

The Russian Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Church of Greece, Synod in Resistance

IN THE FACE of various misleading, self-serving, and mendacious accounts of the history of the Old Calendar movement that are at present in circulation, it seems to us appropriate to cite the circumstances and deliberations that led to the establishment of communion between the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCA) and the Old Calendarist Greek Orthodox clergy and Bishops headed by Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili (the Synod in Resistance).

The union process, which has been misrepresented by various extremist circles, who are seeking to gain ground now that our Church has severed relations with the ROCA, after its recent unification with the Moscow Patriarchate, clearly addresses the canonicity of the Synod in Resistance; the illicit actions taken against it by certain Old Calendarist extremists; and the unity of confession and ecclesiastical self-consciousness between it and the ROCA [also known as the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia] before the latter's change of course and polity and eventual union with Moscow.

The following conclusions and pronouncements by the Bishops of the ROCA followed a year-long investigation of the Greek Old Calendar movement by a committee established by the Holy Synod of that Church, prior to opening communion with the Synod in Resistance. Its deliberations and conclusions are described and enumerated below. They present a truthful presentation of facts, in contrast to the aforementioned fabrications and "histories," motivated as they are by opportunistic ambitions, wholly inappropriate to the Church, passing as attempts to unify the faithful.

Decision of the Hierarchical Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

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On 28 June/11 July, 1994, the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia addressed the question of the possibility of entering into communion in prayer and the Eucharist with the group of Old Calendarist Greeks headed by Metropolitan Cyprian.

Circumstances of the Case: A petition from the synod of Metropolitan Cyprian on this matter was received by the Synod of Bishops in 1993, but was not acted upon. Soon after, a new request was received, asking that the matter be reexamined. On 21 July/3 August, 1993, the Synod of Bishops appointed a committee to study this question and present a report to the Synod of Bishops. In connection with this, the Council has heard the following:

- 1) The report of the Committee, which consisted of Their Graces, Archbishop Laurus and Bishops Daniel and Mitrophanes, who studied the question of the existing divisions within the Greek Old Calendarist Church;
- 2) A short history of the Greek Old Calendarist Church from its beginnings to the present day;
- 3) During the deliberations, attention was also given to statements of those opposed to the union, in which questions were raised as to the canonicity of Metropolitan Cyprian's group and their allegedly un-Orthodox teaching on grace. The remarks of private individuals were also heard concerning this question;

4) In addition, petitions from the Romanian Old Calendarists and the Bulgarian Bishop Photius, and from several private individuals, all urging the reception of the group of Metropolitan Cyprian into communion in prayer were heard;

5) During the deliberation of all questions outlined above, it was established that:

a) The Synod of Metropolitan Cyprian adheres wholly to the exact same ecclesiological and dogmatic principles as our Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. This is set forth in detail in their pamphlet, “An Exposition of the Doctrine Concerning the Church, for Orthodox Opposed to the Heresy of Ecumenism”;

b) In 1986, the Synod of Archbishop Chrysostom [Kiousis] II tried and deposed Metropolitan Cyprian *in absentia* for allegedly holding to heretical teaching and for refusing to unite himself to their synod. But as the history of the Old Calendarist divisions shows, Metropolitan Cyprian had never entered the synod of Archbishop Chrysostom II, which was only formed in late 1985, but was a member of the Synod of Metropolitan Callistos from 1979. Beginning in 1984, after the retirement of Metropolitan Callistos in 1983, Metropolitan Cyprian has headed the Synod of the former. Metropolitan Cyprian was never a part of the Synod of Archbishop Chrysostom and had never submitted to his authority; the latter, therefore, lacked the competence to discipline him.

c) After deliberation and analysis of all aspects of these questions, the Council of Bishops holds that at the present time, when apostasy is spreading and many official representatives of Orthodoxy, such as the Patriarchate of Constantinople and other patriarchates, are succumbing to and embracing the position of the modernists and ecumenists, it is very important for the true Orthodox to unite, stand together and oppose the betrayers of the Orthodoxy of the holy fathers. In connection with this, the Council of Bishops has decided:

1) To establish communion in prayer and the Eucharist with the Greek Old Calendarist synod of Metropolitan Cyprian, as well as with His Grace, Bishop Photius of Triaditza, who heads the Bulgarian Old Calendarist diocese.

2) All parties refrain from interfering in each other's internal ecclesiastical affairs. If any questions arise which require deliberation, it is essential to take counsel together.

RESOLVED:

1) To communicate the above-cited decision to Metropolitan Cyprian and Bishop Photius.

2) To inform our clergy and flock of the Council's decision through publication in Church periodicals.

See also, "Orthodox Life," Vol. XLIV, No. 4, pp. 49-50.