

## **Orthodox Christian Churches are Underutilized and Potent Allies to Help Achieve the National Security Strategic Objective of Combating Human Trafficking**

Orthodox Christian Churches are untapped partners in combating human trafficking throughout the world. The Orthodox Churches are steeped in a tradition of cultural tolerance, diversity, freedom of conscience. With the ever-growing influence of Orthodox Christianity throughout the world after the collapse of the Soviet Empire and the Ottoman Empire before it, the ethos of Orthodox Churches worldwide, partnership with the USG in the elimination of human trafficking is a natural and self-evident fit.

The support of governments and major cultural institutions that hold to Religious Freedom and Freedom of Conscience is essential for international cooperation and success in combating human trafficking. The USG and American culture depend on Religious Freedom and Freedom of Conscience to flourish. The Orthodox Churches worldwide share that same institutional and moral ethos regarding Religious Freedom and Freedom of Conscience. Thus, they offer a significant collaborative opportunity to the USG that increases the success of reducing the scourge of Human Trafficking on a global scale. This opportunity has been overlooked so far even though there is substantial potential to enlist the Orthodox communions as significant partners.

### **History of Track Two Relations by USG with Foreign Religious Organizations: The Roman Catholic Example**

Historical evidence exists that a collaboration between the USG and religious institutions in fighting human trafficking is beneficial. The Reagan administration was the first in modern times to realize it. It broke precedent when it established a formal diplomatic relation with The Holy See and a Track Two dialogue with the Papacy of the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup> In 1984 the Reagan Administration established formal diplomatic relations with “The Holy See” (the Vatican State).<sup>2</sup> The relationship did not offer the usual capacity building benefits of strategic geography, military capabilities, or the sharing of natural resources common in international cooperative agreements.

Therefore, the principal purpose by the Reagan Administration of the establishment of the highest level of diplomatic relations with “The Holy See” was to secure a working relationship not with the sovereign of the Holy See, but with the significant worldwide moral authority of the

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<sup>1</sup> President Ronald Reagan was by personal faith a Protestant Christian. The Secretary of State at the time, George Schultz was also a Protestant Christian. There is no reason to believe the diplomatic relations were made simply from a personal faith. Diplomatic Relations were made possible by the Lugar Act of 1983 that repealed the prohibition against the USG establishing formal diplomatic ties with the Papal States of its successor, The Holy See. <https://www.csmonitor.com/1983/1006/100637.html>.

<sup>2</sup> For twenty years from 1848 to 1867 the USG had formal diplomatic relations at the ministerial level with the Papal States. These relations with broken off by official Federal Legislation because of the perception regarding the Roman Catholic Churches role in potentially supporting the Confederacy and a conspirator in President Lincoln's assassination.

Roman Pontiff. The goal was long term. The USG sought to ensure increased operational capabilities and success in upcoming decades in Track Two dialogues with the Roman Pontiff. The USG succeeded by establishing a permanent Track Two dialogue, through formal diplomatic relations.

There are strong ideological ties with much of the Roman Catholic Dogmatic Theology and USG policy regarding the philosophical understanding of the dignity of the human person. Other Roman Catholic ideological beliefs were not congruent with US policy or law. The simplest example is that the USG holds that abortions on demand are legal, and therefore a moral responsibility for the USG to facilitate. The Catholic Pope and the Roman Catholic Church maintain that abortion is wrong, and that life begins at conception. These differences between these two actors did not stop combined efforts or the subsequent successes of these efforts in a myriad of other areas.<sup>3</sup>

The establishment of formal diplomatic relations, during the Reagan Administration, and the Vatican quickly proved to be beneficial and, in hindsight, even legendary. Examples of the success of these combined efforts include the strengthening of the Solidarity moved in Poland, Glasnost with the former Soviet Union, destabilization of the Warsaw Pact, tearing down the Berlin Wall, German reunification, and ultimately the collapse of the Soviet Union. Cooperation with religious institutions has offered significant benefits for US foreign policy. The success of this Track Two dialogue utilizing the combined operational capabilities of the USG and Roman Catholic Church will continue to help the USG in the future in yet unforeseen ways. The strength of this partnership persists beyond the limitations of the regulatory timelines imposed by USG two and four-year election cycles. Despite some ideological differences, the policy endures unchanged through every subsequent administration, all of whom see the potential benefit to the relationship and have left it unchanged.

### **The Orthodox Church, a Historical Summary**

In order to understand the contribution of the Orthodox Church in combating human trafficking, it first is necessary to clarify the Orthodox Church itself. The Orthodox Church does not fit into the common religious category in ways most Americans understand. The Orthodox Church differs from the Protestant and Catholic counterparts in crucial ways.<sup>4</sup>

The Eastern Orthodox Church traces its lineage back to Jesus Christ and the Apostles, who established the first organized church, identifying with the Greek-speaking eastern part of the Roman Empire. The Apostles appointed their successors, called bishops, who continued the process known as Apostolic succession. The organizational model of the Church was a

