

VOICE OF ORTHODOXY

A Quarterly Journal
To Defend Traditional Orthodox Faith
and Practices



Published by
The Orthodox Christian Hour
Chicago, Illinois

VOL. III

Autumn, Winter
& Spring 1991

No. 1—3

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A Quarterly Journal to Defend the Traditional Orthodox Faith and Practices of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church in accordance with the Word of God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures and the sacred Tradition, published by The Orthodox Christian Hour, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

This publication serves all the Orthodox jurisdictions regardless of ethnic difference, and it views all the various Orthodox churches as one body of Orthodoxy although they worship according to the culture, customs, and languages proper to their ethnic identity, and are governed by their national heads.

We welcome your responses, comments and suggestions; please send them to Voice of Orthodoxy, The Orthodox Christian Hour, 2123 North Moody Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, USA 60639.

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VOICE OF ORTHODOXY

Editorial

Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy : What should be the right ecumenical spirit between them ?

We are printing in this issue a communique by His All-Holiness Dimitrios I, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and His Holiness John Paul II, the Patriarch of Rome. We have a definite reason to publish this communique. Although Rome openly adheres to the principle of mutual respect, at the local level Roman Priests, particularly the uniates, promulgate an exclusivistic ecclesiology among the Roman Catholic believers and an ecumenism geared to absorption of all the churches into the curial might of the Roman Church.

Let us highlight the following issues so that the orthodox position will never be misinterpreted :

1 THE UNIVERSAL JURISDICTION OF THE POPE

The theory of universal jurisdiction by any patriarch is totally unacceptable according to orthodox ecclesiology. Christ is the head of the holy Church, and it is locally

EDITORIAL NOTE :

This issue of Voice of Orthodoxy highlights modern ecumenism; particularly ecumenical relationships between Rome and the East. We do not intend to offend anyone when we try to maintain a conservative orthodox tone in the editorial, and other articles. We welcome your responses.

governed by a canonically elected bishop ordained with the assistance of other bishops of the regional church, and nationally governed by the Synod of bishops and their head, the patriarch. The succession of Peter, or of any apostle, is only a psychological argument. If there is a successor for Peter, there is a successor for every apostle of Christ, and in that case there should be only twelve bishops on earth at any time. We know that this was never a practice in the apostolic and patristic churches. Actually every bishop is a successor to the apostolic college of Christ in general. As any student of history knows, the theory of universal jurisdiction by the pope is a claim that developed later in the western church with the force of the imperial importance of Rome and of the political power the Pope began to exercise in the absence of an imperial ruler in the west. This claim was never accepted by the East as a revealed truth to be accepted by the believers although on certain occasions of crises some of the eastern bishops used it to establish their points and claims.

However, the East is willing to give the pope the traditional honor of first among the equals (*primus inter pares*) as the Patriarch of Rome in view of Rome's historical significance in the universal church. But we believe that he has no business in the affairs of the local churches, in the election of bishops or the day-to-day operation of the national and local churches. Whatever claim the pope has in this area is not divinely given, but humanly given in the context of historical events. Let Rome without doubt understand that a constant dialogue between Rome and the Eastern churches will never bring about the acceptance of this claim by the East. Rome will have to roll back to the early centuries of Christianity in ecclesiology.

2 THE UNIATE QUESTION

Rome officially believes that the Roman Church is the only LEGITIMATE CHURCH of Jesus Christ, and its unity

is intact visibly and spiritually. The Orthodox Church believes that no one can destroy the spiritual and internal unity of Christ's Church, but it is generally held by the orthodox Church that the visible unity is at least temporarily tampered by historical events.

Rome still officially approaches the East as "separated brethren", a phrase so dearly coined by Pope John XXIII. But we would like to emphasize that we are not separated from the Holy Church of Christ and his sanctifying mysteries (sacraments). Our Roman Catholic brethren, particularly the uniates who left their mother Church, generally consider that the Eastern Churches are less than a CHURCH, and hence they should be won for Rome; and it was under this TRUE CHURCH banner that the uniates were engaged in proselytization. They also found the term "REUNION" in order to emphasize the return of every orthodox to the Roman Church, assuming that every eastern Church member is a fallen away member of the Roman Church. We want Rome to tell these uniates that their mother church is that of the East, and they are under Rome because of historical, necessity, and they should go back and get REUNITED with their mother church of the East in order to be an EASTERN CHURCH. If the Pope means what he says, he should dissuade these uniate churches from offending the Orthodox Christendom by the phrase "reunion with Rome." In fact, once the eucharistic fellowship between East and West is materialized, it is 'reunion' for Rome with the East and 'reunion' for the East with West. In other words, as far as East and West are concerned 'reunion' is not a unilateral term.

There were no real jurisdictional relations between Rome and these Eastern Churches in the patristic period or later. There is no indication that Rome ruled these Churches in the past except when Rome became ready to absorb factions of eastern churches who were forced to take refuge under the grand umbrella of Rome because of disciplinary actions taken by their mother church, or of economic crises or of other reasons. In other words, uniatism was never

a movement started out of a genuine desire for spiritual pilgrimage to Rome like the Oxford Movement in the West, although the Eastern Roman Catholic Churches seem to stress it to justify their existence.

Actually uniate churches are the major stumbling block in establishing good relations between East and West. Uniates do not represent a true Eastern Church because they deviated from many crucial practices which are inevitable for a genuine eastern liturgical and spiritual experience. They have accepted several Roman dogmas promulgated after the separation of the East and West. They also have Romanized their Church life more in a Roman fashion than Eastern. If an Orthodox gets inside a uniate Roman Church, or if he attends a liturgy celebrated by a uniate priest, he will find a Roman / Latin touch in everything. The physical appearance within the Church is more Roman, the liturgy is cut short or Romanized one way or other. Although Rome preaches that these churches should abide by eastern practices. She loves that they follow Roman practices. We like to enumerate some such practices to prove that these uniate churches cannot claim to be truly Eastern.

Recently, during his visit of America one of the uniate bishops from India celebrated the eastern Holy Liturgy with unleavened bread. Can you imagine an eastern prelate doing it without getting excommunicated? Can the East conduct a liturgy like it? He also celebrated the Latin Mass during the week-days. Once the East and West are reunited, can we think of the Patriarch of Antioch or Constantinople celebrating the Latin Mass when he comes to the West? Then what kind of Church is he practicing? Is the above mentioned bishop loyal to his own eastern tradition, or can he change his costumes and act to suit the situation? Is a bishop a movie or drama actor? Does not religion mean anything now-a-days? I asked the uniate priest why the bishop betrayed himself like this. The answer was: He has permission from Rome. O Tempora, O Mores! Rome grants dispensation to an Eastern bishop

to become a non-eastern prelate! What right Rome has to interfere with these ancient practices which are essential to eastern liturgical life? I question the integrity of Rome when she says that she will protect the Eastern Church and her traditions. If Rome is genuinely concerned about the Eastern practices she should never let any one change those practices; but she enjoys when the East becomes more and more latinized.

Another concern is about married clergy. Although there is no law forbidding a married man to become a diocesan bishop in the eastern church, according to a conventional practice diocesan bishops are monks. However, married clergy are part of the life of the eastern churches. The so-called eastern churches under Rome do not promote a married clergy; some still practice that tradition reluctantly, others do not have them. But the canon law promulgated by Rome says, it is an Eastern tradition and that should be followed. But how many uniate bishops have the will and power to restore the married clergy without offending Rome? Will Rome promote a priest who believes in real eastern practices to the episcopate? The Uniates and Rome should clearly understand that the existence of married clergy in the church is part of the liturgical expression and life so dearly maintained in the eastern churches which no one has the right to take away.

