

NATIONAL ORTHODOXY

Fr. Alexander

National Orthodoxy is easily recognized. An apostle or evangelist preached the gospel in the most adverse conditions, possibly died as a martyr, some leaders became converts and the population followed, immediately or over a long time. Now the descendants are Orthodox, by convention, not by conviction. Their Orthodoxy is only national.

For the above reason, Russians, Romanians, Greeks, Arabs, etc. may have true Christians among them; but they also exhibit a national kind of Orthodoxy. Their knowledge of God can be rudimentary. All baptize their children, as this is socially expected. They celebrate saints' days, if a saint is named in the family. Most go to church at Easter, the most important service of the year; and they all enjoy foods associated with Christmas and Easter.

In case of war, as between Russia and the Ukraine, the motive is hidden in national interests. Orthodoxy is relegated to incidentals.

The reason for which we need to understand this is: At some time, in this life, every Orthodox Christian – with the help of parents, god-parents, priests, Sunday-school teachers, or regular-school teachers, or even one's peers – must come to the point of saying: I am a disciple of Jesus Christ by personal conviction. Therefore, I will make the church my spiritual home, listen to instruction, take correction, and ensure that I am a good example to those around me.

Remember Christ's last instruction to the 11 apostles: to “make disciples” in all nations. This speaks of people who are committed to God, not to national or nominal Christians.