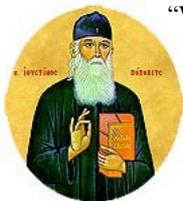


■ There is no “inhuman schism,” but, rather, resistance against inhuman heresy

The Calendar Question or the Heresy of Ecumenism?*

PART II



“Was it really necessary for the Orthodox Church, the all-immaculate Theanthropic Body and instrument of the God-Man Christ, to be so monstrosly humiliated that Her theological representatives, including even Hierarchs, should seek after ‘organic’ participation and inclusion in the World Council of Churches.... Alas, an unprecedented betrayal!”

(Archimandrite Justin [Popovich; †1979])¹

IV. The Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the 1920 Encyclical

However, it is not only the sixteen “steps towards the firm foundation of a common Christian outlook,”² which were fully implemented in the course of the ecumenical movement and which include the eleven “points”³ of the modernist Encyclical of 1920, that lend an undeniably ecclesiological character to the calendar reform of 1924; it is also the anti-Orthodox ecclesiological presuppositions of this encyclical.

We will next discuss these presuppositions, which in essence constitute two of the fundamental theologies of the ecumenical movement that were developed more fully with the passage of time as the aforementioned “steps”⁴ were implemented.

* * *

• Elder Theokletos of Dionysiou, as the doyen of the Athonite élite, ought to be fully aware of these crucial issues, since he does not belong among the “half-educated artisans” as—in his opinion— do we anti-ecumenist Orthodox (Article III); indeed, he engages in lofty flights of noetic prayer.

In any case, the murky cloud of the epithets of Athonite invective, within which Elder Theokletos moves and about which we spoke in section II, becomes still murkier for two reasons: on the one hand, on account of the very frequent references that this Athonite Hesychast makes to himself in all of these articles, and, on the other hand, on account of a barely-veiled narcissism, both of which are wholly foreign to the Angelic way of life.

Moreover, the entire literary œuvre of Elder Theokletos, culminating in his autobiography, entitled *Ἀπὸ τὴν Νοερά Προσευχή σὲ Χριστοκεντρικὲς Ἐμπειρίες* [*From Noetic Prayer to Christocentric Experiences*],⁵ shows very clearly that he is obsessed with his posthumous reputation!

One only has to reflect, with considerable melancholy indeed, that even today there are secular authors who do not stoop to using the narcissistic “I,” or the first person, in their writing....

* * *

1. One text that helps us to interpret the 1920 Encyclical is undoubtedly the official Synodal Epistle (Protocol No. 2672/10 April 1919) to the delegation from the Faith and Order movement that was then in the process of being established.

This delegation, in its capacity as a preparatory commission of the “World Inter-Christian Conference,” a body comprised of Episcopalian clergy, visited Constantinople, requested “the heartfelt support of the holy Eastern Orthodox Church, the mother of the Churches,” and invited the Orthodox Church to take part in a consultation.

The Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople responded and affirmed “with ready mind and joyful heart” that it would send representatives to the consultation in question, “thus extending a helping hand to those laboring in the same field and in the same vineyard of the Lord.”⁶

It should be noted that this response, in which the aforementioned Synod expresses its belief in the ecumenist theology of the “Wider Church”—since Orthodox and Episcopalians are supposedly working within one and the same Vineyard of the Lord—, was a consequence of the “findings” of the “special commission” which had already prepared the text of the 1920 Encyclical.⁷

• Let us bear in mind that the theology of the “Wider Church,” whose leading exponents—apart from its two synodal formulations (1919 and 1920)—are Father Sergius Bulgakov, Professor John Karmiris, and Metropolitans Damaskinos of Switzerland and John of Pergamon, speaks about “the Church in the broadest sense”; about “the Church of Christ in her totality” and “no longer about Orthodoxy alone”; about a “Church outside the Church,” “outside the walls,” “outside the canonical limits” and “ecclesiastical boundaries” of Orthodoxy.⁸

* * *

2. The 1920 Encyclical was composed by a “subcommittee” which “was, in essence, the faculty of the Theological School of Halki, that is, the Principal, Metropolitan Germanos (Strenopoulos) of Seleucia (later of Thyateira), and the professors, Archimandrite J. Evstratiou, Deacon B. Stephanides, B. Antoniadis, and P. Comnenos. Nonetheless, there can be no doubt about the special rôle played by the Metropolitan of Seleucia in its composition.”⁹

Consequently, Metropolitan Germanos was the most suitable person to interpret the ecclesiological presuppositions of the 1920 Encyclical, something which he did publicly, and indeed, with especial clarity, at the first Universal Christian Conference of the Life and Work movement (Stockholm, 16-30 August 1925).

