



An Informatory Epistle

Concerning the Ecclesiological Identity of
the Orthodox in Resistance to the
Panheresy of Ecumenism

*by His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili
President of the Holy Synod in Resistance*

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Fili, Attika
12 December 1998



Concerning the Ecclesiological Identity of the Orthodox in Resistance to the Panheresy of Ecumenism

Introduction

*“To all things there is a time and a season,
for every matter under Heaven,”
“a time to be silent and a time to speak”
(Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7)*

From time to time, in season and out of season, officially and unofficially, directly or indirectly, the Holy Synod in Resistance, and in particular its President, His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili, have been smitten by the unbrotherly and untheological brickbats slung by other Old Calendarist jurisdictions in Greece.

Attacks of this kind almost always touch on the foundations of the ecclesiological self-understanding of that Orthodox community which, since 1924, has maintained no communion with ecumenists, whether the latter follow the Old or the New Calendar.

We have, all along, eschewed hasty “responses” and “rebuttals,” particularly in public, because this strategy does not edify and does not represent a proper theological answer to all of the epithets offhandedly hurled against us.

We consider it an especial blessing of the Divine Comforter that we continue to receive instruction in the theology of the Holy Fathers, and not in the stone-throwing of guttersnipes, which leads directly to spiritual alienation, since it renders Church life untheological and ultimately

deprives the great Mystery of the Church of its ecclesiastical character.

Now, however, finding ourselves confronting several documents that express opposition to our resistance, we feel that we are obliged to publish an earlier document of ours, which was circulated within our Synod, having in mind primarily those well-disposed Faithful who are in a state of confusion on account of all that is happening in the sphere of the Old Calendar movement.

This epistle, to which we have made some very slight additions and improvements, in conjunction with previous documents that we have written on the same subject, constitutes a fundamental and normative text of our Holy Synod, the endorsement of which it has received. We offer it as a contribution towards a deeper understanding of the ecclesiological identity of the Orthodox in resistance to the panheresy of ecumenism.*

It is our hope that this paper will give rise to a fruitful dialogue for the purpose of resolving and dispelling a mass of misunderstandings, through the intercessions of the Most Blessed Theotokos and of all the Saints. Amen.

* See, in particular, the following official texts that we have published: (1) “An Ecclesiological Position Paper for Orthodox Opposed to the Panheresy of Ecumenism” (1984); (2) “The ‘Lawful’ Character of the Sacred Struggle Against Ecumenism” (1997); (3) “The Position in the Church of Heretics Who Have Not Yet Been Brought to Trial” (2000).





HOLY SYNOD IN RESISTANCE
METROPOLIS OF OROPOS AND FILI

Protocol N° 1096

To the Most Reverend
and Right Reverend Hierarchs
of the Holy Synod in Resistance

Fili, Attika
12 December 1998 (Old Style)
St. Spyridon of Trimythous

AN INFORMATORY EPISTLE

Most Reverend and Right Reverend beloved Brethren in the Holy Spirit and concelebrants with me, the unworthy one: greeting you with a holy kiss in Christ our Incarnate Savior, it is with the greatest pleasure that I address you.

I

A Very Serious Matter Has Arisen

1. I hasten, through the present *Informatory Epistle*, to share some of my opinions with you in a timely manner—in a condensed form, of course, and with the prospect of a more wide-ranging discussion in Synod at a suitable time, with the coöperation of the Lord—on a very serious matter that has recently arisen.
2. The matter in question is the synodal endorsement of the “Constitutional Charter and Regulations” (18 September

1998) of the [Old Calendarist] jurisdiction of Archbishop Chrysostomos (Kioussis) and of its “Synodal Condemnation and Anathematization of the Heresy of Ecumenism” (25 September 1998), which is now in force.

3. The documents at issue were published in the “official journal” of this jurisdiction, i.e., in the periodical *Ἐκκλησία Γ.Ο.Χ. Ἑλλάδος* [The True Orthodox Church of Greece] (No. 23 [November-December 1998], pp. 25-40 and p. 45, respectively), and they provoked—primarily the first, namely, the “Constitutional Charter and Regulations”—a strong reaction in its ranks.
4. It is almost certain that the waves of the tempest that has been stirred up will also strike the ship of our own Holy Synod in Resistance, and especially at the level of our spiritual children, some of whom are pious, but naïve and ill-informed.
5. For this reason, I am setting forth for you, Most Reverend and Right Reverend Brethren, some general observations regarding the aforementioned texts and decisions, in order that we might have a common understanding regarding matters of such ecclesiological gravity and importance, and that in this way unity among us, and also sobriety, might be preserved, so that, by the Grace of the Lord, we might continue working positively and constructively for the unity of the Most Holy Orthodox Church.
6. A fruitful and constructive discussion of the ecclesiological views set forth in what follows is assuredly to be wished for and desired, since it will certainly contribute to our discerning clearly and unerringly “what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”¹
7. To this end, and for a more detailed exposition of the issues dealt with in the present *Informatory Epistle*, we are also sending three earlier ecclesiological texts of ours, to wit, the following:

(i) “The ‘Lawful’ Character of the Sacred Struggle Against Ecumenism.”

(ii) “The Position in the Church of Heretics Who Have Not Yet Been Brought to Trial.”

(iii) “The Nature of the Condemnation of the Papal Calendar.”