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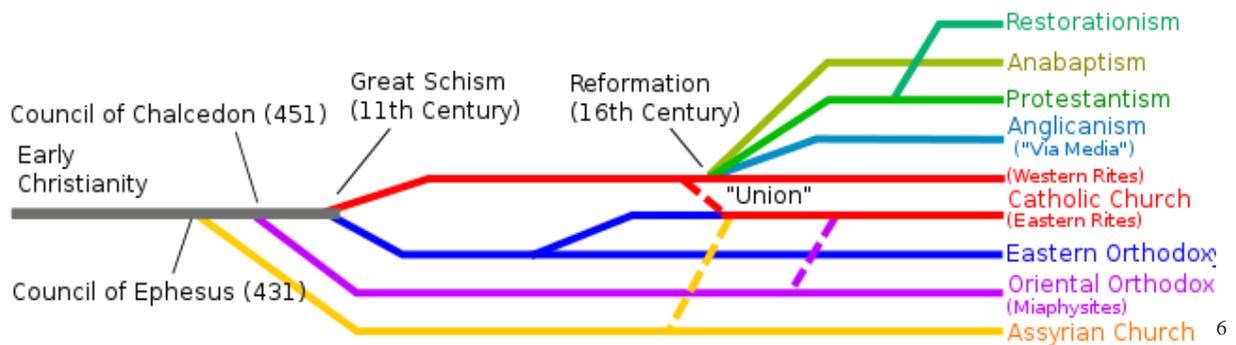
<sup>3</sup> Most of the common core ideological perspectives between the USG and the Holy See are in the common understanding of the dignity, value, and rights of the human person, the individual.

<sup>4</sup> A simple example is that for the Orthodox Churches, the Church liturgical calendar for Pascha (Passover)/Easter always concedes with the Jewish calendar and Passover. This calendar is called the Julian calendar. <https://www.britannica.com/science/Julian-calendar>. Accessed 1 OCT 18. The Protestant Churches maintain the Catholic Liturgical Calendar for Easter. The Catholic Church changed from the Julian calendar for determining how to calculate Easter after the Reformation in 1582. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Gregorian-calendar>. Accessed 1 OCT 18.

Pentarchy, divided into five Patriarchates, headed by five Patriarchs, senior bishops.<sup>5</sup> Prior to the Great Schism, 1054, the patriarchates were Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem.

Although the Orthodox Churches share a common theology and in many cases a shared history (the Greek Church parented Slavic Orthodoxy for example), each national church has a distinct culture, customs, specific histories, liturgical and often a spoken language. Broadly speaking it can be argued that some Orthodox Churches are a nation unto themselves, the Armenians being one prominent example. One would be hard pressed to find these characteristics common to Orthodox Christianity in most other Christian communions.

### Major branches within Christianity



One important aspect of Orthodox Christian history especially relevant today is that the Orthodox Churches were the first Christian Churches to be encountered by Islam and have the longest history of coexisting with it.<sup>7</sup> For example, the Greek Orthodox monastery of Saint Catherine’s on Mt. Sinai located in the Sinai Peninsula possesses a letter from Muhammad himself promising safety for the Orthodox monks from Islamic malefactors. Muhammad issued this decree of safety in 623CE that most Muslims have obeyed in the centuries following up to today.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> "Pentarchy." Encyclopedia Britannica. Accessed 27 September 2018. The proposed government of universal Christendom by five patriarchal sees under the auspices of a single universal empire. Formulated in the legislation of the emperor Justinian I (527–65), especially in his Novella 131, the theory received formal ecclesiastical sanction at the Council in Trullo (692), which ranked the five sees as Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem.”

<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Template\\_talk:Christian\\_denomination\\_tree](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Template_talk:Christian_denomination_tree). Accessed 1 OCT 18

<sup>7</sup> "The Ashtiname of Muhammad." The Prophet Muhammad gave the monks a "charter" that's intent is to allow them and all Christians the freedom to live their faith in perpetuity. Citations in the Quran also speak of the priests of the Christians. At that time, in that region, these priests and monks were all Orthodox Christians. "Muhammad’s Charter of Freedom of Religion to St. Catherine’s Monastery”, Aslam Abdullah, Apr. 9, 2014, <https://www.whyclam.org/common-ground/freedom-of-religion/>. Accessed 2 AUG 18. The Monks of Saint Catherine have remained Orthodox Christians to the present.

<sup>8</sup> Notably, the Prophet Muhammad granted special considerations to the Christians.

<http://www.lastprophet.info/covenant-of-the-prophet-muhammad-with-the-monks-of-mt-sinai>. Accessed 26 AUG 18.

## The Orthodox Churches: A Socio-Political Introduction

In order to understand what the contribution of the Orthodox Churches could be in combating human trafficking, it first is necessary to clarify who and how the Orthodox Churches are as well as are not. American culture is the result of a Protestant, semi-Calvinist, and anti-Catholic ethos that has contributed to a latent hostility to hierarchical religious institutions and a negative view towards history. It creates suspicion towards Christian societies with longer histories and closer ties between faith and governance than Americans have experienced,<sup>9</sup> Especially given that Orthodox Christianity is still a minority religion in America.<sup>10</sup> As a result, little is known about what these societies believe about their Christian faith, how they believe it, and how they organize and structure their religious affairs.

A common mistake is to assume that because the Orthodox Church is hierarchical, they must govern themselves in ways similar to the Roman Catholic Church. This error of understanding is of no real consequence between the religious bodies or even between the USG and Orthodox believers unless they begin collaborating. At that point the differences become evident, and an effort to understand how things work becomes crucial.

