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Mr. Constantine Zervos, Editor  
“Ορθόδοξος Τύπος”  
10 Canning St., Athens 106 77

Fili, Attika  
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St. Justin the Martyr

**A Clarification from the Orthodox in Resistance:**  
*The Calendar Question and Ecumenism*

Dear Editor:

Humbly praying that our Lord will strengthen and guide you in your very important work, we hope that you will permit us to make some brief observations and clarifications regarding an item published in your distinguished newspaper, in which there are references to His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian.

1. On page 3 of issue N° 1554 (11 June 2004) of “Ορθόδοξος Τύπος” you printed a letter from **Archbishop Christodoulos**, which was sent on 23 June 2003 to the learned Athonite Elder **Theokletos of Dionysiou**. The latter subsequently printed it in his recent book *Ἀθωνικά Ἐνθῆ* (Vol. X).

2. In this letter, His Beatitude writes, *inter alia*, about a “meeting” “between persons appointed by the Holy Synod” of the New Calendar Church “and representatives” of our Metropolitan.

3. However, since the reference to this “meeting” is not sufficiently clear and is susceptible to misinterpretations, which the “note” of Elder Theokletos at the end of the letter will only serve to increase, we think it necessary to make the following clarifications.

4. On 11/24 January 2000, a **friendly meeting of an unofficial nature** was held at the house of the pious Mr. K.L. in Athens. At this meeting, there was a discussion lasting nearly two hours (10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.) between, on the one side, Metropolitans Anthimos and Meletios (representatives of the Archbishop) and, on the other side, Bishops Chrysostomos and Ambrose and myself, the unworthy Hieromonk Cyprian (representatives of His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian).

5. This meeting was the fruit of a letter of 14/27 September 1998 from Metropolitan Cyprian to His Beatitude on the occasion of three resolutions by the Permanent Holy Synod [of the Church of Greece—*Trans.*] (26-27 August 1998) that were **anti-ecumenist in nature**.

6. In this letter, which was ecclesiological in content, His Beatitude was urged “to examine afresh and in a comprehensive way the ecclesiological relationship of the Most Holy Orthodox Church with the ecumenical movement, in general, and her place in the W.C.C., in particular,” and was encouraged, in addition, “to issue anti-ecumenist resolutions similar to the aforementioned, and even bolder statements than these.”

7. During the discussion at that informal meeting, it became completely clear, after some leading questions on our part, that Metropolitans Anthimos and Meletios were **not** present as members of the **Commission for Dialogue with the Old Calendarists** that had just recently been appointed by the Permanent Holy Synod (in any event, the third member of the commission, Mr. Vlasios Pheidias, was absent), but as **simple representatives** of His Beatitude, for the purpose of ascertaining the true intentions of Metropolitan Cyprian’s letter of 14/27 September 1998.

8. During the unofficial meeting of 11/24 January 2000, by dint of a persistent effort on our part, we succeeded in turning attention from the subject of so-called “Old Calendarism” to the burning issue of **ecumenism**, the **anti-Orthodox character** of which currently preoccupies the Church at a **pan-Orthodox level**. It is for this reason that there now exist **communities of Orthodox in resistance to ecumenism** in almost all of the local Churches.

9. Our lengthy discussion concluded with a proposal—which, in the end, we gladly accepted—that we formulate a joint **statement** on the issue of **ecumenism**. For us, ecumenism constitutes a deviation from the **traditional Orthodox Faith** with regard both to ecclesiology and to the nature of inter-Christian relations at all levels (worship, education, and ministry).

10. Such a **statement** was deemed necessary from the standpoint of elucidating as thoroughly as possible the ecclesiological self-understanding of the Orthodox in **resistance to the ecumenical movement** (within which, of course, the **calendar question** is included as one particular issue). We decided that it should form the **basis** of further informal contacts or of an official dialogue, though **certainly not with any view to joining or becoming incorporated into the innovationist New Calendar Church, but rather, to confronting ecumenism, which has divided the Orthodox since 1920, in the spirit of the Fathers.**

11. We have not yet been able to fulfill our part of the promise to formulate this **statement**, owing to the great crisis over identity cards [in the New Calendarist Church] and other matters. Moreover, Metropolitan Anthimos has still **not replied to two letters of ours** on the subject of ecumenism. Nevertheless, we consider our obligation in this regard to be binding, and we keep it constantly in view.

12. By way of summary, we emphasize that the “**meeting**” to which His Beatitude’s letter alludes: was **not** an official meeting; was **not** in the nature of a bilateral dialogue; was **not** sought out by us; did **not** touch on the question of our incorporation into the State Church; but was focussed—indeed, with particular emphasis—on the issue of ecumenism. The fact that ecumenism concerns the Church at a pan-Orthodox level was not concealed during this meeting, **and we did not** omit to explain very clearly that it is on account of ecumenism that we have walled ourselves off from, and have no communion with, those jurisdictions which, on the one hand, espouse the ecumenist **Encyclical of 1920** (and everything deriving from it), and, on the other hand, continue to be **active members of the W.C.C.**

13. The ecclesiological views which we advocated during that meeting of 11/24 January 2000 were based entirely on the **pastoral epistle** of our Metropolitan, entitled “**Σχίσμα**” ἢ “**Ἀποτείχις**”;—

*Τὸ Ζήτημα τοῦ Ἡμερολογίου καὶ ἡ Αἵρεσις τοῦ Οἰκουμενισμοῦ* [“Schism” or “Walling-Off”?: *The Calendar Question and the Heresy of Ecumenism*] (Athens: 1998).<sup>1</sup>

14. Finally, the reference of Elder Theokletos of Dionysiou to Metropolitan Cyprian as someone allegedly “**twice deposed**” is certainly not derogatory towards our Shepherd, since it is well known, **first**, that depositions for **reasons of faith** are not really depositions at all, but constitute persecution on grounds of faith and, as such, are confirmations of Orthodoxy; and **secondly**, that there were Holy Fathers who, when persecuted for upholding the true Faith, received more than one such deposition, but who have always been regarded by the conscience of the Church as Pillars of Orthodoxy.

Thanking you for publishing this letter,  
with esteem and love in Christ

+ Archimandrite Cyprian  
Holy Monastery of St. Cyprian  
Fili, Attika

### Note

1. For an English translation of this document, see “Schism” or “Walling-Off”?: *A Pastoral Epistle*, supplement to *Orthodox Tradition*, Vol. XV, No. 4 (1998); also available on the English version of this website under [“Theology>Ecclesiology>Orthodox Resistance.”](#)