

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

The Calendar Question or the Heresy of Ecumenism? Part IV*

“In calling the ecumenists heretics, we are not speaking theoretically, nor are we insulting them, but we are reiterating those things which we are obligated by the Sacred Canons to make known, to uphold, and to teach.... The leading ecumenists are heretics, first and foremost because of their mentality; but, in addition, they are heretics in the more general sense of ‘excommunicates,’ precisely because they have contact, in the form of joint prayer, with heretics ‘who adhere to their heresies.’ Finally, they are ‘excommunicate’ and subject to anathema because they are ‘unprincipled’ violators of many of the Sacred Canons of both CEcumenical and local Synods and of the Holy Fathers recognized by the CEcumenical Synods. This last infraction would be sufficient by itself for them to be characterized as and to be ‘excommunicate,’ even though they profess to be Orthodox in their thinking and preaching.”

(Monk Nicodemos [Bilalis] of the Holy Mountain)¹



The Phanar, 13 April 2004. Patriarch Bartholomew officially welcomes the Roman Catholic delegation, under Cardinal Philippe Barbarini of Lyons, which sought “forgiveness” for the sack of Constantinople by the Crusaders more than eight hundred years previously (13 April 1204).

“The joint prayer of the CEcumenical Patriarch and the Cardinal of Lyons literally stunned the faithful laity, who were flabbergasted as they watched this act of joint prayer in the Church of St. George in the Phanar.”²

VIII. Was Archbishop Chrysostomos (Papadopoulos) an Ecumenist?

A FULLY DOCUMENTED answer to this crucial question will demonstrate the incontrovertibly **ecclesiological character** of the anti-Patristic calendar **reform of 1924**, and will show that the **calendar question** is part and parcel of the thoroughly anti-Patristic **ecumenical movement**.

To be sure, **Elder Theokletos of Dionysiou**, when he separates the **reform of 1924** (which he regards as simply a *“leap of thirteen days”*) from the **heresy of ecumenism** (which he regards as consisting in *“certain acts of politeness and courtesy towards the heterodox”*), and at the same time insults the **Old Calendarist anti-ecumenist Orthodox** in a most surly and unbrotherly manner, is deplorably in error.

It is obvious that **Elder Theokletos**, who moves within a dense cloud of **narcissistic self-references**, with which his articles are all, without exception, literally teeming, **has been forsaken** by the illuminating Grace of the Comforter to the extent that he is “unaware of,” or “forgets,” or “overlooks,” or “misinterprets,” or “is incapable” of understanding certain **very basic issues**, of which he not only ought to have expert knowledge, but which he also ought to address with absolute Patristic and monastic exactitude.

In the case of **Elder Theokletos**, which is truly tragic, we are not dealing simply with

“ignorance,” knowing, as we do from what St. Justin Martyr writes, that “*it is not easy quickly to change a soul possessed by ignorance*”;³ it is quite evident that we are dealing, here, with a tragic instance of someone who has suffered spiritual abandonment by reason of “*complacency*,” as Abba Isaac the Syrian very aptly describes it: “*He who becomes puffed up with his own wisdom is allowed to fall into the murky snares of ignorance.*”⁴

The “*conceit and complacency*” for which Father Theokletos is now notorious is, according to St. Peter of Damascus, an “*imperceptible ruination*,”⁵ and every admirer of monasticism and Mount Athos is truly distressed at how it came about that a man who is now almost ninety years old and is a Hesychast in the tradition of the *Philokalia* should, by incessantly talking about himself and crudely disparaging other people, have forgotten the saying of Elias the Presbyter that “*many have put off all their garments of skin, but the final one, that of vainglory, is shed only by those who abhor its mother, complacency.*”⁶

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NOW, THE INNOVATIONIST and reformer **Chrysostomos Papadopoulos** was an active ecumenist, both as an Archimandrite and a university professor (1914-1923) and as Metropolitan of Athens (1923-1938).

1. To begin with, during the years 1918-1919, as an Archimandrite, **Chrysostomos Papadopoulos**, together with the well-known ecumenists, **Metropolitan Meletios (Metaxakis)** of Athens and **Professor Amilkas Alivizatos**, held unofficial theological discussions with Episcopalians in America and Anglicans in England. These discussions “*occupy a unique position in the series of theological contacts*” between Orthodox ecumenists and Anglicans.⁷

2. Subsequently, as an Archimandrite, **Chrysostomos Papadopoulos** became very well acquainted with the 1920 Encyclical and acted in accordance with its agenda.

It is significant that he had been present, “in the capacity of a visitor,” at the preparatory conference of the **Life and Work** movement (Geneva, 9-12 August 1920), at which the Lutheran Archbishop of Uppsala, Sweden, Nathan Söderblom, “*holding in his hands the [1920] Encyclical of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, extolled its contents.*”⁸

• In fact, another “visitor,” **Metropolitan Germanos (Strenopoulos)** of Seleucia (Patriarchate of Constantinople), stated that “*the goals*” of this conference “*were in harmony with the [1920] Encyclical, whereby the Ecumenical Patriarchate proposed the formation of a League of Churches.*”⁹

3. Likewise, **Chrysostomos Papadopoulos** took part, as a delegate of the Churches of Greece (along with the ecumenist **Amilkas Alivizatos**) and Cyprus, in the preliminary meeting of the pan-Christian **Faith and Order** conference (Geneva, 12-20 August 1920).

The eighteen Orthodox delegates at this conference “*set about organizing an agenda for this consultation ON THE BASIS OF THE PATRIARCHAL ENCYCLICAL OF 1920.*”¹⁰

According to Nicholas Zernov, “*The extensive participation of Orthodox*” in this conference, “*was not unrelated to the Encyclical which the Ecumenical Patriarchate had issued several months earlier [January of 1920].*”¹¹

At this conference, **Amilkas Alivizatos** “*set forth the program of the Orthodox*,” making the following telltale comments, among others: “*The proposed program aims, at least for the time being, at the creation of a LEAGUE OF CHURCHES ALONG THE LINES OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, which will facilitate the ultimate goal of the union of the Churches in faith and administration.*”¹²

• This is precisely what the 1920 Encyclical envisioned, and it was realized in 1948 with the founding of the **World Council of Churches**.

4. Subsequently, as Metropolitan of Athens, **Chrysostomos Papadopoulos**, who talked, at his enthronement (March 1923), about the “*union of the other Churches and Christian*

communities with the Orthodox Church” and about the “determination of a common basis for relations” between them, was unquestionably referring to the syncretistic theology of the 1920 Encyclical when he promulgated the following notions:

*A UNION IN MATTERS OF DOGMA, which is, unfortunately, difficult to achieve, IS NOT A PRECONDITION for such coöperation and solidarity [between Orthodox and heterodox], SINCE A UNION OF CHRISTIAN LOVE IS SUFFICIENT, and this can, moreover, pave the way for a complete union in conformity with the spirit of Christianity.*¹³

5. Finally, it is extremely significant that the Hierarch who delivered the eulogy for the deceased Chrysostomos Papadopoulos on 23 October 1938, praised him because, among other things, “the departed First Hierarch” had cultivated the “bond of friendship with foreign Churches,” had “nurtured an ardent longing to attain a mutual understanding with them,” and had “put forth such great efforts, laboring in a superhuman way” for the “union of all the Christian Churches.”¹⁴

6. The ever-memorable Archimandrite Theokletos (Strangas), a historian of the Church of Greece, commented as follows on the foregoing section of the funeral speech: “That is to say, after Meletios [Metaxakis], he [Chrysostomos Papadopoulos], too, was a pro-ecumenist and, in addition, a pro-unionist.”¹⁵

7. In truth, when Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, as Metropolitan of Athens, “recklessly changed the calendar”¹⁶ in 1924, he was laboring under the influence of ecumenism, and, in particular, of the 1920 Encyclical, and he was not simply a “pro-ecumenist,” but was in the vanguard of ecumenism.

As he himself noted in a positive vein, speaking as an historian, the Orthodox Churches,

*‘keeping abreast of spiritual movements outside the Orthodox Church’ ‘and of the Christian activity of important organizations such as the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches, the worldwide Faith and Order league, and the ecumenical Life and Work league, HAVE PURSUED A JOINT STUDY OF WAYS TO REVIVE CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES IN THE LIFE OF THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD.’*¹⁷

- This was indeed envisioned by the 1920 Encyclical.

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THE HISTORICAL evidence that we have so far adduced demonstrates with complete clarity that those who resisted the reform of 1924 were most profoundly aware that they were first and foremost and in essence opposing the ecclesiological heresy of ecumenism.

In spite of this, we are obligated to continue our critical discussion of these (to put it mildly) unacceptable articles by Elder Theokletos, in the hope that he might desist from deceiving himself and those who are unaware of the issues involved; for, although he has recently been promoting himself as a “confessor” (!) and even a “fellow confessor” (!) with the late Photis Kontoglou,¹⁸ in reality he teaches false doctrines, since his views and his attitude are tantamount to an affirmation of ecumenism.

- St. Ignatios the God-bearer forewarning us and confirming us in the Faith of the Synods and the Father says: “Let not those who appear trustworthy, but teach false doctrines, confuse you.”¹⁹

(to be continued)

Notes

1. Monk Nicodemus the Hagiorite, ““Κανονική” ἡ διακοπή τοῦ “Μνημοσύνου” τοῦ Ἀθηναγόρου Α΄ ὑπὸ τῶν τριῶν ἱεραρχῶν” [“It is Canonical for the Three Hierarchs to Break Off Commemoration of Athenagoras I”], *Ὁρθόδοξος Τύπος*, No. 142 (15 June 1971), p. 3.
2. Georgios Zervos, “Τὸ Βατικανὸν ἐξαπατᾷ τὴν Ὁρθόδοξον Ἐκκλησίαν” [“The Vatican Deceives the Orthodox Church”], *Ὁρθόδοξος Τύπος*, No. 1547 (23 April 2004), p. 2.
3. St. Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, §12, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. VI, col. 345A.
4. St. Isaac the Syrian, Discourse 73, *Ἄπαντα* [Complete Works], p. 284.
5. St. Peter of Damascus, *Short Discourse on the Acquisition of the Virtues and on Abstinence from the Passions*, in *Φιλοκαλία*, Vol. III, p. 74, l. 25.
6. Elias the Presbyter, *Gnostic Anthology* IV, §131, in *Φιλοκαλία*, Vol. II, p. 313.
7. Basil T. Stavrides and Evangelia A. Barellos, *Ἱστορία τῆς Οἰκουμενικῆς Κινήσεως* [History of the Ecumenical Movement] (Thessaloniki: Patriarchal Institute of Patristic Studies, 1996), 3rd ed., p. 303; Basil T. Stavrides, *Ὁρθοδοξία καὶ Ἀγγλικανισμὸς κατὰ τὸν Κ΄ Αἰῶνα* [Orthodoxy and Anglicanism in the Twentieth Century] (Thessaloniki: 1960), p. 13; Ioannis C. Konstantinides, “Μελέτιος Μεταξάκης” [“Meletios Metaxakis”], in *Θρησκευτικὴ καὶ Ἠθικὴ Ἐγκυκλοπαίδεια* [Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics], Vol. VIII (Athens: 1966), col. 967; Basil T. Stavrides, “Ἀγγλικανισμὸς καὶ Ὁρθοδοξία” [“Anglicanism and Orthodoxy”], in *Θρησκευτικὴ καὶ Ἠθικὴ Ἐγκυκλοπαίδεια* [Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics], Vol. I (Athens: 1962), cols. 201-202.
8. Stavrides and Barellos, *Ἱστορία τῆς Οἰκουμενικῆς Κινήσεως*, p. 80.
9. Great Protospesbyter George Tssetsis, *Ἡ Συμβολὴ τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου στὴν Ἰδρυση τοῦ Παγκοσμίου Συμβουλίου Ἐκκλησιῶν* [The Contribution of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the Founding of the World Council of Churches] (Katerine: Tertios Publications, 1988), p. 99.
10. Stavrides and Barellos, *Ἱστορία τῆς Οἰκουμενικῆς Κινήσεως*, p. 93.
11. Tssetsis, *Ἡ Συμβολὴ τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου*, p. 96.
12. See note 10.
13. See Monk Paul of Cyprus, *Νεοσημρολογισμὸς-Οἰκουμενισμὸς* [New Calendarism and Ecumenism] (Athens: “Keryx Gnesion Orthodoxon” Publishing, 1982), p. 60.
14. *Ἐκκλησία*, Nos. 43-44 (29 October 1938), p. 355.
15. Archimandrite Theokletos (Strangas), *Ἐκκλησίας Ἑλλάδος Ἱστορία ἐκ πηγῶν ἀψευδῶν (1817-1967)* [History of the Church of Greece From Reliable Sources (1817-1967)] (Athens: 1971), Vol. III, p. 2160, n.1.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 2159.
17. Archbishop Chrysostomos A. Papadopoulos, *Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἀνατολικὴ Ἐκκλησία* [The Eastern Orthodox Church] (Athens: “A.D.E.” Publications, 1954), p. 192.
18. Monk Theokletos of Dionysiou, *Ὁ Φώτης Κόντογλου στὴν τρίτη διάστασή του* [Photis Kontoglou During His Third Period] (Goumenissa: 2003).
 - To the attentive reader it becomes immediately evident that, in this book, **Elder Theokletos** compromises himself irreparably, in that his agenda is actually **autobiographical**, that is, to promote not so much **Photis Kontoglou**, as himself as a “*confessor*” (!), who in fact corrects the “*deviations*” of the blessed master-painter Photis! In the end, through this book, **Elder Theokletos** shows himself to be openly and incurably obsessed with his posthumous reputation.
19. St. Ignatios the God-bearer, *Epistle to Polycarp*, III.1, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. V, col. 721B.