



## **Patriarch Kirill takes part in the presentation of the Russian version of the book ‘Unto the Uttermost Part of the Earth’**



On April 29, 2018, during the peace visit of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia to the Albanian Orthodox Church, a presentation took place of the book by His Beatitude Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania entitled ‘Unto the Uttermost Part of the Earth’, devoted to the history, today’s tasks and prospects of the Orthodox mission.

The Primates of the Russian and Albanian Orthodox Churches took part in the event held at the cultural center of the Cathedral of the Trinity in Tirana.

The presentation was attended by the members of the delegation accompanying Patriarch Kirill during his visit to the Albanian Church, including Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations (DECR), Archbishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate administrative secretariat, Archpriest Nikolay

Balashov, DECR vice-chairman, Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations, Archpriest Andrey Bondrenko, acting head of the Patriarchal Protocol Service, and Rev. Alexander Volkov, head of the Patriarchal press service. There were also hierarchs of the Albanian Orthodox Church, leaders of the religious communities in Albania, as well as numerous townspeople and guests of the city.

Addressing the gathering, Archbishop Anastasios said in particular,

‘In the 1960s, when we began to refer to Risen Christ’s often forgotten commandment *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations* (Mt. 28:19-20) as part of the work of Orthodox youth throughout the world, many believed that it was ungrounded enthusiasm; others tried to restrict our efforts saying that they were made under an impact of Western churches.

‘And then we decided to engage in a systematic theological and historical research into the missionary work of the Eastern Church. We began with studies in Byzantine missions crowned with St. Cyril Equal-to-the-Apostles, whose name you, our dear and holy brother, have the honour to bear.

‘Then we moved to studying the work of Russian missionaries who continued bringing the gospel to the peoples who had no knowledge of it before. With a deep emotion I studied and published for the first time the Greek and English versions of the studies devoted to the work of great missionaries, such as St. Innocent (Veniaminov) in Alaska (who was to be elected Metropolitan of Moscow), St. Nicholas (Kasatkin) in Japan and many others.

‘These texts have been united in the book ‘Unto the Uppermost Part of the Earth’, the Russian version of which is presented today. With my gratitude to all those who took part in the translation and publication of this book, I also feel the need to extend my heartfelt gratitude to you, my holy brother, for your kind thought to present this book in Albania this evening’.

This was followed by Patriarch Kirill’s speech:

‘Your Beatitude, Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania,

Your Eminences and Graces,

Your Excellences,

Distinguished assembly,

Christ Is Risen!

In these radiant Paschal days of our visit to the hospitable Albanian land, we continue enjoying the fraternal fellowship with Your Beatitude, hierarchs, clergy and devout laity of the Albanian Orthodox Church, feeling our spiritual closeness and thanking God and the Father Who has called us *to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light* (Col. 1:12).

The Russian Orthodox people treat the martyred Albanian Church with special reverence. When people speak about her they, in the first place, remember the terrible persecution to which she was subjected in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and which can be compared only with persecutions that fell to the lot of the Russian Orthodox Church in the last century. The experience of confession draws our Churches close together. We share and understand both the suffering and joys of each other. In our time the faithful of the Moscow Patriarchate also associate the Albanian Orthodoxy with Your Beatitude as outstanding Primate of the revived Albanian Orthodox Church.

On several occasions you have visited the Moscow Patriarch in which you are well known and respected. And for this reason it is so important for us that the Russian version of your book 'Unto the Uttermost Part of the Earth' has come out. This book opens for the Russian reader an opportunity to be drawn into the history of Orthodox mission as set forth by a hierarch who devoted a considerable part of his life to missionary work and worked in this field on various continents and in different, sometimes very hard situations. United under one cover are articles on the history of Orthodox mission published from 1962 to 1972 and edited as a publication in one book.

I present this book with a special feeling. A considerable part of it is devoted to the historic work of Russian missionaries who continued the cause of Ss Cyril and Methodius Equal-to-the-Apostles, preaching the Orthodox faith further on into the vast lands of their homeland and far beyond it. Through their efforts Orthodoxy was brought to the American continent, while in the Far East Autonomous Chinese and Japanese Churches emerged. I am very glad that now Russian readers, too, can familiarize themselves with the clear and profound judgments of the Primate of the Albanian Orthodox Church concerning the aims and tasks of Orthodox missionary work, its past and present.

The first ever Russian version of a collection of articles by His Beatitude Archbishop Anastasios has been prepared for publication by the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations and the Ss Cyril and Methodius Institute of Post-Graduate Studies.

I am confident that the book by His Beatitude Archbishop Anastasios will meet a lively response

in the hearts of those for whom the Saviour's words *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations* (Mt. 28-19) resound as a call to active ministry'.

The speeches were followed by a concert given by the Moscow Synodal Choir together with an Albanian choir team, the psalmist choir of the Jan Kukuzeli Byzantine Music School in Tirana as well as children's choir and dance teams. There was also the screening of the film 'Moments of the Revival of the Albanian Autocephalous Church'.

*DECR Communication Service*

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