

NUMBER V IN THE SERIES

Contributions to a Theology of Anti–Ecumenism



THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE
ORTHODOX ECUMENISTS TO THE
INTERFAITH VENTURE AND
THEIR RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT

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2000

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The Contribution of the Orthodox Ecumenists to the Interfaith Venture and Their Responsibility for It

I. Towards a Non-Christian Future

In two past presentations, by our Most Reverend Metropolitan¹ and by our brother, Father Glykerios,² we have demonstrated clearly and indisputably how the so-called ecumenical movement has in general contributed to and participated in the interfaith venture.

Therein, we presented, in relief, the participation of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in the endeavor to pave the way for the attainment of a *global transformation* and their indirect contribution to the realization of the syncretistic vision of the “New Age.”

But are the Orthodox ecumenists without their share of responsibility for this march of the heterodox West, and, thereby, of the entire world, towards pan-religious chaos?

All of the points that have so far been made show beyond any doubt that the Orthodox are certainly responsible, both at a practical and at a theoretical level. But we deem it necessary to dwell further, albeit in brief, on this truly tragic and distressing topic.

At the outset, we should make it most emphatically clear that this fall is a fall on the part of the secularized power brokers of the local Orthodox Churches, who not only do not reflect the Charismatic Body of Christ in its totality, but who also act without its knowledge.

* * *

On June 27, 1965, a “Convocation of Religions for World Peace” met in San Francisco, in conjunction with the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations Organization in that city.

Addresses on the “religious” foundation of world peace were delivered before ten thousand spectators by the representatives of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, Protestantism, Catholicism, and—unfortunately—Orthodoxy. A two-thousand-voice interfaith choir sang hymns from all of these religions!³

How did we arrive at this point?

The witness and interpretations of the aforementioned presentations with regard to the root and starting-point of these unprecedented events are sufficiently corroborated by the inspired perspective of a contemporary Orthodox Confessor, the learned and virtuous Hieromonk Seraphim (Rose) (†1982) of America.

In his book on this subject, the late Father Seraphim made the following apposite comments exactly twenty-five years ago:

If all ‘Christian’ bodies are relative to each other, then all of them together are relative to other ‘religious’ bodies, and ‘Christian’ ecumenism can only end in a syncretic world religion.⁴

The primary goal of our Convocation this evening, in terms of both the presentations and the audiovisual documentary, and particularly in the second part, is to make it fully understood that the ecumenical movement

consistently treads its own course, with the result that it will end up becoming a pan-religious movement.

Such a result is unavoidable, because it is inherent in the very system of ecumenism. This end is to be expected without fail, since it is the “entelechy” of the secularized pan-Christian movement, which naturally leads to its “consummation,” to a non-Christian future.

In the midst of the confusion that prevails on account of ecumenism, any sense of the difference between Christianity and other religions has been so dulled, that we have reached the astonishing point—indeed, perhaps the ultimate point—of offering the Eucharist even to non-Christians, as one distinguished ecumenist has admitted!⁵

The contribution of the Orthodox ecumenists to this apostasy, then, is self-evident, and their responsibility is tremendous for all that is happening and being reported in this regard, even in the land of Greece.

Most people are probably unaware that last October there was talk in a newspaper article of “a new ecumenical era in eternal Greece,” and an “assortment of cultural institutions” was proposed, including the establishment of a “Church of the World’s Religions on the Holy Mountain”!⁶

Who paved the way for this nightmarish future?

The Theanthropic Identity of the Church is in Danger of Being Destroyed

The contribution of the Orthodox ecumenists to the cultivation of a syncretistic ethos, theologically, practically, and institutionally, and their responsibility for cultivating this ethos, are truly painful subjects.

Those Orthodox who advocate interfaith dialogues place great emphasis on the universality of the “Christian outlook”; they regard the “universality of Christianity” as the most powerful conduit for the “new spirit in interfaith relations between the peoples of the world”; and they abhor “the temptation of Christian introversion.”

Thus, the ecumenists, fearing this “one-sidedness of an introverted (Christian) self-sufficiency,” have been attempting, since 1920, to conform to the contemporary demands of the world, without taking into serious consideration the danger of deception, which leads them to preach “another gospel.”

Deception works slowly and methodically, under many guises, to sunder the essential continuity of the unique message of Orthodoxy and to destroy the Theanthropic identity of the Church, which is not “of this world.”

Orthodoxy, the charismatic Body of Christ, lives out its universality in the Holy Spirit and is not afraid of having relations with non-Christians; but it knows the limits of these relations, as they are ensured by the Tradition of the Fathers and the Synods, through the Hesychastic and Mysteriological (sacramental) experience of the Church.

Front cover photo: The “International Conference on Peace and Religious Tolerance” (Constantinople, February 7–9, 1994). At this Conference, Patriarch Bartholomew declared: “Although none of us—Roman Catholics, Orthodox or Protestants, Jews or Moslems—, can deny the differences that exist between us, yet *we cannot deny the need for alliance and coöperation*, if we are to contribute to steering our world far away from the bloody abyss of extreme nationalism and religious bigotry.” At the Conference: Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, in the midst of heterodox and adherents of other faiths who participated in it.