Germanos, now Archbishop of Thyateira, with his see in London, before making his presentation to the plenary session of the conference, “referred at length to the Encyclical of 1920 and expressed certain thoughts concerning the principles that should govern inter-Christian relations, as these had been formulated by the Œcumenical Patriarchate,”¹⁰ based, of course, on the theology of the “Wider Church.”

‘It is necessary,’ he said, ‘that the churches be made aware that, besides that unity, in the narrow sense of the word, which brings together the members of any single communion into one body, there is also another, more inclusive notion of unity, according to which all who accept the fundamental doctrine of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and who accept Him as their Savior and Lord should consider one another members of the same body and not strangers. Without entering into

an examination of the dogmatic differences which separate the churches,' added the Archbishop of Thyateira, 'we should cultivate precisely this idea of wider unity.'¹¹

- The newfangled theology of the "Wider Church" and the syncretistic context in which its cultivation was proposed are both very evident in these remarks.

* * *

3. Finally, the 1920 Encyclical presupposes the acceptance of yet another of the fundamental theologies of the ecumenical movement, namely, "Baptismal theology."

This ecumenist theology, whose chief exponents are John Karmiris¹² and Metropolitan John of Pergamon,¹³ maintains that baptism—Orthodox or heterodox—supposedly delimits the Church, establishing the so-called "baptismal boundaries" of the Church, and that, in this way, She includes Orthodox and heterodox, who are held together by the "baptismal unity" of the Church.

The World Council of Churches is founded on "Baptismal theology";¹⁴ Pope John Paul II proclaimed this theology in 1995;¹⁵ Patriarch Demetrios proclaimed it in an encyclical in 1974;¹⁶ both Patriarch Bartholomew, in 1995,¹⁷ and Patriarch Ignatios of Antioch, in 1987,¹⁸ proclaimed it in a markedly official way.

"Baptismal theology" is of such vital significance to the Orthodox ecumenists that they affirm the following with absolute clarity:

'For this reason' that is to say, that 'all of us Christians [regardless of what confession we belong to] are sacramentally and ineffably united with Christ and with each other through the Grace of Holy Baptism,' 'the Ecumenical Patriarchate did not hesitate to address its famous proclamation of 1920 "to the Churches of Christ everywhere," characterizing the Christian Confessions as "Churches," and emphasizing "that it is above all imperative that love between the Churches be rekindled and strengthened, and that they not regard each other as foreign or distant, but...as fellow-heirs, and of the same body, [partakers of] the promise of God in Christ."¹⁹

- In spite of this, Elder Theokletos assures us, strangely enough, that ecumenism consists, supposedly, in "certain acts of politeness and courtesy towards the heterodox" (Article I) [!]

* * *

Now, can there be any pious Orthodox Christian who does not immediately and fully understand that the 1920 Encyclical, with ecclesiological presuppositions of this kind, leads us directly into the realm of false belief? And who does not realize that the first of its "points,"²⁰ that is, "the acceptance of a uniform calendar for the simultaneous celebration of the great Christian feasts by all the Churches,"²¹ is clearly ecclesiological in character, since it was on the agenda of syncretistic ecumenism?

- Nevertheless, it is imperative that we clarify the connection between the innovationist Archbishop Chrysostomos (Papadopoulos) of Athens and the 1920 Encyclical and, as well, the contribution of the "Pan-Orthodox Congress" of Constantinople (10 May–8 June 1923) to the calendar reform of 1924, so that we may provide yet firmer foundations for our view that the calendar question cannot be dissociated from the ecumenical movement.

* Source: Άγιος Κυπριανός, No 318 (January-February 2004), pp. 11-13.