8. Finally, I would remind you that the ecclesiological precepts in question, based on the aforementioned works, were presented by me on the Sunday of Orthodoxy and published under the title, *The Heresy of Ecumenism and the Patristic Stand of the Orthodox*, Number IV in the Series “Contributions to a Theology of Anti-Ecumenism” (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1998).

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II

Basic Ecclesiological Precepts

1. In order that you might understand more fully all of the points that will subsequently be set forth, let me remind you of the following basic ecclesiological precepts:
 - (a) The Old Calendarist Orthodox in resistance, who have walled themselves off on account of ecumenism, are the anti-innovationist flock of the Orthodox Church and, in the words of St. Basil the Great, constitute the “healthy part” of the Body of Christ.²
 - (b) This “healthy part” of the Church, to be sure, has fullness in Christ, which is expressed in the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist, and consequently it embodies in itself—as is also the case in each Eucharistic community or parish—the One, Holy, Catholic, and

Apostolic Church, because, according to St. Ignatios, “wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.”³

(c) In spite of this, the “healthy part” in resistance neither constitutes the Church in Her totality nor even the local Church—the Church of Greece, in our case—, and all the more because the anti-innovationist flock today is unfortunately divided into many jurisdictions and is prone to fragmentation and infighting.

(d) Strictly speaking, the “healthy part” constitutes only the anti-innovationist segment— walled off and in resistance—of the “Church of God that sojourns in Greece.”⁴

2. This anti-innovationist Orthodox community in resistance, in Greece, ought, in love and humility, and in anticipation of a unifying Orthodox general synod,

(a) not to have communion with the “diseased” part of the Church;⁵

(b) to make the rest of the members of the Body sensitive to the need to break communion, too, lest they likewise become diseased;

(c) to aid in the repentance and cure of the ailing members, so as to avoid the worsening of their illness and their final excision from the Body; and

(d) to contribute, finally, to the convocation of a competent Synod, which would take measures to prevent the disease from spreading to the entire Body.

3. (a) Of course, whoever “preacheth any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received” is subject to the Apostolic anathema: “let him be accursed.”⁶

(b) The proclamation of an anathema, however, is not the business of individuals among the Faithful, and he who “dares” to do such a thing, according to St. John Chrysostomos, does things that are “contrary to the Master’s death and forestalls the King’s

judgment,” usurping “a great dignity” belonging only to the Holy Apostles and their worthy successors.⁷ Abba Barsanouphios adds this telling comment: “Do not be hasty to anathematize anyone at all,” but say only, “if I anathematize Satan himself, insofar as I do his works, I anathematize myself.”⁸

(c) Likewise, the right to issue an anathema does not belong to ecclesiastical administrative bodies which have a temporary synodal structure, but which do not possess all the canonical prerequisites to represent the Church fully, validly, and suitably for the proclamation of an anathema—a right and “dignity” which is “granted” only to the choir of the Apostles “and those who have truly become their successors in the strictest sense, full of Grace and power.”⁹

(d) In any case, one way or another, automatic enforcement of an anathema that may have been previously proclaimed, and simultaneous excision from the Body of the Church, are not our goal; for, the Seventh Holy Œcumenical Synod, in its *ᾠδος*, provides for a judicial process leading to “deposition” and “excommunication,” and this by a competent Synodal body, of course:

*We order that those who dare to think or teach differently, or, in accordance with the abominable heretics, to overthrow the Traditions of the Church and devise some innovation..., if they be Bishops or clergy, should be deposed, and if monastics or laymen, should be excommunicated.*¹⁰

4. (a) We can understand what a serious matter it is to proclaim an anathema—something which postulates the existence of a synodal body of unequivocal and indisputable ecclesiastical authority—, when we take into account how the Saints respond to this crucial question: What is an anathema?

(b) “What else, therefore, do you mean by ‘anathema,’” inquires St. John Chrysostomos, “than: let this man be consigned to the Devil, let him no longer have any possibility of salvation, and let

him be estranged from Christ?"; "for anathema cuts one off from Christ completely."¹¹

(c) St. Tarasios of Constantinople makes this striking remark: "Anathema is a terrible thing; it casts a man far away from God and banishes him from the Kingdom of Heaven, leading him away into the outer darkness."¹²

(d) Finally, the Blessed Theodoretos of Cyrus interprets the Apostolic phrase, "let him be anathema,"¹³ thusly: "let him be estranged from the common body of the Church."¹⁴

5. (a) The extremely serious implications of an anathema, coupled, first, with the absence, in our day, of a synodal body endowed with all of the aforementioned canonical prerequisites for proclaiming an anathema and, secondly, with the immense confusion that prevails, on account of ecumenism, in the ranks of the local Orthodox Churches, constitute, today, a major restraint on, and an insurmountable impediment to, such a momentous and, at the same time, historic action.