There are many other uniate practices that cause alarm to the eastern conscience. But we will limit this enumeration with one more such practice. It is uncanonical to celebrate liturgy during the lenten season. However, many uniate churches celebrate liturgy during the weekdays of the lent or fasting days denouncing the basic eastern theology of

the Eucharist. The Eucharist is a celebration of joy, not a celebration of penance. When a believer receives Holy Communion, he cannot fast or do penitential services on that day. Eastern canons also stipulates severe punishments to those who fast after receiving the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. Most of the Uniates know this very well; then why do they practice contrary to their belief? There apparently are only two reasons: either to placate Rome by impressing her with a western spirituality which is centered around a very Roman practice of the daily celebration of Mass even when there are no intentions or there are no worshippers to attend, or to distribute the priestly stipend, the amount of which is based on the number of masses celebrated by a priest. Is it not a shame to see our beloved uniate brethren in such a predicament!

Recently in one of the conferences this writer has attended, a priest associated with the Vatican Secretariat of Unity told that the uniates are a real burden to the Roman Church. They burden Rome for their survival (of course Rome was their substantial financial support for the construction of churches, maintenance of clergy and many other vital projects), and they pose a great threat to the emerging new relationship with the East; and now many Roman theologians question the legitimacy and relevancy of their existence under Rome in view of the latest theological awareness resulting from serious ecumenical dialogues between the Roman Church and the Eastern Churches.


Uniates are now a body of people, barely tolerated by Rome, not really welcomed by the Latins (of course the euphoria of regarding them as new-comers to the fold of Peter and of viewing them, their clergy, and churches

as objects of exhibition exists no more!), and not theologically appreciated by Roman theologians themselves; they are considered the second class citizens of the Holy Roman Empire by the Latin Catholics because they came to a fold that does not belong to them. A few uniates who had priestly training in Rome told this writer that they were treated as menials by Roman authorities in the Vatican whereas their Orthodox counterparts, who study in Rome or visit the Vatican, were always treated with dignity and pomp. A uniate priest, who lived in Rome for several years, recently told this writer that a uniate bishop who visits Rome would have to wait a longer period for an appointment with any key Vatican personnel when an Orthodox priest or even a lay person could get it immediately. The uniates know this shift in Roman attitude, and that could be the reason why they want to impress Rome by being more aggressive in evangelization, particularly in proselytizing the Orthodox when the Pope and the Ecumenical Patriarch condemn "every form of proselytizing, every attitude which would be or could be perceived as a lack of respect."

Some of the uniate churches still maintain a married clergy. This practice has created a lot of attitudinal problems among the Latin clergy. It is difficult for them to comprehend the existence of two practices in one and the same church. This writer still remembers what the late Bishop Hayes, auxiliary of Chicago, told an Orthodox priest when he was using the chapel of a Roman Catholic Convent in Chicago on Sundays to conduct his liturgy with his Orthodox worshippers during the months immediately following his first arrival in Chicago: "Please do not tell our priests and nuns that you are married." It implied that such a practice of the East would create more criticism of their church or lead them to question the

western practice of celibacy. Moreover, it also would generate unhealthy jealousy among the Latin priests. This is one of the reasons why the western clergy have some difficulty to tolerate the eastern clergy. Currently the Uniates who maintain a married presbyterate cannot ordain a married man to the priesthood in the United States because of Rome's disapproval due to strong opposition from the American Latin hierarchy. Is this how Rome protects the Eastern traditions everywhere in the world, or are there discriminating laws that would adversely affect the sacred traditions of the East? The truth is that once an easterner becomes a uniate, he surrenders his right to demand the rights and privileges characteristic of the East.

What these practices within the uniates imply is that Rome accepts them fully in so far as they are ready to abide by Roman stipulations, not eastern practices. According to Rome all practices outside the western church are not genuine expressions of true christianity. Similarly, the East considers the uniates traitors and apostates who do not have any concern for eastern values and traditions. If Rome is genuinely concerned about reunion with the East, she should consider the release of all the uniates back to their maternal fold which is the Orthodox church. Will Rome ever do it? If she is not ready for it, uniates will remain a strong obstacle in the party of union between the West and East.



3. PAPAL INFALLIBILITY.

This is a dogma of faith for the Roman church, and it is the latest of the Roman innovations. During the Vatican I council, it was a great struggle for Rome to get this innovative dogma passed by the council members. Recent study of Roman archives belonging to the pontificate of Pius IX who steered Vatican I council clearly reveals that this dogma was passed with strong coercion by the Pope. Pius IX was a mentally weak Pope, regularly afflicted by epileptic seizures; and therefore felt that this dogma would definitely enhance his high-priestly character. European and American prelates did not offer a majority to pass this dogma; it was even opposed by the majority of Roman Cardinals whom the Pope kicked with rage and fell under seizures. But the Pope and his strongmen in the curia threatened the poor bishops, who came from missions with retaliation if they did not vote for passage of the new dogma; they were told that Rome would no more support their projects and dioceses if they did not endorse the new dogma. Finally, it was the bishops of missions who offered a simple majority and got it passed.

Eastern ecclesiology cannot hold or comprehend an infallible pope. No single person can be the source of infallible truth in the East. East accepts the concept of an infallible church; but the truth is revealed through conciliar actions of all the bishops of the church when they are gathered to deliberate the mysteries of Christ and His church in the presence of the Holy spirit. If Rome thinks

that East would accept this innovation, she surely does not know what the Eastern ecclesiology teaches. Rome will have to recant this and other innovative dogmas before East would accept her into her fold.

Will Rome recant them? She says that she will never do it, because, for Rome, they are revealed truths. Then what is the purpose of Roman ecumenism? Is it not to swallow the East? Is orthodoxy ready to give up her noble faith and traditions for a union with Rome? I guess, not. Then what is the real purpose of this ecumenism? Is it not to conface the innocent faithful on both sides? Why do we have to waste our energies for confusing people? Maybe, these activities will highlight some hierarchs who are engaged in shuttle ecumenism, who look for prominence in inter-church relations.

We warn our ecumenical diplomats that Rome will never change her positions. We will never be orthodox if we accept the Roman innovations. Orthodoxy is a whole-some way of life, it is complete in itself. It has everything needed for the salvation of mankind.

Joint Declaration: Pope and Ecumenical Patriarch

In a joint declaration after their December 3-7-1987 meeting in Rome, Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I of Constantinople and Pope John Paul II expressed their hopes for future unity between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. Each of the churches perceives that "when unity in the faith is assured, a certain diversity of expressions, often complimentary, and of particular practices does not create obstacles to unity but enriches the life of the Church and the understanding, always imperfect, of the revealed mystery" the two church leaders said. In awaiting the time of unity, they rejected "every form of proselytizing, every attitude which would be or could be perceived as a lack of respect." And they encouraged joint action by the Churches to promote justice and peace. The N C News Service translation of the French-language joint declaration follows:-

We, Pope John Paul II and Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I give thanks to God who granted that we meet in order to pray together and with the faithful of the church of Rome, which is venerable by the memory of the shepherd apostles Peter and Paul, and to speak together about the life of the church of Christ and of its mission in the world.

