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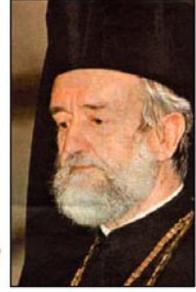
1985

The Articulation of the  
ecumenist

“Baptismal Theology”

Professor John Zizioulas

ORTHODOX ECCLESIOLOGY AND THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT



## Baptismal Theology

### The glue that binds together the “Broad Ecumenical World Family”

In 1985, Professor John Zizioulas, now Metropolitan of Pergamon (Patriarchate of Constantinople) presented a detailed and very clear exposition of **Baptismal Theology**, an ecclesiology of Protestant provenance.

To be sure, there had previously been other official exponents of this patently ecumenist theology, which unquestionably constitutes another form of the **Protestant Branch Theory** (e.g., Anton Kartashev—just before 1960; Ioannes Karmires—1973; Patriarch Demetrios of Constantinople—1974; the Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople—1975; other official expressions of this theology were to follow: e.g., Patriarch Ignatios of Antioch—1987; the Balamand Agreement—1993; Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople—1995; Metropolitan Maximos of Pittsburgh—1995; the Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate—1997; the Conference of European Churches, Graz, Austria—1997; the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops in the Americas—1999<sup>1</sup>), but **John Zizioulas** was more systematic in setting forth his views.

Let us recall, at this juncture, in view of the obvious Anglican influence on **Baptismal Theology**, and also in order to corroborate its historical origins, that both in 1918—when [Patriarch Meletios] Metaxakes, [Archimandrite, later Archbishop Chrysostomos] Pa-

podopoulos, and [Hamilkas] Alivizatos held unofficial theological conversations with Episcopalians and Anglicans—“*the Orthodox stated that they accepted the validity of Anglican Baptism*” and in 1920—when a delegation from the Phanar attended the Sixth Lambeth Conference—“*the Orthodox accepted the validity of Anglican Baptism.*”<sup>2</sup>

Let us also mention two recent cases, which demonstrate unequivocally that the non-Orthodox, non-Patristic **Theology of Baptism**, which adequates the one and unique Baptism of Orthodoxy with the baptism of multifarious heretics, is being steadily, officially, and now synodally adopted by the Orthodox ecumenists:

1. In July of 2004, the National Council of Churches in Australia (a kind of local WCC), issued the following incredible declaration:

*We agree together—To recognise the Sacrament of Baptism administered in each other’s churches, and to promote the use of a common Certificate of Baptism.*

*Anglican Church of Australia*

*Antiochian Orthodox Church*

*Armenian Apostolic Church*

*Congregational Federation of Australia*

*Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia*

*Lutheran Church of Australia*

*Roman Catholic Church in Australia*

*Romanian Orthodox Church*

*Uniting Church in Australia.*<sup>3</sup>

2. In September of 2004, at the **Thirteenth Meeting** between theologians of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Protestant “Evangelical Church in Germany” (Phanar, 16-22 September 2004), the following unprecedented announcement was made:

*Although ecclesiastical communion does not yet exist between our Churches [Orthodox and Protestant], we each regard the other’s members as baptized, and in the case of a change in confession we refuse to undertake a new baptism. The participants in the dialogue salute the efforts of the Churches in Germany (Arbeitsgemein-*

*schaft Christlicher Kirchen) to reach agreement regarding a mutual recognition of Baptism.*<sup>4</sup>

\* \* \*

**Moreover**, let us note that Professor John Zizioulas—now Metropolitan of Pergamon—, on the one hand, thinks that the Church, encompassing Christians of the East and the West, is “invisibly united,” and, on the other hand, subscribes to the theology of the “two lungs.”

In his address to Pope John Paul II at the Patronal Feast of Rome in 1998, he emphasized the necessity

*of restoring our full communion [of Orthodox and Papists] so that the approaching third millennium of the Christian era may find the Church of God **visibly united** as she was before the Great Schism. As Your Holiness aptly put it some years ago, **East and West are the two lungs by which the Church breathes**; their unity is essential to the healthy life of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.*<sup>5</sup>

Anti-Patristic **Baptismal Theology**, as the “**Inter-Orthodox Theological Conference**” (Thessaloniki, 20-24 September 2004) very astutely observed, constitutes, along with other newfangled heresies, the “*pernicious fruit of theological dialogues and of participation in the ‘World Council of Churches.’*”<sup>6</sup>

The unfortunate thing is that this heretical theology is constantly gaining ground and is now regarded as the binding factor that literally defines, not of course the one and unique Church, but the so-called “**Broad Ecumenical World Family**,”<sup>7</sup> that is, that family which encompasses all of the ecumenists of both East and West.

\* \* \*

**The Old Calendarist** Orthodox anti-ecumenists are convinced that Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon falls under Apostolic *anathema*, since he preaches “*another Gospel than that which*” the Holy Fathers “*have preached unto [us]*,”<sup>8</sup> that is, “*than that*

*[which we] have received*”<sup>9</sup> from the Patristic and Synodal Tradition.

It is noteworthy, say the Divine Fathers, that the Holy Apostle Paul

*‘did not say, “if they proclaim contrary doctrines,” but “even if they preach some small point at odds with that which we preached to you”; [St. Paul] shows that even a small distortion subverts the entire Gospel; just as he who mutilates a small piece of imperial currency renders the entire coin invalid.’*<sup>10</sup>

In this regard, Metropolitan John of Pergamon, by way of the **Theology of Baptism**, does not “*alter some small point*” in the Gospel of Orthodoxy, but literally preaches “*another Gospel*”<sup>11</sup> and “*subverts the entirety of the Gospel,*” thereby betraying the hope of the West.