For example, the Orthodox Churches do not have a single head – a Pope figure – in the way that Roman Catholicism has. The structure of each Orthodox Church is a product of political and cultural boundaries. Each national church has a leader – a Patriarch or a Metropolitan – but his authority is not universal, it is limited to the territorial boundaries of his particular Church. Consequently, universality is understood differently than the Roman Catholic model and thus practiced differently as well. Orthodox Christianity is united in a shared faith, rather than a profession of fealty to a shared Pontiff. Once this concept is grasped and the organizational structures that grow out of it are understood, it becomes clear that any USG and Orthodox cooperation in curbing human trafficking will have a different look, methodology, and feel than a US-Catholic model.

One of the historic US perspectives to be overcome is that many of the indigenous Orthodox Churches have been on the wrong side of US Foreign and Domestic Policy, often for reasons beyond their control. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, all Slavic national Orthodox Churches were under the domination of the Soviets.

In other cases, the Orthodox Church was a casualty in the crossfire in international conflicts. For example, in 1974 during the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. Neither the government nor the Orthodox Church of Cyprus received assistance from the US government despite being the center of the resistance. The occupation of Cyprus continues to this day, but US government

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<sup>9</sup> For example: "American Government and Christianity – A Biblical World Perspective." Kerby Anderson, May 27, 2004, or "The Implicit Legacy of American Protestantism," Eric Luis Uhlmann, p. 4-14. , and "3 Important themes of American Culture that Influence Our Schools", Matthew Lynch Sept. 19, 2016, <https://www.theedadvocate.org/3-important-themes-of-american-culture-that-influence-our-schools/>. Accessed 2 AUG 18.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/religious-tradition/orthodox-christian/>. Orthodox Christians average less than 1 percent of the adult US population. Accessed 2 AUG 18.

support is still negligible.<sup>11</sup>

Another example includes the Orthodox Christians of Alaska. Members of the Russian Orthodox Church of America are made up of native Alaskans and citizens of European descent. The US Government forced them into Protestant missionary schools that stripped them of both their culture and Orthodox Christian faith.<sup>12</sup>

The Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches together comprise a family of 400 million people.<sup>13</sup> Orthodox Christian national and ethnically based Churches are a significant presence in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, South Central Asia, East Africa, the Balkans, the Caucasus, and the Mediterranean.

Although the Orthodox Churches share a common theology and in many cases a shared history (the Greek Church parented Slavic Orthodoxy for example), each national church has a distinct culture, customs, specific histories, liturgical and often a spoken language, and so forth. Broadly speaking it can be argued that some Orthodox Churches are a nation unto themselves, the Armenians being one prominent example. One would be hard pressed to find these characteristics common to Orthodox Christianity in most other Christian communions.

Another cultural divide exists because Orthodox nations did not experience the cultural upheavals that shaped the Christian West. For example, Orthodoxy has not experienced a secular Enlightenment to the measure the Western European nations have. It converses with the ideas with great depth at times (Dostoevsky's novels for example), but the culture-shaping energy evident in the areas under Roman Catholic authority stopped at Orthodox borders for the most part. Nor has it been touched by the Protestant Reformation which undoubtedly is one of the more important upheavals of Western European history. The Reformation began as an internal struggle within Roman Catholicism proper and expanded into a social movement. Protestants exist in Orthodox countries, but Protestant Christianity is not homegrown. Most protestants arrived because of migration, some voluntary and some forced.

Closer to home the advantage of collaboration with a local US Orthodox community is that links exist back to the homeland Orthodox Churches as well. Broadly speaking Orthodox Christians in America have done well, often achieving positions of prominence and influence in American society. The Churches also attract capable American converts that enable a social reach that outweighs its small numbers. Finding the right people on a local level should not be difficult, and once this is established outreach to the overseas churches could begin as well.

The international local churches boast substantially more members of course. National Churches also possess very stable internal structures and a wealth of human talent including monks, nuns, and clergy who would share the commitment toward ending human trafficking. These national Orthodox Churches each possess personnel, facilities and logistical capabilities

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<sup>11</sup> For instance: "US Involvement In 1974 Cyprus Invasion Questioned", Jul. 7 2008, Louis Econompoulos, <https://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/us-involvement-1974-cyprus-invasion-questioned>. Accessed 2 AUG 18.

<sup>12</sup> "Alaska Natives' loss of Social & Cultural Integrity/ What the commission found," Alaska Natives Commission Final Report Vol. 1, 1992, <http://alaskool.org/resources/anc/anc01.htm>. Accessed 2 AUG 18.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/11/08/orthodox-christianity-in-the-21st-century/>. Accessed 1 AUG 18.

that would make a build out of operations feasible. A common faith and values unite these Orthodox Churches so networks can be built between them combatting of human trafficking can be built among them with little resistance.

Of particular historical note is that until 1991 approximately ninety-five percent of the Orthodox Christians lived under hostile governments. These governments were either Communist or Muslim. The nations that reemerged out of Communism are still finding their footing and grappling with "freedom," the Eastern Orthodox Churches in those countries are no different in that regard. Today most of the Eastern Orthodox Churches are still only developing their identity and operational direction in a world where their respective government is no longer actively oppressing them.

The USG initiated programs to build trust and facilitate partnerships with these formerly Communist countries. A very successful USG program was Partnership for Peace (PFP). PFP was a US cooperative military program that involved military personnel and units of formerly communist countries to conduct joint training exercises. PFP programed fostered familiarization and trust. Most of those former PFP militaries are now members of NATO.