Our meeting is a sign of the existing fraternity between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. This fraternity, which has manifested itself on numerous occasions and under diverse forms, does not cease to grow and to bear fruit for the glory of God. We experience

again the happiness of being together as brothers (Psalm 133). In giving thanks to "the Father of lights from whom comes every perfect gift" (John 1:17), we pray and invite all the faithful of the Catholic Church and Orthodox Church to intercede with us before God; may He complete the work that He has begun among us! In making our words of St. Paul, we exhort them. "Complete my joy by being of the same mind" (Philippians 2:2). May the hearts of all constantly dispose themselves to receive unity as a gift that God gives to his church!

We state our joy and our satisfaction in reporting the first results and the positive development of the theological dialogue announced at the time of our meeting in * Phanar, November 30, 1979. The documents accepted by the mixed commission constitute important points of reference for the continuation of dialogue. In effect, they seek to express that which the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church can already profess together as common faith about the mystery of the Church and the connection between faith and the sacraments. Each of our Churches, having received and celebrating the same sacraments, perceives better that when unity in the faith is assured, a certain diversity of expressions, often complementary and of particular practices does not create obstacles to unity but enriches the life of the Church and the understanding, always imperfect, of the revealed mystery. (1 Corinthians 13:12)

Before these first results of the effort undertaken in common, in "the obedience of faith" (Romans 1:5), to re-establish full communion between the Catholic Church and Orthodox Church, we thank again and encourage the members of the mixed commission on theological dialogue. We hope that the faithful on being informed of these results and able therefore to render thanks to God will unite themselves in the prayer of the Lord, "May they all be one" (John 16:13) and to enable solutions to be found to the difficulties which still prevent full communion, a communion which will manifest itself in the eucharistic concelebration.

Our meeting takes place this year on the twelfth century of the Second Council of Nicea which, prepared by a long, unending collaboration between the Church of Rome and the Church of Constantinople, caused the Orthodox faith to triumph. The Churches of the East and West, over the centuries, have celebrated together the ecumenical councils which have proclaimed and defended "the faith which was once for all handed down to the holy ones" (* Jude 3) "Called to the one hope (Ephesians 4:4), we wait for the day desired by God when the rediscovered unity in the faith will be celebrated and when full communion will be re-established by a concelebration of the Eucharist of the Lord.

We renew before God our common pledge to promote by all means possible the dialogue of charity, following the example of Christ nourishing His Church and cherishing it by His charity (Ephesians 5:29). In this spirit, we reject every form of proselytizing, every attitude which would be or could be perceived as a lack of respect.

This creative charity leads us to work together for justice and peace, as much at the global level as at the regional and local levels. It impels us not to limit this collaboration, but to open it beyond Christians to all those who, in the other religions, seek God, His justice and His peace. It opens us to collaborate together for the good of humanity with all of good will. In effect, the mission of the church with regard to the world that Christ comes to save implies the defense of the dignity of the person especially where that dignity is directly or indirectly put in question in many different ways and, among others, by the poverty which prevents a decent life; by all which impedes the life of couples and of families, the bases of all society, by the restriction of the liberty of individuals and communities to live and to profess their faith and to develop according to their own culture; by the use and traffic of human beings, in particular of young people, to gratify the passions of others or to make them slaves

to drugs, by a search for pleasure which exempts itself from all moral order, by the fear engendered by the existence of means to gravely harm the integrity of creation, by the racist ideologies denying the fundamental equality of all before God, ideologies particularly inadmissible for Christians who must reveal to the world the face of Christ the Saviour and help the world thus surmount its contradictions, its tensions and its anxieties, because they believe that God so loved the world that He gave his only Son that all be saved through Him (John 3:16-17) and become in Him a single body where they are members one of the other.

In these moments full of joy and after having the experience of a profound spiritual communion which we desire to share with the pastors and the faithful as much of the East as of the West, we lift up our hearts toward Him who is the head, Christ. It is from Him that the entire body receives concord and cohesion thanks to all the members who serve it by an activity shared according to the capacity of each. Thus the body realizes its natural growth. Thus, the body constructs itself in love (Ephesians 4:16)

May all glory be given to God through Christ in the Holy spirit!

Sophia Vol. 18 No. 3, 1988

The Ecumenical Movement

By Katherine Valone

Oh Lord, let me write what is acceptable to you. Let me shed light and not darkness on this matter. Let me see deeper into this question so that I do not only see the obvious, but declare what is in the heart of the Holy Spirit. Bless my thoughts, my memory, my hands so that they will write what is to Your Glory, what is the Truth, and what is profitable for the soul of man who seeks You and his soul's salvation. Amen.

Part I. Ecumenism: "A Spiritual Malaise"

So important is this subject matter that I have begun it with a prayer. I do not seek to sow dissension but only to shed lights, as the Holy Spirit guides me to see the light, on what I deem the most important ecclesiastical topic that faces the Church today, namely, the Ecumenical dialogue and movement.

Why is it the most important? Because in considering it, we find both the seed of joyful resolution and the seed of apostasy. I believe that our dialogue with the non Orthodox Churches can be a blessing if it were to bring back those who have abandoned the whole Truth, but it can be a Satanic trap and devastating if it were to be a matter of compromising Orthodoxy for the sake of unity. Or anything that seems desirable in the view of ecumenism. The danger in speaking this way is that the writer of these words may be considered as rigid and intransigent. I do not speak out of strictness of heart but out of love, for true love

exposes untruth and radiates the Truth that sets one free.
John 8:32.

I love all Christians of whatever persuasion. But I do not love all other faiths and doctrines, nor consider them totally true or God-given. And because I love all Christians as human beings I seek that they should be in union with Our Lord Jesus Christ completely and enlightened by the whole truth.

In this concise effort I will address mainly the dialogue between Orthodox and Roman Catholics and only in passing, between Orthodox and Protestants.

It would take an entire book to discuss every aspect of ecumenism. I will limit ourselves to explaining why I believe that Orthodox and Roman Catholic dialogue has gone astray, how it has misled the Orthodox Faithful, how it can lead to dangerous pitfalls, and finally, what would, in my opinion, constitute legitimate dialogue, and in a broader sense, true ecumenism. This article is addressed to Orthodox Christians and not to theologians, since I am not a theologian. However, as a layperson I am obligated to seek the truth and to be equipped to give a true "apologia" of the Faith once given by the Prophets and the Apostles for our salvation.

The Problem of Semantics.

To begin with, let us examine some of the vocabulary that is used in articles and speeches concerning the dialogue between Orthodox and Roman Catholic theologians whether they be clergy or laity. We often read and hear such terms as Sister Churches, that they (the churches) may be one, that the Church may be restored, made one again, that we are brothers and sisters in Christ, a common faith, celebrating the same sacraments, full.

Communion of the faith, unite to face the social problems that threaten mankind, that we are a branch of the Church as are the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Churches, that all the Christians constitute the Church of Christ as an aggregate body of Christ, that each possesses part of the Truth and that when we unite we will have all the parts together and the Church will be whole.

