



On the fiftieth anniversary of the
repose of The Confessor-Hierarch
Chrysostomos (Kavourides), former
Metropolitan of Florina
(†1955)

Part VI

A Clarification by Metropolitan Chrysostomos of His Pastoral Encyclical * (January 18, 1945)

*[Concerning the breakaway bishops,
Matthew of Vresthene, and
Germanos of the Cyclades—Part II]*

[A]

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”¹

I**N OUR** considerable solicitude for the Church, we recently published a *pastoral encyclical*, in which we advised the Christian flock of our Churches, who follow the traditional Orthodox Calendar, that, on account of the gravity of the times and the difficulty of the war situation, they should remain loyal guardians of our ancestral Faith and live a Christian life that is irreproachable in every way, walking, “not

as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil,"² as the Divine Apostle of the Nations declares to the Ephesians.

Through this printed *pastoral encyclical*, as is our duty, we drew to the attention of Christians belonging to our Orthodox faction the fact that they should not give any credence or listen to all of the false and un-Orthodox teachings that are being disseminated by the apostate Bishops of the Cyclades and of Vresthene, under the guise of a supposedly pure Orthodoxy. These Bishops are causing divisions and offenses among the Faithful, because such people, according to the Apostle of the Nations, serve not Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple Faithful.

In the same *encyclical*, we called the aforementioned Bishops both conventiclors and *Protestantizers*, judging them as such from their beliefs and their official actions.

For after these men had been Consecrated Bishops by us, in order that our sacred struggle might be better served, instead of contributing to its service and success, coöperating with us in complete harmony and concord, in accordance with the sacred Canons, and, in particular, the Thirty-fourth Apostolic Canon,³ they, on the contrary, used the Episcopal office in order to split and divide the Orthodox Christian flock. To this end, without ecclesiastical or canonical reasons, and without first coming to some common understanding and clarifying matters, they disavowed us on the grounds that we had, allegedly, apostatized from our erstwhile Orthodox confession, and they set up their own altars for reasons of ambition and self-interest.

We called them *Protestantizers*, because the *conventicler* Bishops in question were not content merely to disavow us, from whom, by the judgments which the Lord alone knows, they received the Episcopal rank, but they also, like Eastern Popes, appropriating the rights of an Ecumenical Synod, declared the Autocephalous Church of Greece and the entire Greek Hierarchy to be *actually* schismatic, without any trial or defense, for dishonoring the Divine and Sacred Canons and ecclesiastical Canon Law, according to which no clergyman, and certainly no Hierarch, is to be deposed for wrong belief and excised from the universal body of the Eastern Orthodox Church without a prior trial and defense.

Consequently, the aforementioned *conventicler* Bishops, through their renunciation of us as putative heretics and their breaking of ecclesiastical communion with us, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, through their declaration that, on account of the calendar innovation, the Autocephalous Church of Greece is schismatic, not only *potentially*, but also in *actuality*, have divested themselves of Orthodoxy and the Apostolic Tradition, which they derived through us from the Autocephalous Church of Greece, and they have taken on a Protestant complexion, representing only their own individual persons and not the notion of the one Orthodox Church, from which the authority for the Divine Mysteries and their ecclesiastical actions is to be drawn.

And this is so, because only according to the Protestant understanding and interpretation is a faction of clergy and laity justified in high-handedly establishing a Church distinct from that from which they have broken away out of self-will, even for reasons of religious disagreement with the presiding ecclesiastical authority; whereas, according to the Orthodox understanding and belief, the regulations of the Apostles and the Synods reserved the right to establish a Church, and to endow her with Grace and the Divine Mysteries, for the entire Church, when she comes together in a Synod and states her opinions, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, and not for a faction of clergy and laity who have broken away, even for religious reasons.

In view of this, the aforementioned Bishops of the Cyclades and of Vresthene, having lost all dogmatic contact and having broken off all ecclesiastical communion with us and the recognized Orthodox Church of Greece, and not being recognized as Orthodox Bishops by any other local Orthodox Church, have ceased to represent any sense of Orthodoxy, in the name of which they are entitled to celebrate the sacred Mysteries in an Orthodox manner and validly. And having thus cast off the royal robe of Orthodoxy, the wretches have donned the rough sackcloth of Protestantism.

