

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

## The Calendar Question or the Heresy of Ecumenism?\*

### PART III

Ecumenism “assaults fundamental matters of Faith, and is truly a panheresy. The Phanar, unfortunately, is its leading exponent”; “The heroic Great Church of Constantinople, imprisoned in the Phanar, has been, for a century now, in a new captivity following that of the Turkish Yoke—the captivity of ecumenism.”

(Protopresbyter Theodore Zissis,  
Professor at the University of Thessaloniki)<sup>1</sup>

### V. Ecumenism and Anti-Ecumenism: “Soteriological Consequences”

**We continue**, by the Grace of God, our critical report on three articles by Elder Theokletos of Dionysiou, in an endeavor to substantiate fully our thesis that the calendar question is indissolubly bound up with the ecumenical movement.

It is not possible, from an ecclesiastical standpoint, for the calendar question to be examined in isolation and by itself; the reform of 1924 must always be considered and examined along with the ecumenical movement, as a child in relation to its mother.

There exists such a direct connection, a causal connection, between ecumenism and the calendar that, ever since 1924, there have not, in essence, been “New Calendarists” and “Old Calendarists,” but ecumenists and anti-ecumenists; and, for this reason, there is no “inhuman schism,” as Elder Theokletos contends (Article II), but, rather, Orthodox resistance against the inhuman and misanthropic heresy of syncretistic ecumenism.



*The visit/pilgrimage of Pope John Paul II to Athens (4-5 May 2001), with the consent and the active participation of the innovationist New Calendar Church, left “the door” wide open “to the poison of heresy, syncretism, and ecumenism.” However, that door had already been opened in 1924.*

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**This truth**, that is, of the existence of ecumenism and anti-ecumenism and of the conflict between heresy and truth, is of such very great importance that it unquestionably has soteriological repercussions—and hence, the responsibility of those who overlook it, gloss over it, or distort it is enormous.

Elder Theokletos, we are sorry to write, on account of his lack of brotherly love and the dense cloud of narcissistic self-references in his works, is incapable of understanding that ecumenism really is a “sickness unto death.”<sup>2</sup> He regards it as consisting, supposedly, in “relations and encounters of a social nature” and “certain acts of politeness and courtesy towards the heterodox” [!] (Article I).

On the contrary, however, Father Theodore Zissis very correctly diagnoses and proclaims, in an entirely Patristic spirit, that

by means of the ‘poison of heresy, syncretism, and ecumenism,’ ‘the spiritual atmosphere of the Orthodox Church has truly been polluted in a hazardous way; the ecclesiastical climate has altered; adulterated spiritual products are in circulation, even in the realm of Orthodox monasticism. This is the real ecological problem with which the leaders of the Church ought to be dealing. But instead of taking urgent measures against this spiritual pollution and destruction, which has soteriological consequences, they increase the pollution and continue boldly on their ecumenist course, with the spurious argument that they are witnessing to the Orthodox Faith and showing love for the heterodox.’<sup>3</sup>

The contrast between these views of Elder Theokletos and Father Theodore Zissis is so glaring that we would not hesitate to exclaim, along with St. Gregory the Theologian, who observed something similar in his own era:

“O, what Jeremiah will bewail our confusion and spiritual blindness? He alone knew how to utter lamentations befitting our misfortunes!”<sup>4</sup>

• Furthermore, to paraphrase St. Gregory a bit, we have found that Elder Theokletos, regrettably, debases the authentic language of the Patristic and monastic Tradition, which was always “unpretentious and gentlemanly”: “unpretentious and gentlemanly language was reckoned to be a hallmark of piety.”<sup>5</sup> Monks, and especially Hesychasts, ought to be articulate in their speech, standing “within [their] proper bounds.”<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, Elder Theokletos, as can be demonstrated—and this will become clearer in the course of our argument—, “by throwing off the rider, reason, and spurning reverence, which keeps us within due limits,”<sup>7</sup> does not follow these limits handed down by the Fathers and does not distinguish between language which is “alien” to us and language which is “proper” to us, either in matters of brotherly love or in matters of Faith.

## VI. The 1923 Congress, Ecumenism, and the Calendar

**Evidence** for the direct connection between ecumenism and the calendar is also provided, after the 1920 Encyclical, by the “Pan-Orthodox Congress” of 1923, which met in Constantinople (10 May–8 June 1923) and which had an ecumenist agenda. It was on the basis of this agenda that the congress occupied itself with reforming the Church Calendar and ultimately decided that the reform should be implemented.

On 3 February 1923, Meletios Metaxakis, as Patriarch, invited representatives of the Orthodox Churches to Constantinople to take part in a pan-Orthodox congress, which would reach a decision on reforming the calendar “for the furtherance,” as he wrote, “of pan-Christian unity”<sup>8</sup>

The congress was indeed convened, and it hammered out the final step towards the calendar innovation, because by means of this innovation the “rapprochement of the two Christian worlds of East and West in the celebration of the great Christian feasts”<sup>9</sup> would, allegedly, be achieved.

Patriarch Meletios, who presided over this congress, stated that the participants

would deal with “issues pertaining to the union of all the Churches”<sup>10</sup> and expressed the belief that “the time has come for the restoration of Christian unity, at least on this point.”<sup>11</sup>

Likewise, the members of the congress made it clear that they were concerned with the issue of the calendar “as members of the pan-Christian brotherhood.”<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, very symptomatic of the ecumenist agenda of the self-styled “Pan-Orthodox Congress” was the presence, at its fifth session (Wednesday, 28 May 1923), of the former Anglican Bishop of Oxford, Charles Gore, and his companion, the Reverend Mr. Buxton.

On that occasion, Patriarch Meletios and Bishop Gore had an illuminating discussion about the union of Orthodoxy and Anglicanism, regarding their “full union” and about the “terms of union,” and acknowledged that “the calendar question” represented the “second step” “towards union,” “so that we might celebrate together the great Christian feasts of the Nativity, the Resurrection, and Pentecost,” and that “it would be good to bring about a reform of the calendar, which would be conducive to all of us Christians celebrating Holy Pascha at the same time” (Gore).<sup>13</sup>

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It is, therefore, indisputable that both the Patriarchal Encyclical of 1920 and the Pan-Orthodox Congress of 1923 were fully aware that the calendar constituted a suitable and necessary tool for the promotion of the ecumenist vision, that is to say, for the realization of syncretistic ecumenism, based solely on “a fellowship of love.”<sup>14</sup>

The “acceptance of a uniform calendar” (Encyclical of 1920) “for the furtherance of pan-Christian unity” (Congress of 1923), placed in the context of aspirations for “rapprochement,” “fellowship,” “contact,” “friendship,” and “coöperation” “of the whole Christian body,”<sup>15</sup> as foreseen specifically by the “scheme”<sup>16</sup> of 1920, lends an incontrovertibly ecclesiological character to the calendar reform of 1924.

## VII. In Communion with Heretics and Alienated from the Fathers

The fact that the Church of Constantinople, with the coöperation of other Orthodox Churches, formulated an unprecedented and totally subversive “principle,”<sup>17</sup> which “constitutes one of the basic presuppositions of the ecumenical movement,”<sup>18</sup> is a cause for profound sorrow.

On the basis of this “principle,” the syncretistic “fellowship” and “coöperation” of Orthodoxy and heresy, “regarding each other [henceforth] as kith and kin in Christ,” “is not precluded by the differences that exist between them” (Encyclical of 1920), but in fact, this “coöperation between the Churches would prepare the way” “for full dogmatic agreement.”<sup>19</sup>

After the calendar innovation of 1924 and the implementation of the other ten “points”<sup>20</sup> of the “scheme,”<sup>21</sup> the syncretistic vision was realized, namely, the vision “of a common journey of the Orthodox with the rest of the Christian world”<sup>22</sup> and of “common service” of the world, “regardless of the fundamental theological differences”<sup>23</sup> between the Christians who were journeying and serving together.