This list is endless but the few examples above suffice to illustrate the false message that confuses the Orthodox Faithful whether he be a layperson or a cleric. The false message being repeated over and over again is that we Orthodox are not the one, holy catholic, and apostolic, and Orthodox Church which Christ established once at Pentecost, but that we are just one of the many legitimate churches which altogether constitute the Holy Church of Christ. It tells us that the various sects and denominations evolved because of cultural differences. It tells the Faithful that what difference does it make what we call ourselves, we are all, after all, the same and we are part of the Christian Family. It is just a matter of where you were born and what your traditions and customs are. That if we but sit down together and embrace one another in love, that is all that matters. Doctrinal differences are semantics and political. We all worship the same God. We all may have different ways and paths but they lead to the same God. (Especially when ecumenists try to bring in non-Christians!) All we have to do is recognize one another, love one another, respect one another, worship with one another, and share the Eucharist with one another and we will all be one! I gasp to think how whole parts of the New Testament are emphasized while others are completely forgotten!

Listen to the words of the Joint declaration made by the Pope and the Ecumenical Patriarch (at the end of their December 3-7-1977 meeting in Rome). Quoting from the documents of the meeting on November 30, 1979 at the Phanar in Constantinople, it says:

The documents accepted by mixed commission constitute important points of reference for the continuation of dialogue. In effect, they seek to express that which the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church can already profess together as common faith about the mystery of the Church and the connection between faith and the sacraments. Each of our Churches, having received and celebrating the same sacraments, perceives better that when unity in the faith is assured, a certain diversity of expressions, often complementary, and of particular practices does not create obstacles to unity but enriches the life of the Church and the understanding, always imperfect, of the revealed mystery (I Corinthians 13:12).

What this says is that the two Churches make up one Church with the same sacraments which simply express the same Faith but in diverse or different ways!

Is it any wonder that Orthodox Faithful are confused? Do we wonder why some of our people go to non-Orthodox Churches and receive communion in other worship services? Do we wonder why when mixed marriages occur, that the Orthodox spouse in America gives up his Faith (which is foreign in their diverse ways of celebrating the liturgy and sacraments) for that of his or her spouse which is "western" and more recognizable? We are all the same after all, they reason, and therefore, why quibble over trifles? Confusion, lack of religious education, wanting to conform to western ways and so on have taken their toll on the ranks of our Faithful.

"Have our Orthodox bishops become victims of ecumenism and have they undermined Orthodoxy and entangled it in the delusions and errors of the dogmatic and religious syncretism of Ecumenism?" I think Archimandrite Spyridon Bilalis of Athens has stated it well in his book *Orthodoxy and Papism* (Athens, 1969 Orthodox Typos).

Have we forgotten the true doctrine of the Church, that it is one, that it can never be otherwise? There can only be one Church that Christ founded and that Church is not splintered into many churches! It is still whole and holy. The Orthodox Church is not a branch of the True Church it is the very trunk and tree itself. The others both Roman Catholic and those who broke away from Rome are the branches which have severed themselves from the True Church. (John 15 is helpful here.) The Church cannot err and therefore does not need reformation, or to 'return' to the Truth. Its dogmas are not subject to change or examination. The Ecumenical Councils of Orthodoxy are as valid today in what they taught and proclaimed as they were then. They are indeed, timeless and contemporary. They are still beacons that guide us to the safe harbor of Truth.

If we do venture to engage in dialogue it should be to bring all to the whole Truth. We cannot compromise. We cannot just be 'nice' and allow the other faiths to to save face. We must strive to save souls. Our Lord will hold us accountable. What else can He mean when He says 'Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven....' Matt: 7:13-29. (A good portion of Mathew to keep in mind when thinking of ecumenism).

In the many decades of ecumenical dialogue have we accomplished anything? I think not, and at best only superficial things. We have not brought Orthodoxy to the heterodox except that they may "tolerate" our "strangeness" and look upon us as a "religion" that emphasizes "mysticism" rather than the Gospel. How many souls have we saved among the heterodox? Indeed, most of the converts are persons who have sought out Orthodoxy in spite of us and through many trials and tribulations. Needless to repeat the oft spoken phrase that "Orthodoxy is the best kept secret" and that in spite of the great communication age.

Part II. The Cure for Ecumania.

To properly understand ecumenism and to engage in any kind of productive dialogue we must reject the branch theory of the Church. Christ founded the Church. The Orthodox Church is that unchanged, complete, right-teaching Church which has remained constant and faithful since apostolic times and from Pentecost to this day. She shall remain unmoveable throughout the ages as Her Divine Founder has promised. She cannot err, or change, or modernize. All other 'churches', especially the Roman Catholic or Latin Church voluntarily exited from the Church of Christ primarily because of their deviation from the correct authority of the Church which is the ecumenical council and conciliarity. The Roman Church sowed the seeds of its own destruction by the innovation of the papacy and the concept of papal infallibility. Thus the proper authority in the Church has been usurped by one bishop, namely the Bishop of Rome. From just this one fundamental error and heresy it is evident from history that each age had to have its reformers which accounts

for the rise of Protestantism. Today, according to the latest statistics, there are 22,000 Christian denominations! Where can one possibly begin to call for unity? Perhaps only by going back to 'square one.' There one will find the Orthodox Church, unchanged and True.

By changing or adding to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed without the consent or agreement of the entire Church as a whole through an ecumenical council with both the laity and clergy in attendance, Rome has distanced herself (beginning in the seventh century and culminating in the eleventh century [1054 A. D.]) from the four other venerable Patriarchates of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople. Therefore, it is an error to call the Orthodox Church the "Eastern" Church and Rome the "Western Church." The Orthodox Church is the one, holy, Catholic, (universal), apostolic, Orthodox (right-worshipping and believing) and complete, whole, (not a part of) original Church founded by Jesus Christ. He is the Head of the Church which is guided into all Truth by the Holy Spirit through the whole people (laos) of God.

In reality, there is no question of union of the Christians. True Christians were, are, and always will be united. They were, are, and will be one flock with one Shepherd. Men, regardless, of what name they have or to what religion they belong, have one destiny; to find the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church of Christ, and to drink from the water springing up into everlasting life. The Church is One. People are many and few of them are her children. (Against False Union; Alexander Kalomiros, 1967)

We must understand that the Church must teach and preach the unadulterated Gospel and the doctrines which were decided by the Seven Ecumenical Councils from

ECUMENISM

(ORTHODOX LIFE No. 5, 1987)

The first interconfessional organization was the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) founded in London in the middle of the last century, and followed fifty years later by the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association). The Principal objectives of these organizations are essentially humanitarian, supported by a faith in man's basic goodness (in the spirit of Rousseau or Tolstoy) without any reference to sin or, more pertinently, to the exclusiveness of Christ's Church in the economy of salvation. Thus, so far as the dogmas and canons are concerned, a critical attitude appears: the people become self-assured, joking about obsolete tradition, but are nevertheless emotionally committed to the human realization of some philanthropic or religious plan. The word ecumenism was used for the first time in 1910 at the time

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325 A. D. to 787 A. D. to which even the Roman Church adhered but which later changed the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed by adding the words that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son without the consent or approval of the entire Church. Anything added or changed in the way of doctrine and dogma must be rejected by any church which wishes to return to the basic Faith. Orthodox clergy and theologians should not expect the Orthodox Church to accept any innovations either of the Roman Church or of the Protestants. Our task is to point to the Truth and those who wish to may accept. Those Orthodox who represent the Church in dialogue or debate must be

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of the World Missionary Conference. Then the Universal Council, Life and Work, was founded. This met at Stockholm in 1925 and at Oxford in 1937. The World Conference, Faith and Order, was created in parallel. This met at Lausanne in 1927 and at Edinburgh in 1937. From these two conferences (Oxford and Edinburgh), the World Council of Churches (WCC) was born in 1937.