(b) Aside from anything else, this view is substantiated by the very noteworthy fact that during the period of turmoil that occurred in the second wave of Iconoclasm, St. Theodore the Studite advised a certain "Presbyter who," out of weakness, "had signed a statement opposing the iconic depiction of Christ," but who was already deeply repenting for this deed, that he should "desist completely from serving as a Priest"; although at that time there existed Orthodox Confessor-Hierarchs, he provides the fallen Presbyter with absolute assurance that it is not possible for him to be released from his suspension by any Hierarch whomsoever, "and this, until peace is restored to the Church of God, at which time every single one of such matters will be appropriately settled by synodal judgment and will receive a verdict ordained by God."¹⁵

6. Now, with regard to the prerequisites for a synodal body, they are primarily the following:

- (a) a profound awareness that it canonically, fully, and unconditionally represents the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church and functions in Her name;
 - (b) the power to arraign those who “preach any other gospel than that we have received,” i.e., to summon and judge them, unwaveringly preserving the established synodal procedures and having as its criterion the theological and canonical Tradition of Orthodoxy;
 - (c) the supreme authority to depose those of wrong belief, in the event that they remain unrepentant, to banish them from their Thrones, and, ultimately, to anathematize them.
- Such a synodal body, however, with such sweeping powers and broad jurisdiction, does not exist, at least at present; but the segment of the Church that maintains a correct and healthy resistance is working assiduously and prudently towards this end.
7. With regard to the tremendous confusion caused by ecumenism, we should avoid indiscriminate generalizations deriving from undiscerning zeal, and we should never forget that the local Churches cannot be characterized, today, in their entirety as ecumenist, taking into consideration, on the one hand, that only a small portion of them consists of out-and-out ecumenists, while the overwhelming, albeit silent, majority is anti-ecumenist; and, on the other hand, that no local Church has proclaimed synodally that the primary dogma of ecumenism is a teaching of the Orthodox Church, which must be believed and is necessary for salvation; neither has there ever been any pan-Orthodox proclamation to this effect.
 8. This thesis has strong Patristic support in St. Theodore the Studite, who asserts that if a Metropolitan falls into heresy, it is not the case that all of those who are in direct or indirect communion with him are regarded automatically and without distinction as heretics, despite, of course, the fact that by this stand of theirs “they bring upon themselves the fearful charge of silence.”¹⁶

9. Given these considerations—expressed, of course, with the utmost concision—, there remains the possibility, attested, moreover, by Holy Tradition, that only heretical doctrines (the anathema of an opinion), and not their purveyors (a personal anathema), should be anathematized and refuted, in order that our flock might be protected, out of fear of their safety,¹⁷ and not led astray by the corruption of wrong belief.

(a) The Holy Apostle Paul, according to the Divine Chrysostomos, “appears to utter this expression [i.e., “anathema”] out of necessity only in two places, and without bringing it to bear on a particular person. In his First Epistle to the Corinthians, he says: ‘If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema’; and [in the Epistle to the Galatians]: ‘If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed [anathema].’”¹⁸

(b) St. John offers the following advice: “We must anathematize heretical doctrines and refute impious teachings, from whomsoever we have received them, but show mercy to the men who advocate them and pray for their salvation.”¹⁹

10. (a) But this *non-personal anathematization* is already occurring on a continuing basis, because whenever we proclaim a completely Orthodox ecclesiology, not only in practice, through walling-off, but also in writing and orally, we *potentially anathematize* every heretical or ecumenist impiety.

(b) This position derives directly and clearly from St. Theodore the Studite, who states that “everyone who is Orthodox in every respect anathematizes every heretic potentially, even if not verbally.”²⁰

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III

Fundamental Pastoral Principles

1. However, even if the *potential anathematization* that is already in effect is not considered pastorally sufficient, we must, at least for the time being, avoid directly and explicitly proclaiming any anathema aimed solely at heretical and impious doctrines (the anathema of an opinion), on the one hand, because our pious flock is not in immediate danger of being seduced by the false teaching of the ecumenist innovation and, on the other hand, for the following two serious pastoral reasons.
2. With regard to the “*healthy part*” of the Church, that is, our flock.
 - (a) The fact that the Faithful generally do not have any profound knowledge either of the Patristic and Synodal teaching of our Church, or of the polymorphous heresy of ecumenism, coupled with their at times undiscerning zeal, will cause them confusion, because they lack the criteria for distinguishing between a *personal anathema* and the *anathema of an opinion* and, likewise, for distinguishing between one who is truly an ecumenist and one who is not, since in their simplicity they indiscriminately mix together and equate all of these things.
 - (b) It is certain that this confusion concerning those who are ailing in conscience will intensify and multiply the divisions and schisms in the “*healthy part*” of the Body of the Church and that it will not be long before it starts to have retroactive effects, with unforeseen consequences, because deceased family members, as well as persons of acknowledged sanctity, who, by judgments which the Lord alone knows, reposed nonetheless in the New Calendar Church, will be regarded as liable to anathema.
 - (c) At any rate, there is a spiritual solution for the difficulty faced by the Faithful, when pressure is put on them by the over-zealous

to anathematize someone, in order to prove their Orthodoxy; in such a case, they can repeat, with minor alterations, the advice given by Abba Barsanouphios: “Brother, to anathematize someone seems to me to be a form of condemnation; but I tell you this: I know of no other Faith than that of the Holy Fathers; and he who thinks contrary to this Faith, consigns himself to anathema.”²¹

3. With regard to the “*diseased part*” of the Body.

(a) Similarly, the dearth of spiritual knowledge and discernment on the part of our brothers who commune with those that are caught up in innovation and heresy, but have not yet been condemned, combined with the proclamation of an anathema against the heretical doctrine [of ecumenism] (the anathema of an opinion), will bring about their total estrangement from the “healthy part” of the Church; moreover, it would erect an impenetrable wall between them and us, and in this way the missionary dimension of Orthodox resistance would be completely destroyed, and any hope of their returning to the Faith that knows no innovation would be lost.