Notes

1. Archimandrite Justin Popovich, “Ὁρθοδοξία καὶ "Οἰκουμενισμός"—Μία Ὁρθόδοξος Γνωμάτευσις καὶ Μαρτυρία” [“Orthodoxy and ‘Ecumenism’: An Orthodox Appraisal and Testimony”], *Κοινωνία* (March-April 1975), pp. 95-101; *Ὁρθόδοξος Τύπος*, No. 235 (1 June 1975), pp. 1, 4.
2. Gregory Larentzakis, “Βασικαὶ ἀρχαὶ τηρήσεως καὶ ἀποκαταστάσεως τῆς Χριστιανικῆς ἐνότητος—Ὁρθόδοξοι ἀπόψεις” [“Basic Principles for the Preservation and Restoration of Christian Unity: Orthodox Viewpoints”], in *Ἐπιστημονικὴ Παρουσία Ἐστίας Θεολόγων Χάλκης [A Professional Meeting at the Halki Center for Theology]* (Athens: 1987), Vol. I, p. 351-365.
3. Basil T. Stavrides and Evangelia A. Barellas, *Ἱστορία τῆς Οἰκουμενικῆς Κινήσεως [History of the Ecumenical Movement]* (Thessaloniki: Patriarchal Institute of Patristic Studies, 1996), 3rd ed., p. 55.
4. See note 2.
5. Athens: “Speliote” Publications, 2004.
6. Great Protopresbyter George Tsetsis, *Ἡ Συμβολὴ τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου στὴν Ἰδρυση τοῦ Παγκοσμίου Συμβουλίου τῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν [The Contribution of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the Founding of the World Council of Churches]* (Katerine: Tertios Publications, 1988), pp. 53-64, 236-250; *idem*, *Οἰκουμενικὸς Θρόνος καὶ Οἰκουμένη—Ἐπίσημα Πατριαρχικὰ Κείμενα [The Ecumenical Throne and the Oikoumene: Official Patriarchal Texts]* (Katerine: Tertios Publications, 1989), pp. 47-51.
7. See note 6.
8. G.A. Galitis, “Ἡ Ἐκκλησία καὶ οἱ Ἐκκλησίες” [“The Church and the Churches”], *Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμᾶς*, No. 755 (November-December 1994), pp. 537, 543; *Ἐπίσκεψις*, No. 523 (31 October 1995), p. 13, No. 260 (15 October 1981), pp. 13-14, No. 517 (30 April 1995), p. 10, and No. 518 (31 May 1995), p. 16; *Ἐκκλησία*, No. 7 (1 May 1988), p. 267a; Archimandrite Cyprian Agiokyprianites, *Orthodoxy and the Ecumenical Movement* (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1997), p. 20.
9. Tsetsis, *Οἰκουμενικὸς Θρόνος*, pp. 56-57; *idem*, *Ἡ Συμβολὴ τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου*, pp. 78, 80; Stavrides and Barellas, *Ἱστορία τῆς Οἰκουμενικῆς Κινήσεως*, p. 54.
10. Tsetsis, *Ἡ Συμβολὴ τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου*, p. 101.
11. See note 10.
12. John Karmiris, *Δογματικῆς Τμήμα Ε΄, Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησιολογία [Dogmatic Theology, Part V, “Orthodox Ecclesiology”]* (Athens: 1973), pp. 241, 242, 243.
13. Professor John Zizioulas, “Orthodox Ecclesiology and the Ecumenical Movement,” *Sourozh*, No. 21 (August 1985), pp. 16-27.
14. See George N. Laimopoulos (ed.), *Ἡ Ζ΄ Γενικὴ Συνέλευσις τοῦ Παγκοσμίου Συμβουλίου Ἐκκλησιῶν, Καμπέρρα—Φεβρουάριος 1991: Χρονικὸ, Κείμενα, Ἀξιολογήσεις [The Seventh General Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Canberra, February 1991: Chronicle, Texts, Remarks]* (Katerini: Tertios Publications, 1992), p. 136.
15. Encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint* (25 May 1995), §66.
16. *Ἐπίσκεψις*, Special Issue (14 April 1974).
17. *Ἐπίσκεψις*, No. 520 (31 July 1995), p. 20.

18. *Ἐπίσκεψις*, No. 370 (15 January 1987), pp. 8-13.
19. Karmiris, *Δογματικῆς Τμήμα Ε'*, p. 243.
20. See note 3.
21. Stavrides and Barellas, *Ἱστορία τῆς Οἰκουμενικῆς Κινήσεως*, p. 334.