After the war, the WCC organized world assemblies at Amsterdam (1948), at Evanston (1954), New Delhi (1961), Nairobi (1975) and at Vancouver (1983).

At the start, the WCC was made up of "Churches" born of the Reformation. Little by little, these attracted the Orthodox Churches to them. Now almost all Orthodox Churches (except for the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad) belong to the WCC as active members.

The WCC's doctrine of the Church is based on the branch theory. According to this theory, all Churches on earth are components of the Universal Church: they all contain a portion of the Truth, but only the so-called UNDIVIDED or INTEGRAL Church, which has not yet been manifested, possesses the whole truth.

In conformity with this ideology, specialist delegations have begun to employ a hitherto unknown religious terminology, such as the RECONSTITUTION or RECONSTRUCTION of the UNDIVIDED CHURCH.

Acts of reconciliation between the different confessions are undertaken "in love and in truth": all Churches must "recognize their past errors" in order to overcome their differences.

This new ecclesiology has been manifest all along in the World Conferences of the WCC.

In resolution number 2 of the Toronto Conference (1950) it is said: *"The members of the-representative Churches enter into spiritual relations, through which they come to know and help each other so that the Body of Christ might be set up and the life of the Churches regenerated."*

The resolution of the Evanston Conference on Faith and Order affirms that the unity of Christ has been accomplished in spite of "the separation of the Churches": a contradiction that seems to stand in no one's way. It is not the only contradiction: *"From the Church's beginnings, there has been an indissociated unity with Christ, because He did not separate Himself from His faithful. But the Church has never realized the fullness of this unity. From the start, divisions disturbed the unity, revealed in Christ, of the people, so that we can think of the Church as we think of an individual believer, of whom it is possible to say that he is at the same time righteous and a sinner."*

The attitude of the Orthodox delegations also contains its own contradiction. Right from the start, they have refuted the Protestant conception of the Church. Their reservations were recorded at the bottom of the resolutions. However, ecumenism did not proceed any less intently on its path because of this, and yet the Orthodox still remain

members of the WCC, justifying their position by the necessity of bearing witness to Orthodoxy Fr. George Grabbe (now Bishop Gregory), an observer at Evanston on behalf of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, wrote: "the doctrine of interconfessionalism permeates each resolution in a lasting way This Protestant voice is so strong that the Orthodox delegations would have had to intervene every minute if they had wanted to eradicate this taint from all the resolutions." Now these Orthodox interventions were in fact limited to certain declarations which, while not changing the organization, demonstrate at what point the Orthodox body is estranged from it.

An important WCC figure, the Methodist Bishop Oxnam, revealed in 1953 the Protestant plan for the Ecumenical Movement:

"The Protestant Churches must pursue the existing fraternal and fruitful collaboration with the Eastern Orthodox Churches until Protestantism is inwardly united. They must then approach the discussion with a view to union with the Eastern Church When complete union between Protestantism and Orthodoxy has been realized, and Christians of the whole world belong only to two large Churches, on that day their direction will have revealed a sufficiently Christian and creative attitude to the point of kneeling down together at a common altar, asking Christ's forgiveness for the divisions, and uniting in the communion of the bread and wine of the Holy Eucharist, in order to raise themselves in spirit so as to make a reality the Holy Catholic Church, to which all Christians would be able to belong."

Thus, on the one hand, the Orthodox justify their presence at the WCC by the opportunity it offers to bear witness to their Faith before the whole world; but, on the other, the Protestants use the Orthodox as a means to effect their own internal union.

ORTHODOX PARTICIPATION

Ecumenism would certainly never have known such a development, had not the Orthodox gone beyond their state of straightforward witness to one of real participation in the Ecumenical Movement with a view to union. Such, in essence, is the participation of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Formerly, during the exchange of correspondence between theologians of the Reformation and Constantinople in the sixteenth century, when their dialogue had begun to founder with the appearance of certain insurmountable difficulties, which were harmful to Orthodoxy, Patriarch Jeremias II wrote these simple words: "We ask you in the future not to tire us anymore by writing the same things to us again and again, since you treat the luminaries and theologians of the Church in a different way each time, and although you honor and exalt them in your words, you disparage them by your attitude of wishing to demonstrate that

our weapons are useless Therefore, so far as you are concerned, we ask you not to create difficulties for us any longer. Follow your own way; do not write to us again on questions of dogma but only out of friendship, if that is what you wish. I salute you." (6 January 1581)

After 1902, a change in Constantinople's attitude began to emerge. Patriarch Joachim III, in seeking advice from all the other Orthodox Churches on their attitude towards relations "with the two great branches of Christendom — the Western Church [i.e., the Roman Catholic — ed.] and the Protestant Church," proposed that they consider how to smooth the path "leading to peace and love, that they seek to discover points of contact and agreement and even of mutual forgiveness of our faults, until the day arrives when all this work will, with the help of time, be accomplished"

In 1920, Constantinople appealed to "the Churches of Christ all over the world" and invited them to draw nearer together and invited them to collaborate in a spirit of trust and mutual respect. "This encyclical of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, issued in 1920, is the basis of the whole ecumenical movement, having prepared the ground for the creation of the World Council of Churches," acknowledges an eminent representative of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Myra (Episkepsis, Number 331, 1/3/85). In particular, it proposed the creation of a "League of Churches," after the pattern of the "League of Nations," and announces nine firm proposals, based on the incontestable fact that there exist, in parallel with Orthodoxy, other "Churches of Christ all over the world" (Episk. idem).

PAN-ORTHODOX REUNION

Undoubtedly in order to implement its plan, Constantinople invited all the Orthodox Churches to a Pan-Orthodox Council in 1923, the subject of which was a program of renewing the Orthodox Church: the introduction of a married episcopate and of second marriage for priests, the reduction of the services and of the fasts, simplification of clerical dress, suppression of the wearing of beards, and the use of the Gregorian calendar.

The opposition with which this program was greeted in the Orthodox Churches reduced the meeting that was held at Constantinople to the level of a simple Congress; also, the inadequate representation of the Orthodox world at the Congress frustrated the planned reforms except those pertaining to the Gregorian Calendar — the New Style — which was adopted.

We should point out that, at this Congress, the representative of the Russian Orthodox Church, Archbishop Anastasy (First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad from 1936 to 1964), made a very firm statement opposing the planned innovations.

In pursuit of its idea, Constantinople renewed its proposal for summoning a Pan-Orthodox Council in the thirties. This time it was the Serbian Church that wrecked the proposal by objecting that no Orthodox Council could be held without the Russian Church.

THE CONQUEST OF THE ORTHODOX BY THE WCC

The Church of Constantinople was one of the first Orthodox Churches to join the WCC.

The Council's first conference after the war, at Amsterdam (1948), afforded most eminent theologians the opportunity of relaxing the doctrine of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Among the Orthodox theologians present was Fr. Georges Florovsky. Like the other professors, he allowed that the Church has not yet clearly defined herself, and that She has not yet formulated a scholastic and theological definition of Herself (see Archbishop [now Metropolitan] Vitaly, Paper presented in 1967 to the Council of ROCOR). This is true; but there is no need to regard it as a deficiency, for the richness of Orthodox teaching about the Church goes far beyond all definition.

