

## Why the True Orthodox Are Truly Orthodox: Fr. Maximus (Maretta)



*Fr. Maximus (Marretta), of Holy Ascension Monastery, 2008, during his ordination to deacon at the parish of St. Maximos the Confessor, Owego, NY, 2008.*

*Photo Source: <http://www.hotca.org/news/miscellaneous/98-fr-maximus-ordained-a-deacon>*

### *A Rejoinder to Fr. Basil Gregoriates and an Apology for Breaking Communion with Ecumenist Bishops*

In every age the devil tempts the faithful by various means: persecutions, foreign invasions, the lure of worldly seduction. Among his most effective snares are heresy and schism which, by separating Christians from the Church, lead them away from Christ and into spiritual deception and apostasy. Long is the list of heresies which have tried the Church over the centuries: Arianism, Nestorianism, Monophysitism, Iconoclasm, Papism, Protestantism, and many others. In our day

a new heresy has appeared which seeks to bring all these together and for this reason is aptly referred to as a "pan-heresy." This is Ecumenism, which we may briefly define as the belief that sects which the Church had previously considered heretical and cut off from her are in fact in some way still part of her. The threat Ecumenism poses to the Church is perhaps greater than that of any heresy of the past, for two reasons. First, by far the larger part of the Church has succumbed to its temptation. Second, the effect of Ecumenism is to negate the underlying conception of "Orthodoxy" and "heresy" as the Church has understood them from her very inception.

Despite the spread of Ecumenism, in most local Churches a remnant of the faithful has remained steadfast in Orthodoxy. These faithful Christians are known as the "True Orthodox," the "Traditionalist Orthodox," or sometimes as the "Old Calendarists." The latter name is used because one of the first manifestations of Ecumenism was the change of the Church's liturgical calendar to correspond to that of the Papists and Protestants. Since the Papal calendar had long been condemned by the Church, the Orthodox rejected it when the New Calendarists adopted it, and they severed communion with the bishops who promoted it.

Nearly as disturbing as the heresy of Ecumenism itself is the fact that many individuals with otherwise Orthodox beliefs have remained under Ecumenist bishops, even though they vigorously disagree with these bishops on matters of faith. For the sake of convenience, we may style these individuals as "conservative New Calendarists," although perhaps they would be better described as "conservative adherents of World Orthodoxy," since many of them still follow the Patristic calendar. Under one name or another, they have a long history of failing to support those who follow the traditions of the Fathers, of assailing them as schismatic, and of claiming that although Ecumenism is wrong, it is not so wrong as to warrant separating from bishops who preach and foster it. A number of diatribes have been written by these people against the faithful who have broken communion with the Ecumenist bishops. Perhaps the most widely circulated is an article written several years ago by Fr. Basil Grigoriates entitled ["Anti-Patristic: The Stance of the Zealot Old Calendarists."](#) This polemic sums up virtually all the arguments used against the Old Calendarists; thus to refute it entails a full justification of the position of the Orthodox and a confutation of its detractors.

It is said in Holy Scripture, "Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee; give instruction unto a wise man, and he will be yet wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning."<sup>[1]</sup> It is the author's hope that the readers of this

rejoinder, being wise, will understand the errors of Fr. Basil and those of like mind, will sever communion with the Ecumenists, and will adopt the stand of the Holy Fathers.

## **Part I. Canonical Considerations: the Status of Uncondemned Heretics.**

Before examining any particular heresy, it will be useful to establish the Church's teaching on heresy in general; especially since this forms the crux of Fr. Basil's argument. Are heretics, before they are condemned by a council, part of the Church? And is it necessary, permissible, or forbidden to have communion with them? In addressing these questions, we turn to three sources of authority: the canons of the Church, the writings of the Holy Fathers, and the Church's actual practice in history. Here we shall examine the two most relevant canons. The first and less explicit is the 31st Apostolic Canon, which forbids the Christian from breaking away from his bishop except when the bishop has offended against "piety and justice." Since the Ecumenist bishops have offended in many ways against piety and justice (even when these terms are defined in the narrowest sense possible), this canon, despite its general language, by itself justifies the Orthodox in severing communion with them.<sup>[2]</sup> The second and more explicit canon is the 15th of the First-Second Council, which states:

As for those persons...who on account of some heresy condemned by the holy councils or Fathers withdraw themselves from communion with their president who preaches heresy publicly and with a bare head in the Church, such persons are not only not subject to any canonical penalty on account of their having walled themselves off from any and all communion with the one called a bishop before any conciliar or synodical verdict has been rendered, but on the contrary, they shall be deemed worthy to enjoy the honor which befits them among Orthodox Christians. For they have defied not bishops, but pseudo-bishops and pseudo-teachers; and they have not sundered the unity of the Church with any schism, but on the contrary, have been sedulous to rescue the Church from schisms and divisions.<sup>[3]</sup>

This ruling provides the primary canonical (as distinct from patristic or historical) basis for the position of the Old Calendar Church vis-à-vis World Orthodoxy. Much of the polemic against the Orthodox Christians of the Old Calendar consists in denigrating, marginalizing, trivializing, or simply ignoring this canon, as we shall see from the following assertions of Fr. Basil.

**Assertion 1. Heretics who have been condemned by a council are outside the Church and no Orthodox Christian may have communion with them. Those who do so fall under the same strictures as the heretics themselves.**

Reply: This initial and valid assertion is introduced by Fr. Basil not to any positive purpose, but with a view to discredit those who break communion with a heretic who has not been synodically condemned. In fact, the passages he cites from the Fathers to support this valid assertion do not refer to "condemned heretics," but simply to heretics in general. The texts he quotes make no distinction between heretics who have been condemned by a council and those who have not. And not surprisingly, for there are *no canons or patristic texts which state that one must remain in communion with heretics who have not yet been condemned by a council*. The contrary rather is true: the Scriptures and the Fathers state that a heretic, simply by reason of his heresy, is self-condemned. St. Paul, in his epistle to Titus, declares explicitly: "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself."<sup>[4]</sup> This is amply expanded upon in the writings of such Fathers as St. Cyprian of Carthage, who in the 3rd century laid out the Church's definitive teaching on the subject. He states that a heretic is "of himself condemned,<sup>[5]</sup> and banished outside the fountains of paradise."<sup>[6]</sup>

Again,

If everywhere heretics are called nothing other than adversaries and antichrists, if they are pronounced to be people to be avoided, *and to be perverted and condemned of their own selves*, wherefore is it that they should not be thought worthy of being condemned by us since it is evident from the apostolic testimony that *they are of their own selves condemned?*<sup>[7]</sup>

St. Cyprian does not allow for several faiths to coexist simultaneously within the Church. The Church has only one faith. Nor does he allow heretics to be within the Church: if one becomes a heretic, by definition he is found outside the Church. St. Firmilian of Caesarea confirms this doctrine, writing, "All of [the heretics], it is evident, *were self-condemned*, and have declared against themselves an inevitable sentence before the Day of Judgment."<sup>[8]</sup>

St. Cyprian hammers this point over and over: heretics are outside the Church by virtue of their heresy. Thus,

The Apostle Paul explains, teaching and enjoining that a heretic must be avoided...as condemned of himself. For that man will be guilty of his own ruin, who, not being cast

out by the bishop, but of his own accord deserting from the Church is by heretical presumption condemned of himself. <sup>[9]</sup>

There are many examples from church history and the lives of the saints that illustrate that the Church views heretics as being outside the Church even before they are condemned by a council. In the *Disputation with Pyrrhus* of St. Maximus the Confessor, we read that the Monothelete Patriarch Pyrrhus recanted of his error, and thus he "united himself to the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church." <sup>[10]</sup> This took place in 645, *before* the local councils of Carthage (held later in the same year) and of Rome (held in 649), and long before the Sixth Ecumenical council of 681, all of which anathematized Monotheletism. <sup>[11]</sup> Again, St. Maximus declares concerning the Monothelites, They have repeatedly *excommunicated themselves from the Church* and are completely unstable in the faith. Additionally, they have been cut off and stripped of the priesthood by the local council held in Rome. What Mysteries, then, can they perform? Or what spirit descends on those whom they ordain? <sup>[12]</sup>

Likewise, St. Hypatius, abbot of a monastery in Constantinople, said of the heretic Nestorius, "From the time I learned that he said unrighteous things about the Lord I have no longer been in communion with him and I do not commemorate his name, *for he is not a bishop.*" <sup>[13]</sup> This was pronounced before Nestorius had been condemned by the Third Ecumenical Council. Again, many years before the 7th Ecumenical Council, St. Stephen the New told the Iconoclast Bishop Theodosius,

Such are your decrees against the veneration of the holy icons, which were promulgated not by sons of the Catholic Church but by godless adulterers. Certain is the prophet's saying: *The rulers of the people were assembled together* with false shepherds and hirelings against Christ and His precious icon! <sup>[14]</sup>

In fact, the entire first session of the Seventh Ecumenical Council was devoted to how to receive the Iconoclasts back into the Church. The heretics were assumed to be already outside of the Church prior to the beginning of the council, as the petitions of the heretical bishops make clear:

Theodore, Bishop of Myra, was then brought forward. He said, "Even I, a sinner and unworthy, having made deep inquiry and research and, having chosen the better part, do entreat of God and your Holiness that among the rest I also, though a sinner, may be united to the Catholic Church." Euthymius, Bishop of Sardis said, "Blessed be God, who hath united him to the Catholic Church." Then John, Legate of the See of Antioch said,

"Most holy father, it is a question with many of us in what manner we ought to receive those who return from heresy; wherefore, we request this holy and sacred Council to give order that the books of the holy fathers may be produced, that we may search and examine them, and so obtain perfect certainty as to the manner in which these persons also should be received, for our mind is not made up on this matter."<sup>[15]</sup>

The Council then read many testimonies of how heretics had been received in the past, without discriminating between those who had been condemned by a council and those who had not. This shows quite clearly that the Fathers of the Council made no distinction between the two in this connection. In the course of the conversation, John, Vicar of the See of Antioch, declared, "'Heresy separates every man from the Church.' The Holy Council replied, 'That is very evident.'"<sup>[16]</sup> This observation is still evident to the True Orthodox, but Fr. Basil and company seem to have forgotten it.