\* \* \*

**Holy Tradition** teaches us that one, and only one, attitude is to be maintained in such instances: **Orthodox walling-off.**

*“When [a Shepherd] is wicked in regard to Faith, flee and avoid him, not only if he be a man, but even if he be an Angel come down from Heaven”* (St. John Chrysostomos).<sup>12</sup>

*“We ought not to obey a false-believing [Bishop]”* (Ecumenios).<sup>13</sup>

*“If a leader is wicked in regard to Faith, he must be shunned and avoided as much as possible”* (Zigabenos).<sup>14</sup>

*“If [the Bishop] is wrong with regard to Faith, flee him, even if he be an Angel from Heaven”* (St. Theophylact).<sup>15</sup>

*“In what respect, O Christian, do you say that your Hierarchy and leader is wrong? If he is wrong with regard to Faith, that is, if he espouses heretical and blasphemous doctrines, flee from him, even if he be an Angel from Heaven”* (St. Theophylact/St. Nikodemos).<sup>16</sup>

• **Our communion** with the Lord and the Saints, and, at the same time, our non-communion with schismatics and heretics, are the pre-condition for Heaven welcoming us, after death, as kindred:

*Have no communion with the schismatics, and none whatsoever with the heretical Arians. For you know how I shunned them on account of their Christ-opposing heresy, which is alien to true doctrine. Be the more earnest always to unite yourselves first to the Lord, and then to the Saints, so that after death they, too, may receive you as familiar friends into the eternal habitations* (St. Anthony the Great).<sup>17</sup>

*10/23 April 2005  
Holy Apostle Simon  
the Zealot, of the Twelve*

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#### Notes

1. In 1999, the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, sponsored by the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA), the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB), and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCC), issued an Agreed Statement on "Baptism and 'Sacramental Economy'" (for a critical analysis of this Statement, see "When is a Chrismation Not a Chrismation?" *Orthodox Tradition*, Vol. XVI, Nos. 3-4 [1999], pp. 71-77).
2. Basileios T. Stavrides, *Ὁρθοδοξία καὶ Ἀγγλικανισμὸς κατὰ τὸν Κ' Αἰῶνα* [*Orthodoxy and Anglicanism in the Twentieth Century*] (Athens: 1963), pp. 13, 15.
3. See "Australian Churches Covenanting Together," [http://www.ncca.org.au/departments/faith\\_&\\_unity\\_commission/\\_edit/\\_data/page/104/A\\_National\\_Covenant.pdf](http://www.ncca.org.au/departments/faith_&_unity_commission/_edit/_data/page/104/A_National_Covenant.pdf). Accessed 22 May 2006.
4. See "Annäherung im Taufverständnis zwischen EKD und griechisch-orthodoxer Kirche" ["Rapprochement in the Understanding of Baptism Between the EKD and the Greek Orthodox Church"] ([http://www.ekd.de/orthodoxie/pm183\\_2004\\_ekd\\_patriarchat\\_konstantinopel.html](http://www.ekd.de/orthodoxie/pm183_2004_ekd_patriarchat_konstantinopel.html). Accessed 22 May 2006). (This document contains the communiqué of the "13th meeting in the bilateral theological dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, [which] took place between 16th to 22nd September 2004 on the subject of 'God's mercy and the salvation of the world' in the Phanar, the headquarters of the Ecumenical Patriarch

- in Istanbul” [[http://www.ekd.de/bulletin/bulletin4\\_2004\\_15.html](http://www.ekd.de/bulletin/bulletin4_2004_15.html). Accessed 22 May 2006.]
5. “Chronicle of the Eastern Churches,” *Eastern Churches Journal*, Vol. V, No. 2 (Summer 1998), p. 270.
  6. Inter-Orthodox Theological Conference, “Findings,” *Ἐκκλησιαστικὸν Τύπος*, No. 1577 (17 December 2004), p. 5b, §A2.
  7. “Orthodox Participation in Ecumenical Movement: ‘There is No Alternative to Dialogue,’” <http://www2.wcc-coe.org/pressreleasesen.nsf/index/pu-03-27.html>. Accessed 10 May 2006.
  8. Cf. Galatians 1:8, 9.
  9. See note 8.
  10. St. Theophylact of Ohrid, *Exposition of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. CXXIV, col. 960D.11
  11. Cf. Galatians 1:6.
  12. St. John Chrysostomos, “Homily XXXIV on Hebrews,” (§1), *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXIII, col. 231.
  13. Eucumenios, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. CXIX, col. 448BC.
  14. Evthymios Zigabenos, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ*, ed. Nikephoros Kalogeras (Athens: 1887), Vol. III, p. 468.
  15. St. Theophylact of Ohrid, *Exposition of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews*, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. CXXV, cols. 396D-397A.
  16. St. Nikodemus, *Παύλου αἱ Δέκα Τέσσαρες Ἐπιστολαὶ Ἐκκλησιαστικῶς ὑπὸ Θεοφυλάκτου Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Βουλγαρίας* [*The Fourteen Epistles of St. Paul Interpreted by Theophylact, Archbishop of Bulgaria*] (Venice: 1819), Vol. III, pp. 446-447.
  17. St. Athanasios the Great, *The Life and Conduct of Our Holy Father Anthony* (§91), *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XXVI, cols. 969C-972A.