(b) It should be noted that our hitherto brotherly relations with them, and accommodating behavior towards them, have contributed substantially to informing them and to promoting a gradual awareness on their part of the rightness of our stand, which has often led them to join the Orthodox resistance and to accept “sound doctrine.”²²

- The Patristic grounds for this charitable pastoral stand of ours are very strong; in what follows, we will mention three compelling examples.

4. St. Basil the Great, in order to win over to Orthodoxy the Homœousians, that is, the moderate Arians, first and foremost “employed οἰκονομία,” says St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite, “and for quite some time did not openly call the Holy Spirit God,”²³

for which reason he was unjustly accused of being a “crypto-Pneumatomachian”(!);²⁴ secondly, he did not make excessive demands on the “weaker brethren,” i.e., the Homœousians, for he was convinced that “by longer association and mutual experience without strife,” whatever else was necessary would be given them by the Lord.²⁵

5. Similarly, St. Cyril of Alexandria, in order to bring into unity with the Church those who were in danger of being engulfed by the error of Nestorianism, used a good deal of *οἰκονομία* and wrote to various zealous Orthodox Hierarchs: “There are times when, in the administration of affairs, certain people are constrained to veer slightly off the proper course, in order to achieve some greater gain”; “so also, in practical matters, when it is not possible to maintain absolute strictness, we overlook certain points, so as not to suffer the loss of the whole.”²⁶

And, in speaking about “condescensions that are not unprofitable,”²⁷ the Saint insists that “the nature of present circumstances sometimes compels us, against our will, to put up with situations that are contrary to our intention and our better judgment;”²⁸ “the matter requires great *οἰκονομία*,”²⁹ “which is applied to them like a remedy; for in a short time, they themselves will arrive at a sincere state of mind; and these are the ‘helps’ and ‘governments’ which the Blessed Paul mentioned,” “for we do not wish to amputate, but to join together.”³⁰

6. Finally, the Divine Chrysostomos, this sweetest and most charitable Pastor, addressing those who were overly zealous and who wanted to anathematize the heretics of their era, invokes the Apostle’s words, “[The servant of the Lord...must be gentle unto all men...] in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they might recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil, who are taken captive by him at his will,”³¹ and hands on to us an everlasting example of how to deal

pastorally, “in the manner of the fishermen,” with those who are weaker:

‘Spread out the net of love, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed; ‘throw out the sweet bait of compassion, and thus, having searched what is hidden, snatch from the depth of perdition him who has let his mind drown therein; ‘simply bear witness with forbearance and goodness, lest his soul be required from your hand by the Judge; ‘we implore and adjure you to refrain from such an evil [that of anathematizing],’ because ‘you commit impiety in cutting off one who is mutable and capable of changing from evil to good.’³²

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IV

Dogmatizing and Anathematizing Ignorantly

1. (a) On the basis of the aforementioned “Basic Ecclesiological Precepts” and “Fundamental Pastoral Principles,” we are in a better position to make critical comments on the two recent and complementary documents issued by the jurisdiction of Archbishop Chrysostomos (Kioussis), to wit, the “Constitutional Charter and Regulations” and the “Synodal Condemnation and Anathematization of the Heresy of Ecumenism.”
 - (b) The first of these documents is dominated by an intensely legalistic spirit, is devoid of Grace, freedom, and love, literally causes suffocation, is an instrument of repression and destruction rather than a “schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ,” and, in the end, transforms the assembly of the “True Orthodox Church of Greece” into a body that passes itself off as religious, centralized like the Vatican, and totalitarian in character.
 - (c) The second document is literally riddled, from a theological point of view, with canonical, pastoral, historical, logical, and grammatical errors, in spite of its relative brevity.

2. With regard both to the authors and to those who endorsed and signed these documents, the very timely and apt remarks of the Divine Chrysostomos are apropos:

*For as I go on, I see men who neither possess minds educated by Divine Scripture, nor understand anything whatsoever of this Scripture, and in spite of my great embarrassment I keep silent, as they rave and quarrel, 'knowing neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm,' ignorantly daring to pronounce this very teaching alone as a dogma, and to anathematize things of which they have no knowledge, such that those who are strangers to the Faith ridicule our affairs, for we are neither concerned about living a good life nor have we learned to do what is good.*³³

3. (a) Those who belong to the jurisdiction of Archbishop Chrysostomos, though manifestly aware that only *the Church* could take the most daring step of “Condemning and Anathematizing,” hasten to proclaim themselves to be in “canonical and unbroken continuity with the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church founded by Christ” and to assert that the assembly of the “True Orthodox Church of Greece” is “the local Orthodox Catholic Church in Greece, which Christ founded,” and which is “autocephalous,” to boot.³⁴
- (b) This is a clear transgression of the sole canonical limits within which the anti-innovationist flock in resistance, that has walled itself off, is permitted to act, until a “synodal decision,”³⁵ that is, a “final decision,”³⁶ against the purveyors of false teaching by a competent synodal body is convened, in accordance with synodal tradition, “for the union and harmony of the Church”³⁷ and “for the union of the Holy Catholic Church of God.”³⁸
4. (a) By virtue of this aforementioned ecclesiological self-understanding, promulgated by the jurisdiction of Archbishop Chrysostomos, the well-nigh insurmountable chasm that already exists between ourselves and them has now turned into an abyss.
- (b) This state of affairs clearly arises from the other very clear sentiment of the “Constitutional Charter and Regulations,” that the

assembly of the “True Orthodox Church of Greece” is “the only sure way of salvation for her members,” as being the One Church, from which “certain groups belonging to our Church, which follow various deposed former clergy of ours,” have broken away.³⁹

(c) It goes without saying that they consider us to be explicitly outside the Church, that is, outside the “only sure way of salvation”!

