy to hear we've begun the translation and would very much like to live to see it completed! May it be so, and may God give us the way to publish it! I'm already on p. 45 of the translation (the 4th tape), out of 200 or so.

Enclosed is a letter of Kalomiros, which please return, showing another side of the "crisis" which you noted also in the Denver parish. I had written him briefly in answer to a recent inquiry of his, telling him that indeed our bishops are inclining dangerously now to the path of compromise — the last Sobor said nothing in support of the Zealots, even those suffering on Mt. Athos, and seems to want to be friends with everyone; Archbp. Anthony of Geneva especially is advocating "condescension" toward new calendar and everything that isn't "dogma." The letter of the Bishops to Metropolia was very weak and, as Archbp. Averky and Bp. Nektary told us, shouldn't have been sent in that form (without a call to return to the truth and step away from the world's ways). The sad thing is that our Synod has justification for separate existence only if it is zealot, gives an example to the other fallen or falling away "jurisdictions" — but to be wishy-washy and just dragging along behind the apostasy has no meaning at all. Your feeling at Denver was correct. But Christ our God is with us, and Vladika John has pushed us in the right direction (he told us to keep right on accusing Athenagoras, even if people didn't like it!), and all of our trials are only to strengthen us for the very difficult times ahead. God is with us!

Vladika Nikon understands English well enough for correspondence, and the fact that he was interested enough to write you and send his book (he did the same to us — in English) shows he still has his missionary fervor (even though in theological things our zealots do not always agree with him!).

We have purchased a truck — 1953 pickup for \$325, thanks to Br. Michael's friend in Eureka; but it's got a broken axle or something, so your truck is still our mainstay; we're able to get up and down in it with chains, whereas the car is still parked at the bottom of the hill owing to the remaining patches of snow on the road.

For John we have hopes, but also fears. There were times when he was here, especially at night when I would talk to him, when he was completely natural and normal, and it is obvious that he is very intelligent and also well-read for his age — he's obviously far ahead of his class in almost everything, except perhaps for math, in which he doesn't seem too interested. At times he would



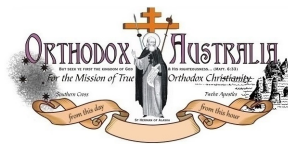
even be humble — but then at other times, especially when exposed to our whole community life at refectory or in church, he would put on his “act” of stubbornness, disobedience, knowing better. We could see that deep down he doesn’t even want to do this, but it’s become a habit with him, reinforced by a rather deep streak of just plain pride. We told him that his future visits to us will depend on what reports we hear of his behavior in Etna. I told him straight out that it’s a disgrace that he is failing school and has to have “special treatment” which he does not need at all, except for his willful stubbornness. Of course, it will require time and perhaps some shocks to get him out of his “escape mechanism” of dreaming, etc. May God teach us all how to help him, but primarily he must himself want to please others and not just himself. May Barbara learn patience and firmness! That’s doubtless the best place for him now, and we will try to preserve our skete for him as a “reward” and something to look forward to — he seemed to like it here, even some of the difficulties. By the way, he seems to be quite mechanically minded, and while he was helping me put together our new press he was quite absorbed in the work and willing to do anything to help. Is there something mechanical there for him to get interested in?

Kireyevsky’s remarks on the family, etc., are unfortunately not as clear-cut and applicable as the remarks I’ve already taped (partly because he contrasted Russian family with European upper-class family, with the daughters being sent for education to convents); he also has remarks on the European “party” system. But if you’re already writing this chapter, perhaps we should see what you say first and then perhaps suggest some additions if needed. The main idea of his remarks on the family is that in Orthodox families no one lives for himself but gives up himself for the good of the others.

The book *Scientific Creationism* is very good; John read parts of it while he was here and seemed to understand (I think he’s a secret evolutionist, so I deliberately gave him the book to read); in fact at times he almost caught me in my ignorance of which “layers” come after which in the geological time scale — he’s read all about those things! We can add some things to Part One from this book; I hope to get about two days in “Valaam” before long to think about this. By the way, we should also have a good bibliography of objective books on evolution, of which there are now quite a few.

Pray for us. We wish you and all the community a joyous epiphany — store up all the blessings of this time of year for the struggles ahead! Do not be discouraged if the community is “fragile” — that’s part of the testing we’re all going through! We had here yesterday a young visitor who’s staying for a few weeks with our Adventist neighbors — he’s been through Yoga and worked “miracles,” then found his goal in a state beyond all sects, in “Biblical” Christianity (literally interpreted). It turns out that the “Sabbath” is the chief of the commandments, and he demanded I show him in Scripture that it isn’t so. The look in his eyes says he’s in prelest and won’t be moved out of it — these people (including our Adventists) are opposed to the charismatic movement but spiritually are quite akin to it. It seems that few of them are capable of seeing the truth of Orthodoxy.

With love in Christ,



Seraphim, monk