After eighty years, not only the intentions and pronouncements of the Orthodox ecumenists, but also the entrenched practices of their syncretistic “common journey” with the whole spectrum of the heterodox, are now so evident that the accusation which

they direct against the Old Calendarist anti-ecumenists as being, supposedly, “calendar-worshippers” [!], “worshippers of days” [!], and finally, “idolaters” [!] <sup>24</sup> is a mark, as St. John Chrysostomos would say, “not only of foolishness, but also of the utmost madness”! <sup>25</sup>

In addition, the following joint statement is truly tragic, and also fully confirms our thesis about the ecclesiological nature of the 1924 reform:

Undoubtedly, the tendency to indulge in idle talk about concelebration with the herodox began during the twentieth century that has now passed by, when a change in the ecclesiological perceptions of the Orthodox not only occurred, but was also cultivated, that is, ever since the Orthodox began to relinquish the ecclesiological principle, enshrined in the lives of the Saints and the writings of the Fathers, that the Orthodox Church constitutes the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church of the holy Symbol of the Faith. <sup>26</sup>

In truth, the “common journey” of the Orthodox ecumenists with heretics has corroded and corrupted their confession of the Faith in such a way and to such an extent that they are, unfortunately, unaware that,

‘there is [already] a clear breach and rupture [on their part] with Tradition,’ and that ‘they have cut themselves off from the Church of the Saints who are alive in Heaven,’ ‘and, on top of everything else, are becoming enemies of the Saints,’ that is, are maintaining ‘an attitude of hostility towards the Saints.’ <sup>27</sup>

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The Orthodox ecumenists prefer this “breach,” this “rupture,” this “cutting-off,” and this “hostility towards the Saints”...for the sake of “furthering the pan-Christian unity” <sup>28</sup> “of the whole Body of the Church”! <sup>29</sup>

The Old Calendarist Orthodox anti-ecumenists, devoutly following the “glorious and venerable rule of our Tradition” (St. Clement of Rome), <sup>30</sup> that is, the agreement of the Fathers and the Church (*consensus Patrum et Ecclesiae*), have always believed that rapprochement (and how much more so institutional coöperation, communion, and concelebration!) with heretics signifies separation from the Saints; and conversely: separation from heretics signifies rapprochement and union with God, the Truth, and the Fathers.

St. Athanasios the Great declares, in this connection: “We ought to live according to the standard of the Saints and the Fathers, and imitate them, and to know that, if we depart from them, we estrange ourselves from their fellowship.” <sup>31</sup>

And St. Mark of Ephesus complements this when he says:

I am absolutely convinced that the more I distance myself from him [the Patriarch and the other pro-Papal unionists] and those like him, the closer I draw to God and all the faithful and Holy Fathers; and just as I separate myself from these people, even so am I united with the truth and the Holy Fathers and theologians of the Church. <sup>32</sup>

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**Although** we have by now provided sufficient evidence for the ecclesiological character of the anti-Patristic calendar reform of 1924, insofar as the calendar question is a legitimate and first-born child of the ecumenical movement, we consider it necessary, in order to dispel all doubts in this regard, to demonstrate the direct connection

of the innovationist Archbishop Chrysostomos (Papadopoulos) of Athens both with the Patriarchal Encyclical of 1920 and, more generally, with ecumenism.

(to be continued)

\* Source: *Άγιος Κυπριανός*, No 319 (March-April 2004), pp. 22-25.

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## Notes

1. Protopresbyter Theodore Zissis, “Ἀνησυχητικές Ἐξελίξεις. Νέα ἀνοίγματα στό Βατικανό καί στοὺς Προτεστάντες. Φανάρι καὶ Ἀθήνα ἀντίπαλοι καὶ συνοδοιπόροι” [“Disturbing Developments: New Overtures to the Vatican and to Protestants: The Phanar and Athens Are Rivals and Fellow-Travelers”], *Θεοδορομία* (April-June 2003), pp. 284, 288. This detailed article was reprinted in *Ὁρθόδοξος Τύπος*, Nos. 1527-1531 (21 November 2003–19 December 2003).
2. Andreas Theodorou, *Ἡ Ὁρθοδοξία χθές καὶ σήμερον* [*Orthodoxy Yesterday and Today*] (Athens: “Orthodoxos Typos” Publications, 1973), p. 21.
3. Zissis, “Ἀνησυχητικές Ἐξελίξεις,” pp. 275, 277-278.
4. St. Gregory the Theologian, Oration 21, “On St. Athanasios the Great,” §12, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. XXXV, col. 1096A.
5. *Ibid.*, cols. 1093D-1096A.
6. *Idem*, Oration 27 (“First Theological Oration”), §5, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. XXXVI, col. 17A.
7. See note 6.
8. Dionysios M. Batistatos (ed.), *Πρακτικά καὶ Ἀποφάσεις τοῦ ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Πανορθοδόξου Συνεδρίου, 10 Μαΐου–8 Ἰουνίου 1923* [*Proceedings and Decisions of the Pan-Orthodox Congress in Constantinople, 10 May–8 June 1923*] (Athens: 1982), 2nd ed., p. 6.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 86-88.
14. John Karmiris, *Τὰ Δογματικά καὶ Συμβολικά Μνημεῖα τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας* [*The Dogmatic and Credal Monuments of the Orthodox Catholic Church*] (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck u. Verlagsanstalt, 1968), Vol. II, p. 9856 [1054].
15. 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., pp. 332-336.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 54, 55.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.* These statements are from a presentation by the General Secretary of the WCC, Dr. W.A. Visser ‘t Hooft, at a conference in Rhodes (1959).
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 54, 55.
21. *Ibid.* The 1920 Encyclical proposed a “scheme for the practical implementation

of principles, consisting of eleven points.”

22. Great Protopresbyter George Tsetsis, “Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξη Παρουσία στὴ Β΄ Πανευρωπαϊκὴ Οἰκουμενικὴ Σύναξι τοῦ GRAZ” [“The Orthodox Presence at the Second Pan-European Ecumenical Assembly in Graz”], *Ἐνημέρωσις*, 13–1997/1, p. 2.

23. “Ἐπόμνημα τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου ὅσον ἀφορᾷ εἰς τὴν ἀντίληψιν καὶ τοὺς ὁραματισμοὺς αὐτοῦ περὶ τοῦ Παγκοσμίου Συμβουλίου Ἐκκλησιῶν” [“Memorandum of the Ecumenical Patriarchate Regarding Its Understanding and Visions Concerning the World Council of Churches”] (Phanar, 30 November 1995), *Ἐνημέρωσις*, 11–1995/12, p. 24.

24. Archimandite Athanasios Kollas (*Ἱεροκλήρουξ* of the Metropolis of Demetrias), “Τὸ Ἡμερολογιακὸ Σχίσμα” [“The Calendar Schism”], Website of the Metropolis of Demetrias.

25. St. John Chrysostomos, *First Oration Against the Jews*, §5, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. XLVIII, col. 850.

26. “Ἐπόμνημα περὶ Οἰκουμενισμοῦ” [“A Memorandum Concerning Ecumenism”], §5, *Παρακαταθήκη* (1999), 2nd ed., p. 36. The “Memorandum” was signed by seventeen clergymen and laymen and was submitted on 23 September 1998 to the Hierarchy of the Church of Greece.

27. Zissis, “Ἀνησυχητικὲς Ἐξελίξεις,” pp. 284, 285, 286.

28. See note 8.

29. See note 15.

30. St. Clement of Rome, *First Epistle to the Corinthians* VII.2, *Βιβλιοθήκη Ἑλλήνων Πατέρων καὶ Ἐκκλησιαστικῶν Συγγραφέων*, Vol. 1, p. 15, ll. 32-33.

31. St. Athanasios the Great, *Epistle to Dracontios*, §4, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. XXV, col. 528B.

32. St. Mark of Ephesus, “*Apologia* Uttered Impromptu at the Time of His Death,” *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. CLX, col. 536D.