[B]

FIRST TO reply to this *pastoral encyclical* were the followers of the *conventicler* Bishops, Archimandrites Akakios (Pappas), Artemios of

Xenophontos, and Kosmas (Karambelas), to whom we did not deign to respond, since what they wrote, aside from the fact that it constitutes a conglomeration of shameless lies and untenable arguments, is composed in language that is irreverent and wholly improper.

There is only one truth that these men utter, and this is their admission that they derive the authority for their actions from the Orthodox character of the Greek Church, which shows that they refute themselves; for, on the one hand, they assert and proclaim that the Greek Church is *actually* schismatic, yet, on the other hand, they admit that she is Orthodox in essence. Behold how they have freed us from any need to respond with a refutation.

Second to reply was the Bishop of Vresthene; but we did not respond to him, because he renders it impossible in what he writes, aside from the fact that it constitutes a farrago of incoherent and disjointed words and phrases, to answer his perverse arguments, weaving together, as he does, what is incompatible and combining what cannot be combined.

Third to reply were two laymen, A. Demetriades and A. Panagiotopoulos, to whom, since they expressed themselves piously and sought, in the form of a *memorandum*, a solution to certain difficulties, not only to allay their scandalized consciences, as they said, but also to clarify and demonstrate the Orthodox spirit of our sacred struggle, we respond as follows.

We received your lengthy *memorandum* and read it attentively. From the whole style of what you have written and the arguments set forth therein, we ascertained the person who inspired and composed this memorandum, who, for reasons that are easy to understand, did not want to make himself known by his own protest and signature.

We originally thought of not responding in writing, but of orally enlightening those who signed this memorandum, on the ground that they do not possess requisite theological and canonical education, lack the competence to criticize pastoral encyclicals, and are people who ought to have greater confidence in the leader of our Orthodox faction, and all the more because the latter has given clear proof of his Orthodox way of thinking and of the holy zeal by which he is motivated in conducting our sacred struggle.

Subsequently, however, suspecting that our silence might be characterized as an acceptance, on our part, of the erroneous judgments and opinions contained in the *memorandum*, or as an inability to rebut them, and taking into consideration, besides, the Apostolic saying, “*I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians, both to the wise, and to the unwise,*”⁴ we deemed it reasonable to respond and enlighten both the one who inspired, as well as those who signed, the *memorandum* addressed to us.

There are five main *points*, on which the entire edifice of the *memorandum* rests, that require clarification; indeed, when we have demonstrated that these points are shaky and canonically groundless, the entire heap of arguments which the authors of the memorandum put forward, in support and defense of their mistaken ideas, logically collapses.

We ask our readers to pay close attention to these matters, which are as follows:

- 1) the confusion of the persons of the Hierarchs with the character of the Church to which they belong;
- 2) a failure to discriminate between and grasp the technical and canonical terms “potentially” and “actually”;
- 3) ignorance, or, rather, an erroneous understanding of the primary elements of an Orthodox Church;
- 4) ignorance of when a change of mind can be called a self-contradiction and a discrepancy, and when it is to be called an explanation and a clarification;
- 5) and finally, the mistaken perception of the authors of the memorandum, who ascribe their Bishops’ ecclesiastical disagreement with, and separation from, us to personal issues.

* * *

1) **WITH REGARD** to the first *point*, that is, the confusion of the persons of the Hierarchs with the character and the dogmatic significance of the Church, we put forth the following, to the best of our ability:

According to the fundamental principle of Orthodox ecclesiastical Canon Law, and according to the spirit of the dogmatic theology and the age-old practice of the Orthodox Church, the character of the Church, as a Divine and self-subsistent institution, is in principle different from, and independent of, that of the persons of the Bishops who represent and administer her. For this reason, any ideas and opinions of the Bishops that may be erroneous from an Orthodox standpoint, insofar as they are not judged or condemned by a canonical and valid Synod as un-Orthodox and false, do not affect the Orthodox character of the Church to which these Bishops belong.