It should be noted that an official Church Council, which met in Moscow in the same year (1948) decided to reject all participation in the Ecumenical Movement.

The Ecumenical Movement's advance upon the Orthodox Church then adopted the indirect path of politics. This was the period of the Cold War between the East and the West. An important sector of the Orthodox Church lay behind the Iron Curtain, under Communist domination, and the Communists were about to discover the enormous potential for international action that the Ecumenical Movement afforded.

In 1954, at the Evanston Conference, in the presence of 13 Protestant delegates from the so-called countries of the East, who had taken up the organizers' invitation to attend, an eminent Conference delegate, Dr. Nolde, proposed the search for some co-existence between the "Christian and Communist countries" by avoiding mention of the anti-Christian nature of Soviet Communism.

The general spirit of the Evanston Conference and the overtures repeated by the WCC towards Moscow succeeded in obtaining the admission of the Moscow Patriarchate to the WCC. It became a member at the New Delhi World Conference in 1961.

PAN-ORTHODOX MEETING AT RHODES

A little earlier in the same year, an extremely significant event took place on the Island of Rhodes, the Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference, which had as its objective to prepare the way for a future Pan-Orthodox Council. This is significant because, since that time, we can

follow in parallel the moves made on the Pan-Orthodox plan and on the chess board of the World Council of Churches.

The organization of both conferences — that of Rhodes and that of New Delhi — in 1961 accorded with the WCC's aspirations. The WCC had an interest in a Pan-Orthodox Conference being held before the WCC conference and before the Second Vatican Council, which had already been announced. The Rhodes Conference was to bring about the entry of the Moscow Church and the Orthodox Churches under its influence into a dialogue at the international level.

At Rhodes, the Patriarchate of Constantinople had again come armed with an innovative plan (see Fr. George Grabbe, "Rhodes and New Delhi"). But Metropolitan Nikodim of the Moscow Patriarchate, who had been elected to an important commission on theological and related problems, put forward a different program, one that was essentially dictated by socio-political considerations, such as disarmament and decolonization.... There then appeared on the agenda such topics as *Orthodoxy and racial discrimination: the realization of the Christian ideas of peace, liberty, fraternity, and mutual love; Christian duties in regions where rapid social changes are taking place*.... But on purely ecclesiastical questions, the delegates from Moscow showed such conservatism that, at that time, they acted as upholders of the traditions of the Orthodox Church.

Ever since then (and independently of the WCC, though not wholly separate from it), Preconciliar Orthodox Conferences have been held at the offices of the Patriarchate of Constantinople at Chambesy in Switzerland. These have sought to define the conditions for holding a future Pan-Orthodox Council and the subjects to be discussed there.

Generally speaking, these subjects relate to matters of tradition and Church discipline, to questions of jurisdiction in the Diaspora (the Orthodox dispersion), and, in particular, to the setting up of a common date for Easter for all Christians. This Council, if it does take place, would clearly lack the distinguishing marks of its predecessors, which were preoccupied principally with seeing that the true Faith triumph at a time when it was being particularly threatened. And such is the case in the world in which we are living.

The following point is also of particular relevance: each Church would be represented at the Council by an almost equal number of delegated bishops, and not by all the Orthodox bishops. This is radically opposed not only to Orthodox Tradition, but also to the actual ecclesiastical significance of Orthodoxy.

Against such schemes there arose one of the greatest figures of the Orthodox world, the Serbian theologian, Fr. Justin Popovich.

VATICAN II

This is another event which had the effect of reinforcing ecumenism in an entirely unexpected way. The Second Vatican Council began in 1963 and, in the aspirations of its inaugurators, it was to be a Council of all Christians. However, in the face of the reservations of the remainder of Christendom, it remained limited to the Roman Catholic Church.

Vatican II was like a fireball, descending on the Roman Catholic fortress. It breached all aspects of its church life: both dogmatic and traditional, both spiritual and social; breaches through which swept a wind bearing currents of good and of evil. And, since the evil currents were the more active, dogmas were challenged, moral standards were diminished by reducing the sense of sinfulness, the sacraments were attacked, the meaning of the liturgy was reconsidered, man was honored and God was made more human (J. Ploncard d'Assas): "*Men of the Church began to utter the same words as men of the world, and to listen to the world instead of instructing it.*"

Yet the total Protestantization of the Roman Catholic Church has not taken place. After Pope John XXIII's death, Paul VI's actions stemmed the progress of *aggiornamento*.

ECUMENISM AND ROME

The WCC had always sent invitations to the Roman Catholic Church, but without much hope of success. The Roman Catholic Church has never had any more than observers at the WCC Conferences.

Yet the Roman Catholic Church initiated an ecumenism of its own. Pope Paul VI found an eager partner in the person of the Patriarch of Constantinople, Athenagoras. Everyone remembers their meeting in Jerusalem in 1964, the embrace and the hopes for the coming unity of the two Patriarchs of the East and the West, as the commentators then remarked.

In 1965, in order to further the dialogue that had been initiated, the anathemas of 1054 were mutually lifted. However, in doing this the Pope was answerable only to himself; but the Patriarch of Constantinople, in doing the same, was acting as though Constantinople's anathema of 1054 was not the concern of the whole Orthodox Church. To the Orthodox Churches (which would have the same authority as a Pan-Orthodox Council) has ever agreed to lift the anathemas against Rome.

This is another characteristic of the Ecumenical Movement: that the actions which nourish it are all profoundly anti-Church.

On this occasion, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad raised a strong protest, dated 15th December, 1965.

Yet nothing could check the Ecumenical Movement; it was always a step ahead of the reactions that it provoked

AN EXCLUSIVE HAPPENING IN MOSCOW

In 1969, Moscow took a curious decision, as if she wanted to steal a march on the Patriarchate of Constantinople in her dialogue with Rome. *The decision was to grant Communion to Roman Catholics*; and, as if to justify herself, she stipulated that it was to be given only when there was no Roman Catholic priest in the vicinity. Yet these strictures were not adhered to when Metropolitan Nikodim gave Communion to Roman Catholics at Rome itself shortly afterwards.

The reaction to this decision in the Orthodox world was extremely sharp. We are aware, in particular, of the Archbishop of Greece's reaction and, of course, that of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.

We should note that, within the Patriarchate of Constantinople, Patriarch Athenagoras' encyclical of 1967 still remains in force. This states that the question was examined in Synod and that it was decided not to accept the practice of giving Communion to non-Orthodox.

However, one cannot avoid noting also that even though this matter was considered by these two great Churches, Moscow and Constantinople, the practice in question had already become current here and there, "on the ground," through the participation (in it) of an Orthodox priesthood that was anxious to quicken the progress of the Ecumenical Movement by circumventing the theologians, whom very many judged to be timid, and by presenting the hierarchy, which was considered to be conservative, with a reality which compelled recognition.

This practice has not disappeared from the Church of Constantinople. For in 1983, the monks of Mount Athos addressed a written document to the Patriarch of Constantinople declaring themselves scandalized by it.

VARIOUS DEMONSTRATIONS FROM ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS

Among other kinds of local ecumenical activity, one could cite the practice of prayers in common, at the time of prominent events or during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which is held in January, (at that time, for example, Orthodox are careful not to offend Protestant sensibilities and so omit the prayer to the Mother of God during Vigils), prayers and blessings in common, and processions behind the Roman Catholic holy sacrament (*Epikepsis*, Number 338, 6/20/85).

