

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR
“FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD”

PREFACE (Pg. XIII - XV)

What was the motivation of the Ecumenical Patriarch in commissioning a group of theological experts to discuss the social theology of the Church?

What is the overall context of this text as well as the Church’s social theology? (XV)

What have been the chief obstacles to the Orthodox Church responding effectively to moral issues? (XVI)

What is understood by the phrase “living tradition”? (XVI)

What four sources are the foundations for the thinking in the document? (XVIII)

INTRODUCTION (Pg. 1)

Why is the starting point “anthropological”, i.e. beginning with the nature and destiny of man? (Pg. 1 & 2)

What part does the love of God play in our identity and how does “theosis” enter into the formation of a social ethos in the Church? (Pg. 3)

What is the Orthodox Christian’s responsibility to the world in its present condition? (Pg. bottom of 3, top of 4)

What are the two ultimate sources of the Orthodox social ethos? (Bottom of 5, all of 6)

How do the authors summarize the vocation of the Orthodox Christian in a world so disparate, disconnected, impaired, multiform, and struggling in its values? (Pg. 8)

CHAPTER 2 – THE CHURCH IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE (Pg. 8)

The Church has existed over the centuries in a wide variety of social cultures, religions, and governments. What is the unifying factor that kept the Church united through it all? (Pg. 9)

Within this pluralistic context, has the Church found it necessary to condemn certain forms of social violation, oppression, and human degradation? (Pg. 10)

What are the meaning and implication of the following quote: *“When the commands of even a legally established political authority contradict our responsibilities as Christians, we must obey God rather than men.”* (Pg. 10)

In describing the function of the Church within society, why do the authors say: *“Even so, the Church remains in some sense always an alien presence within any human order, and recognizes that God’s judgment falls upon any political power in some measure.”* (Pg. 11)

Why is it important for the Orthodox Christian community to recognize and support advances in science, technology, social theory, etc.? (Pg. 12)

What is the danger of “phyletism” which was condemned as heretical by the Council of Constantinople in 1872? What is the most dangerous part of this insidious heresy? (Bottom 12, top 13)

The authors make the following point: “It is absolutely forbidden for Christians to make an idol of cultural, national, or ethnic identity. There can be no such thing as “Christian nationalism” or even any form of nationalism tolerable the Christian conscience.” (Pg. 13, midpage) What do they mean?

How does racial bigotry, prejudice, and exclusivism underscore the importance of rejecting divisive nationalisms? (Pg. 8)

What is one of the more morally corrosive aspects of modern democratic politics? What are their results, and how ought the Orthodox Christian respond? (Pg. 15)

Many suggest that a truly democratic society is only possible if religion and religious witness is relegated to the private – disjointed from the public square. What is your reaction to this assertion? (Pg. 16)

Why is the separation of state and Church, throne and altar important to the Church’s witness? What is the danger of “Cuius regno, eius religio.” (“Whoever rules, his is the religion of the realm.” (Pg. 17)

What does the term *symphonia* mean? What is the theory behind it? (Pg. 18)

THROUGH THE PRAYERS OF OUR HOLY FATHERS, LORD
JESUS CHRIST OUR GOD, HAVE MERCY ON US AND SAVE
US!

A+M+E+N