For example, when one or more of the Bishops who belong to a ruling Church introduce into her an innovation that is at odds with the healthy and pure spirit of the Orthodox character of the Church, the sinful and anti-Orthodox character of this innovation weighs on the innovating Bishops, as individuals, and renders them culpable before God and the entire Church; but it does not affect or diminish the Orthodox authority of the Church which they govern.

The Orthodox character of the Church is affected and her Divine authority is diminished only when the Bishops who govern her, and who have introduced the innovation, are tried by a valid Synod—either a major local Synod or an Œcumenical Synod—for wrong belief and an anti-Orthodox innovation, and, after being sufficiently enlightened, are unwilling to conform to the recommendations of the Synod or to reject their wrong belief, adhering obstinately and unyieldingly thereto, in which case they are deposed by the Synod and excised from the universal body of the Orthodox Church.

We then read in Church the decree of deposition and excision whereby, together with the heretics, both the innovating Bishops and all of the clergy in communion with them, as well as all of the laity who accept prayers and blessings from them, are anathematized and excommunicated.

All of these people, who are under the anathema of a Synod, then constitute, not an Orthodox, but a schismatic, Church.

Hence, we draw the conclusion that a recognized Orthodox Church only loses her Orthodox character and the validity of her Divine Mysteries when she is recognized as heretical or schismatic by

a Pan-Orthodox Synod, which alone has the right to withhold from her the Grace and the Divine validity of her Mysteries, since it alone has the right to impart these to her.

In view of this, since the sanctifying Grace and validity of the Divine Mysteries are not bestowed by the Bishop or the Priest who celebrates them—he being simply a means or an instrument for imparting Grace—, but by the Orthodox character of the Church, in whose name these Mysteries are celebrated, what may be an un-Orthodox understanding of certain ecclesiastical questions that are, in the expression of Saint Basil the Great, *capable of solution* cannot diminish, much less remove, the Orthodox character of a Church or the validity of the Mysteries that are celebrated in her name, as long as this understanding is not judged or condemned by a valid Synod.

This is precisely what happens in the case of moral lapses on the part of the Church’s ministers. For example, it may be that certain clergy are truly unworthy to approach the holy Altar on account of their moral character; but nonetheless, their bad morals cannot affect the Divine Mysteries celebrated by them, which retain their validity undiminished, provided that these unworthy clergy have not been tried or deposed by the Church, and provided they perform their sacred duties and celebrate the Divine Mysteries in the name of the Orthodox Church.

* * *

2) WE NOW come to the second *point* of the *memorandum*, concerning the definition of the technical and canonical terms “*potentially*” and “*actually*,” which the authors of the memorandum confuse.

Regarding the distinction and the meaning of these two technical and canonical terms, so much was clearly and convincingly written in our recent *pastoral encyclical*, and so clearly and articulately does the wise Hagiorite Nicodemus write in a footnote in the sacred *Πηδάλιον* of the Orthodox Church about the distinction and the meaning of these two terms, that we consider it superfluous to explain and elucidate these matters, and we refer our readers to the aforementioned *encyclical* (see *Πηδάλιον*, pp. 4-5, n. 2).

3) IN RESPONSE to the third *point*, concerning the primary elements of an Orthodox Church and who has the right to establish and excise her, we have this to say:

Every local Orthodox Church is established and endowed with sanctifying Grace and the Divine Mysteries by the universal Eastern Orthodox Church, as the Treasurer of Divine Grace.

She is comprised of the Bishops in their entirety, as those who govern her, and of the plenitude of faithful and Orthodox Christians, as those who are governed, and, as such, she is simple and undivided.

If differences of opinion appear in a local Orthodox Church between the governing clergy and the laity whom they govern, and, as a result of these differences, a rupture of ecclesiastical communion between them comes about, the question naturally arises: *Who among those who disagree and have broken off ecclesiastical communion with each other represents the one and undivided, recognized Church, given that both of the discordant parties that have separated from one another derive from her and draw from her the sanctifying Grace and the ecclesiastical validity of their Mysteries?*

To this question, which is as important as it is hard to resolve, we reply as follows.