There also exists an entire pedagogy: for example, the Theological Seminary at Chambes near Geneva, consisting in 1984 of 25 professors and specialists in ecumenism: Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant (*Epikepsis* Number 316, 1/6/85). From time to time, strange things are taught. For example, there is a Roman Catholic professor who implies that a hierarchy can be discerned among Protestants; for as he says, Vatican II "did not exclude in certain exceptional cases 'consecration i.e.

ordination) at the hands of priests' or 'succession at the hands of priests'."

As for the Orthodox professor, Evangelos Theodorou, he reveals that: "the faith of the two Churches — Roman Catholic and Orthodox — is essentially the same and the differences between them no more than debating points (theologoumena), but not irreconcilable opposites." In another connection, he says: "The reconciliation of the two Churches — in the minds of the people of God — could be greatly facilitated by the abolition of Uniatism by the Roman Catholic Church, and also by the introduction of a "liturgical ecumenism" which would unify the faithful of the two Churches in a single community of prayer and piety."

In a seminary opening address in 1984, Metropolitan Darnaskinos of Switzerland, speaking about "the Orthodox Church's bilateral discussions," declared that they "proceed from an awareness that the Orthodox Church has been the bastion which succeeded in consistently protecting the unity of the ancient Church throughout history. In so far as this was so, her duty now is to preside over the rebuilding of that unity by holding a dialogue with the other Christian Churches and confessions."

He also declared that "bilateral discussions must be conducted on the binding condition that the division of the Churches into Eastern (Greek) and Western (Latin) is not an absolute state-of-affairs, but a painful wound in the Body of the Church" and that "although the Orthodox Church identifies herself with the *Una Sancta*, she must recognize nevertheless the nature of a Church — in the full sense of the term — in every other Christian community where the essence of the Faith and of apostolic succession would not have been broken." And furthermore: "Sacramental communion, in particular Eucharistic Communion, between Churches in dialogue with each other, will have to be the outcome and the summation of all our steps towards unity" (Episkepsis, idem).

CONCLUDING REMARKS ON ECUMENICAL ACTIVITIES

Some permanent characteristics are evidenced in the activities of Orthodox Christians engaged in the Ecumenical Movement:

- 1) *an enduring duplicity*: in one text one finds statements of the strictest Orthodox confession, coupled with others which deny these statements and are biased towards the ecumenists.
- 2) *lies by omission*: One sees Scriptural passages being deliberately truncated and quotations being abridged and taken out of context. A particularly striking example of this is the one which has now become an ecumenist slogan: "that all might be one."
- 3) *permanent misunderstanding of the nature of the Church*: as will be apparent from all the preceding.

THE LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES

The march forward of ecumenism allows one to foresee its distant objectives, pursued with a will to accomplishment that one feels to be powerful.

They are more distant than those which are commonly proposed, namely, the union of the divided Christian Churches.

The next state, the second, is already announced: the union of the three monotheistic religions descended from Abraham: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

The following state, the third, is, as yet, hardly discernable: the union of all religions.

At the time of the festivities of St. Andrew in 1984, in the presence of representatives from Rome, Patriarch Demetrios had some quite revealing words about what the "grand design" might be:

"Our goal is not only to unite all those who are Christians, but through this unity to bear witness with conviction before the whole world, of which Jesus Christ is the Saviour. Therefore, by this union, we shall act so that the world might be transfigured and included in the Christian Church, so that His Kingdom might be established on earth."

Again the Patriarch says: "As God the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ united all mankind through His Son by redemption, similarly we, in carrying on the saving work of the Lord, are united to mankind, with every man, with all humanity living on this earth."

Two years ago, Rabbi James Rudin, a member of the Jewish American Committee, made the following declaration: "Something new and important is being effected among Christian theologians." "It is a new theology which affirms the purity of Judaism, without compromising faithfulness to Christianity."

The Pope recently told representatives of B'nai B'rith (a Jewish world-wide fraternal organization — Transl.): "The encounter between Catholics and Jews is not the meeting of two ancient religions, each following its own way, and which often had difficult conflicts in the past, but it is the encounter of brothers."

More details are given by the WCC itself. In the official guide to the WCC's World Conference at Vancouver (1983) — although the theme of the Conference was *Jesus Christ, the Hope of the World* — one reads:

"In the end, the great religious communities will not disappear. No one will have the upper hand. Jews will remain Jews; Muslims will remain Muslims; and those belonging to the great Oriental religions will remain Hindus, Buddhists, and Taoists. Africa will express its own view of the world; China will retain her heritage. As before, people will continue to travel from the East to the West, from the North to the South, and to abide in the Kingdom of God without, in consequence, having first become Christians like us" (Christianity Today, April 1984, p. 121).

ORTHODOX REACTIONS AGAINST ECUMENISM

Faced with this slipping away from the Church, what might be, and what ought to be, the faithful Christian's attitude to the Church?

One has to concede that Orthodox Christians' reactions to various ecumenical happenings are tending to diminish in strength. It is a well-known fact that the Ecumenical Movement relies on a familiarization effect.

Be that as it may, in the Greek Church reactions to ecumenism were still very forcible even ten years ago. Nowadays it depends on the personal influence of hierarchs.

In the past, the Patriarch of Alexandria protested very firmly against ecumenism and freemasonry, but then he went to Constantinople and made an announcement appropriate to the occasion.

The current Patriarch of Jerusalem and the Archbishop of Mount Sinai are firmly opposed to ecumenism.

The Patriarch of Antioch's position is ambiguous.

The Serbian Church, in spite of its presence at the WCC, is not favorable towards it. Its life is ruled by the theology of the Fathers of the Church.

The other Churches are all under the influence either of Moscow or of Constantinople, and are drawn into their maneuverings.

Against these trends, some local Church leaders, bishops, and priests do confess both in words and deeds their unyielding faithfulness to the Orthodox Church of all times.

This results sometimes in confusing situations which cause what seems to be a major contradiction in the bosom of the Church and require the adoption of Church discipline, difficult but necessary, in the case of concelebrations, for example, so that the confusion may be resisted through love of the Church.

The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad has been steadfast in her actions to reveal the true nature of ecumenism:

- in 1965, concerning the lifting of the anathemas of 1054,
- in 1969, concerning common prayer and the pronouncements of Archbishop Iakovos, Constantinople's Exarch in America,
- in 1969, the first Sorrowful Epistle of Metropolitan Philaret to all Orthodox hierarchs,
- in 1972, the Second Sorrowful Epistle,
- in 1975, concerning the *Thyateira Confession*,
- in many different circumstances, by means of articles, conferences, reports to the Council of Bishops (by Archbishops Vitaly, Averky, Anthony, Bishop Gregory . . .),
- in 1984, the anathema against ecumenism and all those who confess it.

THE RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE ANATHEMA

"To those who attack the Church of Christ by teaching that Christ's Church is divided into so-called branches which differ in doctrine and way of life, or that the Church does not exist visibly, but will be formed in the future when all branches or sects or denominations, or even religions, will be united into one body, and who do not distinguish the priesthood and mysteries of the Church from those of heretics, but say that the baptism and eucharist of heretics is effectual for salvation; therefore to those who knowingly have communion with these aforementioned heretics, or advocate, disseminate, or defend their new heresy of Ecumenism under the pretext of brotherly love or the supposed unification of separated Christians: ANATHEMA!"

