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Anti-Ecumenist and Anti-Papist  
(1922-2004)



## 1. Orthodox Theologians in Opposition to Ecumenism\*

by Professor Andreas Theodorou (†)

(As is well known, in December of the past year [1972], the “Soter” Brotherhood of Theologians convened a meeting of theologians, friends, and collaborators, at which Professor Andreas Theodorou delivered a talk on the topic: “Orthodox Theologians in Opposition to Ecumenism.” From this detailed presentation *Ἐκθρόδοξος Τύπος* has reprinted, in the following article, those sections in which Professor Theodorou pointedly emphasizes the tremendous dangers which Orthodoxy is courting by its participation in the contemporary ecumenical movement.)

**T**he problematic position of Orthodoxy in contemporary ecumenism is, naturally, pregnant with tremendous dangers for Orthodoxy. The only possible justification for the participation of the Orthodox Church in the World Council of Churches is her obligation to impart the light of Orthodox Catholicity to the Christians of the West who languish in darkness and error. In other words, her task is clearly missionary in nature.

To date, this missionary work on the part of Orthodoxy has yielded only meager and insignificant results. Of course, we cannot deny that, within the bosom of the ecumenical movement, Orthodoxy has gradually become better known to the heterodox of the West. But beyond this, and indeed, beyond an emotional admiration of the richness of Orthodox worship (with preference for the Russian style), nothing positive regarding the ontological depth of ecclesiastical confessions has so far been achieved.

Many decades of ecumenical experience and life have now passed. The Protestants have become sufficiently acquainted with us. But it

would be naïve for us to believe that it will ever be possible for them to draw near to Orthodoxy and to relinquish the fundamental principles of Protestantism, and all the more so because the Branch Theory both precludes such a possibility and renders it pointless.

In comparison with these meager benefits for Orthodoxy, the damage and the dangers that she courts through her participation in ecumenism are immeasurably more numerous and more serious.

The principal danger in this regard is the gradual erosion of the Orthodox conscience, first of the Orthodox representatives who participate in the ecumenical movement, and then also of wider groups and circles within the Church, and especially those who fraternize with the heterodox in the New World and Western countries.

The situation that is being created, here, is quite simply tragic! Most of the Orthodox ecumenists, who are Orthodox only on the surface, have ceased to believe that the Orthodox Catholic Church constitutes the *Una Sancta* on earth. Even if they do not admit it outright, nonetheless inwardly, in their consciences, they embrace the Protestant Branch Theory and other similarly outlandish ideas. They flippantly disdain the dogmas of the Orthodox Faith, show scant regard for the Holy Tradition of Orthodoxy, and despise and trample upon her sacred Canons. They boast that they are Orthodox, whereas in reality they are baptized in the font of all the other Christian confessions. Some of them may even be ready to sell their Orthodox birthright for a mess of ecumenist potage!

This spirit, which sows confusion in Orthodox communities abroad, has begun, regrettably, to blow even in the traditional homeland of the Greek Orthodox Church. As one example of the idea that the Orthodox Catholic Church might not be the one and unique Church of Christ on earth, we cite, below, a short excerpt from the periodical *Χριστιανικὸν Φῶς* (No. 46, October 1972), published by the Metropolis of Cydonia and Apokoronos, Crete:

*The activities of the Seminar were conducted in a mystagogical atmosphere, with the result that souls were rebaptized into the idea of one united Church throughout the world—the palladium and ark of the hopes of the global human community that is today in anguish unto death.<sup>1</sup>*

Now, what might the author of this commentary mean when he says that “souls were rebaptized into the idea of one united Church throughout the world”? What “Church” is this? Could it be that the Orthodox, too, were “baptized” into this idea? Or is it not enough that they have been Baptized into the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church of Christ?

Is Orthodoxy the unique and true Church of the Savior in the world, or is it not? Or is it perhaps simply one of the three great Confessions, as the author himself observes elsewhere in his commentary?

We would be truly happy if the author—whom we do not know personally—were to state plainly and unequivocally to us that by “rebaptism,” here, he means the rebaptism of the heterodox of the West into the idea of the Orthodox Catholic Church as the one united Church of the Lord on earth.

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**T**he danger which the Orthodox Catholic Church incurs from Roman Catholic ecumenism is, in our judgment, much greater and more serious.