At the end of the deliberation, the Holy Council said,

"Let the Bishops now step forward and read their several recantations, as they now desire to enter the Catholic Church." Tarasius replied, "Let them read [their recantations], now that these two points in question have been fully examined—namely, the reception of those who come from the ranks of heresy to the Holy Catholic Church, and also those who have been ordained by heretics."<sup>[17]</sup>

The heretics read their recantations, and Tarasius said, "As they have by their recantation made known their profession, let their reception take place at some future session, if there be no other cause of hindrance."<sup>[18]</sup>

Finally, the Council, in its Definition of faith, officially declared the Orthodox position on heretics who have not yet been condemned by a council, stating, "For they [the Iconoclasts] have dared to slander the God-befitting beauty of the sacred offerings, being called 'priests,' while in reality they are not."<sup>[19]</sup>

Since the above proceedings of the Seventh Ecumenical Council reflect, at the highest level, the Church's understanding of the status of heretics uncondemned by a council, that understanding must be regarded as indisputable for the Orthodox. To maintain, as does Fr. Basil, that such uncondemned heretics remain members of the Church completely contradicts the stance of the Seventh Council.

**Assertion 2. An Ecumenical Council must condemn those who are preaching a heresy in order for the Orthodox to be justified in separating communion from the heretics.**

Reply: A direct refutation of this assertion on our part is unnecessary, as Fr. Basil abandons his own contention here when he later concedes that the

condemnation of a local council suffices to justify a break with heretics. Then he goes further, admitting that in certain cases communion with heretics was actually severed before synodal condemnation of any sort, and that this is allowed by the 15th Canon of the First-Second Council. Nevertheless, he qualifies these admissions by pretending that "no sacred canon or holy Fathers ever *imposed* the interruption of ecclesiastical communion with heretics on Orthodox followers prior to a synodal decision." To this contention we shall return shortly.

From the above it is clear that, while he does not shrink from labeling the Orthodox as schismatic because they have separated themselves from the Ecumenist bishops before those bishops have been synodically condemned, Fr. Basil is quite confused as to what the real criteria are that would validate such a break. He allows that in the past the Orthodox justly separated themselves from heretics in circumstances similar to those prevailing today. But he denies that the present-day Orthodox may do so.

Now, the 15th Canon of the First-Second Council praises those who break communion with heretics. From this it is evident that such people act rightly, not wrongly; and that it is a grievous sin to denounce them for following the explicit injunctions of the canons and holy Fathers. Two of the Church's primary modes of explication are encomium and vituperation. The Church praises those who lead her children towards God; she reviles those who turn her children away from God. Her approval of those who wall themselves off from heretical bishops is powerful testimony to the fact that the stand of the Old Calendarists is encouraged by holy Tradition.

It is evident from even the most cursory reading of the canon that the Orthodox are *permitted* to separate from a bishop who preaches heresy. From this, it follows that whenever bishops openly profess heresy, the Orthodox are *automatically* justified from breaking communion with them. And here we arrive at the central point. The position of the Orthodox Church is in actuality much stronger: *it is not only praiseworthy, but absolutely obligatory to separate from heretical bishops.*

A careful reading shows that this is precisely what the canon demands, for it labels hierarchs who promulgate heresy as "pseudo-bishops" and "pseudo-teachers." Such language can only mean that it is these bishops who have "divided" the Church; that is, they have fallen away from the Church. *For this*



*reason they are no longer bishops at all, but "pseudo-bishops": bishops in name only.* To put it more simply, if they were true and Orthodox bishops, then they would not be false bishops. The fact that the canon resorts to such strong language mandates the Orthodox to separate from the heretical "bishops." *For in order to belong to the Church, one must be under bishops who themselves are part of the Church.*

It is spiritually disastrous to remain in communion with a bishop who does not rightly divide the word of truth. The bishop teaches and leads the people to Christ. But if he teaches falsely, he leads the people away from Christ. He is the icon of Christ, and it is as an *Orthodox* bishop that he teaches in the stead of Christ. To advocate remaining in communion with a *heretical* bishop simply because he has not been condemned by a council is to subvert or even render null the entire meaning of hierarchy in the Church. The virtue or faith of the laity does not correct the bishops' lack of Orthodox faith; rather, the bishops' misbelief pollutes the laity. In practice, we see this taking place in Ecumenist churches, where the laity has been drenched in Ecumenist propaganda for so long that the majority of them does not have an inkling of what is the true Orthodox teaching on what constitutes the Church. But even where the process is not so naked and advanced, the very fact that the laity accept these pseudo-bishops necessarily means that they tacitly accept and acquiesce to the misbelief of their bishops. It is in this context that St. Cyprian of Carthage writes,

We find that in such wickedness, not only the leaders and originators, but also the partakers, are destined to punishment, unless they have separated themselves from the communion of the wicked; as the Lord by Moses commands, and says, '*Separate yourselves from the tents of these most hardened men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in their sins.*' (Num. XVI, 26.) And what the Lord had threatened by Moses He fulfilled, that whosoever had not separated himself from Korah, and Dathan, and Abiram, immediately suffered punishment for his impious communion. By which example it is shown and proved, that all will be liable to guilt as well as its punishment, who with irreligious boldness mingle themselves with schismatics in opposition to prelates and priests...all are absolutely joined with the leaders in punishment, who have been contaminated by their crime. <sup>[20]</sup>

Beyond this, let us consider a few of the countless perplexities that arise if it is permissible but not obligatory to break communion with heretical bishops. Side by side, yet out of communion with each other, two groups will exist: one headed by Orthodox bishops, the other by heretics. Which of these is the Church? Or if both together constitute the Church, ought they not be in communion? But then it would be praiseworthy for the Orthodox to be in communion with heretics,



whereas we have already seen that the canons praise the Orthodox for *breaking* communion with heretics. Again, if heretical bishops are really still Orthodox because they have not been synodically condemned, then how could one dare to break communion with them as did the saints? And how can a faction headed by openly heretical bishops be the Church, which, as the Apostle teaches, is the *pillar and foundation of the truth?*<sup>[21]</sup>

Interesting and important these perplexities may be. Nevertheless they are rendered largely irrelevant with respect to the current situation, since the heresies in question have in fact already been synodically condemned. The Gregorian Calendar was anathematized synodically in 1583 and multiple times thereafter, while Ecumenism was condemned by the Russian Church Abroad in 1983. Now, some would imagine that anathemas laid down in the past have to be "re-imposed" by a modern council in order to be valid.<sup>[22]</sup> If this were the case, we would have to affirm that were someone to become a Monophysite or Roman Catholic today, he would remain part of the Church until a contemporary synod of bishops re-imposed the ancient anathemas on him which is ridiculous. This would mean that truth has an expiration date; and that the Church, in order to ensure that no heretic remained inside her, would have to hold an Ecumenical Council every year...or even more frequently, perhaps. But the truth of the matter is that an anathema, once pronounced, is forever valid against all who fall under it. Its efficaciousness does not depend upon its being reactivated by a new council every time an individual or group espouses the heresy in question. This is supported by the acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, which declared, "To those who have taught, do teach, or will teach that there is one will and one energy in the incarnate dispensation of Jesus Christ, Anathema!" In other words, not just the living heretics, but all who at any time in the future adopt the heresy are under the anathema. This explains why the Church holds the anathemas pronounced in the 16th century against those who accept the New Calendar to be just as valid and binding today as when they were issued; this is why contemporary New Calendarists must be regarded as falling under the already existing anathemas declaring whoever accepts the New Calendar to be outside the Church.

**Assertion 3. Between the first appearance of the heresy and its final condemnation a period of time may lapse, during which time the Church strives to bring the wayward bishops back to a correct confession of faith.**

Reply: It is self-evident that in the very nature of things time must elapse between

the appearance of a heresy and its condemnation. Obviously, the condemnation would not precede the heresy's invention. Somehow from this obvious fact Fr. Basil draws the unfounded conclusion that it is irresponsible to break communion with heretical bishops before they are synodically condemned. What the correct course of action is has already been shown.

At this point an interesting question arises: exactly when should synodal condemnation of heretics occur? To this, Fr. Basil cannot provide a coherent answer. He can only insist that both the breaking of communion and the synodal condemnation must be postponed as long as possible. This assertion (it is hardly an argument) may easily be reduced to absurdity along the following lines: It is better to be inside the Church than outside the Church. But (according to Fr. Basil) a heretic remains inside the Church until a synod condemns him. Thus, the Church should always refrain from condemning heretical bishops, so as not to put them and their innocent followers outside the Church. For, according to Fr. Basil's theology, the ecclesial status of heretics depends upon the whims of the Orthodox—upon whether the Orthodox choose to condemn a given heresy—and not on the beliefs of the heretics themselves. Since Fr. Basil would exclude the heretics from membership in the Church solely on the basis of their condemnation by a council rather than on their confession of faith, such a council in theory might never convene, if the Orthodox wanted to continue their "economy" towards the heretics forever. All this because Fr. Basil insists upon an imaginary dichotomy between an Orthodox confession and membership in the Church. <sup>[23]</sup>

Now, Fr. Basil explains the inevitable transitional period preceding the severance of communion with heretics as an exercise in economy. It is indeed prudence and legitimate economy to refrain from separating from bishops until one has ascertained definitely that they are heretics. But if, in this context, economy is understood as an imperative to maintain unity at all cost, then the Church's self-understanding has been fundamentally violated. Unity has been placed above truth; the order of theology has been inverted. For unity proceeds from truth and not truth from unity; the latter idea being the wishful thinking of the Ecumenists. At this point, Fr. Basil is seen to be advocating not a legitimate economy, but a dangerous abuse; actually, a sub-species of the heresy of Ecumenism. For Ecumenism is spiritual fellowship with those who believe other than we do. Therefore, those who say they reject Ecumenism, but maintain communion with the Ecumenists most exactly fit the definition of Ecumenists themselves!

The primary reason for the delay preceding severance of communion with a

heresy is to allow time for assessment of the heresy itself. Sometimes it is unclear whether a heresy has definitely established itself among those who until recently had been members of the Church. Before the Orthodox break communion with heretics, several things must happen. First, the Orthodox learn that a heresy is in fact being preached. They look for positive proof of heresy, and do not make a decision based on innuendo. While this may seem obvious, it is difficult for a modern reader to conceive of the slowness of travel and the difficulty of communications in the ancient and medieval world, where information could take months, even years to reach one region from another, and often was transmitted in garbled form. This fact alone explains many of the delays in breaking communion with heretics in the past. Next, the Orthodox, both the clergy and the fullness of the faithful, but especially the saints, ascertain whether an actual heresy is being promulgated, or whether there is merely some incidental abuse taking place. In addition, they determine whether the heresy is being preached deliberately, or simply out of ignorance or a careless use of language. Finally, the Orthodox publicly rebuke the heretics, and the heretics reply by rejecting or at least ignoring the Orthodox teaching on the matter in question.