The outcome of a long series of explanations and warnings, the present resolution has assumed above all else a prophetic character. It will serve as a yardstick, like so many other canons, when, in a future which promises to become increasingly difficult, a choice will have to be made in order to get away from the confusion which is adversely affecting all aspects of Church life. This is certainly an important Church CANON which has emerged.

However, as in the case of a surgical instrument which is in contact with living flesh, this canon must be used prudently and proficiently and with the concern of one bestowing care, by subscribing to the Church's economy of salvation.

In the history of the Church, there have been numerous occasions on which Christians, animated by zeal, have passed judgement on people by having recourse to such and such a canon. This practice was so widespread in Christian society in his day that St. John Chrysostom was alarmed by it: *"But who do you think that you are? What power or authority do you possess? Is the Son of God about to sit in judgement, to allow His sheep to be separated, on your orders, putting some on His right and thrusting others away on His left? Why do you usurp this eminent dignity, in which only the college of the Apostles has a share, together with those who, through the strict perfection of their lives, have shown themselves to be their successors, filled with grace and virtues?"*

"Teach," says St. Paul, "by correcting with meekness those who hold out against the truth, in the hope that God will one day give them the spirit of repentance so as to bring them to a knowledge of the truth" "Correct, as being opposed to apostolic tradition, that which prejudice or ignorance passes off as being true. And if the unfortunate man, who adopted the error, wishes to accept your teaching 'he will live in true life; you will have saved his soul' (cf. Ezekiel 3:21). If he refuses, if he resists and remains stubborn, be content to safeguard your responsibility to

'bear witness to the truth in meekness and patience'; from that time on the Sovereign Judge will no longer require you to claim back your brother's soul." (St. John Chrysostom, *That One is not Required to Anathematize the Living or the Dead.*)

By drawing our inspiration from these words, our attitude will in all things be directed by discernment, being firm with regard to ourselves, and showing a pastoral attitude towards others. We shall avoid associating with ecumenists and with ecumenically-minded Orthodox by keeping away from their meetings, so that we do not implicitly avow that they are right. We shall not pass individual judgements on their adherence to the Church, leaving that to those who have the authority to do so, and concentrating our attention on keeping ourselves within the Church, and welcoming those who come to us in the love of the Church, helping people without condemning them, for they risk an existence separate from us if they stray further away.

(Continued from page 22)

disowned the moment they have abandoned any point in the Faith. There can be no compromise just as there can be no mixture of Truth with falsehood, light with darkness.

Above all, the Orthodox ecclesiological model is not to be tampered with. Such 'tampering' includes the idea of a papacy whether this is in Rome or Constantinople. Conciliarity through ecumenical councils and local synods is the only legitimate authority of the Church, both locally and universally.

The Church is entering its most dangerous age. Critical times will be ahead of us. Whereas in the past everyone knew heresy and resisted it unto death, today there is great ignorance, apathy, and indifference. Some hierarchs today are seeking to imitate Rome by wanting absolute power and control over the Faithful and the clergy. This will be a period of trial for all the saints who adhere to the True Church and Her teachings. Those who now seek power instead of holiness, faith, and righteousness are to be rejected. Some misguided Orthodox seek to change the world instead of changing the hearts of sinners and bringing them to Christ. They try to improve the world instead of improving the character of man. They seek power, influence and wealth hoping to change the world for the better. One wonders if anyone is reading the Gospel anymore. Misdirected hierarchs have succumbed to the world in seeking those things which corrupt and destroy the soul. Many of our deluded spiritual shepherds are leading us away from the Church under the guise of love. The great apostasy has already begun. We are being readied in subtle ways for the generic, all embracing, all-inclusive 'Church' that will have wealth, power, influ-

—ence and be a superpower in the world to come. We are being prepared for the age of the Antichrist, the Pseudo Christ, and the Beast. Then the Church shall be a small remnant made up of those remaining true to Christ.

In these trying times, the Orthodox Church has been protected by a Providential God who in His wisdom has seen fit not to put decisions in the hands of one person. Each patriarch, each bishop, each hierarch is Orthodox so long as he teaches the True Faith and does not tamper with it or superimpose his will over the will of the Holy Spirit. If he ceases to teach Orthodoxy, then he has severed himself from the Church, but the Church remains complete and whole. Once out of the Body of Christ, the wrong-believing bishop cannot function or survive for long. But the Faithful have a duty to be diligent and to protect their soul.

If the ecumenical movement becomes a springboard for the Orthodox to become part of a world church, a syncretism of all beliefs in common that all can agree upon, the so-called generic church of the most common denominator, then the Orthodox Church must dig in and find a safe haven for the remnant of the Faithful who still belong to the True Church. They will need faithful pastors to guide them and in order to avail themselves of the Holy Eucharist which only the True Church can impart to its believers.

Why should Orthodoxy which contains the Truth compromise with any other faith? Let us remain united, true, and yes, even small in numbers but strong in Spirit. Remember the eight that were saved in the Ark and remember Elijah and the 7,000 faithful Israelites who did not bend their knee to the false God, Baal.

I believe we are called to be martyrs and not ecumenists; we are to be ridiculed and made outcasts,

strangers, unloved, unpopular and to be spat upon because we will not bend or compromise. Our Lord tells us that in the last days we shall be sorely tested. We must stand uncorrupted by heresy, true to the doctrines of our Fathers and Saints of the whole Church, unrelenting in our determination to belong to the Church headed by Christ and Christ alone.

Let us try, each one, to save souls and especially our own, by remaining in the Church and by leading others to the one and only True Church. Those who are ecumenists in the wrong sense of the word are attempting to unite the separated, and the only thing that they are accomplishing is to divide the united and to destroy the stability of Faith that has existed for almost 2,000 years.

It is not the God-given purpose of the Church to save the world. Rather it is the Church which truly saves man from the world. The idea that all Christians of whatever dogmas must unite to present a united front against any of the devices of this world, any 'ism' such as communism, humanism, or any social evil, such as even the one concerning human rights, and the environment; this idea of unity in order to make a "better world" is a false union and shows spiritual ignorance of the Gospel of Christ. The Church was not meant to become a political, ethical, or even religious power in the world. The Church has only one mission: to save souls. It does not need power, influence, distinction, recognition, or popularity, or even esteem. It has Christ.

The Orthodox Church need only to be like a candle on top of the hill that will show the way and forever point to the Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Once this is understood, the ecumenical movement will come into perspective and it

will stand naked for what it really is. And what is the naked truth concerning the so-called dialogue of the 20th century that has produced the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches and countless other ecumenical-minded organizations? The truth is that the world is not ready to come to the truth. It only seeks compromise. The truth is that the Orthodox Church can exist without the other Churches and be complete and whole, but they cannot exist without the semblance of truth. The truth is that we are being detoured from our proper work which is to save souls. One does not bring souls to Christ by leading them away from the Truth, the Way, and the Life, the Lord Himself. Let us concentrate our energies on this worthwhile endeavor if we really love mankind. Let us also protect and guide our own Faithful who are being deceived and devoured by other faiths that have nothing more than perhaps part of the Truth. Let us help our Orthodox brethren in Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa who thirst for Christ and His Church. Let us help those from among the other faiths who are seeking the True Church to find Her. This is the kind of unity that is productive and that God wants us to engage in until the Lord returns. So be it Amen.