According to the spirit of the Divine and Sacred Canons and the administrative polity of the Eastern Orthodox Church, in the event that a segment of clergy and laity, breaking ecclesiastical communion with the presiding authority for ecclesiastical and canonical reasons and separating itself, for reasons of religious conscience, from the ruling Hierarchy, sets up its own altar, however much it may seem, from its separate worship, its own houses of prayer, and its own ministers, that it constitutes a Church distinct from that from which it is separated, this segment nonetheless does not cease belonging canonically to the same one and undivided Church, as an unsullied and integral part of her, drawing its spiritual life and power from the organism of the Mother Church, whose history it continues under the pure and uncorrupted mien of an unadulterated Orthodox identity, by keep-

ing the Canons intact and the reliable Traditions of the Church undiminished.

And this is so until the difference and the discord between this segment and the ecclesiastical authority and ruling Hierarchy that is deviating from the boundaries of Orthodoxy is adjudicated by a major Synod that represents all of the local Orthodox Churches.

And when this major Synod has tried and condemned the majority of the ruling Hierarchy as thinking and acting contrary to the nature of Orthodoxy, and has vindicated the minority segment that stands on the ground of Orthodoxy, it then deposes and excises the former from the universal body of Orthodoxy if, after being enlightened by the major Synod, they refuse to renounce their error, while it recognizes the latter, who preserve the institutions of Orthodoxy inviolate, as the only canonical representatives of this one and undivided local Orthodox Church, from which the former are estranged, being proclaimed schismatics, not only *potentially*, but also in *actuality*.

However, until such a thing comes to pass, this minority segment, insofar as a major Synod does not grant it the right to represent the Church or anoint it with sovereignty over the Church, is justified in breaking ecclesiastical communion and ceasing to commemorate the First Hierarchy; but it cannot, although it is in all respects right-believing, arbitrarily withdraw the right of sovereignty from the majority of the Hierarchy, even if the latter are innovators, or assert that it alone constitutes the one and undivided local Orthodox Church.

The high-handed claim by such a minority faction to the right to exercise sovereignty over the Church, and its pretension to constitute and represent the autocephalous Church on its own, without being recognized by the universal Church, reeks of Protestantism, which professes that one segment of the clergy and laity can constitute a distinct and self-proclaimed Church independently of the central Church, from which, for one or another reason, it has arbitrarily split off and seceded.

For, according to the Protestant understanding and interpretation, just as the Holy Spirit enlightens the ruling Hierarchy when it comes together in a Synod and states its opinions with the aid of the Holy Spirit, He also enlightens the subordinate clergy and laity in

such a way that they, too, are able to establish Churches and endow them with sanctifying Grace and the Mysteries, appropriating, out of self-will, the prerogatives of the universal Church, as the Treasurer of Grace.

This, you see, is why, in our recent *pastoral encyclical*, we called the Bishops of the Cyclades and of Vresthene *conventiclers* and *Protestantizers*, because, although they were elected and Consecrated by us as titular Bishops, through the invocation of the All-holy and consecrating Spirit, they did not hesitate, the wretches, not only to disavow us in encyclicals which they signed themselves, without any ecclesiastical right, without first coming to some understanding with us, and incontrovertibly for reasons of ambition and self-interest, and to set up their own altars, but also to declare the New Calendar Hierarchy and Church schismatic, without any trial or defense, as the Canons provide, and arbitrarily to seize from the ruling Hierarchy the rights of sovereignty that belong to the Autocephalous Greek Orthodox Church.

The Bishops in question, who are *conventiclers* and *Protestantizers*, according to the Canons and according to our opinion, become, through such high-handed actions as these, accountable before the universal Orthodox Church, whose Canon Law and Divine and Sacred Canons they have freely violated. For the age-old history of the Orthodox Church teaches us that no wrong-believing person who is liable to deposition and excision has ever been declared heretical or schismatic by Hierarchs acting in isolation, without any trial or defense, but by a valid and canonical Synod, coming together and taking counsel with the aid of the Holy Spirit and putting forth its vote of condemnation only after the defendant has stood trial and defended himself, and after all means of enlightenment and admonition have been exhausted.