5. (a) It was to be expected, therefore, given these ecclesiological views, that the jurisdiction of Archbishop Chrysostomos would usurp the prerogatives of an Œcumenical Synod and proceed to a full “Synodal Condemnation and Anathematization of the heresy of ecumenism”; i.e., it has both “applied it to particular persons” (a personal anathema) and anathematized “heretical dogmas” (the anathema of an opinion).⁴⁰

(b) We will make only the following critical and selective comments on this document, i.e., on its *twofold anathema*.

6. (a) The first and principal section contains a patently false teaching: It is asserted that “the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, which is the Church of the firstborn in Heaven,” became “the Body of Christ at the advent of the Holy Spirit on Holy Pentecost”!

(b) That is to say, the Holy Spirit “descended” (read: “ascended”) upon the “Church in Heaven,” not upon the historical community of the Holy Apostles, “with Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with His brethren,” who were all in the upper room of the house where they were staying in Jerusalem.⁴¹

(c) According to this line of thinking, the Church has not hitherto existed on earth!

7. (a) In this labyrinthine and syntactically awkward first section, teachings are ascribed to the “newly-manifest ecumenists” which

none of them has ever actually expressed, at least not officially, jointly, or in this extreme form.

(b) This absurdity underscores our own view, that in order for the heresy to be judged, deep knowledge of the false doctrine of ecumenism in its many forms is required, lest we align ourselves, as the Divine Chrysostomos puts it, with those who “ignorantly dare to make dogmatic pronouncements,” and “to anathematize things of which they have no knowledge, such that those who are strangers to the Faith ridicule our affairs.”⁴²

(c) It is worth noting that the Seventh Œcumenical Synod draws it to the attention of the Faithful that they should read the heretical writings under consideration “searchingly and not cursorily,”⁴³ if they are to draw the correct conclusions and formulate a “just judgment.”

8. Following on from this, one is perplexed as to why, among the “pioneers of the false teachings of ecumenism,” many others were not included, such as Metropolitan Nicholas of Cæsarea, who, as “*locum tenens* of the Œcumenical Throne,” signed the “Synodal Epistle to the Delegation of the Faith and Order Movement” (Protocol N^o 2672 [10 April 1919]), which constitutes the first openly ecumenist official text of the Patriarchate of Constantinople;⁴⁴ also not included were “the *locum tenens* of the Patriarchal Œcumenical Throne of Constantinople,” Dorotheos of Proussa, and the other members of the Synod who signed the 1920 Encyclical, which, as is well known, “constitutes a definitive expression of Orthodox ecumenism, and also a milestone in the history of the ecumenical movement”;⁴⁵ also overlooked were Patriarch Gregory VII of Constantinople, who implemented the calendar reform, and its great theoretician, Anthimos of Bizya (and subsequently of Maroneia), and Patriarchs Athenagoras, Demetrios, and Bartholomew—to dwell on the more important figures—, who give and have given great impetus to ecumenism in both word and deed—although a multitude of other clergy

and laity ought to be mentioned, including, of course, those belonging to other Orthodox jurisdictions.

- At any rate, these omissions, as well as those of the ensuing paragraph, bear witness to the reliability of what we said in §7 regarding “anathematizing things of which they have no knowledge.”
9. Consequently, while the congress held on the Holy Mountain in 1931 is numbered among the “congresses that acted arrogantly against the Orthodox Faith” (and does anyone know in what way this congress “acted arrogantly” against Orthodoxy?), oddly enough, the Patriarchal Synods of 1920, which signed the well-known Encyclical, and 1965, which decided on and brought about the lifting of the anathemas against Papism, are passed over in silence; likewise, no mention is made of the two Synods held under Archbishop Chrysostomos (Papadopoulos) of Athens, the Fourth (April 1923) and the Fifth (December 1923), which decided to introduce the calendar reform in Greece; and finally—not to belabor the point—there is no mention of the successive “Pre-Synodal Pan-Orthodox Consultations” (Rhodes and Geneva, 1961-), which have been preparing, in an ecumenical spirit, for the so-called “Holy and Great Synod.”
 10. Next, what pastoral purpose is served by the fourth anathema—one that is truly “off the wall”—concerning those who say that “Christ had two sanctities, a Divine and a human, and that His human sanctity experienced progress,” since among the Old Calendarists such views have never been espoused; nor are the Faithful, who are fully aware that these Nestorian beliefs have repeatedly been condemned in the past by the Ecumenical Synods, at risk from them?
 11. Similarly, what connection can the laudatory reference to the Ecumenical Patriarch and “those who took part in the Synod in Constantinople in the year 1848” possibly have with anti-

ecumenism? And if this is perhaps an attempt to link it to anti-Papism, despite the fact that, paradoxically enough, the “Anathematization” concerns anti-ecumenism, why was there no mention of the countless Synods and Fathers who resolutely struggled against the multifarious heresy of Papism and in fact, pronounced anathemas against it?

