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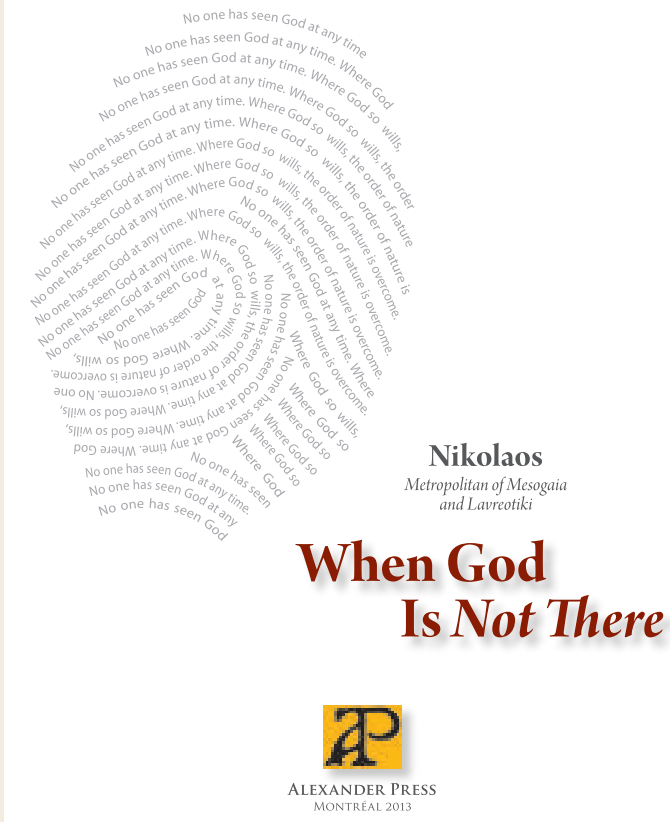

Nikolaos

Metropolitan of Mesogaia and Lavreotiki

When God Is *Not There*

The world we live in has been called a 'vale of tears', a 'place of weeping' – perhaps with good reason. Wherever you turn you see pain, sorrow, undeserved suffering, death, and sin. The 'ruler of this world' (Jn 12: 31), the 'world ruler' (Eph. 6:12) is the devil. He is constantly to be seen.

God, who is named 'He who is', meaning the One from whom everything comes into being, is nowhere to be seen. 'No one has seen God at any time' (John 1:18). That is why his very existence is a matter of dispute. He has, however, 'revealed himself' (John 21:1), and he promises to manifest himself to whomsoever keeps his commandments and loves him: 'I will manifest myself to him' (John 14:21).

This book records simple events and conversations, all the while grappling with difficult questions. We see the human struggle to discover the person of God when that is veiled by the logic of this world, our limited understanding, and the arrogant pretensions of human littleness. The book engages intensely with complex and difficult issues… but which leave us confused and at times scandalised. What it does not do is give any direct answers, or try to persuade the reader through logic or impressive arguments. Its aim is to convey the sense of the discreet yet persuasive presence of the true God precisely in situations where He is not visible: in pain, in disability, in the tragedies of life, in inexorable death, as this comes across in true events and is reflected in the lives of real people.

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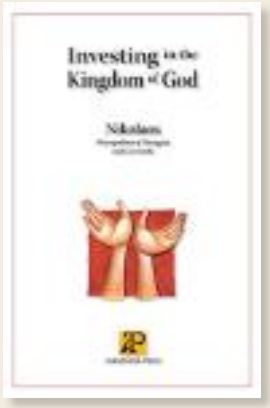

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Metropolitan Nikolaos (**Hatzini kolaou**) has degrees in Physics, Astrophysics, Mechanical Engineering, Biomedical Engineering and Applied Mathematics, Theological Studies, and Theology. In 2003, he received a Ph.D. in Theology from the University of Thessaloniki on Orthodox Christian Ethics and Bioethics and and has been awarded the honorary title of Doctor of Social Theology by the University of Athens.

He has worked as a researcher and scientific partner in hospitals and as a scientific advisor in Space Medical Technology in the U.S. Upon his return to Greece in 1989, he was tonsured a monk in Mount Athos and then ordained a deacon and a priest. In 2004, he was elected a Metropolitan of Mesogaia and Lavreotiki. Among his other activities, he founded the first hospice in Greece under the auspices of the Church. He is the author of numerous theological and scientific writings and a frequent participant in conferences regarding a broad spectrum of social and bioethical issues, and the relationship between Orthodox theology and modern science.