

320. Oct, 17/30. 1981 Prophet Hosea

Categories : [Letters](#)

Date : October 10, 2016

Dear Father George [Macris],

Christ is in our midst! He is and shall be!

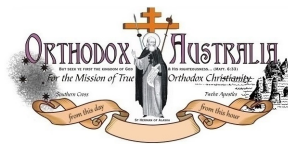
Thank you for your letter and your proposal to meet me on my next visit to the Portland area. I would be glad to arrange a meeting with you, although my next visit will not be too soon. Father Herman visits the Russian parish there more often than I, and since I made the last two visits the next one will undoubtedly be his. I won't be there until after the first of the year.

I'm sorry you found The Orthodox Word no. 96 disturbing, but I can assure you there was nothing in it "implied" about any change in our attitude towards the Moscow Patriarchate. The recent "Decision" of the Synod of Bishops says it very well, I think, and I agree with it wholeheartedly.

I think perhaps a part of the disturbance comes from the fact that the attitude of our Church Outside of Russia to the Moscow Patriarchate has never been "defined" in so many words, and some people have read into the strictness of our attitude an ecclesiological statement about the Patriarchate that simply isn't there. Among most of the Russian clergy articles on Archimandrite Tavrion (which have appeared in Orthodox Russia over the past several years), as well as others like Fr. Dimitry Dudko, Boris Talantov, etc., cause no problem because, while their position is recognized as one of "compromise" to some degree, the church situation in Russia is recognized as not yet "final" and therefore as not yet requiring any absolute judgment on our part. Therefore, our non-communication with Moscow is strict, but it is in no way compromised or threatened by our sympathy and support for courageous priests and laymen of the Patriarchate. This is not at all a "new" attitude in our Russian Church Abroad; it has always been like this, but only recently have there appeared any very public instances in which it has been expressed.

If you want a theological statement on this whole question, I think the closest you will get to it is in the writings of Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan {The Orthodox Word, 1977, no. 75}.

Given the non-finality of the Russian church situation, I myself find no problem in co-existing in the same Church with people who have different approaches and even different opinions on this situation, as long as they do not try to force their opinions upon the whole Church. Some seem to want to proclaim the Moscow Patriarchate as without grace and no better than Roman Catholicism; others (among the clergy) allow their spiritual children to receive communion (when travelling in Russia) from clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate. These are both matters of private opinion which can co-exist in the Church as long as no attempt is made to make them the Church's official



position; I myself think the correct position is somewhere between these two extremes. If you have any difficulty accepting such “broadness,” I think your difficulty is not with any of us who have expressed various opinions, but with our bishops who for fifty years have not taken any more definite position.

Asking your prayers, and assuring yours [stet] of mine,

With love in Christ,
Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim