

## The Interfaith Outlook of Patriarch Bartholomew\*

Those Who are in Communion with Him  
Contribute to the Transformation of the  
Church “into a Humanistic  
Religious Club”

### 1. Interfaith Dialogue “Leads to Interfaith Syncretism”

It is well known that the ecumenical movement has ventured full sail into the interfaith movement, in which the Orthodox ecumenists participate fully—in-  
deed, in the wake of a joint resolution—, being active a) in so-called academic dialogues, b) in developing an interfaith theology, c) in collaborating with the related interfaith programs of the Vatican, and d) in encouraging the WCC in its reckless interfaith ventures.<sup>1</sup>

The Orthodox ecumenists are gradually experiencing a *profound erosion in their ecclesiology* through both the inter-Christian movement and the interfaith movement, which is, unfortunately, leading them not only outside the “boundaries” of the Orthodox Church, but also outside the “boundaries” of Christianity.<sup>2</sup>

It has been correctly observed that

*‘...the spirit of syncretism has become habitual for certain Orthodox, who, as a result, do not live the life of the Church; and there is now a tendency for it to be imposed at an institutional level, as a consequence of dialogues with the adherents of other religions,’ since, overall, interfaith dialogue ‘is not content with simple coöperation*

in resolving social, international, and environmental problems, *but is leading to interfaith syncretism.*'<sup>3</sup>

Syncretistic views—completely unacceptable to Orthodoxy—which emphasize the alleged “common worth of every religion” are being promulgated more and more openly:

‘Every religion, every creed, every minor or persecuted heresy is a ladder that leads its adherents to the worship of the same God’; ‘there is no religion that does not contain God; all religions are simply approaches to God, on Whom no one has a monopoly’; ‘every people has the right to approach (the one and only God) through its own historical and cultural tradition: some through Jesus, others through the Prophets, others through Buddha or Mohammed, and others through the beauty of nature. From whatever starting-point one offers up incense and prayer, he is praising the one and only God!’<sup>4</sup>

## 2. A Leader in Interfaith Dialogue

Patriarch Bartholomew aspires also to be a leader, from the Orthodox platform, in interfaith dialogue, and for this reason he is constantly undertaking bold-er ventures, in such a way as to raise a crucial question: If his inter-Christian activities are placing him outside the bounds of communion, do not his interfaith views and activities render him all the more essentially so?



*Patriarch Bartholomew at the World Conference on Religion and Peace (Riva del Garda, Italy, November 4, 1994), proclaiming the need for alliance and coöperation between Orthodox, heterodox, and people of other religions “in the spirit of the one God.”*

In November of 1994, at the World Conference on Religion and Peace (Riva del Garda, Italy, November 4, 1994), he put forth the following astounding idea:

‘Roman Catholics and Orthodox, Protestants and Jews, Muslims and Hindus, Buddhists and Confucians: the time has come not only for rapprochement, but also for an alliance and joint effort’ to ‘contribute—all of us—to the promotion of the spiritual principles of ecumenism, brotherhood, and peace,’ since ‘we are united in the spirit of the one God.’<sup>5</sup>

In June of 1995, at the Consecration of the Church of St. Demetrios in Zürich, he made his pitch as a “leader”:

‘From the tranquil land of Switzerland’ ‘I appeal today yet again for peaceful coöperation between religions.’<sup>6</sup>

Since then, the Hierarchs of the Phanar have not ceased being the “organizers of many assemblies and

dialogues between Christians and Muslims and Christians and Jews” and “active participants in the ecumenical movement and interfaith discussions.”<sup>9</sup>

### 3. His Trip to the USA in 1997

Patriarch Bartholomew’s recent trip to the USA gave him the opportunity to express his interfaith identity in the fullest possible way.

1. On November 4, 1997, at an “Ecumenical Doxology” that took place in Iowa, he made the following statements:

‘The Ecumenical Patriarchate has been at the forefront of the dialogue with Christian Churches, as well as other religions’; ‘we are committed to the Ecumenical and Interfaith dialogue as a means of knowing one another in fullness and truth.’<sup>7</sup>

2. But the most astonishing chapter in the Patriarch’s trip was his appearance and speech in Chicago, on November 3, 1997.

Let us recall, parenthetically, that the much-touted Second Parliament of the World’s Religions convened in Chicago in 1993; the First Parliament met—again in Chicago—more than a century ago, in 1893, inaugurating the interfaith movement and opening the way for the proliferation of Eastern religions in the West.<sup>8</sup>

The Second Parliament, in 1993, gathered together more than 6,000 delegates from 250 religions and religious groups; the Parliament’s podium was a place

of prayer and worship for the most diverse groups and religions.

The Vatican took part in a highly public capacity, and its strong presence was aimed at forging a “sacred harmony” between religions, in order to construct a new civilization, based on humanism, with a purely secular perspective, which was confirmed by the syncretistic vision of the Dalai Lama’s address before an enthusiastic audience of 30,000.<sup>8</sup>

All religions together, in a deadly embrace, are already immersed in a pan-religious melting-pot, with the collaboration of the Vatican—the multi-faceted heresy of Papism—which is in the vanguard of apostasy.

The unfortunate thing is that Patriarch Bartholomew’s address to the religious leaders of Chicago on November 3, 1997, demonstrated the complete concurrence of the ecumenists of the Phanar with pan-religious apostasy.

‘We are cognizant,’ stated Patriarch Bartholomew *inter alia*, ‘of the unique commitment that the religious community of Chicago has made to promote the cause of understanding between her faith communities. There is a long and noble history in this city of religious coöperation and exchange.’ ‘We give thanks to Almighty God that the people of the faith communities of this city have persevered in their work toward understanding. We bestow on them our Patriarchal blessing and commit ourselves today to continue our support of the Diocese of Chicago in this noble work.’ ‘In the midst of our diversity, we seek to know and fully commune with the presence of the Divine. We can share this desire for God,

seeing in our differences the mystery of God's all-embracing love for His creation. Let us continue to model love, in our acceptance without judgement of one another as children of God!<sup>9</sup>

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The dilemma for all those in communion with the ecumenists of the Phanar—and especially for the Fathers of the Holy Mountain—assumes dramatic proportions, pending a complete and direct answer to the agonizing question:

How much longer will they participate, by way of their anti-Patristic stance, in the transformation of the charismatic Body of the Orthodox Church ‘into a humanistic religious club’!<sup>10</sup>

## Notes

\* Reprinted from *Orthodoxos Enemerosis*, No. 27 (January–March 1998), pp. 107–108.

<sup>1</sup> See section I.

<sup>2</sup> See Archimandrites Cyprian and Glykerios, *The Heresy of Ecumenism and the ‘Boundaries’ of the Church: The Erosion of Orthodox Ecclesiology in the Ecumenical and Interfaith Movements* [in Greek] (“Fourth Convocation for Orthodox Awareness,” 1996 [in press]).

<sup>3</sup> *Christianike* (“Orthodox Support for Ecumenism and Heresies”), No. 529 [843] (25 September 1997), p. 5 [in Greek]: “Interfaith Ecumenism is Galloping Along.”

<sup>4</sup> Costas E. Beïs, “The Common Worth of Every Religion” [in Greek], *Eleftherotypia* (24 December 1997), p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> *Episkepsis*, No. 511 (30 November 1994), p. 28 [in Greek]; *Orthodoxia* (October–December 1994), pp. 745–754 [the entire address was in English].

<sup>6</sup> *Episkepsis*, No. 519 (30 June 1995), p. 8 [in Greek].

<sup>7</sup> See the Internet: Orthodox World News/Archdiocese of America/Orthodox Ministry ACCESS/Ecumenical Patriarchate: “Homily of His All–Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the Ecumenical Doxology Service at the Civic Center of Greater Des Moines, Iowa, 4 November 1997.”

<sup>8</sup> See Archimandrite Cyprian, *The Rôle of the Vatican in the Contemporary Interfaith Movement and the Great Fall of the Orthodox Ecumenists* [in Greek] (“Third Convocation for Orthodox Awareness,” 1995 [in press]).

<sup>9</sup> See the Internet: Orthodox World News/Archdiocese of America/Orthodox Ministry ACCESS/Ecumenical Patriarchate: “Address of His All–Holiness Ecumenical Bartholomew to Religious Leaders at the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Chicago, Illinois, 3 November 1997.”

<sup>10</sup> Holy Monastery of St. Gregory, *Orthodoxy and Islam: A Critical Approach to Academic Dialogue in the Light of the Holy Fathers* (Holy Mountain: 1997) [in Greek], p. 7.

\* Source: Hieromonk Klemes, *The Contribution of the Orthodox Ecumenists to the Interfaith Venture and Their Responsibility for It* (Etna, California: C.T.O.S. 2000), pp. 71–77.