These steps indicate that breaking communion with heretics is a process, one that may take years to complete. Indeed, one part of the Church may come to an understanding of the issues before another part, and break communion with the heretics first, so that there may even be a time when one local church is simultaneously in communion both with the heretics and with the more zealous, perceptive, or well informed Orthodox who have already broken communion with the heretics. Sometimes also the successor to a bishop who has declared a heresy retracts the heresy, only for it to be reinstated by his successor; or a bishop publicly honors clergy who are preaching heresy, without himself espousing any definite heretical position, and so forth, all of which creates confusion and further retards (or hastens, as the case may be) the time it takes the Orthodox to break communion with the heretical hierarchy. The process of division may often be protracted, and may only enter the wider conscience of the Church gradually. Obviously, if the modern quickening of the pace of life in general and of communications in particular would have any effect in this sphere, it would accelerate the speed at which the Church recognizes heresy and reacts to it.

Fr. Basil, however, takes this period of time in which the Church comes to understand that a heresy being preached, and extrapolates from it a rule

whereby the faithful, who fully understand the erroneousness of the heresy in question, are required to stay in communion with the heretics. This is a perversion, a dishonest and misleading interpretation of history that twists the actions of the holy Fathers into meaning the exact opposite of what they intended.

**Assertion 4. It is impermissible to break communion over the violation of the canons (such as praying with heretics, etc.) and not over a heresy *per se*.**

Reply: This statement may or may not be true, depending upon exact circumstances (a discussion which could itself be the subject of a treatise). But even if we assume the assertion to be true in the present case, it is nonetheless irrelevant, because we have broken communion with the New Calendarists and Ecumenists precisely because they are heretics, and not merely because they flagrantly violate the canons.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that canons are written with various aims and presuppositions. Some canons deal with morality, others with administration, and still others with proper Church order. Certain canons, however, address the relationship of Christians with heretics or pagans: these canons are not merely rules for Church order, but are practical expressions of the Church's ecclesiology and self-understanding. To break canons such as these indicates a lack of understanding or even a denial of Orthodox ecclesiology. In particular, the Church through a number of canons forbids praying with heretics or accepting their baptism. These canons translate into real-life terms the Patristic doctrine of the Church; that is, that the Church is truly the Body of Christ, and that as Christ is one and in Him there is no division, so also the Church is one and there can be no division of it into opposing parts. But to pray with heretics and accept their sacraments is to recognize that they are part of the same Body, for Christian unity is wrought in the Mysteries and made manifest in worship. The Ecumenists' violation of the canons in question is proof in practice of their heresy, since the fundamental supposition of Ecumenism is that various heretical bodies are in some real (albeit imperfect) way part of the Church. When a heretic implements his false belief by violating the canons which are designed to hinder his heresy, it becomes doubly manifest that he is a heretic.

## **Part II. The New Calendar**

The issue of the Church's calendar dates back to the earliest centuries of Christianity. At that time there were very few feasts of saints, except for local celebrations: the calendar was used primarily to determine the date of Pascha and its attendant feasts. In the beginning the second century, a controversy arose concerning the practice of certain churches in Asia Minor of celebrating Pascha on the same day as the Jews (the 14th of the month of Nisan), and not on the following Sunday together with the other Christian churches. The issue was important because the Church expresses its inward unity through a common celebration of feasts. The lack of a common celebration ultimately betrayed a lack of a common faith. This led Pope Victor of Rome to excommunicate the aberrant churches. Eventually the Church declared that the "Quartodecimans" (i.e. "celebrators of the 14th day") were heretics, and were to be received back into the Church through chrismation. Canon VII of the Council of Laodicea declares:

Persons converted from heresies, that is... Quartodecimans...shall not be received until they have anathematized every heresy, and particularly that in which they were held... and having been anointed with the holy Chrism, shall so communicate in the holy Mysteries. <sup>[24]</sup>

Canon VII of the Second Ecumenical Council also testifies that Quartodecimanism was reckoned a heresy:

Those who from heresy turn to Orthodoxy...we receive according to the following method and custom...Quartodecimans...we receive upon their giving a written renunciation and anathematizing every heresy...Thereupon, they are first sealed or anointed with the holy oil... <sup>[25]</sup>

Finally, Canon XCV of the Quinisext Council, which also possesses Ecumenical authority, declared,

Quartodecimans...we receive on their presentation of certificates and their anathematization of every heresy which does not hold as does the holy Apostolic Church of God: then first of all we anoint them with holy chrism on their foreheads, eyes, nostrils, mouth, and ears; and as we seal them we say, "The seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit." <sup>[26]</sup>

The Quartodecimans were guilty of nothing other than using a different calendar from the rest of the Church—a calendar which they claimed had been given them by the Apostle John the Theologian himself—yet the Church utterly cut them off

and considered them to be heretics. St. Hippolytus testifies to the purity of their faith in all other respects:

Certain other ones, contentious by nature...say that Pascha should be kept on the fourteenth day of the first month, according to the commandment of the Law, regardless of what day [of the week] it may occur...In other respects, however, these persons consent to all the traditions delivered to the Church by the Apostles.<sup>[27]</sup>

Anatolius, another early writer, likewise testifies concerning the Quartodecimans: "The one party, indeed, kept the Paschal day on the fourteenth of the first month—in accordance with the Gospel, as they understood it. They added nothing of an extraneous kind, but kept the rule of faith through all things."<sup>[28]</sup>

In other words, a disagreement about Church order ultimately came to be regarded as a heresy. Though the Quartodecimans were Orthodox with respect to every dogma and deviated only in their particular reckoning of Pascha, they were cut off from the Church as heretics when they refused to submit to the judgment of the local and ecumenical councils. So much were they considered heretics that they were received by chrismation, and not merely by written renunciation, which was permitted to Monophysites and Nestorians, who are indubitable heretics in the full dogmatic sense. If the Quartodecimans were reckoned heretics for following a calendar tradition established by St. John the Theologian, then what of the New Calendarists, who follow a calendar devised by the Papists and repeatedly condemned by the entire Church?

The First Ecumenical Council definitively fixed the date for Pascha, but some of the western Churches, due to poor communications, continued to use outdated systems of calculating the feast. Most of the local churches corrected themselves when they realized their error, but the Celtic Churches in the British Isles refused to adopt the Paschalion (the calendar system for calculating Pascha) used by the Church Universal. A heated controversy arose between the proponents of each side, with the result that the Church ultimately considered the British churches schismatic until they accepted the correct calendar.

In 1583 Pope Gregory VIII created a new calendar, which he imposed on the Roman Catholic world as the sole calendar to be used for both secular and ecclesiastical purposes. He then called upon the Orthodox and the Protestants to adopt his new calendar. Both the Orthodox and the Protestants rebuffed him, and the Orthodox Church proceeded to hold three Pan-Orthodox Councils which anathematized the New Calendar and any who should dare to adopt it. The first of these three councils, which convened without delay in 1583, drew up a list of

Papist errors, which were then anathematized. The seventh article of the *Sigillion* (resolution of the council) declared:

Whosoever does not follow the customs of the Church which the seven Holy Ecumenical Councils have decreed, and the Holy Pascha and calendar which they have enacted well for us to follow, but wants to follow the newly invented Paschalion and the New Calendar of the atheist astronomers of the Pope; and opposing them, wishes to overthrow and destroy the doctrines and customs of the Church which we have inherited from our Fathers, let any such have the anathema and let him be outside of the Church and the Assembly of the Faithful.

The New Calendarists clearly fall under this anathema, and it is for this reason that those who have remained loyal to Orthodoxy reject communion with the New Calendarists. The resolutions of this council have never been abrogated by a council of equal or greater authority. These resolutions must be binding; for if local Churches can overturn rulings of the Church Universal at will, the part becomes greater than the whole and the catholicity of the Church disappears. The innovation of an inferior council overrules the long-established Orthodox tradition explicitly defended and imposed by the superior, Pan-Orthodox Council; and the whole concept of tradition and authority in the Church loses its connection to the conciliar process.

**Assertion 5. The Old Calendarists justify their separation from the New Calendar church by accusing that church of accepting the heresy of Ecumenism. But historically they split off not because of Ecumenism, but because of the change of calendar, which is not a heresy. Therefore, even if Ecumenism is a heresy, the Old Calendarists are still schismatic, because they split off for entirely different reasons; and for them to use Ecumenism to justify an earlier schism is revisionist history.**

Reply: The New Calendar of its very nature promotes schism and violates the unity of the Church, such that those who adopt the New Calendar are intrinsically in a state of schism from those who retain the Church's calendar. It is also in and of itself potentially heretical, because it is an alteration of a sacred symbol that the Fathers have handed down to us. The Church everywhere expresses sacred reality through symbols. Symbols are created things which represent that which is uncreated, thus making the uncreated and divine intelligible to us. They do not represent God's essence, since the divine essence is entirely inexpressible and super-exalted above all reality, but they point the way to actualizing the divine in our life by portraying His energies. That is, symbols show us how and by what



mental conceptions we may become receptacles of God's grace and indwelling energy.

The Church uses verbal and written symbols (often adapted from classical philosophy) to signify truths concerning the Godhead, the Incarnation, and other doctrines. For example, we say that God is one in essence but three in hypostases, although the reality this formula attempts to express is in fact infinitely loftier than this verbal expression. We also borrow symbols from poetry and metaphor, such as when we say that "God is a consuming fire." Although He is in actuality not a physical fire at all, such a formula creates the correct conception in our minds, which God knows is most useful for us in the spiritual life; for He works in those He deems worthy in a manner likened unto fire. In the same way, the Church's calendar, according to the Fathers,<sup>[29]</sup> is an icon of the eternal worship of God in heaven. The Church expresses the everlasting aspect of the age to come by arranging her services in a series of cycles, inasmuch as a circle is an image of that which does not end. Each of these cycles moves in perfect concordance with one another, producing a rhythm that brings the soul into harmony with itself, with its fellow members in Christ, and with the incarnate Word Himself. However, when the calendar is arbitrarily altered to conform to a heretical model, this series of cycles is disrupted, and a spiritual discordance results. Perhaps the most outrageous example of this in the present application is how the New Calendar shortens the Apostles' Fast—sometimes even eliminating it altogether—thereby depriving the faithful of one of the basic tools used to advance in the spiritual life.<sup>[30]</sup>

Every aspect of the Church's self-expression be it theology, poetry, liturgy, calendar, architecture, music, iconography, the sacraments, or anything else—is a symbol of heavenly realities and as such fundamentally unalterable; for a correct symbol leads us to worship God correctly and follow the commandments properly, while an incorrect symbol leads us away from God. If a symbol is ever legitimately altered, or if the Church allows for several variants on the same theme, this is because the saints understood that there are several different symbols capable of expressing the same reality. But if a symbol is altered without the approval of the saints—or worse, against the explicit and consistent condemnation of the universal Church—then that innovation must be rejected as destructive to the soul.