The Orthodox Churches just as the militaries of these countries before them, can be brought into and developed into a trusting partnership in addressing common issues of concern. Just as previously, the militaries themselves, these Churches have minimal experience in reaching out and acting internationally. All but two countries of the thirteen Orthodox majority population countries have a Tier 2 or lower rating on the US State Departments CTIP Tier system.<sup>14</sup> The USG can gain a great deal by working with these Churches in addressing common issues of concern.

### **Freedom of Religion, Freedom of Conscience, and Theology**

The theology of the human person in Orthodox Christianity is well developed and taught by every Orthodox Church without qualification or diminishment. The core of the theology states that God creates the human conscience. The ability to choose or reject anything is an inviolate characteristic of the human being. It is a theological position drawn from the indisputable truth that each person is the "image and likeness" of God.<sup>15</sup>

Two corollaries emerge from this foundational teaching. The first is that the freedom of conscience must thus be respected by the state and social institutions regardless of a person's beliefs, politics, orientations, foibles or any other distinction. The second is that a human-being irrespective of religious beliefs have the freedom to believe and express their faith.

The Oriental Orthodox hold to the same theological definitions of the human persons which

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2018/index.htm>. Trafficking in Persons Report June 2018, US Department of State. These two Countries are the Republics of Georgia and Cyprus. Accessed 2 AUG 18.

<sup>15</sup> The scriptural passage setting the foundation for the theological concept of "Image and Likeness" is GEN 1:27 NKJV "So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.". The term man here in the first phrase refers to Anthropos, humanity, a human being. Then humanity is created in God's own image in the forms of male and female. The most recent detailed eastern Orthodox exposition of this theological concept Vladimir Lossky addresses in "Image and Likeness," Vladimir Lossky 2001, SVS Press.

also overlap in large part the Roman Catholic teachings. They are also congruent with many of the guiding moral precepts of USG policy particularly towards the oppressed such as those exploited by human traffickers. The convergence of Orthodox beliefs and American values is yet to be examined by the scholars (novelist Alexander Solzhenitsyn was one of the first to speak on the subject in his Harvard Address in 1976), and as Orthodoxy grows in the Christian West, more opportunities may arise to examine these questions with more in-depth deliberation. Some preliminary ideas are offered below.

### **Similar Ideological Beliefs about Slavery and Human Trafficking Between the USG and Orthodox Churches Make Operational Development Possible**

Human trafficking is slavery, and slavery has been abhorrent to Orthodoxy Christianity since its beginnings. Orthodoxy Christianity codified its opposition in the Fourth Century when St. Basil the Great (329-379CE) wrote the definitive treatise against the practice that is still used today.<sup>16</sup>

Anti-slavery rests on the moral ground of the freedom of the human person discussed above. Over the centuries it developed to cover the majority of issues that in secular terms is defined as the Dignity of the Human Person. Orthodox Christian theology is very clear about what the freedoms and rights of every person are without any gray areas of moral ambiguity. Orthodox Church leadership is bound by a clear, comprehensive, holistic and easily identifiable body of moral standards to which they are accountable. Putting and keeping a person in slavery violates these canons at their core.

### **Working with the Russian Orthodox Church to Achieve National Security Strategic Objectives**

Each national and local Orthodox Church has both its particular history, current political and social concerns. Nonetheless, offering one Church as an example of the potential of collaboration with the USG can be instructive given what all the Orthodox Churches share.

One such example is the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). The ROC is an often ignored and often maligned religious institution. Consequently, it is also an untapped partner in securing and maintaining religious plurality, tolerance, diversity, freedom of religion and conscience throughout the world. Many in the US Government see it as a proxy agent for the Russian Government. These and other misunderstandings about the ROC organizational structures, operational capabilities, theology, history, and culture present a significant obstacle by the USG for meaningful cooperation with the ROC. This loss affects both sides; the ROC efforts to curb trafficking with its own nation remains limited, while the USG is distanced from its objective of

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<sup>16</sup> “They try to insult the doctrines that concern the divine nature by comparing them with the human and endeavor to apply to the ineffable nature of God that common custom of human life whereby the difference of degrees is variable, not perceiving that among men (Anthropos) no one is a slave by nature. For men are either brought under a yoke of slavery by conquest, as when prisoners are taken in war; or they are enslaved on account of poverty” “On the Holy Spirit” CH XX., Basil the Great, <https://www.elpenor.org/basil/holy-spirit.asp?pg=58>. Accessed 3 AUG 18.

curbing trafficking worldwide as well as securing universal acceptance for Freedom of Religion and Freedom of Conscience.

Russia's human trafficking problem is more than a means to obtain illicit wealth. Trafficking operations are also the vectors of entry and exchange of illicit drugs and weapons. Terrorists particularly benefit from these vectors of criminality because when human beings become a commodity, the logistics required for housing and movement enable the movement of other contraband as well. Even for a country as geographically large and politically powerful as Russia, the trafficking in human beings represents a national security threat.

## **Russian Orthodox Church History**

The ROC is a national institution in the Russian Federation, a nation colloquially known as Russia. The ROC is an autocephalous (self-governing) that has existed for over 1000 years. It is run by a completely independent ecclesiastical authority (the Synod of Bishops) and led by a Patriarch headquartered in Moscow.<sup>17</sup> The ROC is in full communion with all the Orthodox Churches in the world which number in total about 300 million members. The ROC is largest of independent Orthodox Churches in the world with between 120 million and 130 million members.<sup>18</sup>

Orthodox Christianity was introduced to Russia by Prince Vladimir who sought religion as a means to unify the peoples of Slavic Rus. He sent emissaries to Rome, Jerusalem, and Constantinople and after the experienced the Orthodox Divine Liturgy in the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople reported back that they felt they encountered heaven. Over the past 1000 years, the Orthodox faith has shaped the cultures of many surrounding nations, and the influence of the ROC has grown. The ROC is perhaps the single most important influence in the development of the Russian national identity and the critical institution of Russia's cultural rebirth after the Soviet period. Overestimating the ROC's importance is hard. It has contributed more to Russian identity than the combination of the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution, Revolutionary War, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, the Civil War, the Civil Rights Movement, the Viet Nam War have contributed to American self-identity.

Historically the ROC is either a foil, foe, or friend to the Russian government. It all depends on how the Russian government of that time treated the Church, particularly the government's disposition toward freedom of religion. The ROC has endured and survived foreign interference, Czarist corruption, Nazi occupation, and Soviet persecution. It has suffered the death of tens of

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<sup>17</sup> The Russian Orthodox Church to maintain its place as a Church and Patriarchate in the Eastern Orthodox Church must hold, as it has, the Orthodox Faith as maintained by the Seven recognized Ecumenical Councils of the Christian Church that occurred during the 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> centuries CE.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.ciaworldfactbook.us/europe/russia.html>, <http://www.pewforum.org/2014/02/10/russians-return-to-religion-but-not-to-church/>. The figures regarding the totality of Russian Orthodox faithful is a compilation of many country profiles from the online CIA Factbook. However, figures for the Kievan Patriarchate in Ukraine, at present, looking for autocephaly from the Ecumenical Patriarch are not included in the number above. Accessed 1 AUG 18.<sup>18</sup>

millions of its members and endured brutal repressions on a scale not seen in history or by any other Christian Church.

The ROC displays a dynamic and enduring yet enigmatic and unpredictable role in the international arena. There is no comparable religious body in the West. It styles itself as the “Third Rome”<sup>19</sup> meaning it sees itself as the substitute for the authority that the Catholic Rome abdicated when it went into schism from its brother Patriarchs in 1054 CE.<sup>20</sup> In the larger world, the ROC is an adventurous, bold, even a maverick organization. For centuries it had strong ties with the Orthodox Churches of Israel, Palestine, Syria, Jordan, Bulgaria, Lebanon, Japan, China, Alaska, and Romania to name some. It also has a vigorous outreach to the Roman Catholic Church and smaller, but significant bodies like the Coptic Church.<sup>22</sup>

The significance of ROC as a pivotal international leader for Christianity is a point that is not lost upon the present Roman Catholic Pope of Rome, Francis.<sup>23</sup> Pope Francis made history in 2016 by holding a meeting for the first time between the Roman Pontiff with a Russian Orthodox Patriarchate, in Havana, Cuba.<sup>24</sup> The ROC's reciprocal actions to Pope Francis' advances after many failed past attempts by Pope John Paul II, only serve to underscore the change of direction and disposition by the current leaders within the ROC as to its evolution into a worldwide actor in the modern era in the arena of religious leadership.<sup>25</sup>

### **Patriarch Kirill and Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev**

The two most important leaders of the ROC are Patriarch Kirill (Vladimir Mikhailovich Gundayev) of Moscow and All Rus', and Metropolitan Hilarion (Grigoriy Valerievich Alfeyev) of Volokolamsk, respectively the primate/president and the foreign minister of the ROC. Kirill and Hilarion represent a new ideological line of thought within the Russian Orthodox Church where leaders establish a strong international presence and take bold policy initiatives. Kirill's mentor, Metropolitan Nikodim (Boris Georgiyevich Rotov) of Leningrad and Novgorod, first

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<sup>19</sup> Alar Laats, “The concept of the Third Rome and its political implications,” p. 102

<sup>20</sup> “History of the Orthodox Church,” Aristeides Papadakis, Ph.D.,  
<http://www.greekorthodoxchurch.org/history.html>. Accessed 1 AUG 18.

<sup>21</sup> “The Pentarchy and the Moscow Patriarchate,” <http://orthochristian.com/48694.html>. Accessed 2 AUG 18.  
Today the Greek Orthodox See of Antioch is the only Patriarchate out of the four original members of the Pentarchy in the Orthodox Church, Constantinople (Istanbul), Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, that is led by a non-Greek Patriarch, and whose Patriarchal election is not overseen by the Ecumenical Patriarch.

<sup>22</sup> “Commission for Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Coptic Church holds in Cairo its first session,” <https://mospat.ru/en/2016/02/08/news127959/>. Accessed 2 AUG 18. The Second Commission meeting was held in June 2017 in Astana, Kazakhstan. The third meeting of the commission will be held in Los Angeles, California in 2019. This ROC dynamism is in sharp contrast to the insular relative inaction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The clearest representative example would be the literally blank webpage on the EP's website. <https://www.patriarchate.org/coptic-orthodox>. Accessed 2 AUG 18.

<sup>23</sup> “Pope Francis’ meeting with Patriarch Kirill is a breakthrough of enormous importance”  
<https://www.americamagazine.org/content/dispatches/pope-francis-and-patriarch-kirills-meeting-cuba-milestone-road-christian-unity>. Pope John Paul II was a hardline Roman Catholic, anti-communist and ethnically Polish. These issues affected the relationship between the two Churches at the time. Accessed 1 AUG 18.

<sup>24</sup> “The Patriarch and the Pope” <https://www.vifindia.org/article/2016/may/18/the-patriarch-and-the-pope>. Accessed 1 AUG 18.

<sup>25</sup> “Why meeting between the pope and Russian church leader is a big deal” <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Global-News/2016/0206/Why-meeting-between-pope-and-Russian-church-leader-is-a-big-deal>. Accessed 1 AUG 18.

articulated the new policy and Kirill has used it to shape his protégé, Hilarion Alfeyev.

The line of thought embraces three distinct perspectives. First is the recognition that the ROC is, in fact, an actor on the world stage with authority and control over churches and issues outside of the territorial boundaries of Russia.<sup>26</sup> Second is that the current putative administrative authority of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople rests on a faulty reading of history and an amplified notion of what the title "First Among Equals" really means.<sup>27</sup> Third, Practical Ecumenism (versus theological dialogue or liturgical forms of Ecumenism) is the most functional form of ecumenism.<sup>28</sup> Making Practical Ecumenism a future paradigm for ROC operational leadership and a worthwhile pursuit in conjunction with other religious groups, non-Christian or Christian.

The execution of the three perspectives gears ROC policy towards the actualization of the Third Rome ideology. Russia is perceived to be the new "city on a hill" and a beacon to the world – not unlike President Reagan's vision even though he hearkened to an earlier time when America still retained some of its innocence.

To be clear, however, the Third Rome ideology should not be read cynically. Leadership in the larger Orthodox world has always been a contested point all throughout history beginning with Rome before the Great Schism. Secondly, the ROC should not be conflated with the Russian government. Some American polemicists insist on conflating the two, but the reality is different. Russian history teaches that the government is in never in harmony with the Church. Over four hundred years of Czarist oppression was eclipsed by the ruthless and brutal savagery of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Soviet regime executed upon the ROC leadership and membership.<sup>29</sup>

Although to American ears the political positions of Pat. Kirill and Met. Hilarion elicits an exclusively patriotic ring, their goal of leadership in the Orthodox world transcends mere political ambition and is accomplished only with great personal risks and voluntary self-limitation.<sup>30</sup> Their ideal is formulated and embedded in the life and theology of the Orthodox Church, its dogmas and teachings and neither man can embrace any alternative inimical to Orthodox Christian teaching and maintain their positions. They are by vocation, prisoners of their choosing.

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<sup>26</sup> "Autocephaly: Who decides?" 29 July 2018, | Andrew Sorokowsk, [https://risu.org.ua/en/index/expert\\_thought/authors\\_columns/asorokowski\\_column/72002/](https://risu.org.ua/en/index/expert_thought/authors_columns/asorokowski_column/72002/). Accessed 1 AUG 18.

<sup>27</sup> "Orthodox patriarch does not represent us in meeting the pope, says Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev," 23 May 2014, [https://risu.org.ua/en/index/all\\_news/orthodox/moscow\\_patriarchy/56522/](https://risu.org.ua/en/index/all_news/orthodox/moscow_patriarchy/56522/). Accessed 1 AUG 18.

<sup>28</sup> Practical Ecumenism is a change from the approach of the Anglican and other Liturgical Western Christian Churches of promoting a branch theory paradigm to world Christianity and church leadership. Practical Ecumenism is also an operational practice embraced by the Vatican.

<http://www.beliefnet.com/columnists/viamedia/2006/03/practical-ecumenism.html>

<sup>29</sup> The Romanian, Bulgarian, and Ukraine Orthodox Churches have endured, survived similar histories. The Orthodox Churches in the middle east have survived over a millennium of active persecution. The religious organization has a political as well as ideological endurance that defies Western concepts of institutional longevity.

<sup>30</sup> Both men became monks, formal lifelong professed members of the ROC during the Soviet regime. Kirill received monastic tonsure in 1969. Hilarion received monastic tonsure in 1987. Kirill is reputed to have been recruited by the KGB in the 1960s or as late as 1972.

The people of Russia have a long memory. The ROC's memory is longer still. Patriarch Kirill is the descendant of those personally savaged by the Soviets.<sup>31</sup> Kirill and Hilarion know personally that governments can turn and inflict great hardship and suffering on the Church.

Within only 20 years since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kirill and Hilarion were striking out in new domestic as well as international trajectories to expand the operational arena of the ROC.<sup>32</sup> Credibility, accountability, and respectability abroad help ensure survival at home if a future Russian government undertakes a position of oppression or worse against the Church. They plan to build on their successes and expand them to ensure a safety net should problems with the government arise.<sup>3334</sup>

## **Anti-Human Trafficking and the Russian Orthodox Church**

Russia is a Tier 3 member of the US State Department Tier System of countries involved in anti-human trafficking efforts. Even if Russia desired to change its position in the system, or even if it merely wanted to change the public's perception of how it handles the scourge, the obstacles that would need to be overcome would be only slowly rectified. America's news cycles, and its 2 & 4 year, election cycles move quickly while contrastingly the Russian government appears to move slowly.

