

The discussion about the Eucharist between the Russian Orthodox Church and Lutheran Churches

KSENIYA BOBKOVA

The article is dedicated to the discussions about the sacrament of Eucharist, which took place between the Russian Orthodox Church and Lutheran Churches. First, the documents of the dialogues with the Evangelical Church of Germany and the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland are examined. Questions about the Eucharistic sacrifice and Christ's presence in the Eucharist are emphasized. Then the final document of the Lutheran-Orthodox Commission and the reaction to it from the side of the Russian Orthodox Church and Russian theologians are analysed. A particular focus was on the usage of the terms "transubstantiation" and "metabole".

Keywords: *Lutheran, Orthodox, Eucharist, sacrifice, church, transubstantiation, metabole, body, blood*

Introduction

The dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and Lutheran Churches has had a long history, but for the future of these Churches, the most important discussions are those of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries.

We should remember that this period of time was very difficult for the Russian Orthodox Church. After the October revolution of 1917 it was cut off from the rest of the world. It could not take part in the ecumenical movement in the initial stage of its development. Only later could the Russian Church join into the ecumenical movement, which had already taken shape. To my mind, this fact not only affected greatly the role that it played in ecumenical history, but it maintains its influence even today.

At the beginning of the 20th century the Russian Orthodox Church found itself in a situation, where its main task was simply to survive. The question about its attitude towards the ecumenical movement and the possibility of participating in it was discussed only in 1948 at the Moscow Consultation of the representatives of the autocephalous Orthodox Churches. As is well known the decision was negative, but at the end of 1950s it began to change and in 1961 the Russian Church became one of the members of the World Council of Churches.

Today many Russian theologians, discussing the problems or "crisis" of the ecumenical movement and Orthodox participation in it, cite the decisions