In any case, the New Calendar was introduced precisely to foster Ecumenism. This is readily apparent from the fact that the first official document issued by an

Orthodox patriarchate endorsing the New Calendar was also the first public declaration of Ecumenist beliefs and schemes. In 1920 the Patriarchate of Constantinople published an encyclical entitled "To the Churches of Christ Wheresoever They Might Be." This encyclical presented a list of eleven proposals to further the "Union of the Churches," the very first of which was the adoption of a single calendar for all the churches, Orthodox and heretical, to celebrate feasts simultaneously. Three years later, Patriarch Meletios Metaxakis of Constantinople, a high-ranking Freemason and radical Ecumenist, convened a "Pan-Orthodox Congress"—attended by representatives of only three Orthodox Churches—which recommended that in order to modernize the Church and achieve union with the Western denominations, the Church ought to adopt the Gregorian Calendar and Paschalion, drastically reduce the length of fasts and church services, and abolish clerical garb. The next year the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Churches of Greece and Romania adopted the New Calendar. The advocates of the New Calendar in the 1920's made no attempt to hide the purpose of the calendar change: they explicitly declared, both officially and privately, that the reason for adopting the New Calendar was to facilitate union with the Western churches.<sup>[31]</sup> This fact was known to the Old Calendarists of the time, and it was in large measure because the calendar change was the first step in the union with the Papists and Anglicans that the Orthodox rejected it. Indeed, the very text of the 1583 condemnation of the New Calendar recognizes that those who favor changing the calendar are precisely those who want the Orthodox Church to unite with the Papacy. So it is idle to argue that the issue of Ecumenism did not arise until decades after the calendar change. The two go hand-in-hand.

**Assertion 6. The condemnation of the New Calendar by the Pan-Orthodox Councils of the 16th century do not apply to the modern New-Calendarists, since the modern New-Calendarists have only changed the Menologion,<sup>[32]</sup> not the Paschalion as well.<sup>[34]</sup>**

Reply: Anyone who reads the text of the condemnations can see that these councils condemn not only those who adopt the errors of the Latins all together, but those who accept even one of them individually. Such an error is the new Menologion. If one were to claim that the Church can accept the new Menologion as long as it does not accept the new Paschalion, then by the same logic, one would have to confess that the Church can accept Papal supremacy or the azymes,<sup>[33]</sup> as long as it does not simultaneously accept the Filioque. But away with such absurdity! The wording of the text puts the Paschalion and the

Menologion on precisely the same footing; and indeed, there is no reason to judge the two according to different standards, since both are integral and necessary expressions of the inner life of Church.

It should be noted that the Churches of Finland and Estonia, which have adopted the New Paschalion, certainly fall under the condemnation not only of the councils of the 16th century which declared them "outside the Church and the assembly of the faithful," but also of the First Ecumenical Council which established the Paschalion and forbade anyone to celebrate Pascha with the Jews (as occasionally happens on the Papal Paschalion.) Therefore according to the dicta accepted by the New Calendarists themselves, one ought to break communion with those two churches.

**Assertion 7. The New Calendar used by the Orthodox Church is not the Gregorian Calendar, but the Revised Julian Calendar. It differs from the Gregorian Calendar in that it is slightly more accurate (having only 97 leap years as opposed to 100 every 400 years.) Thus the Orthodox who follow the Revised Julian Calendar do not fall under the anathemas against the Gregorian Calendar.**

Reply: The New Calendar is functionally identical to the Gregorian Calendar anathematized in 1583. It differs only in taking the principle behind the Gregorian Calendar a step *further* away from the Julian Calendar. That is, the "atheist astronomers" of the Pope (to use the phrase of the anathema of 1583) invented a new calendar because, unlike the holy Fathers, they felt that astronomical accuracy was more important than tradition or the unity of the Church. Following in the Pope's footsteps, the New Calendarists likewise ignored tradition and the unity of the Orthodox Church in favor of astronomical accuracy and unity with heretics. But since Greek intellectuals of the 1920's suffered from an inferiority complex vis--vis the West, they altered the Gregorian Calendar slightly to make it even more accurate, thus proving to themselves that their "atheist astronomers" were superior to the Pope's.

It would be more accurate to call the New Calendar the "revised Gregorian Calendar" rather than the "revised Julian Calendar," since it is plainly a version of the former and not of the latter. The Fathers of the Church who battled Arianism proved that the Son is of one essence to the Father by showing that His operations are the same as the Father's; for that which has identical operations has an identical essence. Since the operations of the New Calendar are identical

to those of the Papal calendar—that is, since they both celebrate the same feasts on the same days (that being the purpose of a common Church calendar), it is clear that the New Calendar is essentially the calendar instituted by Pope Gregory and anathematized by the Orthodox, varying only in an incidental way. Furthermore, since the chief reason the Ecumenists introduced the New Calendar was to facilitate union with Rome, and it was to hinder union with Rome that the Papal calendar was anathematized in 1583, it should be evident to all but the most extreme formalist that the modern New Calendarists fall under the anathema of the Orthodox Patriarchs. The incidental differences between the original Gregorian Calendar and the New Calendarists' revised Gregorian Calendar are practically invisible, except to a specialist. <sup>[35]</sup>

### **Part III. Ecumenism**

Finally we come to central problem afflicting World Orthodoxy: the heresy of Ecumenism. The first official manifestation of Ecumenism in the Orthodox Church was the Encyclical of 1920, issued by the Patriarch of Constantinople. The language of this encyclical is comparatively mild, however, compared to the later declarations and actions of the Ecumenists. These have taken a variety of forms, due to the fluid and amorphous nature of the heresy. In its weakest form, Ecumenism holds that the Church of Christ is larger than the Orthodox Church, or that other churches possess some real, albeit imperfect, ecclesial status. More deviant from Orthodox ecclesiology are the so-called "Branch theory," "Fragmentation theory," "Baptismal theology," and "Communion theology." The Branch theory was devised in the 19th century by High-Church Anglicans who wished to associate themselves with forms of Christianity more ancient than the Protestant Church of England. They proposed that the Church had been divided into several branches, usually limited to the Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Churches. The issues which separated these Churches were not so great, they believed, as to prevent each branch from truly belonging to the One Church of Christ. Such being the case, it was a logical imperative for each branch to seek to reunite with the others. This was the first coherent theory to undergird the nascent Ecumenical movement, but today it has largely given way to more comprehensive theories, although the term "Branch theory" itself is still used to describe many versions of Ecumenism, often with a negative connotation.

"Fragmentation theory" is the belief that the Church has fragmented into many parts, all of which nevertheless constitute a portion of the Church. This view

originated among the Protestants, who themselves are divided into many denominations, none with any better claim to authenticity than the next. This division has led many Protestants (and subsequently many Roman Catholics and Orthodox) to doubt the real existence of catholicity in the Church after the first Christian centuries, and to seek to reconstitute the Church's catholicity through such initiatives as the World Council of Churches.

"Communion theology" holds that the Orthodox Church must enter into intercommunion with other churches even before perfect doctrinal agreement is achieved. According to this theory, the ecclesial status of the given heterodox community is acknowledged *a priori*, and it is supposed that the unity which comes from the Eucharist itself will override any minor doctrinal differences which exist between the various groups.

"Baptismal theology," a popular theory championed by Metropolitan John Zizioulas of Pergamon, holds that even though the different Churches differ in doctrine, they are all united in a common baptism into the Trinity. This view was officially affirmed by the Patriarchate of Constantinople vis--vis the Lutherans in September 2004, and has become the characteristic theory of Ecumenism in the Moscow Patriarchate.

The most extreme form of Ecumenism, expressed by a number of New Calendarist bishops and theologians (most notably the late Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople), is the view that all religions are equal paths to God and equal vehicles for salvation. This view is frequently encountered in the World Council of Churches, where Orthodox delegates (including bishops) participate in pagan rituals and sign documents stating such blasphemies as that Christians need to "move beyond a theology which confines salvation to the explicit personal commitment to Jesus Christ."<sup>[36]</sup>

All forms of Ecumenism, even the mildest, are heretical. The Orthodox Church has never accepted that other Churches exist parallel to her. Throughout her long history, she has consistently rejected every heresy not only as being an intellectual error, but also a means of spiritual deception leading one away from God. All heresies originate not from God, but from the devil, and have as their sole purpose (*qua* heresy) the destruction of human souls. If a person belonging to a heretical body seems to attain some level of virtue, this occurs because he adheres to the remnants of Orthodox teaching which have survived within the heretical group; and not at all because of his belief in that group's particular

heresy. The presence of well-intentioned people in a heretical church in no way implies that the organization in question holds, in any meaningful sense, *the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*.<sup>[37]</sup> Many saints of the Church suffered or died in order to oppose the spread of heresy, because they knew that light and darkness cannot coexist: Christ has no communion with Belial. The Ecumenists, in recognizing heresies as part of the Church, defy the universal teaching of the Holy Fathers and show themselves to be not visionary pioneers of a means to overcome outdated divisions, but simply inventors of their own new heresy, this one ecclesiological in nature. For Ecclesiology is as much a subject of dogma as is Triadology or Christology; indeed, the former is constituted by the latter, inasmuch as the Church is the Body of Christ. This is why the Church includes a summary of Ecclesiology in the Nicene Creed, declaring, *[I believe] in One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, I confess one baptism for the remission of sins*.

Ecumenism, being the search for lost oneness, a quest to reconstitute catholicity, and a recognition of many baptisms, is a direct contradiction of the Creed. It is totally unacceptable to Orthodox Christians.

**Assertion 8. Ecumenism has never been officially proclaimed in a heretical form.**

Reply: This assertion begs the question of what constitutes an official proclamation. Obviously, it is in the interest of the conservative New Calendarists to define the word "official" so narrowly that no one could ever "officially" proclaim any heresy. Nevertheless, the Ecumenist churches have certainly espoused heretical teachings in forms which any reasonably unbiased person can recognize as being quite official: that of public proclamation by a Patriarch, with synodical approval of the proclamation. This has occurred in some form in all of the Ecumenist churches. All of them belong to the World Council of Churches, a worldwide organization whose sole purpose for existing is to promote Ecumenism and the non-Orthodox ecclesiological principles upon which Ecumenism is based. A number of them were even founding members and helped formulate on the highest level the Council's goals and beliefs, which are entirely foreign to the Orthodox understanding of the Church. Both the Council's Charter and the many declarations signed by the various Orthodox delegates over the years state again and again, both implicitly and explicitly, that non-Orthodox groups are indeed somehow part of the Church, and that the Orthodox Church is part of a larger whole comprised of both the Orthodox and the heterodox.