12. (a) Finally, the reference to the well-known Synods of the sixteenth century is equally erroneous, as well as misleading.

(b) These Synods did indeed “condemn the calendar innovation,” but they condemned that of Pope Gregory XIII, which directly affected the Orthodox *Paschalion*, and certainly not the partially implemented innovation of 1924, which did not alter the four “Stipulations” concerning Pascha, and for this reason, as the Confessor-Hierarch, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina stated, “is an issue that appears for the first time in the history of the Orthodox Church.”⁴⁶

(c) Likewise, these sixteenth-century Synods did not “cut off from the Body of the Church those who accepted this innovation,” for the simple reason that none of the Orthodox of that time accepted it; in fact, it was rejected at a pan-Orthodox level.

(d) There was certainly never any possibility of any Synod in the sixteenth century “proleptically” cutting off from the Body of the Church “those who would accept” an innovation in the distant future, because excision, when it is deemed necessary, according to St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite, is always “put into actual effect by a Synod of living,” that is, present “Bishops,” while “the imperative force of Canons remains unexecuted and does not act of itself, either immediately or before a decision.”⁴⁷

(e) This issue is extremely serious, if one takes into account that any acceptance of the erroneous idea of the automatic efficacy of Patristic and Synodal penalties and anathemas, prior to a specific ruling by a competent synodal body, would entail, for example, that the various Synods which have hitherto been convoked in

order to condemn heretics and schismatics were wrongly convoked, since all of these persons would already have been cut off from the Body of Christ, on the basis of the Apostolic anathema: “If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed”;⁴⁸ furthermore, it would entail that, in essence, all of those Christians who in other respects are truly Orthodox in outlook are already cut off from the Church and have been handed over to Satan, on the basis of the other Apostolic anathema: “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema.”⁴⁹

(f) Besides, the mere idea that these Synods held in the sixteenth century “cut off from the Body of the Church those who would” in the future accept this innovation, aside from being inherently absurd, demonstrates the perversity of those who accepted and endorsed the idea, for the following very simple reason: if it really is the case that, at the time of the calendar change in 1924, all those who accepted it—and, of course, those in communion with them—were automatically and indiscriminately cut off from the Body of the Church, then the proclamation, seventy-four years later, of an anathema against them and the ecumenists who came after them would be completely devoid of meaning, because, as is well known, the Church does not judge those outside Her, according to the Apostle Paul,⁵⁰ of whose words St. Theophylact offers an excellent interpretation: “For what have I to do to judge them also that are without?” says [Paul]; therefore, it is superfluous to apply the ordinances of God to those outside Christ’s fold; for whatever the Law says, it says to those under the Law.”⁵¹

* * *

V

The Presuppositions of Orthodox Theology

Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs:

1. By going on at such length, I have undoubtedly wearied you; but I hope that you will forgive me, because, as you will appreciate, the issue that has emerged is truly very serious.
2. We have approached only certain aspects of this issue, so that you might understand, by way of example, where an Old Calendarist jurisdiction can be led, when it does not have a correct and clear understanding of its ecclesiology, when it is not aware of its limitations, and finally, when it tackles questions of great importance in a slipshod and superficial manner, without pastoral discretion and without the requisite theological, spiritual, and intellectual qualifications.
3. To anticipate any objection you may have regarding the related condemnation of ecumenism by the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (1983): in spite of the analogous and comparable problems that were presented when that much-discussed and controversial condemnation was issued—problems which still continue to bother our Russian brethren—, it is noteworthy that the Russian Synod at least did not take this step in the full and avowed belief that she constitutes the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church; nor did she “impose” the condemnation “on any definite person.”
4. Hence, in view of these two recent documents and actions on the part of the jurisdiction of Archbishop Chrysostomos, it behooves us to delve more deeply into our ecclesiological identity; to maintain a stricter stand towards this jurisdiction, which regards us as being already officially outside the Church; and to become more missionary-minded towards our brothers in the innovationist

New Calendar Church, who expect us to act with sobriety and responsibility, in a spirit of love and humility.

5. We believe unshakably that this grave deviation on the part of the jurisdiction of Archbishop Chrysostomos, as the culmination of a series of many other deviations, is due to its inability to theologize in an Orthodox manner, primarily because it lacks the spiritual prerequisites for this, i.e., as St. Athanasios the Great puts it, “the modeling of one’s life after the Saints”;⁵² it lacks, in particular, love and humility.

6. Here are the wondrous words of the Œcumenical Luminary of Alexandria:

For the searching of the Scriptures and true knowledge of them, a good life is needed, and a pure soul, and that virtue which is according to Christ; for, without a pure mind and a modeling of one’s life after the Saints, a man cannot possibly comprehend the words of the Saints; he who wishes to comprehend the mind of those who speak of God must begin by washing and cleansing his soul by his way of life, and approach the Saints themselves by imitating their works.’⁵³

7. It is, moreover, significant that Nestorios was unable to understand Orthodox Christology, although he was a very competent theologian, because he did not have a “pure mind,” on account of his haughtiness, arrogance, and hatred for his brothers;⁵⁴ in vain did the other Luminary of the inhabited earth, St. Cyril of Alexandria, remind this heresiarch of the very clear Christology of the Symbol of Faith, which the hapless Nestorios vehemently upheld, but did not understand correctly.⁵⁵