This canonical path was recently followed by the Synod of the Œcumenical Patriarchate in the Bulgarian Schism and by the Synod of the Autocephalous Church of Greece in the condemnation of Theophilos Kairis for the heresy of Pietism⁵ and of Apostolos Makrakis for his heretical teaching concerning the threefold composition of the human person.⁶

4) **DEEMING THIS** enough to refute the third *point* of the *memorandum*, we now come to an examination and elucidation of the fourth point, which concerns the *self-contradiction* and *discrepancy* to which the author of the recent *pastoral encyclical* allegedly succumbed.

Allow us, in this section, to teach a lesson to the authors of the memorandum, who weave together what is incompatible and combine what cannot be combined.

One contradicts and gainsays himself when he expresses one opinion about a question today and utterly rejects it the next day, thereby falling into blatant contradiction.

But when, after deeper study of the issue and more serious reflection and judgment, he modifies his previous opinion for the better, giving it a broader interpretation and formulating it more clearly and distinctly, such a modification, broader explanation, and more detailed formulation of an opinion about one and the same issue cannot be called either *contradiction* or *discrepancy*, but should rather be called an *explanation* and a more complete *clarification* of a compact and condensed idea, so that it may more easily be understood by another person.

This can truly be said about that man who begins by stating an opinion about an issue in a rough-and-ready way and at first sight, formulating it dimly and imperfectly, but later, delving more deeply into the meaning of the issue and, challenged either by those who do not understand or by those who hold the opposite opinion, proceeds to shape his opinion more completely and to formulate it more clearly and in greater detail, so that it may be more easily understood and its truth more convincingly demonstrated.

The author of the *pastoral encyclical* can be accused of this, for at the outset, he called the New Calendarist Hierarchs *schismatics* and the New Calendar Church *schismatic*, failing to add, owing to an oversight, that they are schismatic *potentially*, and not in *actuality*, which means that they will only suffer the consequences of their excision from the body of the universal Orthodox Church, being deprived of the right to celebrate valid Mysteries and to impart Divine Grace and sancti-

fication to the Faithful, when they are tried by a valid major Synod and condemned to deposition for wrong belief, as adhering obstinately thereto.

And this is because it is possible that they are erring out of ignorance and misunderstanding, in which case, when they are tried and enlightened by a Synod, it is not inconceivable for them to change their minds and reject their error, their deposition and excision being thereby averted.

To this point of view the authors of the memorandum pose the objection that it should *not be said, and much less written, that the Hierarchs who innovated regarding the calendar will only be deprived of Grace and the right to impart it to the Faithful when they are declared to be actual schismatics and deposed by a major Synod, because this not only does not benefit, but even harms, our sacred struggle through the defection of followers from our Orthodox segment, since they are kept in it by the idea that the New Calendarist clergy, even before they are proclaimed schismatic by a Synod, are deprived of the capacity to perform any sacred functions validly.*

But this objection, aside from the fact that it is mistaken, carries with it a certain dose of demagogy and the deception of the Faithful, which are antithetical to the Divine mission of the Church, which ought to teach aright the word of truth, in all places and at all times, as well as uphold the uprightness and principles⁷ of our sacred struggle.

The error of this objection rests on the misapprehension that the Old Calendarists adhered to the ancestral traditions because the New Calendar Church was deprived of Divine Grace from the outset, as the *conventicler* Bishops say.

This perhaps *can* happen to those who follow a conventicle. But the Old Calendarists who knowledgeably belong to our Orthodox segment are well aware that following the Old Calendar is not a corollary of the validity or invalidity of the Mysteries of the New Calendarists, a question on which a valid Synod alone has the right to pronounce. It is, rather, an inevitable necessity if one is to avoid sharing in the New Calendarists' responsibility for the innovation, and a shining example of the boundless reverence and the sacred and godly zeal by which the

followers of our Orthodox segment are animated with regard to the venerable traditions of the Church.

The demagogy and the opportunism of the contrary opinion lie, on the one hand, in the hope of attracting other converts to the Old Calendar, brandishing the invalidity of the Mysteries of the New Calendarists as a bugbear, and, on the other hand, in keeping these followers, and especially the gullible and the lukewarm, in our sacred struggle.