In 1965 Patriarch Athenagoras and the Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople lifted the anathemas of 1054 against the Roman Catholic Church. They stated that the Orthodox condemnation of Latin heresies is "without foundation" and must be obliterated from memory; and they prayed "to arrive at a common understanding and expression of the faith of the Apostles and its demands" through "regret for historical wrongs."<sup>[38]</sup>

In 1975 Patriarch Demetrios and the Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople approved and highly recommended the "Thyateira Confession." This catechism stated, among other things, that "the Church has doors but no walls"; that as a result of a "new understanding" of the Church, "Christian people now visit and pray with other Christians of various traditions with whom they were forbidden in the past to associate, for they were called heretics"; and that consequently, intercommunion between the Papists and Orthodox is permitted under certain circumstances.

In September, 1990, synodically designated and credited delegates from all the Ecumenist churches met in Chambesy, Switzerland with official representatives of the Monophysite churches, and declared that the Monophysites were perfectly Orthodox and in no way heretical. This declaration was synodically ratified by the Patriarchate of Alexandria in 2001. What is worse, in June 1991 Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch approved full communion with the Syrian Monophysite Church, effectively abandoning the resolutions of the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Ecumenical Councils.

The very fact that the Ecumenists persecute the Old Calendarists for their beliefs shows that they consider their heresy to be a formal teaching of their church. In the Life of St. Maximus the Confessor, we read:

The Bishop proposed, "Accept the Emperor's Typos not as an expression of dogma, but as his personal interpretation and a means of silencing controversy."

"If the Typos is not a dogmatic definition establishing that our Lord has a single will and operation, why have I been exiled to a land of barbarians and pagans who do not know God?" asked Maximus. "Why do I waste away here, and my fellow-laborers in Perveris and Mesembria?"<sup>[39]</sup>

The point here is that when those who diverge from Orthodoxy persecute the Orthodox, such persecution must be regarded as proof that the persecutors hold



their heretical beliefs to be so important and so integral to their own self-identity that they will do violence to those who disagree with them.

Beyond this, the bishops, clergy, and laity of the Ecumenist churches consistently affirm their belief in Ecumenism in a variety of forms. Ecumenist hierarchs of every jurisdiction have uttered numberless blasphemies questioning nearly every dogma of Orthodoxy, joint prayers are conducted with heretics on a regular basis, communion is freely given to Roman Catholics and Monophysites, and agreements such as the so-called "Balamand Union" and the recent appalling statement of the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches are issued by official delegates from the New Calendarist Churches. All these affirm versions of the Branch Theory and a host of other errors.

Contrary to what the conservatives would like to think, such declarations and actions are not irrelevant. The representatives who compromise Orthodox teaching at Ecumenist gatherings are not acting as free agents. They are delegates who have been selected by the Synods of their churches to represent the voice of the Church. When they sign heretical documents, they express not their own personal opinions, but the views of the whole hierarchy of their church. That is, after all, why they were designated and sent in the first place. If, as the conservative New Calendarists aver, such actions do not make the Ecumenist churches *de jure* heretical, they certainly do show the Ecumenist hierarchs to be at least *de facto* heretics. And if the consciousness and self-expression of a church on the episcopal level are consistently heretical, the multitude of "official" declarations of heresy is unnecessary to show that the body in question is not the Church that Christ founded.

It is not only the hierarchy, but also the majority of the laity in the Ecumenist churches which accepts heretical churches as possessing some real ecclesial status. Only a minority of conservatives holds to something resembling the Orthodox teaching on the nature of the Church. The members of this minority, usually the most devoted element of the Ecumenist churches, deceive themselves into thinking that their church as a whole still shares their views; and they dismiss the more commonly held opinions of their bishops and fellow believers as temporary, essentially irrelevant aberrations. But such thinking is flawed, and not merely because it is unrealistic. It is not the beliefs of the clergy and laity that determine the ecclesial status of a Church, but rather the positions of the hierarchs. And even if the opinions of the laity were the determining factor, the conservative members of the Ecumenist churches would find themselves

considerably outnumbered by the liberal members, so far has the contagion of Ecumenism spread.

**Assertion 9. The Church has often used economy in dealing with heretics and she allows canonical abuses up to the point of tolerating the presence in her bosom of individuals who hold to some heresy; but none of these acts of economy led to a schism such as the Old Calendarists have now made.**

Reply: Fr. Basil provides a large number of examples from Church history to prove this point, but they are quite irrelevant, because the current situation does not involve acts of economy—even excessive acts—but matters of doctrine. When the Ecumenists violate a canon, they do so not because they recognize the principle embodied by the canon but soften the canon's application in order to facilitate the salvation of many (which is the meaning and purpose of economy). Rather, they deny the very principle embodied in the canon. Thus the Church has often received heretics by some manner other than baptism, not because she recognized the baptism of heretics, but to facilitate their return to Orthodoxy. But the Ecumenists preach that heretical baptism is valid; or worse, that the heretics in question are not heretics at all. The Church has occasionally conducted discussions with heretics, not because she recognizes heretics as Orthodox, but because she wishes to persuade them to return to Orthodoxy. The Ecumenists, however, constantly hold dialogues with heretics not in order to convert them to Orthodoxy, but to recreate the unity which the Church (defined as something larger than Orthodoxy) has lost through historical misunderstandings. The "economies" which Fr. Basil adduces were in some cases abuses of a non-dogmatic nature, and in others simply a proper use of economy; the heresies which were tolerated were being preached by lower clergy or the laity, or at most by an isolated bishop—but never by a synod and a patriarch. In none of the examples cited by Fr. Basil were the entire institutions of the patriarchates corrupted by heresy, as is the case now.

It is important to remember that the incorrect or even heretical behavior and opinions of the laity and lower clergy does not affect the ontological status of the Church. A Church only becomes heretical if a group of bishops adopts a heresy. The laity and lower clergy do not constitute the center of Church unity based upon the Eucharist; therefore, they remain inside the Church until they are excommunicated or follow their bishops into heresy. The bishops, however, depart from the Church as soon as they become open and persistent heretics,

since the orthodoxy and catholicity of the Church is subsumed in the episcopacy. When bishops lose their orthodoxy, they simultaneously cease from being the locus of the Church.

The numerous canonical transgressions which have occurred throughout Church history were never made on the basis of a publicly proclaimed heresy; whereas the similar transgressions of the present occur precisely because the bishops of the Ecumenist churches have embraced an ecclesiology alien to Orthodoxy; namely, that heretical bodies are in some sense part of the Church. This belief is then exemplified in practice by violating those canons of the Church which indicate how the faithful are to act towards heretics.

**Assertion 10. Ecumenism is dying. Patriarch Bartholomew has declared to the monks of the Holy Mountain that the Orthodox Church possesses the fullness of the truth while the Latins are in error; and he has condemned joint prayer. Archbishop Christodoulos, the [former] Archbishop of Athens synodically forbade joint prayers with the heterodox. Many other local Churches have criticized aspects of Ecumenism, while the Churches of Georgia and Bulgaria have withdrawn from the World Council of Churches. This proves that our stand is justified and bearing fruit.**

Reply: Actually, Ecumenism is worsening. Joint prayers with heretics are regularly conducted by Patriarch Bartholomew, who has visited the Pope in Rome, invited the Pope to visit him, prayed with him, and received him as a full bishop. <sup>[40]</sup> In February 2006, the 9th Assembly of the WCC in Porte Alegre, Brazil, reaffirmed a version of the Branch Theory; and this was signed by the delegates of nearly all the "Orthodox" Churches. These actions, and many others that could be listed, show how worthless are any seemingly Orthodox statements made by the Ecumenists. Such statements are made hypocritically for the sole purpose of preventing the conservative New Calendarists from leaving the Ecumenists and joining the Old Calendar Church. This two-facedness is typical of heretics of all the ages, but in no way implies that the heretic has become Orthodox or that he should be accepted as such. The arch-heretic Arius on one occasion made an Orthodox confession of faith and agreed to accept the Nicene Creed, but St. Athanasius refused to accept him into communion because he knew that Arius was mentally reinterpreting the Creed into conforming with his own heresy. Likewise, the patrician Epiphanius, speaking for the Monothelete party, gave an Orthodox confession to St. Maximus the Confessor:

"Tell us, wicked graybeard, possessed of a demon: why do you consider the Emperor and the citizens of the capital heretics? We are more Christian than you, and more Orthodox," he raved. "In Christ Jesus our Lord we recognize a divine and a human will and a rational soul. Operative ability is intrinsic to sentient being, just as will is to mind, and every rational nature possesses a power of willing and a capacity for operation corresponding to itself. We acknowledge that the Lord has the power to will according to His divinity and His humanity and do not deny that He has two wills and operations." <sup>[41]</sup>

St. Maximus, however, refused to accept this perfectly Orthodox confession of faith, since he knew that it was hypocritical and that the Monotheletes continued to propagate Monotheletism and persecute those who disagreed with them. Again, Eutyches (the inventor of extreme Monophysitism) made an Orthodox confession of faith when on trial for heresy; nevertheless St. Proclus and the entire "Endemousa Council" of Constantinople excommunicated him because they knew that Eutyches did not believe his own statements, but was merely trying to avoid being condemned.

One of the most striking examples from Church history of dissimulation comes from the life of St. Nicetas the Confessor, an abbot who lived during the Iconoclasm of the 9th century. We read:

Eventually, the godless heretics realized that the fathers [the Orthodox abbots who refused to accept Iconoclasm] preferred death to apostasy, so they cunningly proposed, "Partake just once of the Holy Mysteries in church with Patriarch Theodotus [the Iconoclast Patriarch of Constantinople], and you may return to your monasteries. Continue to believe as you wish. Nothing more will be demanded of you."

Deceived by the wicked heretics, the other fathers consented. Later they understood that they had been led astray, and they bitterly repented and corrected themselves. But before this, having been released from bonds and prison, they visited our venerable father Nicetas and begged him to enter into communion with Theodotus. Saint Nicetas wanted to remain in the dungeon where he was suffering for Christ's sake, but the fathers insisted, "We cannot leave you here when the only thing required of us is that we receive communion with Theodotus. Our confession of faith remains unaltered. Discretion is necessary in such difficult circumstances. Better to compromise in a small matter than to lose everything."