However, the ideological trajectories of the ROC endure far longer than US election cycles, multi-generational Czarist regimes and the entire political life of the Soviet Union. One way to overcome the cultural and political differences is to find common ground in the shared ideological values against slavery in order to incorporate ROC values and initiative into the American influenced international processes.

The USG works with actors that promote similar ideological perspectives, trajectories, and solutions as those held by the USG. The Russian Orthodox Church is a unique potential partner in the fight against human trafficking. The ROC is on ground zero for human trafficking. Russia is a country with an estimate of more than one million people in slavery.<sup>35</sup> Russia stays in the top ranks internationally as one of the worst countries for human trafficking. It is always the only country in those top ranks that also possess an indigenous religious or philosophical

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<sup>31</sup> Patriarch Kirill's grandfather was a long-term prisoner of conscience in many of the Soviet Gulags. His experience and words shaped Kirill. "Patriarch Kirill: By Denying God's Truth We Ruin the World" Andrei Vandenko, March 13, 2015, <http://www.pravmir.com/patriarch-kirill-by-denying-god-s-truth-we-ruin-the-world/>. Accessed 2 Aug 18

<sup>32</sup> <https://cruxnow.com/ap/2016/12/17/church-state-seeing-eye-eye-putins-orthodox-russia/>. Accessed 1 Oct 18

<sup>33</sup> "In Expanding Russian Influence, Faith Combines With Firepower," Andrew Higgins, Sept. 13, 2016, NYT <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/14/world/europe/russia-orthodox-church.html>. Accessed 2 Aug 18

<sup>34</sup> "The Russian Universal Soul" <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2017/06/the-universal-russian-soul>. Russia has its own concept of "Manifest Destiny." The ROC has always been the guardian and evangelist of that concept. Accessed 1 AUG 18.

<sup>35</sup> "Over 1 Million Russians Are Modern Slaves — Report" May 31, 2016, the Moscow Times, <https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/over-1-million-russians-are-modern-slaves-report-53088>. "The New Russian Empire: Modern Slavery in Russia; 154 years after the abolition of serfdom, Russia is Europe's most slave-holding nation, in modern terms" <https://www.theglobalist.com/the-new-russian-empire-modern-slavery-in-russia/>, Feb. 12, 2015, The Globalist, Accessed 2 AUG 18.

NGO that believes in and promotes the same basic concepts regarding the dignity of the human person that the USG values.

The ROC owns and therefore can access a complete national and international network of operational, administrative and informational resources to identify, address, prevent and intervene on behalf of victims of human trafficking. The goals of anti-human trafficking are congruent with the theology and values of the ROC. Although not free of politicization neither Patriarch Kirill or Metropolitan Hilarion are, nor intend to be simply agents on behalf of the government. ROC knows the trafficking of persons is a problem. The ROC has also identified traffickers in its ranks.<sup>36</sup>

The ROC addresses several areas of corporate interest by identifying and affirmatively addressing the scourge of human trafficking. Some of these are:

1. The ROC has an implicit and explicit theological/moral imperative to address and defeat all forms of human bondage.
2. The ROC by fighting human trafficking becomes the Orthodox leader in addressing and fighting human trafficking.
3. The ROC by fighting human trafficking it establishes itself as a worldwide religious leader in addressing and fighting human trafficking.
4. The ROC by fighting human trafficking it establishes itself as a worldwide religious leader capable of addressing other worldwide issues on a global scale.
5. The ROC by fighting human trafficking strengthens its relationship of trust and value with other worldwide bodies.
6. The ROC by fighting human trafficking builds a foundation for its survival as a worldwide religious leader when and if the Russian government turns against it.
7. The ROC seen by many, as a component agency of the Russian people/identity and by extension the Russian Government by fighting human trafficking benefits the Russian Federation by proving that the Russian Government is not complicit, nor tolerant of human trafficking.
8. The ROC by working as a national and international partner in anti-human trafficking provides the Russian Government with another competent and trusted venue through which to negotiate and moderate issues of concern, but not limited to human trafficking.

The ROC is looking to partner and ally with international bodies to change its national as well as the international landscape. The ROC will endure long after the present Russian is no longer in power. The historic overtures to the Roman Catholic and Coptic Church are just two examples. The USG can partner with the Russian Orthodox Church to create more resources, enabling affirmative trajectories that facilitate operations to bring about the eradication of human trafficking. The USG can also partner with the ROC in other areas providing expanded

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<sup>36</sup> "Russian Priest Gets Prison Term In Belarus On Pimping, Human Trafficking Charges," Nov. 14, 2017, <https://www.rferl.org/a/belarus-russian-priest-pimping-trafficking/28852877.html>. "Two ROCOR priests defrocked, accused of human trafficking," <https://byztex.blogspot.com/2017/05/two-rocor-priests-defrocked-accused-of.html>. Accessed 2 AUG 18.

operational capabilities and venues for dialogue with other parties.<sup>37</sup> These efforts also serve the religious and patriotic interests of the Patriarch Kirill and particularly Metropolitan Hilarion.<sup>38</sup> So that through them a positive long-term operational trajectory based on shared values can be built that will endure for decades.<sup>39</sup>

