

O GOD, OPEN OUR EYES
by Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston

Once, I was sitting in the airport at Salt Lake City, waiting to board a flight back to Boston. An elderly man sat down next me, and seeing me in my black robes, he asked me what I might be. I told him I was an Orthodox Christian clergyman. Well, it turned out that he was a high official in the Mormon Church, and he told me that he was going to Boston on some business. Then he announced to me with some pride, "You know, there are some ten million of us Mormons in the world now."

"Oh, that's interesting," said I.

Whereupon, he asked me, with some condescension in his voice, "And how many of you folks might there be?" (Obviously, he was thinking to himself, "How many black-robed and bearded figures do we see walking around here in Utah?")

I answered, "Well, let me put it this way. Some *sixty million* of us were martyred by the Communists in the Soviet Union during the twentieth century."

He slouched and turned, and went back to reading his newspaper.

That was the end of our conversation.

But it's true. When you start thinking about it, there are a lot more of us than meets the eye.

For example, in our daily struggles to live as Orthodox Christians, we are not alone.

A lot of us complain, and think to ourselves, "Oh, we are so isolated." It seems to us that there are so many of the non-Orthodox, and so few of us Orthodox Christians, especially here in North America. But we North American Orthodox Christians are not alone.

First of all, there are the countless members of the Church Triumphant — all those that have gone before us for all the many centuries and ages past, and who now intercede and pray for us. They are still here with us.

Then there are the angelic hosts.

There is one striking passage from the Old Testament that brings home to us what role the angels of God play in our lives. It is found in the Fourth Book of Kings (Septuagint) and tells us of an incident from the life of the Prophet Elisseus (Elisha):

The soul of the king of Syria was very much disturbed concerning [the fact that Israel knew beforehand of his war plans against them on many occasions]; and he called his servants, and said to them: "Will ye not tell me who betrays me to the king of Israel?" And one of his servants said,

"Nay, my Lord, O king, for Elisseus the prophet who is in Israel reports to the king of Israel all the words whatsoever thou mayest say in thy bedchamber." And the king said, "Go, see where this man is, and I will send and take him." And they sent word to the king saying, "Behold, he is in Dothaim." And he sent thither horses and chariots, and a mighty host; and they came by night, and compassed about the city. And the servant of Elisseus rose up early and went out; and behold, a host compassed the city and horses and chariots; and the servant said to Elisseus, "O master, what shall we do?" And Elisseus said, "Fear not, for they that are with us are more than they that are with them." And Elisseus prayed and said, "Lord, I pray Thee, open the eyes of the servant and let him see." And the Lord opened the servant's eyes and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses, and there were chariots of fire round about Elisseus.

(IV Kings 6:11-17)

Would that God would open our eyes also; then we would see that there are a lot more of us than we think.