The choice facing the godly Nicetas was a matter of life and death. He was unafraid of afflictions and tortures, and preferred death for the true faith to life, but out of respect for their years, he heard out the venerable abbots, for he knew well their Orthodox convictions and righteous life. In the end, they wore him down and he submitted.

Nicetas and the other abbots went with the pseudo-patriarch to a chapel specially adorned with icons, the better to deceive them. Theodotus reasoned that when they saw the holy images, the abbots would conclude that he had espoused Orthodoxy. He celebrated the Liturgy there and communed them, having first announced to all: "Anathema to anyone who refuses to venerate the icon of Christ." The hypocrite spoke thus not because he revered the Savior's icon, but to ensure that the abbots would commune with him.

Following this, the superiors went back to their monasteries, but the godly Nicetas grieved that he had communed with the false-patriarch and dissimulator Theodotus. He considered that a small deviation from the correct path was for him no different than to go astray entirely. Eventually, the saint returned to Constantinople where he declared to the Emperor:

"I intend henceforth to remain steadfast in the confession of faith held by my fathers... As God is my witness, I regret what I did and repent of it. Henceforth I will have no communion with you whatsoever. Instead, I shall abide in the traditions of the Holy Fathers as I originally received them."<sup>[42]</sup>

From this story we learn several lessons. First, that one cannot justify communing with heretics on the basis of how useful or expedient it may be to us or to others. Second, that the Fathers of the Church considered communing with heretics to be equal to espousing the heresy itself: even if we have an Orthodox confession of faith, it will not avail us at all unless we sever communion with heretical bishops. And third, that even when a heretic puts on every appearance of Orthodoxy, one must not commune with him until he sincerely repents and the Church has exonerated him of even the slightest suspicion of heresy. At the first session of the Seventh Ecumenical Council the Holy Fathers confronted the problem of dissimulation directly:

The Holy Council said, "If the bishops now under examination give consent to us with their whole heart, thanks be to God and to them; but if they use dissimulation, the Lord judge them as He did Arius, Nestorius, and other like to them." The Bishops under examination laid themselves under a curse, saying, "We use no dissimulation. If we do not confess as doth the Catholic Church, may we bear the anathema of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

A heretic cannot be accepted by the Orthodox simply because he makes a hypocritical or vaguely Orthodox sounding confession of faith. As demonstrated by the acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, a heretic must completely anathematize every aspect of his heresy and prove that he genuinely repents. Only then is he accepted back into the Church. This applies much more to the

leaders of heresy, such as Bartholomew of Constantinople and Cyril of Moscow, who have been actively involved in promoting heresy and subverting Orthodoxy virtually their entire lives. The Ecumenists bishops occasionally release carefully worded statements which sound Orthodox not because they embrace the truth, but because they wish to prevent the conservative New Calendarists from joining the Old Calendar Church.<sup>[43]</sup> That this is true is supported by the fact that, in general, these bishops oppose their conservative followers at every turn, to the point of reprimanding or even disciplining them when they protest too loudly against the heresy rampant in their churches.<sup>[44]</sup>

## **Part IV. The Church of the Old Calendar, or the True Orthodox Christians**

When the Gregorian Calendar was introduced in Greece in 1924, over a million of the faithful refused to accept it, choosing rather to sever communion with the schismatic hierarchy. Although a significant number of bishops were sympathetic to the Old Calendarists (for the change of the calendar had occurred not because of popular demand, but due to pressure from the Greek government, which was seeking to modernize and liberalize the Church), it was not until 1935 that three bishops officially renounced the New Calendar church and assumed leadership of the True Orthodox. The New Calendarists responded by deposing the three bishops and launching a vicious persecution against the Orthodox. With the assistance of the police, they broke up church services, overturned chalices and trampled the Eucharist into the dust, imprisoned and forcibly shaved priests and monks, brutalized the faithful (several were killed), and denied them basic civil rights such as the right to marry and to attend college.

Unfortunately, several small but vocal groups broke away from the main synod of the True Orthodox, giving rise to the myth popular among New Calendarists that the Greek Old Calendarists are split into innumerable squabbling jurisdictions. This notion is misleading, however, for the great majority (about 70%) of the True Orthodox in Greece remains in the original synod.<sup>[45]</sup>

The True Orthodox have remained faithful not only to the Church's calendar, but also to the Patristic mindset and spirituality. The Old Calendarists cultivate the piety always characteristic of the Church, but mostly abandoned by the Ecumenists: keeping the fasts, reading the Fathers, saying daily prayers, holding full vigils, and practicing the hesychastic tradition of interior prayer and watching of the mind. Monasticism is very strong; and this is natural, because monasteries

have always been bastions of Orthodoxy, the first to resist heresy whenever it appeared in the past. Indeed, it is usually the case that the most impious element within the Church introduces a heresy, and the most pious portion rejects the innovation. This tendency is proven true in the current situation, for the hierarchs who introduced Ecumenism and changed the Church's Calendar were secularists, modernists, and Westernizers, while the faithful who resisted the changes were the monks and those who cleaved to the Orthodox phronema. Such is the case even today: a difference not only of belief, but also of piety and mindset separates the New Calendarists from the Old Calendarists.

**Assertion 11. The fact that the Old Calendarists are split into several groups proves that they are schismatic and have a schismatic mentality. In particular, they misinterpret the 31st Apostolic Canon, which permits separating from a bishop for reason of "piety and justice." By interpreting this phrase in the broadest way possible, they allow a schism to take place for virtually any reason.**

Reply. The fact that division exists does not in itself signify anything beyond the weakness of fallen human nature. The existence of many religions in the world does not mean that belief in God is false and that atheism is true. In actuality, one religion is true and the others are false. The existence of many churches calling themselves Christian does not mean that Christianity is false, for one Christian Church is true and the others are false. By the same token, the plurality of Old Calendar Synods does not mean that the Old Calendar as a whole is schismatic; but rather, one Synod is historical and authentic while the others have separated themselves from it.

Furthermore, the New Calendarists and Ecumenists themselves are hardly free from internal divisions. The Ukrainian church has fragmented into three major and many minor groups; the Church of Macedonia has declared itself autocephalous and is shunned by the other Patriarchates; the Churches of Bulgaria and Montenegro have each spawned independent "counter churches," the Patriarchate of Jerusalem has two Patriarchs who do not recognize each other; and a bewildering array of vagante groups exist, claiming apostolic succession from one or another of the official churches. In addition, the official Patriarchates are often very hostile to one another, and the Patriarchate of Constantinople in particular has the tendency to carve out and support uncanonical, autonomous churches within the historical territory of the other Patriarchates, especially that of Moscow.



It is true that the 31st Apostolic Canon may be interpreted in such a way as to permit a schism for virtually any reason. However, at the very least, the canon allows for separation on the basis of heresy (if it did not, the clause "for reasons of piety and justice" would have no meaning at all); and it is for reasons of heresy that the Old Calendarists are separated from the New Calendarists. If a small group has left the historical Old Calendar Church using this canon as a justification, it in no way discredits the Old Calendarists as a whole, but only those individuals who misapply this canon.

**Assertion 12. The main body of Old Calendarists was left without bishops in 1955. This shows that they were abandoned by God.**

Reply: We were brought to this impasse by the violent and bloody persecution of the New Calendarists, who used force to coerce the weaker bishops of our Church into joining the schismatic New Calendar church. Eventually Bishop Chrysostom of Florina was left as our sole bishop, and when he died in 1955 we remained without hierarchs. Our Church is not the first local Church to suffer such a misfortune. There have been many cases in history where the Church has literally been persecuted out of existence: for example, the once flourishing Church of North Africa was conquered by the Moslems who launched such a heavy persecution that there is today not a single Orthodox Christian left where once there were millions. Far from discrediting the Old Calendarists, this unfortunate situation rather discredits the New Calendarists, who resorted to violence in order to establish their innovation. We should note also that the fact that the Greek Old Calendarists were without bishops for five years did not mean that they ceased to be a legitimate local Church. During the sixteenth century, all the bishops in Little Russia became Uniates and the faithful were left without hierarchs, but Orthodoxy did not cease to exist. Likewise, in the life of St. Maximus the Confessor we read that the Monothelites asked the saint, "To which Church do you belong: to that of Byzantium, Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, or Jerusalem? All these churches and the provinces under them are in concord. If you belong to the Catholic Church, you must enter into communion with us at once, lest you forge a new and strange pathway and fall into unexpected disaster." The man of God wisely replied, "Christ the Lord acknowledges as Catholic that Church which maintains the true and saving confession of faith. But tell me: on what basis have all the churches, as you say, entered into communion? If it is on a foundation of truth, I do not wish to be separated from them."<sup>[46]</sup>

When the saint was told that it was not on a foundation of truth, but on an

agreement in heresy that the Patriarchates were united, he refused to have communion with them, even if it meant he would be left under no bishop at all. On another occasion, when asked a similar question, he replied, "The whole world may enter into communion with the Patriarch, but I will not. The Apostle Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit anathematizes even angels who preach a new Gospel, that is, introduce novel teaching."<sup>[47]</sup> The Old Calendar Church, emulating the confessing spirit of St. Maximus, found itself for a short period in a position similar to his. But God blessed our Church for its perseverance in adversity, with the result that the Russian Church Abroad ordained bishops for us and formally recognized our Church as canonical.

**Assertion 13. The main body of Old Calendarists regained its episcopacy in 1960 from the Russian Church Abroad, which at the time was in full communion with the New Calendar churches. Thus the Old Calendarists contradict themselves, saying on the one hand that the New Calendar church is heretical, while on the other hand accepting ordination from a Church in communion with the same heretics. The Old Calendarists are guilty of using the ends to justify the means.**

Reply: When a Church falls into heresy or schism, it does not automatically follow that all the correctly believing Churches in communion with the erring Church are instantly cut off from the Church. There is a period of time (discussed under Assertion 3) during which the correctly believing Church of necessity remains in communion with the heretical or schismatic Church, just as there is a period of time during which the faithful of a local church ascertain whether there is a heresy within their own church from which one must separate. If slow communications, lack of interest in outside affairs, internal problems which occupy the bishops' attention, and the difficulty of judging events outside of one's immediate sphere of action prevent the members of a local church from immediately breaking communion with their heretical hierarch, then much more so is this the case with respect to the bishops of another autocephalous Church. Each local Church requires a period of time, differing according to circumstance, to ascertain whether another local Church has truly fallen into heresy or schism, or is guilty merely of some abuse or misunderstanding.