We are talking, here, about a hypocritical ecumenism, garbed in the superficialities of love, but of a vague and generic love, disjoined from Divinely revealed truth and divorced from theology. In the name of this love, chasms and gaps between Churches are disregarded, estrangement is bridged, and division is removed. Theological dialogue gives way before this love, in the face of which tradition and history are consigned to oblivion.

Love is a magic word which, by a wave of the hand, transforms ecclesiastical matters that developed over a period of many centuries. We are moved by the idea of love. Like an enormous magnet it attracts the souls of human beings, alluring unstable spirits and bewitching those uninformed about the Faith.

In the name of love, the leaders of Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy have put on spectacular displays on the proscenium of the ecumenist theater. They have raised their voices sky-high. They have shed rivers of ecumenist tears. They have dreamed ecumenist dreams.

They have taken the fast lane towards the goal of ecumenical union.

At the last moment, Divine Providence saved Orthodoxy from a de facto union, which the aforementioned Church leaders were intent on inaugurating during the past year (1971) in Rome, by communing from the same holy Cup.

Nonchalant hobnobbing with Roman Catholics is rife with deadly perils for Orthodoxy. In the ecumenist spirit of love, and with the idea that Roman Catholicism has not departed from Orthodoxy in any essential way, the gate is opened to a variety of evil and shameful ventures, like the reckless initiative of the Russian Patriarchate which, being “more kingly than the king,” decided recently to engage in Mysteriological (sacramental) intercommunion with the heretics of the West (the Papists)! Promotion of this shameful policy will inevitably lead Orthodoxy to the most grievous schism in her history.

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**E**cumenism, under both of its aspects, constitutes a deplorable secularization of Christianity.

Living and functioning in a world which has essentially destroyed any conception of authenticity and principle and which has lost any metaphysical sense of the mystery and sacredness of life, and suffocating human existence by confining it within the physical bounds of the present life, ecumenism at some point began to conform to the *Zeitgeist* in a reckless fashion, obtunding every idea of Divine and human authority and gradually rejecting any sense of the Mysteriological fabric of Christian existence and life.

Contemporary ecumenism, which is daily becoming more and more secularized, tends to downplay the absolute and exclusive grandeur of Christianity as the sole religion based par excellence on Divine revelation, and thus it tends to diminish the exclusivity of Christianity’s redemptive character. What else, indeed, could be the meaning of the indiscriminate and superficial shift of the ecumenical movement towards other, non-Christian religions, with which it is hastening to enter into brotherly and friendly dialogue? What, other than the fact that it recognizes a kind of parity between these religions and Christianity and, up to a point—if not fully and perfectly—the

possibility that mankind can be saved by them?

And all of this, in spite of our Lord, Who sent out His Apostles, not to engage in fraternal dialogue with idolaters, but to preach the Gospel of salvation to them and to Baptize them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit!

It goes without saying that such an ecumenist secularization of the essence of Christianity, which totally destroys the traditional substance of Orthodoxy, tends also to undermine the foundations of our nation.

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**I**t is said and written that ecumenism is a panheresy. Personally, I do not agree with this characterization. Ecumenism is not a panheresy, because it does not concern itself specifically with dogmas, which it distorts in a non-Orthodox way. On the contrary, it has no interest in dogmas whatsoever. It disregards and sidesteps them, just as it disregards and sidesteps the dogmatic differences between the Churches.

Ecumenism is the obliteration and toleration of heresies, so as not to say anything about their condemnation or justification. It sidesteps heresies and weakens their gravity and strength.

But it is precisely in this regard that ecumenism is something far worse than a panheresy. Heresies are open enemies of the Church. Against them she can struggle. But against ecumenism, which arrogates the genuine form and essence of Orthodoxy, how is she to fight? Ecumenism is an infernal and insidious enemy. It wells up from within, struggling, supposedly, for the beauty of Orthodoxy. In this resides the deadly peril that stems from it.

Ecumenism is a snare and a sickness unto death!

\* Source: *Ἐορθόδοξος Τύπος*, No. 182(15 March 1973).

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## Notes

1. Remarks on a seminar on love and mutual understanding convened between officials from the three great Christian Confessions at the Orthodox Academy of Crete. Orthodox, Roman Catholics, and Protestants (from Germany) participated in this seminar, which took place in the second week of October 1973.