8. Both then and at all times, and today, the Divinely inspired saying of Holy Scripture is constantly fulfilled: “For into a malicious soul wisdom shall not enter.”⁵⁶

9. A dearth of love and humility has always been the principal characteristic of the jurisdiction of Archbishop Chrysostomos, a char-

acteristic which is daily displayed in all areas and which creates problems upon problems, and for this reason his jurisdiction “has been given over to a reprobate mind.”⁵⁷

10. But let us, by the Grace of the Lord, conducting ourselves in a missionary spirit towards the “weaker” and “ailing” part of the Church, never forget that “the nature of present circumstances” “requires great *οἰκονομία*” and condescension, for “we do not wish to amputate, but to join together,” as St. Cyril puts it.
11. Let the exhortation of St. John Chrysostomos, replete with brotherly love, ever be a luminous signpost on our journey: “Spread out the net of love,” “throw out the sweet bait of compassion.”

* * *

After all this, again extending my greetings in Christ our Incarnate Savior to Your Eminences and Your Graces, I remain, with deep love in the Lord and all respect,

Your beloved brother in Christ,

Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili,
President of the Holy Synod in Resistance

Notes

1. Romans 12:2.
2. St. Basil the Great, Epistle 251, “To the People of Evææsæ,” §4, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XXXII, cols. 937C-938A.
 - See also the following epistles of St. Basil: 82, 90, 91, 113, 204, 242, 243, and 251.
 - See also St. Theodore the Studite, Epistle II.65, “To Navkratios, His Spiritual Child,” *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XCIX, col. 1288A.
3. St. Ignatios of Antioch, *Epistle to the Smyrnæans* VIII.2, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. V, col. 713B.
4. Cf. St. Clement of Rome, *First Epistle to the Corinthians* I, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. I, cols. 201B-204A.

5. See note 2.
6. Galatians 1:8, 9.
7. St. John Chrysostomos, "That We Should Not Anathematize the Living or the Dead," §3, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XLVIII, col. 948.
 - See also *Πηδάλιον* [*The Rudder*], p. 397, n. ("Prolegomena Concerning the Local Synod of Gangra").
8. Abba Barsanouphios and John, *Βίβλος ψυχωφελεστάτη* [*A Most Soul-Profiting Book*], §§700, 701, 702 (Volos: S. Schoinas, 1960), pp. 320b-321a.
 - See also *Πηδάλιον*, p. 397, n.
9. See note 7.
10. Mansi, Vol. XIII, col. 380B/*Πρακτικά τῶν Ἁγίων καὶ Οἰκουμενικῶν Συνόδων* [*Proceedings of the Holy Œcumenical Synods*], ed. Spyridon Melias (Holy Mountain: Kalyve of the Venerable Forerunner Publications, 1981), Vol. II, p. 874b (Seventh Session).
11. St. John Chrysostomos, "That We Should Not Anathematize the Living or the Dead," §3, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XLVIII, col. 948.
 - See also *Πηδάλιον*, p. 397, n.
12. St. Tarasios, Mansi, Vol. XII, col. 987C/*Πρακτικά*, Vol. II, p. 724a ("Apologetic Discourse").
 - See also *Πηδάλιον*, p. 397, n.
13. I Corinthians 16:22.
14. Theodoretos of Cyrus, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXXXII, col. 373B.
15. St. Theodore the Studite, Epistle II.6, "To a Presbyter Who Had Signed an Heretical Statement," *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XCIX, col. 1128CD.
16. *Idem*, Epistle I.49, "To Navkratios, His Spiritual Child," *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XCIX, col. 1089A, and Epistle I.48, "To Athanasios, His Spiritual Child," *ibid.*, col. 1076C.
17. St. Theophylact of Bulgaria, in his interpretation of the Apostolic injunction, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema" (I Corinthians 16:22), points out the instructive fear deriving from an anathema: "By this one word he put fear into" sinners and "in general into all those among the Corinthians who were living without regard for the teaching and tradition that he had imparted to them; for all such people have no love for the Lord" (*Patrologia Græca*, Vol. CXXIV, col. 793A).
18. St. John Chrysostomos, "That We Should Not Anathematize the Living or the Dead," §3, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XLVIII, col. 948; I Corinthians 16:22; Galatians 1:8, 9.
19. St. John Chrysostomos, "That We Should Not Anathematize the Living or the Dead," §4, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XLVIII, col. 952.
 - See also *Πηδάλιον*, p. 397, n.
20. St. Theodore the Studite, Epistle I.49, "To Navkratios, His Spiritual Child," *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XCIX, col. 1088B.
21. Cf. Abba Barsanouphios and John, *Βίβλος ψυχωφελεστάτη*, §702, p. 321a.