But the use of such demagogic and illegitimate means in order to hunt after followers for our Orthodox faction, while it may be permitted by the Latin Church, which has as an ethical maxim the Jesuit dictum, "*The end sanctifies the means,*" is not permitted by the Eastern Orthodox Church, which always teaches aright the word of truth.

With regard to the criticism of us, which the authors of the memorandum hurl at us so naïvely and with such an easy conscience, that in our *pastoral encyclical* we called the Bishops of the Cyclades and of Vresthene *conventiclers*, we must give them a second lesson, since they are, it seems, unfamiliar with ecclesiastical terms.

The word "conventicler" is applied literally to those clergy who, bereft of ecclesiastical or canonical justification with regard to the Faith or Canon Law, disavow the canonical presiding ecclesiastical authority and set up their own altars, acting in a partisan spirit for personal reasons and serving their own lust for power and self-interest.

The Synods endorsed this term for factionalists and those who lift their heels against the Church without any canonical justification, and all of the Fathers of the Church used it for those who rebel against the presiding ecclesiastical authority in order to replace it with their own unlawful and uncanonical rule.

And just as the word "*heretic*" was established for those who have wrong beliefs about the dogmas of the Church, and the word "*schismatic*" for those who have wrong beliefs about traditions and Divine worship, so the name "*conventicler*" was established for those who act in a partisan spirit and rebel against the Church for reasons of ambition and personal advantage.

Consequently, we have used this ecclesiastical term for the Bishops of the Cyclades and of Vresthene, because these wretches, too, for reasons of ambition and self-interest, dared to split our Orthodox segment and thereby to cause, aside from spiritual damage to themselves and their followers, incalculable harm to our sacred struggle, which is made to appear, in the general conscience of the New Calendarists, as opportunistic and reckless.

This being so, those who wrote and signed the *memorandum* ought to have addressed their criticism, not to us, who rightly and in accordance with the canons called those in question *conventiclors* and *Protestantizers*, but to the *conventicler* Bishops, if, as they say in their memorandum, they were seeking to allay their scandalized consciences and to serve the sacred goal of our struggle.

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5) **FINALLY**, with regard to the fifth and last *point* of the *memorandum*, in which the differences and dissonance that exist between us and the *conventicler* Bishops are mistakenly characterized as deriving from personal issues, we have this to say.

You do an injustice, gentlemen and authors of this memorandum, to your intelligence and sound judgment, if you suppose that the disagreement between us and the *conventicler* Bishops derives from personal issues. At the same time, you do us an injustice, when you portray us as capable of sacrificing on the altar of human passions, not only the precious and lofty interests of our sacred struggle, but also the salvation of our soul and the salvation of the souls of those belonging to our segment, which constitutes the primary spark and the effective fulcrum of our thoughts and activities.

For we, and let this not be construed as boasting, but as a reflection of the truth and as a defense of the honor and reputation that I enjoy—we say that, for the idea of Orthodoxy and its restoration, we have sacrificed, as you also are aware, the material and social capital that we acquired through the honorable and conscientious services that we rendered on behalf of the Church and the nation during our thirty-five years as a Hierarch. Struggling faithfully and steadfastly with the

aid of Divine and all-strengthening Grace on the adamantine battlements of Church and nation, we neither hesitated nor shrank from unmurmuringly accepting even this exile, and in old age, at that.

We are truly perplexed at how, despite knowing all of these things, you have succeeded in imagining and persuading yourselves that we, who have sacrificed everything for the ideal of our struggle, would show ourselves to be so lacking in self-respect and so malevolent as to divide our Orthodox segment for reasons of pride and ambition, and to deprive ourselves of the manifest reward which future historians and Jesus Christ, the Giver of rewards, reserve for those who fight the good fight.⁸

Do not say that you are not attaching this unjust reproach and censure to us, but are encouraging us in our sacred struggle out of love and in order to allay your scandalized consciences, so that we may seize the initiative and take the lead, as first in rank, in the struggle for reconciliation and union, pursuing, as you write, a more moderate policy towards these Bishops, as if they were seeking union from us without conditions and as if we rejected union for personal reasons that degrade our position and offend our dignity.