The Russian Church Abroad in its earlier years was hardly in a position to analyze the theological implications of Ecumenism and the New Calendar, given that it was simply trying to survive and reconstruct a normal church life after escaping the Communists. It was only after several decades that the Church

Abroad had sufficiently stabilized its internal situation to be able to assess the question of Ecumenism and the calendar. When it did, it concluded that Ecumenism was heretical. For this reason it severed relations with the New Calendarist and Ecumenist churches, entered into full communion with our Church, and subsequently issued the anathema against Ecumenism. <sup>[48]</sup>

## Part V. Conclusion

Fr. Basil's article, and by extension, all New Calendar polemics which use arguments similar to those found in his article, fails to provide the Patristic support necessary to prove that one should remain in communion with uncondemned heretics. He thus fails to convict the Old Calendarists of having violated the Patristic witness. A close examination of the evidence shows that the stand of the Traditionalist Orthodox is entirely vindicated. Heresy is being taught on multiple levels within World Orthodoxy—most significantly on an episcopal level—and the unanimous consensus of the Fathers is that one must separate communion from those who preach contrary to the traditions we have received from the Apostles.

Not only are the conclusions of conservative New Calendarists like Fr. Basil wrong, but so is their whole method of argumentation. They reject the rule of the Church as inconvenient, and then search Church history and the writings of the Fathers in order to find exceptional cases which can be employed to defend virtually any pet theory. Then they formulate these exceptions into a new rule and vilify those who adhere to what the Church has always taught. But what is the established rule of the Church? Nothing other than the *consensus Patrum*, the universal voice of the Fathers in concord with one another. Since the truths of Orthodoxy find their ultimate temporal expression in the consensus of the Fathers and the age-long tradition of the Church, it should be evident that to formulate new ideas based on exceptions rather than the rule, minority opinions rather than majority, and deviations rather than the norm is to reject the whole thinking of the Fathers of the Church. In other words, this is an unorthodox mindset: one which has often been employed to justify heresy, and is itself a type of heretical methodology.

It is no doubt easy to be complacent, overly comfortable with the established structure of the Church and conclude that wide-sweeping heretical movements which originate within the Church are a thing of the past—after all, it has been many centuries since a large group of Orthodox bishops has espoused a new

heresy, and the passage of time can create a sense of security. But there is no reason why a heresy cannot arise today and threaten to take over the Church, just as in the past the Church was nearly overwhelmed by Arians, Monotheletes, and other heretics. The gates of hell cannot prevail against the Church, but large portions of her can most certainly fall away, and indeed have. Reluctance to accept this fact—combined, perhaps, with the inevitable inconveniences which arise from not being part of an institution recognized by the fallen world can lead sincere and well-meaning persons into a position which ultimately is rejected by the Church. But an honest and diligent reading of Church history and the works of the Fathers (within the context of fidelity to sacred Tradition and a pious way of life) will make clear the Orthodox teaching on every controversy. A person who possesses a firm resolve to follow his conscience even when this involves sacrifices will inevitably embrace the position held by the Traditionalist Orthodox: he will sever communion with those churches teaching heresy, and place himself under bishops who confess Orthodoxy in her pristine and apostolic exactness.

## Endnotes

[1] Prov. 9:8-9

[2] This is stated in the standard commentaries on the Canon in the Rudder.

[3] *The Rudder*, First-Second Council, Canon 15, p.471

[4] Titus 3:10-11

[5] Emphasis added; and so throughout.

[6] Cyprian of Carthage ep. 73, 10.3.173

[7] Cyprian of Carthage ep. 74, 2.3.37-41

[8] *Ibid.* 5.3.101-105

[9] *Ibid.* 69.2.89-93

[10] St. Maximus the Confessor, *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, 220.

[11] And Pyrrhus personally at the latter two councils.

[12] St. Demetrius of Rostov, *The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints*, Vol. 5, p. 380

[13] Καλλινίκου Μοναχού, *Βίος Αγίου Ὑπατίου τοῦ ἐν Ρουφινιαναΐς*, ed. G.J.M. Bartelink, *Vie d'Hypatios (Sources Chrétiennes 177*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1971): 32.12-14.

[14] Στεφάνου Διακόνου, *Βίος Αγίου Στεφάνου τοῦ Νέου*, ed. M.-F. Auzépy, *La Vie d'Étienne le Jeune par Étienne le Diacre (Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman monographs 3*. Aldershot/Brookfield: Variorum, 1997): 44.9-23.

[15] Mansi, 12, 1011c.

[16] *Ibid.* 1022c.

[17] *Ibid.* 1050d.

[18] *Ibid.* 1050e.

[19] *Conciliarum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta*, 310.38-41.

[20] ANF vol. 5, p.400

[21] A point of clarification should be noted here: if an isolated bishop preaches a heresy, one could interpret the 15th Canon of the First-Second Council as allowing one to break communion with that bishop; but not necessarily with all his fellow bishops until that bishop has undergone a canonical trial for his heresy. Fr. Basil seems to imply that the Old Calendarists have made the mistake of severing communion with entire synods simply because a few individuals are in error. But this is not true, for the entire institution of the Patriarchates has embraced heresy (as this paper will show.) No synod of Ecumenists has ever condemned a member hierarch for preaching the heresy espoused in common. The standard process of a canonical trial for heresy only works when the synod itself is Orthodox. That this is actually the case was shown when Metropolitan Augustine of Florina, a conservative New Calendarist, lodged a formal charge of heresy against Metropolitan Stylianos of Australia for the latter's extreme Ecumenism. The Ecumenical Patriarchate refused even to bring the case to trial, even though repeated indictments were made over the course of many years. This, of course, was because the Patriarchate approved of Metropolitan Stylianos' Ecumenism. When an entire synod embraces a heresy, one must sever communion with the entire synod.

[22] An error not only of many "conservative" adherents of World Orthodoxy, but also of Metropolitan Cyprian of Fili, founder of a small faction of Old Calendarists. Cyprian taught that heretics, even those falling under an earlier anathema, remain within the Church until condemned by a Pan-Orthodox or Ecumenical Council held by living bishops, in which the heretics themselves participate; nevertheless, he did allow one to separate from the heretics prior to such condemnation.

[23] One might protest that in fact many individuals within the Church have taught heresy and yet communion with them was not broken; for example, Origen or Theodore of Mopsuestia, But what is essential here is that such individuals spoke precisely as individuals, not as Synods, and that the Church at large was not infected with their errors. Nevertheless, Origen (who was only a priest) was condemned while yet living by his bishop, Demetrius, and again at the Fifth Ecumenical council. The errors of Theodore of Mopsuestia did not come to general notice until after his death. When his views were examined closely, he also was condemned at the Fifth Council. The unity of Orthodox confession and

membership in the Church refers to public confession of faith insofar as it is examined by the Church. A person's private opinions, however erroneous, do not separate him from the Church (although he will have to answer for them to God).

[24] ANF vol. 14, p. 127

[25] Ibid., p. 185

[26] Ibid., p. 405

[27] ANF vol. 5, p.123

[28] ANF vol. 6, pp. 148-9

[29] See St. Dionysios the Aereopagite, *The Divine Names X*; St. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit XXVII*. 66 PG 32 19A-B; and St. Maximus the Confessor, *The Fifth Century of Various Texts, The Philokalia*, vol.2, p.272

[30] Another discordance resulting from the introduction of the New Calendar was the obliteration of thirteen days from the liturgical year in 1924.

[31] For extensive documentation, see *A Quest for Reform of the Orthodox Church*, Patrick Viscuso, InterOrthodox Press, 2006.

[32] The Church calendar is divided into two parts: the Menologion, which is the calendar for the consecutive days of the year; and the Paschalion, which determines the date of the Paschal cycle. The New Calendarists adopted the new Menologion but not the new Paschalion.

[33] Azymes are unleavened bread utilized by the Latins for the Eucharist. Their use was condemned as Judaizing by the Orthodox Church, which employs leavened bread.

[34] This assertion is not Fr. Basil's, but has been included because it is commonly made.

[35] Documents from 1920's indicate that the reason a slightly different version of the Gregorian calendar was adopted was not to sidestep the anathema of 1583 (which was ignored), but to achieve greater scientific accuracy. It is only more recently that some have claimed that the slight divergence in calendars exempts the New Calendar from the anathema the Fathers placed on it. But even if the reformers intended to circumvent the anathema (while still obtaining the Ecumenist objective) by introducing a calendar slightly different from one explicitly condemned, one should see it this move for what it is: dishonest sleight-of-hand meant to deceive the weak-minded.

[36] "The Baar Statement," accessed from <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/christian-identity-in-pluralistic-societies/baar-statement-theological-perspectives-on-plurality.html>

[37] Jude 3

[38] "Joint Catholic-Orthodox Declaration of His Holiness Pope Paul VI and the



Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I;" available from [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/speeches/1965/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_spe\\_19651207\\_common-declaration\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/speeches/1965/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19651207_common-declaration_en.html)

[39] St. Demetrius of Rostov, *The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints*, vol. 5, pp. 370-371

[40] These statements apply equally to Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens, who was alive when Fr. Basil wrote his paper but has since died.

[41] St. Demetrius of Rostov, *The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints*, vol. 5, pp. 374

[42] St. Demetrius of Rostov, *The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints*, Vol.8

[43] A common Ecumenist tactic in the past several decades has been to make heretical declarations or statements which are presented to the non-Orthodox as official, but which are defended as "non-binding" when questioned by the conservative New Calendarists. By such double-speak, the Ecumenist agenda among the non-Orthodox is satisfactorily advanced; the accepting majority of the faithful in the Ecumenist churches is given to believe that the Ecumenist line is normative for the Church; and yet the conservatives are given a sop to ease their consciences, placating them into believing that no "official" betrayal of the Faith has taken place. It should be evident that this is exactly the sort of behavior condemned by the Fathers and the Seventh Ecumenical Council.

[44] Even when the protester is a hierarch. In 2009, Bishop Diomid of Anadyr and Chukot was suspended for insisting that the Ecumenical movement was heretical and that the Moscow Patriarchate should withdraw from the World Council of Churches.

[45] The Genuine Orthodox Church currently under the presidency of Archbishop Chrysostomos II of Athens.

[46] St. Demetrius of Rostov, *The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints*, vol. 5, p. 366

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 380

[48] An example of this process may be seen in the person of St. John Maximovitch. When the calendar change took place in 1924, his initial reaction was to condemn the New Calendar but without approving separation of communion over the issue. By the 1960's however, when he had observed first-hand the motivations of the New Calendarists and the staunch Orthodoxy of the Old Calendarists, he supported the ordination of bishops for our Church and the establishment of communion with us. Plainly, however, our observations here can in no way exonerate the current course of the Russian Church Abroad, which has now entered into communion with the Ecumenist heretics after decades of separation from them.



In 1924, the Church of Greece ushered in the pan-heresy of Ecumenism in a form tangible to every believer—by changing the Church's traditional Julian calendar. It adopted the papal Gregorian calendar, thereby evincing a desire to concelebrate, not with the Church Triumphant in heaven, but rather with the heretics of the fallen West. This calendar had been anathematized by three Pan-Orthodox councils in the 16th century, as well as by numerous local councils in the succeeding centuries, and whoever followed it was declared to be outside of the Church and the assembly of the faithful.[1] About one quarter of the Greek population refused to accept the innovation and cut itself off from the hereticizing hierarchy, but it was not until 1935 that any bishops espoused the cause. In that year, three bishops of the New Calendar Church declared for the Old Calendar, and immediately assumed leadership of the movement. The New Calendarists responded by definitively committing themselves to the calendar innovation: they deposed the three bishops, declared the Old Calendar Church to be graceless, and launched a violent and often bloody persecution. With the aid of the police, they brutalized and banished the leaders of the Old Calendar, and even went so far as to throw chalices to the ground and trample upon the Holy Eucharist. In view of all this, the Old Calendar bishops issued (in 1935) an encyclical to the effect that the New Calendar Church had separated itself from the Body of Christ and no longer possessed valid Mysteries. Two years later, however, Metropolitan Chrysostomos (I) of Florina, later head of the Old Calendar Church, wrote a private letter to another bishop stating that, in his opinion, the New Calendarists were only in a state of potential schism and that their Mysteries were still valid. Two other bishops (of a number that had been ordained), upon learning this opinion, separated themselves from the Old Calendar Synod, believing this view to be a fall from true Orthodoxy. In 1948, one of them, Matthew of Bresthena, believing he was the last Orthodox bishop left on earth, ordained (by himself) a whole new synod of bishops, thus forming a synod parallel to the main Synod. This group is called the Matthewites and was the first schism from our Church. Eventually, as other bishops died or returned to the New Calendar, Metropolitan Chrysostomos (I) of Florina, now head of the Church, felt it necessary (in 1950) to restore unity among the Old Calendarists by synodically revoking his letter of 1937 and officially declaring (again) that the New Calendar was graceless. This, however, failed to heal the Matthewite schism, and in 1955 Chrysostomos (I) died, leaving the main body of Old Calendarists without any bishops. This situation was partially remedied in 1960 and 1962, when several hierarchs were consecrated by bishops of the Russian Church Abroad. It was altogether resolved in 1969, when these private consecrations were officially recognized by

the Russian Synod and full communion was established between the Greek Old Calendar Church and the Russian Church Abroad under Metropolitan Philaret. In 1963 Auxentios, a good but incompetent man, was elected Archbishop. As a result of his mismanagement, numerous scandals broke out as immoral clergy were ordained or accepted from the New Calendar. Relations with the Church Abroad deteriorated, and many people quietly left the Old Calendar. Several events of this period were: 1.) In 1969, Archimandrite Cyprian and his monastery at Fili, formerly New Calendarists, joined the Old Calendar under Auxentios. 2.) In 1974, the Synod of Auxentios renewed its condemnation of the New Calendarists as graceless. 3.) In 1977, Callistos, a bishop of the Matthewite Synod, joined the Synod of Auxentios, because he wished to be in communion with the Russian Church Abroad.

Discouraged because of the scandals taking place in the Church, a number of bishops stopped attending synod meetings and, in February 1979, two of the remaining five bishops of the Synod (the above-mentioned Callistos and his cohort Anthony) proceeded to consecrate eight new bishops, one of whom was Cyprian of Fili. These ordinations were made without the permission or even the vote of the Synod, were performed by a minority of the Synod's members, and took place at nighttime in the monastery of Fili. The breakaway bishops claimed they had the oral permission of Archbishop Auxentios, but Auxentios denied ever having made such a statement and with his hierarchs immediately condemned and deposed the new bishops. The new bishops declared themselves to be the only legitimate synod of Old Calendarists and immediately invited the hierarchs who had been avoiding synod meetings to join them, but the other bishops (such as Petros of Astoria and Chrysostomos (II), the future Archbishop) refused to join the schismatic group. In 1983, the president of the new synod Callistos retired. Shortly thereafter, all the surviving bishops consecrated by Callistos and Anthony in 1979, except for Cyprian (one had died), repented of their uncanonical consecrations and were accepted back into Auxentios' Synod. At this time (1984), Metropolitan Cyprian began issuing a series of documents in which he presented his own ecclesiological theories in a coherent form, stating definitively that the New Calendarist Church was the "Mother Church" and that its mysteries were valid until condemned by a pan-orthodox council. On the basis of this position, he refused to rejoin the bishops under Auxentios, even though he was invited back. He remained by himself and, with the help of John of Sardinia (the only other bishop remaining of the Callistos group—not one of the original schismatics, but consecrated later—organized his few followers into what he called the Synod in Resistance).

We should note that Cyprian joined the Old Calendar knowing that the official

position of the Church was that the New Calendar was graceless. He accepted consecration to the episcopacy, not in objection to this position (since Callistos, who ordained him, was the most avid and public proponent of the idea), but rather hoping new and more responsible bishops would restore order to the Church. It was not until several years later that Cyprian, already a bishop, began using the issue of grace as an excuse to remain separate from the other hierarchs of the Old Calendar. He claimed that it was impossible for him or any of his followers to have communion with a church holding the official position that the New Calendar was without grace. In Cyprian's eyes, thus, his is the only correctly believing Old Calendarist Church, while the true Synod is "shipwrecked in the faith"[2] and an invalid ecclesiastical body[3] for holding to the same thing it has declared since 1935 when the Old Calendar first received its episcopacy. At no time before did anyone feel it necessary to justify a schism by defending the mysteries of the New Calendarists. Cyprian himself never declared invalid the Old Calendar movement as it was in 1935 or 1950 or 1974 (the years when proclamations were made about the gracelessness of the New Calendar). Had he done so, the entire movement from its very inception and throughout its whole history would have been (following his line of reasoning) "fanatical," "extremist," and "impossible to join with," as he now calls the Synod under Chrysostomos. Meanwhile, in the canonical Synod, the ineptitude of Auxentios soon became an issue again, and he was deposed for having made a notoriously immoral man bishop without synodal approval. In his place, the revered Chrysostomos (II) was chosen to the Archbishopric (in 1986), which post he occupies to this day. The difference between the Matthewites, the Cyprianites, and the canonical True Orthodox Church of Greece can be summed up as follows: the Matthewites say that the New Calendar is graceless and heretical, and that anyone who ventures a private opinion to the contrary (as did Chrysostomos in 1937) is graceless and a heretic as well. The Matthewites are also uncanonical, being schismatic and having their ordinations from only one bishop, which the canons strictly forbid. The Cyprianites state that: 1.) the condemnations of the 16th century Pan-Orthodox councils against anyone who would adopt the New Calendar do not apply to the modern New Calendarists;[4] 2.) the ecumenist New Calendar Church is the "Mother Church" of the Old Calendar Church; 3.) its mysteries are fully valid until condemned by a Pan-Orthodox council—even if the resolution of the situation be prolonged until the Second Coming;[5] 4.) to be considered Pan-Orthodox, this council must be attended by the ecumenists and New Calendarists themselves;[6] 5.) a local council has no right to issue an anathema against a heresy[7] (such as the Russian Church Abroad issued against ecumenism in 1983);[8] 6.) a bishop who publically proclaims heresy is not a

heretic, but is rather an ailing member of the Church until he anathematizes his own heresy at a Pan-orthodox council;[9] 7.) a local Church may splinter into any number of synods which are out of communion with one another because of matters of faith, yet they are all equally part of the Church until the Pan-Orthodox council is held—or forever, if the various synods (including the ecumenists themselves) never agree to convene the Pan-Orthodox council to condemn ecumenism;[10] and 8.) anyone who disagrees with these positions is a gravely mistaken fanatic with whom it is impossible to have communion.[11] The Cyprianites are also schismatic, having failed to return to the canonical Church from the Callistos schism with the other bishops ordained in 1979 by Callistos. [12] Finally, the canonical Church of Greece, which comprises about 70% of the Old Calendarist movement, maintains the traditional position that the New Calendar is graceless; but actual opinion in the Church is not necessarily unilateral on this question. Its bishops reject the New Calendar church not so much because they view it as graceless, but because it has abandoned the truth. Since it does not adhere to an Orthodox confession of faith, it is impossible for the True Orthodox to recognize it, a schismatic and hereticizing body, as the Mother Church, or officially to declare that beyond a shadow of doubt it possesses sacramental grace—as Cyprian teaches. We admire the zeal and piety of the Matthewites and Cyprianites, and we look forward to the day both groups will end their schisms and return to the canonical Church. In this way, our united forces will present a coherent opposition to Ecumenism, which, with God's help, will prove impossible for the heretics to ignore or withstand.

1. Sigillion of the Council of 1583.
2. Second Epistle of the Holy Synod in Resistance.
3. See "The Orthodox Resistance against the Ecclesiastical Heresy of Syncretistic Ecumenism," E:3-5.
4. See "An Informatory Epistle" by Met. Cyprian, 4:12.
5. An Ecclesiological Position Paper, by Met. Cyprian.
6. Ibid.
7. See "An Informatory Epistle," 4, passim.
8. Ibid. 5:3
9. See "An Ecclesiological Position Paper."
10. Ibid.
11. See "Second Encyclical of the Holy Synod in Resistance."

12. From 1994 to 2006 the Russian Church Abroad and the Cyprianites were in communion. Archbishop Mark of Berlin and several other bishops instrumental in the ROCOR union with Moscow also played a leading role in the ROCOR union with the Cyprianites. The ROCOR bishops stated that their ecclesiology—previously somewhat unclear, at least on an official level—was now the same as Cyprian's. Subsequently, certain of Cyprian's notions proved very useful to the ROCOR bishops in justifying their union with Moscow.

[Source: <http://www.hotca.org/orthodoxy/orthodox-awareness/236-why-the-true-orthodox-are-truly-orthodox>