22. I St. Timothy 1:10; II St. Timothy 4:3; St. Titus 1:9, 2:1.
23. Πηδάλιον, p. 53, n. St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite, *Ἑομηνεΐα εἰς τὰς Ἑπτὰ Καθολικὰς Ἐπιστολάς* [*Interpretation of the Seven Catholic Epistles*], footnote on I St. John 3:1.
- With regard to St. Basil, “who maintained silence about the Divinity of the Spirit” and “dispensed his doctrines judiciously,” and, in general, with regard to the sundry “οἰκονομίαι” of the Holy Fathers, see St. Photios the Great, *Treatise Concerning the Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit, Patrologia Græca*, §§78, 66-78, Vol. CII, cols. 357B-360A, and also Epistle 1.24, “To the Metropolitan of Aquileia,” §§16-22, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. CII, cols. 344B-360A and cols. 809BC-816A.
 - See also, regarding St. Basil’s tactics in this matter and the accusations leveled against him: St. Gregory the Theologian, Oration 43, “Funeral Oration on St. Basil the Great,” §§68-69, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XXXVI, cols. 585C-589C; *idem*, *Patrologia Græca*, Epistle 58, “To Basil,” *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XXXVII, cols. 113A-117B.
24. Panagiotis K. Chrestou, “Introductory Remarks” on the Epistles of St. Basil, *Ἑλληνες Πατέρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας* (Thessaloniki: 1972), Vol. I, p. 37.
- Regarding St. Basil’s tactics, see also, more broadly, the section dealing with his “Theological and Ecclesiastical Teaching” (*ibid.*, pp. 34ff.).
25. St. Basil the Great, Epistle 113, “To the Presbyters of Tarsus,” *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XXXII, col. 528A.
26. St. Cyril of Alexandria, Epistle 56, “To Gennadios the Presbyter and Archimandrite,” *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXXVII, col. 320B.
27. *Idem*, Epistle 43, “To Rufus, the Bishop of Thessalonica,” *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXXVII, cols. 220D-221A.
28. *Idem*, Epistle 58, “To Maximos, a Deacon of Antioch,” *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXXVII, col. 321C.
29. *Idem*, Epistle 57: “To Maximos, a Deacon of Antioch,” *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXXVII, col. 321A.
30. *Idem*, Epistle 58, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXXVII, col. 321CD; I Corinthians 12:28.
31. II St. Timothy 2:23-26.
32. St. John Chrysostomos, “That We Should Not Anathematize the Living or the Dead,” §§3, 4, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XLVIII, cols. 949, 950.
33. *Ibid.*, §1, col. 947; I St. Timothy 1:7.
34. “Constitutional Charter and Regulations,” Article 1, §§1, 2, 3.
35. Fifteenth Canon of the First-Second Holy Synod of Constantinople (861, in the time of St. Photios the Great).
36. Balsamon, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. CXXXVII, col. 1068D.
37. Seventh Œcumenical Synod, Mansi, Vol. XII, col. 1118E/*Πρακτικά*, Vol. II, p. 758b (Third Session).
38. *Idem*, Mansi, Vol. XII, col. 1126B/*Πρακτικά*, Vol. II, p. 760b (Third Session).

39. "Constitutional Charter and Regulations," Article 1, §§5, 2.
40. Cf. St. John Chrysostomos, "That We Should Not Anathematize the Living or the Dead," *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XLVIII, cols. 948, 952.
41. Acts 1:14.
42. St. John Chrysostomos, "That We Should Not Anathematize the Living or the Dead," *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XLVIII, col. 947.
43. Seventh Œcumenical Synod, Mansi, Vol. XIII, col. 208C/*Πρακτικά*, Vol. II, p. 826b (Sixth Session); Mansi, Vol. XIII, col. 293D/*Πρακτικά*, Vol. II, p. 851a (Sixth Session).
44. Great Protopresbyter George Tsetsis, *Οἰκουμενικὸς Θρόνος καὶ Οἰκουμένη: Ἐπίσημα Πατριαρχικὰ Κείμενα* [*The Œcumenical Throne and the Oikoumene: Official Patriarchal Texts*] (Katerine: Tertios Publications, 1988), pp. 47-51.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
46. *Resistance or Exclusion? The Alternative Ecclesiological Approaches of Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina and Bishop Matthew of Vresthene* (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2000), p. 59 (a letter of 9 November 1937 from Metropolitan Chrysostomos to Bishop Germanos of the Cyclades).
47. *Πηδάλιον*, pp. 4-5, n. 2, p. xxxix, n. 3, §10.
48. Galatians 1:8, 9.
49. I Corinthians 16:22.
- St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite, in his interpretation of the present passage, makes these telling comments: "In writing these words, I cannot say anything other than 'woe' and 'alas' to us Christians of today! Because we do not truly love Christ, we deserve the anathema of which Paul speaks in this passage; and consequently, we deserve to be separated and excommunicated from the Church" (*Ἐρμηνεῖα Ἐπιστολῶν* [*Interpretation of the Epistles*] [Venice: 1819], Vol. I, pp. 400-401, n.).
 - Note: "we deserve": i.e., "we are not already," but "we are liable to," "we are potentially, not actually."
50. I Corinthians 5:12-13.
51. St. Theophylact, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. CXXIV, col. 628AB.
52. St. Athanasios the Great, *On the Incarnation of the Word*, §57, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XXV, cols. 196CD-197A.
53. See note 52.
54. See the article, "The Unity of Dogma and Love: From Misguided Zeal to the Cesspool of Heresy," *Orthodox Tradition*, Vol. XVI, No. 1 (1999), pp. 2-5.
55. Third Œcumenical Synod, *Πρακτικά*, Vol. I, p. 4347a (Epistle of St. Cyril to Nestorios: "I hear that some are rashly talking...").
56. Wisdom of Solomon 1:4.
57. Cf. Romans 1:28.