



290. June 9/22, 1980 St. Cyril of Alexandria

Categories : [Letters](#)

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Dear Fr. Demetrios,

Christ is in our midst!

We were glad to hear of your conference next summer; these conferences could be valuable supports for our difficult task of standing in the truth in these evil times.

I hope you don't mind if I have a suggestion or two for this conference:

First, I think a good number of English-speaking Russian priests should be invited to speak. Father Herman was the only Russian invited to speak at Seattle, and this creates the impression that the conference is for an "American clique" in the Church, and not for the Russian Church Abroad as a whole; even if this wasn't the intent, the result is that this group of priests is more and more cutting itself off from the rest of the Church. There are many Russian priests who could give excellent talks in English (and probably on a less "intellectual" and more down-to-earth level than we Americans usually give)—for example, Fr. Valery Lukianov, Fr. Roman Lukianov (especially on the new martyrs of Russia), etc.

Second, I think the theme of the conference should be expressed in positive terms. "Modernism and ecumenism" are good to talk about as dangers facing us, but I think they shouldn't set the tone for a conference. If they're mentioned in the title, perhaps it could be something like: "Preaching the Orthodox Gospel in the midst of 20th-century modernism and ecumenism," or something similar. The evils of our time are so great that sometimes we lose sight of the greater power of what we have to oppose them with—I think this is the mistake of those who are attacking Fr. Dimitry Dudko, who almost more than anyone else today is preaching the positive Orthodox Gospel, even though he is overwhelmed with the evils of contemporary society.

We've sent you a copy of Father Herman's open letter to Fr. Nektas. I don't know what else he could have said or done. To pretend the problem doesn't exist (when it's already gone so far that honest love and sympathy can be called "unprincipled and irresponsible") is foolish, and to wait longer to begin protesting will have worse results. Archbishop Anthony and Bishop Nektary (who are both literally crushed by the attack on Fr. Dimitry Dudko) have said they themselves will be as far away from Seattle as possible during the conference. I only hope that Fr. Nektas and others, when they see how they are pushing away the best part of our Church from themselves, will make an earnest effort to come back and join the rest of us in a positive witness of Orthodoxy. If not, I fear they will go into schism, still thinking themselves "correct" and everyone else wrong.



Thank you for the name of the young couple in Oakland; I will write to them if we don't see them here (or with Fr. Alexey in Etna) before long.

Since writing the above, we've heard of Fr. Dimitry Dudko's "confession" on Soviet television. May God help this poor man in his hour of trial; one can only imagine the pressures and tortures placed upon him to extract this (chiefly, I would think, threats against his family and spiritual children). I hope there will be no gloating over this on the part of his enemies. For my part, I think the lesson in this for us is to go deeper within ourselves. It can be very consoling to know that someone there is a "hero" and is saying boldly what even we in freedom seldom have the courage or strength to say; but now we can appreciate a little better the suffering we must all go through to be true Orthodox Christians in these terrible times. This "confession" does not invalidate a single word he said before, as I see it; but now it is others who will have to continue this work. We must all pray for each other more, and have more love and sympathy for each other. May God help us all! I sense the clouds becoming ever darker over America too. Please pray for us here, that we may put out some more essential books while we still have time and freedom.

With love in Christ,
Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim