



PRACTICAL POINTERS

FOR

21ST CENTURY

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN

MISSION

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**“The Gospel of Christ must be preached in all tongues
throughout the world in an **Orthodox context**.
Only then will the end come.” – Holy Hierarch John Maximovitch**

BARFIELD LAWS OF MISSION

*The Missionary is not there to convert people,
but to confront them with the message of Jesus Christ.*

1. Start before you are ready

- ❖ Concept of urgency – the world's end is unknown, souls need to be shown path to salvation. Best time for mission is when the world is at its worst.
- ❖ Your life is nearing its end – bring forth fruit to consolidate your Orthodoxy: “...as we forgive our debtors”.
- ❖ Recall Christ's parables of the Talents, the Wise & Foolish Virgins, and the Barren Fig Tree.
- ❖ Have missionary material on hand, pamphlets, books, DVDs, movies, Icons, inspiring stories, etc – give them something!
- ❖ Be prepared in any situation to give a missionary witness of Orthodoxy.
- ❖ To those to whom much is given, ie. to the Orthodox – from those much will be required, (Luke 12:48).

2. When you have the fire, run with it

- ❖ This is all about inspiration, zeal – a normal God-given grace to want to share the jewels of Orthodoxy with others.
- ❖ Idealism is the mark of a True Christian and desire to share with others.
- ❖ “Zeal is a prime characteristic of a true Christian” – St Theophan the Recluse.
- ❖ First person to be ignited with Christian zeal was St Simon Zealotes – Bridegroom at the Wedding at Cana. He became one of the evangelizers of Britain.

3. Dream big, work small

- ❖ Do not institutionalize missionary work – it always fails and turns into another worldly organization – “They have built a lot of noble palaces, but have forgotten to put the noblemen inside” (H. Thoreau); “Nowadays, they are building walls, walls and empty walls” (Elder Cleopa of Romania).
- ❖ Work with individuals – “Fear not, LITTLE FLOCK; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).
- ❖ St Seraphim of Sarov – “If you save your own soul, a thousand souls around you will be saved.”
- ❖ Read Acts of the Apostles and incident with St Phillip and the Eunuch of Queen Candice.

4. Have a spiritual mentor, close to home

- ❖ For yourself and for your missionary activities.
- ❖ From Australia: Fr Antonios (Mobayed)– Fawkner cemetery; Fr Vladimir (Evsukoff) – Footscray cemetery; Fr Lazarus (Moore) – translator of Orthodox texts; Archbishop Nectarios of Madagascar – Baptized over 20,000 people. Do regular Requiems.
- ❖ Need also a missionary Saint protector – St Herman of Alaska, St Raphael Hawaweeny, Holy Hierarch John – re-establisher of Western Orthodoxy in modern times. Fr Seraphim Rose – exemplifier of Orthodox Truths to contemporary society. Get their Icons. Know their lives.
- ❖ St Innocent of Alaska – the 3 essentials of Missionary Work = {Gardening/handwork + Cliros + Ennobling Literature}.
- ❖ Get to know God-bearing people in the world – go regularly on pilgrimages.

5. Do not ask a blessing, when God already blesses it

- ❖ Missionary work is a Commandment, the last Commandment – we are obliged to do it, as with any good work.
- ❖ Do not ride on the blessing of your spiritual father. Obedience is a gift of the Holy Spirit – Unless you are a monastic with a God-bearing elder – this special relationship is given to a very few. Fr John Krestiankin says much about this in his letters – read!

- ❖ It is better to have tried and failed than never to have tried – sloth and inactivity is a known disease of today’s Orthodox Christians. *“Because thou art lukewarm & neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth” (Rev. 3:16)*. Take responsibility for your mistakes.
- ❖ Work through Independent Orthodox Christian Brotherhoods – a living Tradition.

6. **Do not count your blessings, but count your blisters**

- ❖ You are working for God not yourself, but we are working UPON ourselves. We have only so much that is possible – to God anything is possible.
- ❖ Run away from awards, recognition and praise.
- ❖ Be prepared for commotion – Christ said that your problems will come from the ones closest to you. Watch out for devil’s envy and thank God for all repercussions.
- ❖ A true Christian will never fit into this world, therefore the confrontation is automatic.
- ❖ Asceticism – be a giver not a consumer. Must be doing something for the Church always.
- ❖ FEAR is belief in triumph of evil – COURAGE is the belief in the triumph of Good (God).

7. **Know your proselyte, know yourself**

- ❖ What is a Proselyte? One who has been there, done that!
- ❖ Realm of having a “Missionary Conversation”.
- ❖ Must know your theology and that of your proselyte.
- ❖ Protestants – *“What came first, the Bible or the Church?”*
- ❖ Catholics – The Pope; St Bede; Inheritance of Holiness; Immaculate Conception;
- ❖ Jehovah Witnesses – OΩN, Have icon of Christ ready, will need it sooner or later.
- ❖ Muslims – Category of fundamentalists. Not much you can do, except catch them in their “logic”, eg. *“...all women are just meat (harlots)”* – what about your mum? Mohammed has no historical standing – just one of many single heretics.
- ❖ Evolutionists & atheists – must know scientific, philosophical, Biblical and spiritual answers. Must be appealing to contemporary, educated, empirical mind. Make sure you know well the scientific refutation to evolutionary theory.
- ❖ Generation-X – will take no fakery or nonsense from you.
- ❖ What about the Orthodox? Most Orthodox Christians do not know their Faith. Start at home.
- ❖ If you argue, you can say good-bye to the “Missionary Conversation”.
- ❖ *“Opinion is the lowest form of human knowledge”* – St Theophan the Recluse.
- ❖ Orthodox World View is of prime importance. *“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the End... Who is and Who was and Who is to come.” (Rev. 1:8)*.

8. **Be a fool-for-Christ, but not an idiot**

- ❖ Learn to stand on your own spiritual feet and help others to do the same.
- ❖ Do not be a guru – even an ordained person today, is at best an advisor.
- ❖ Orthodox Christianity is based on love – test yourself regularly with the 5 Point Missionary Readiness Evaluation (next page).
- ❖ An idiot is one who calls themselves a Christian, but has no love. Pray for discernment.
- ❖ Church politics are a sure way to undermine missionary work. Seek not the “perfect” Jurisdiction. They are all equally good for salvation. Pontius Pilate was interested in Jurisdictions (Luke 23:7). BUT, Wisdom is built on the 5 Christian Fidelities – Christological, Apostolic, Traditional, Transmissional and Aesthetic (or Philokalic).
- ❖ Pray, fast, confess, partake of the mysteries, read (spiritual and secular), keep spiritual journal (cf. St John of Kronstadt), be ALWAYS doing something for the Church (the list is endless) and lead an increasing life of piety – a path to deification.

Your task – Check the above according to Orthodox Theology, Tradition and Teachings of the Missionary Fathers.

5 POINT MISSIONARY READINESS EVALUATION

You are interested in Orthodox Mission. That is great! It is the fulfillment of Christ's last Commandment:

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Mat. 28:19-20)

BUT, before you can be a missionary, you need to be immersed in fulfilling the other Commandments that the Lord has given us, especially that to do with loving our enemies:

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Mat. 5:44)

Here is a 5 point test to evaluate your spiritual disposition and standing in Orthodox life. It will show clearly your readiness to be a missionary for our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. *In five minutes, name 5 living people that you consider are better than you.*
2. *Indicate for each of the above 5 people, why you consider them better than you.*
3. *In five minutes, name 5 living people that you consider are worse than you.*
4. *Indicate for each of the above 5 people, why you consider them worse than you.*
5. *From the above exercise, determine 5 spiritual aspects about yourself that need urgent correction.*

It is suggested that you repeat these 5 steps every five months of your life.

How will you know when you are ready for missionary work?

DEIFICATION

THE THREE STAGES OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

6. *By a progress of internal purification. This prepares the soul for God's work — it is equivalent to the cleansing of a dirty vessel — it is the ascetic and often painful process of turning around one's life from that controlled by the passions and sin (the flesh, world and devil — lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life), to one controlled by God's love.*
7. *By a progress of illumination — this is the sphere of the obtaining of real knowledge & understanding about all things, past, present and future (Sobriety, Nipsis), and;*
8. *By a progress to deification — this is the ultimate union with God which transcends all the above and in fact all that we believe and live for in this world and the next.*

