

## The Orthodox Church of Georgia Gives Still Greater Impetus to Anti-Ecumenism\*

### Historic Synodal Condemnations of Ecumenist Beliefs and Practices

It is well known that the ancient Church of Georgia decided synodally to end its participation in the ecumenical movement and to withdraw from its two major institutional organs, *i.e.*, the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches, which have their headquarters in Geneva.<sup>1</sup>

At that time, we prayed and waited with anguish for the pacification of the Church, a synodal rejection and condemnation of ecumenism as an ecclesiological heresy, and, in addition, for a full implementation of the natural consequences of such a condemnation.

After nearly fifteen months, on October 8, 1998, the Orthodox Church of Georgia gave still greater impetus to its anti-ecumenism in an impressive way: the Holy Synod, under the presidency of Patriarch Ilia and with the participation of twenty-four Hierarchs, made the following stark resolutions, which are printed below and which, it should be noted, “constitute the Faith of the Georgian Church; it has always held these views and it continues to confess and clearly uphold these positions.”<sup>2</sup>

These condemnations of ecumenism, regardless of the inconsistent stand of the Georgian Patriarchate,<sup>3</sup> truly comprise yet another golden page in the bible of

Orthodox anti-ecumenism, and are certainly preparing the ground—slowly but surely—for still more important steps, with the hopeful prospect of a radical and pan-Orthodox confrontation of a heresy which, for a century, has been literally shaking the foundations of the Most Holy Orthodox Church.

### THE HISTORIC SYNODAL RESOLUTIONS<sup>4</sup>

The Holy Synod of the Church of Georgia resolves:

1. That the documents of the Joint Theological Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Non-Chalcedonian [Monophysite] Churches in Chambésy, Switzerland, in 1990 and 1992 *are unacceptable*.

2. That the preliminary draft agreement between the Orthodox Church of Antioch and the Non-Chalcedonian [Monophysite] Church of Antioch in 1991 *is unacceptable*.

3. That the document adopted by the Joint Commission of Orthodox and Catholics on June 23, 1993 in Balamand, Lebanon, concerning Uniatism, under the title “The Unia, a Past Method of Union, and the Present Search For Full Communion,” or the so-called Balamand Agreement, *is unacceptable*.

4. That the celebration of Pascha by the Autonomous Orthodox Church of Finland according to the Gregorian *Paschalion*, which contravenes the Decree of the First [Holy] Œcumenical Synod of Nicæa regarding the date of Pascha, *is unacceptable*.

5. That the un-Orthodox and heretical doctrine, which was formed in the bosom of modernist theology, concerning the existence of Life-giving Grace beyond the canonical boundaries of the Church, as well as its extreme expression, [*i.e.*,] the so-called “Branch Theory,” which regards all of the miscellaneous trends in present-day Christianity as various unified or uniform branches of the true Church of Christ possessing Divine Grace in equal measure, *is unacceptable*.

6. That joint prayers and sacramental intercommunion with non-Orthodox *are unacceptable*.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> For a complete chronicle of this decision, see Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐνημέρωσις, No. 24 (April–June 1997), pp. 89–96 (special issue).

<sup>2</sup> Παρακαταθήκη, No. 3 (November–December 1998), p. 12B.

<sup>3</sup> Regarding the events that took place at the Eighth General Assembly of the WCC in Harare, Zimbabwe, December 3–14, 1998, see Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐνημέρωσις, No. 31 (January–March 1999), pp. 129–132, and No. 32 (April–June 1999), pp. 133–136.

<sup>4</sup> In laying out the texts of these resolutions, we had before us the versions printed in the following publications: Παρακαταθήκη, No. 3 (November–December 1998), pp. 12–13; *The Shepherd*, Vol. XIX, No. 5 (January 1999), p. 19. (*Clarifications in brackets and emphasis ours*).

\* Source: Archimandrite Cyprian, *The Dramatic Crisis in the Ecumenical Movement and the Awakening of Orthodox Anti-Ecumenism* (Etna, California: C.T.O.S., 2000), pp. 131–133.