## **The United States Foreign policy objectives and the Orthodox Churches**

The Policy Issues home page of the US State Department website cites sixteen areas of policy issues.<sup>40</sup> Partnering with the Orthodox Churches can facilitate USG objectives in twelve areas. These areas are:

1. Anti-Corruption
2. Climate and Environment
3. Combatting Drugs & Crime
4. Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism
5. Democracy and Human Rights
6. Economic Affairs and Trade Policy
7. Food Security
8. Health Diplomacy
9. Nonproliferation
10. Refugees
11. Trafficking in Persons
12. Women's Issues

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<sup>37</sup> USG is looking at ways to address its concerns with the Russian Government. Vladimir Putin is politically invested in being a faithful Russian Orthodox Christian. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3d\\_yxJhmjk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3d_yxJhmjk) Accessed 1 Oct 18. Strong and good working relations with the ROC provide the USG a venue to address certain issues through a different filter. <http://russialist.org/jack-matlock-current-tension-in-u-s-russia-relations-is-result-of-political-mistakes-on-both-sides/>. Accessed 1 OCT 18. Ukraine as it develops its post-Soviet identity presents a cauldron of issues that concern USG, the Russian Government and the ROC. Just two examples of where these three organization share common goals are nonproliferation and counter-terrorism. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/former-bush-adviser-has-three-steps-to-rebuild-u-s-russia-relationship/>. Accessed 1 OCT 18.

<sup>38</sup> Metropolitan Hilarion holds the second most important position of leadership in the Russian Orthodox Church as the Chairman of the Department of External Church Relations of the ROC. It is also the same position that Kirill held when he was elected patriarch.

<sup>39</sup> Regardless of the outcome of the Kievian request for Autocephaly from the EP. The ROC will pursue its international influence and standing. Kiev's autocephaly will make further international expansion of influence essential to the ROC's expansion of standing in the international community. The EP by providing anything, but autocephaly to the Kievian Ecclesiastical Party (Patriarchate) would only bolster ROC's international momentum and standing. However, by giving the Kievian Ecclesiastical Party (Patriarchate)'s autocephaly, the EP may precipitate a schism that could last for decades or longer. The opposition faction to the EP's pro-Kievian decision would be Moscow with Antioch and most of the Slavic Churches in tow. Jerusalem, Alexandria, Athens, Cyprus and the autonomous Churches under the Ep will back the EP. Kievian Autocephaly gives the EP a potential ally against further Turkish aggression by creating a bond with the Ukrainian Government. The EP normally focuses on issues regarding its suzerainty over other Orthodox Churches, Hellenism and its survival in Istanbul.

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.state.gov/policy/>. Accessed 25 SEP 18.

All these twelve policy areas are issues that immediately concern the welfare and the dignity of the human person. Therefore, they are of immediate pastoral concern and theological interest to the leadership of the Orthodox Churches. Many if not most of the Orthodox Churches' populations, experience daily the issues that drive these areas to be US State Department Policy Issues.

The US State Department and the Orthodox Churches are very similarly invested in congruent outcomes in twelve of sixteen US State Department Policy Issues. The Orthodox Churches representing 400 million people in institutional population sizes of 500,000 to 110,000,000 constituents. As in the case of the ROC the faithful of that Church represent of a population if concentrated in one country would be the 12<sup>th</sup> largest in the world.<sup>41</sup> The ROC also represents a country with approximately three times the size of the average nation. In 1984, the establishment of formal Diplomatic relations with The Holy See and the formalizing of a Track Two Dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church was in the best interests of the USG and the American people. Today, establishing partnerships with the Orthodox Churches to address these policy areas is in the best interests of the USG and the American people

## **Recommendations**

The USG should work to forge permanent strategic alliances with the Orthodox Churches to secure US interests at present and in the future. The Orthodox Churches represent a population spread throughout over a dozen countries and consisting of 400 million people. Members of these religious bodies face consistent terrorism in Egypt, genocide in Iraq, and very significant issues of human trafficking in every area.

Orthodox Churches, unlike The Holy See, do not have a sovereign territorial government. An ambassador in residence is not possible or necessary with a particular Orthodox Church. Appointing a Special Envoy, Ambassador at Large to work with the Orthodox Churches would provide a consistent and appropriate USG agent to create the venue for the USG to work on and press USG goals in these mutual operational interests with the Orthodox Churches. A Special Envoy would also provide the continuity of effort and operation necessary to achieve success in designated Policy Issue areas.

## **Summary**

Orthodox Churches, Eastern and Oriental, are very valuable hitherto unengaged partners for the USG in issues that form the core of US Policy and political thought regarding the dignity of the human person. Properly engaged and partnered the Orthodox Churches possess the theological foundations, moral motivations, cultural, linguistic, institutional, administrative as well as operational capabilities to fight for the Dignity of the Human Person. These areas of personal human dignity that are substantially similar between USG and the Orthodox Churches are Freedom of Conscience, the concept of Religious Freedom, and an immutable moral belief that the slavery of a human being is wrong. Establishing and maintaining a permanent, reliable

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<sup>41</sup> <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/population-by-country/> Accessed 27 SEP 18.

diplomatic vehicle between the USG and the leadership of the Orthodox Churches facilitates the USG's interests in at least twelve of its State Department Policy Issues.