For you write all of these things, even though you know, on the one hand, under what conditions—conditions which infringe upon the inviolate and Divine authority of the Canons and essentially wound our sense of honor—these men have sought to have communion with us and to coöperate with us, and, on the other hand, are familiar with the reply that we gave, through the mediation of Mr. Kinias the attorney, in which, to facilitate a union for the good of the struggle and for the joy of Christians, we set aside to some degree our personal honor and dignity, attending only to the honor and dignity of the Canons, as it was our sacred and inviolable duty to do.

Hence, we asked them to express their regret for all that they had said and written in the past by way of misinterpretation or misunderstanding, in such way as to bring the authority of the Canons into disrepute, and to give their promise that they would henceforth work with us in full harmony and concord and on the basis of our struggle against the New Calendar Church as it is set forth in our recent *pastoral encyclical* to the Christian flock.

In accordance with this, if those who composed and signed the *memorandum* were inspired by the incentive of allaying their scandalized consciences and were motivated by the interests of the struggle, they ought to have sent their instructive *memorandum*, which urges us to seek after unity, not to us, who are not responsible for the division and have no need of instruction or encouragement from individuals whose rôle it is not to enlighten us or urge us on to what is good, but to the *conventicler* Bishops who created the division and are in greater need of being enlightened and encouraged to look to the good of the struggle, which they have, unfortunately, made the object of ambition and exploitation.

That these Bishops aimed, from the outset, at dividing the struggle with a completely easy conscience is evident from all that the Bishop of the Cyclades, who is of the same mind as the Bishop of Vresthene, wrote to us when we were in Jerusalem during the first year of our exodus into the struggle; he encouraged us to depose the ever-memorable president and leader of the struggle⁹ and to replace him with our humble self. And because we rejected this malicious proposal and responded to them they should submit to our leader, since we did not throw ourselves into the struggle in order to lay claim to leadership, but to serve Orthodoxy, these men then proceeded to disavow both of us, so that they might themselves be leaders of the struggle and be independent in their opinions and activities, dividing the benefits of leadership equally. But they ended up disavowing each other and excommunicating each other as heretics or schismatics.

[C]

THIS BEING the case, we advise the authors of this memorandum, in a fatherly way, to have more confidence in the leader of our struggle, who is aware of his great responsibilities before God and the Church and who deploys his good will, with strength of soul and by Divine Grace, for the success of the struggle, in which he unswervingly hopes.

We urge them, if they are truly aiming at union for the good of the struggle, to devote their efforts and activities in this regard to the

apostate Bishops, pointing out to them the great responsibility which they bear before God and the Church for having, with a complete ease of conscience, split the Orthodox flock into two opposing factions, which inflicted mortal damage on the struggle and made them, as the saying goes, “a spectacle to Angels and to men.”¹⁰

In order to bring to an end our verbal rowing and weigh anchor in the harbor of our rejoinder, we deem it advisable and exceedingly beneficial, for the dignity and the ideals of our sacred struggle, to draw to the attention of all those who are seeking after union between us and the *conventicler* Bishops at any cost to the extremely tenuous and precarious future position to which the moral and theoretical aspect of our struggle will be reduced, in the general Christian conscience, by way of union and coöperation with the apostates, who are neither repentant nor wish to come to any understanding, but obstinately cling to their erroneous beliefs.

Indeed, we should not overlook this extremely delicate and sensitive point, that if we were to unite and coöperate with the apostate Bishops, who have no intention of putting off the old man of erroneous beliefs and antiquated ideas—as a consequence of which, they committed uncanonical and altogether outrageous acts, which provoked disgust and revulsion in the general conscience of Christians—or of putting on the new man, who is renewed in the spirit of traditional faith and piety,¹¹ our sacred struggle would, in all probability, be very seriously damaged in thereby adopting the mistaken ideas and arbitrary actions which have beset these apostate Bishops in the recent past, such that the final error would be worse than the first.¹²

Let the authors of the memorandum and all who aspire to such a union at all costs be aware that they become answerable and jointly responsible for the canonical and moral harm that our sacred struggle will suffer in the general conscience of Christians, if our principled and Orthodox segment, which up to now has commanded the respect of those who adhere steadfastly to Orthodox institutions and ethnic traditions, is joined by corrupt elements and administrative figures whose coöperation will not only not lend glory and honor to the struggle, but will even impute ludicrousness and defectiveness to what has hitherto been its pure and far-gleaming countenance, which radiates in our conservative Orthodox faction. Let this be the last word on this subject, and may the

God of peace grant the desired union of all Christian Churches within the bounds of Orthodoxy, that with one mouth and one heart we may all glorify Him at one and the same time.

Athens, 18th January 1945
† *Metropolitan Chrysostomos*
(formerly) of *Florina*

*Source: *Resistance or Exclusion?: The Alternative Ecclesiological Approaches of Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina and Bishop Matthew of Vresthene* (Etna, CA: C.T.O.S., 2000), pp. 117-135.

Notes

¹ Romans 16:17-18.

² Ephesians 5:15-16.

³ This Canon which His Eminence cites reads as follows: “The Bishops of every nation must acknowledge him who is first among them and account him as their head, and do nothing of consequence without his consent; but each may do those things only which concern his own parish, and the country places which belong to it. But neither let him (who is the first) do anything without the consent of all; for so there will be unanimity, and God will be glorified through the Lord in the Holy Spirit” (*A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978], 2nd ser., Vol. XIV, p. 596).

⁴ Romans 1:14.

⁵ Theophilos Kairis (1784-1853), an apostate Greek intellectual who founded a new religion called Θεοσεβισμός (“Reverence for God”). Born on Andros, he was tonsured a monk in 1801 with the name “Theophilos.” He studied philosophy in Paris, where he met Adamantios Korais and came under the influence of European rationalism. Later in life, he was accused of advocating novel ideas that conflicted with Orthodoxy, and, when ordered to submit a confession of faith, refused; for this, he was deposed, exiled to a monastery, and finally imprisoned in 1852. The philosophico-religious system that he promoted was Deistic in nature and was an amalgam of rationalism and mysticism. Kairis “gave up the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation on the ground that they were incomprehensible” and “denied the reality of supernatural revelation” (Constantine Cavarinos, *Modern Greek Thought* [Belmont, MA: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1986], p. 24); he even went so far as to replace Orthodox worship with new rites and prayers of his own. (For additional information, see *Θρησκευτική καὶ Ἠθική Ἐγκυκλοπαιδεία* [Athens: 1965], Vol. VII, s.v. “Καίρης,” by Basil Sphyroeras, cols. 177-179.)

⁶ Apostolos Makrakis (1831-1905), a prominent philosopher and theologian. Although, like Kairis, he had studied Western philosophy in Paris, “he was in general faithful to the Orthodox tradition in his theology.” However, he “placed philosophy—in particular his own philosophy—above religion,” maintaining that religion “by nature precedes philoso-

phy; because infancy precedes manhood, and faith precedes true knowledge” (Cavarnos, *Modern Greek Thought*, p. 24). Makrakis earned the displeasure of the Church of Greece for teaching that man is tricomposite, that is, that he consists of body, soul, and spirit, rather than simply of body and soul. (For additional information, see *Θρησκευτική και Ἠθική Ἐγκυκλοπαίδεια* [Athens: 1966], Vol. viii, s.v. “Μακράκης,” by John Karmiris, cols. 514-517.)

⁷ Metropolitan Chrysostomos uses the word ἰδεολογία and the adjective formed from it, ἰδεολογικός, several times in this text. We have chosen not to render it literally as “ideology” and “ideological,” on account of the political overtones the word has acquired in this century, and particularly in Marxist and other left-wing circles. Metropolitan Chrysostomos certainly did not intend to present himself as an ideologue or a theoretician in the party-political sense, but as a man of principle and the leader of a movement governed by solid theological and intellectual criteria, rather than by merely pragmatic considerations.

⁸ Cf. 1 St. Timothy 6:12.

⁹ This is a reference to Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias.

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 4:9.

¹¹ Cf. Colossians 3:9-10.

¹² Cf. St. Matthew 27:64.