

Ecumenism and “Baptismal Theology”

*The Protestant “Branch Theory” of the Church in a New Form**

IN A PREVIOUS ISSUE of the periodical *Orthodoxos Enstasis kai Martyria* (Nos. 22-23 [January-June 1991], pp. 266-267), in exposing what occurred at the Seventh General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Canberra, we made reference to the presentation by



Metropolitan John of Pergamon [who belongs to the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate—*Translators*] (*see photograph at left*); characterizing it as “mediocre, poor, timorous, and in many ways unclear,” we concluded our observations as follows: “Having some years ago branded the Immaculate Bride of Christ, the Holy Orthodox Church, as ‘narcissistic,’ referring to ‘the Church

of Christ *in her totality*’ and ‘no longer [to] Orthodoxy *alone*,’¹ Metropolitan John thereby sinned very gravely and ‘grieved’ the Holy Spirit. Naturally, as a result of this, he is incapable of giving an Orthodox witness.”

But the views of Metropolitan John concerning an “inclusive” ecclesiology and a “Church” broader than the boundaries of the Orthodox Church are certainly nothing new to him.

On February 13, 1985, while he was still a layman, he addressed a joint audience of Orthodox and Anglicans at St. Basil’s House, in London, on the subject of Orthodox ecclesiology and the ecumenical movement.²

We will neither analyze this speech nor recount it in detail. A brief citation therefrom is sufficient, for now, to demonstrate that His Eminence is truly a “veteran ecumenist,” a stranger to Patristic Orthodoxy.

The speaker examines the extent to which participation by the Orthodox Church in the ecumenical movement is consistent with Her ecclesiology, and concludes: “And yet, in spite of what some very conservative Orthodox would say, I think that the Orthodox Church cannot drop out of the ecumenical movement *without betraying its own fundamental ecclesiological principles*”!

The speaker makes reference to the “boundaries” of the Church and confronts the “dilemma” of choosing between the rigid ecclesiology of St. Cyprian of Carthage (the Holy Spirit is present only within the bounds of a canonical community—the Orthodox Catholic Church) and the different—and more novel—ecclesiology of St. Au-

gustine (the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Mysteries exist also outside the Church).

Indeed, Metropolitan John appears to accept the [subsequently disavowed] opinion of Protopresbyter Georges Florovsky, that “*there are saints outside the Orthodox Church*” and that the canonical boundaries of the Church “*are important, but at the same time, are not absolute.*”³

And in finding a “balance” in understanding these “boundaries” as not constituting impediments or divisions between the Church and the rest of the world—and, in particular, the heterodox—, Metropolitan John proposes a theology of “baptismal unity.”

What does “baptismal theology” confess?

“Baptism does create a limit to the Church.” Baptism, Orthodox or otherwise, delimits the “Church,” which includes Orthodox and heterodox. There exist “baptismal limits in the Church,” and “outside baptism there is no Church.” On the contrary, “within baptism, even if there is a break, a division, a schism, you can still speak of the Church.”

On this point, Metropolitan John, desiring heretics to be within the Church, shows himself to be more daring than Father Florovsky, who wrote: “Perhaps we should not say that schismatics are still within the Church; in any case, such an expression would not be precise and would sound ambiguous.”⁴ [The Greek translation, here, does not precisely render, in secondary translation, the original English text (see note 3), which reads: “It may not follow, perhaps, that we should say that schismatics are still in the Church. In any case, this would not be precise and sounds equivocal”—*Translators.*]

According to “baptismal theology,” heresy, as a falling-away from the catholicity of the Faith handed down by the Apostles, is simply and solely “a break in communion,” which “does not mean that one falls outside the realm of the Church.”

In the past, this “state of division” between Orthodox and heretics or schismatics, between “baptized Christians,” occurred “because of a lack of love which is now, thank God, disappearing”!

* * *

The “baptismal theology” of the Metropolitan of Pergamon—how far, we wonder, is this from the “branch theory” of the Church?—literally overturns Orthodox Patristic ecclesiology: it greatly pleases the heterodox, because it recognizes their non-existent baptism and, at the same time, confirms them in their heresies, since it regards these as a matter of simple division arising from a lack of love.

However, the reception of heretics by œconomy and without Bap-

tism never betokened acceptance by the Orthodox of heterodox baptism. As long as the correct form is maintained in a baptism performed outside the Orthodox Catholic Church, *and as long as heretics come in repentance to the One, True Church*, She “perfects and vivifies” the “ineffectual and invalid” mysteries that were “not inculpably performed” outside Her, and “frees them from every deficiency and culpability through the bestowal of Chrismation and the gifts of the Spirit that are imparted thereby.”⁵

There is, therefore, a “correction” when heretics return to the Church, and it is presupposed that those who return have “preserved the form and substance of Baptism indistinguishably from that of the Orthodox and were Baptized according to the formula of the Catholic Church,”⁶ if, we emphasize again, œconomy is to be applied.

Metropolitan John obviously does not speak in the manner of the Fathers. The Saints of the Church instruct us in a different way. The question is: Do heretics have Baptism, the Eucharist, and Priesthood? For these three Mysteries cannot be thought of separately, and certainly not outside a correct ecclesiological context.

Since, in the case of schismatics and heretics, we have a break in love, unity, and catholicity, and consequently a “departure” from the “observable limits of the Church,” outside which Divine Grace cannot generate “living flames,” how is it possible for us to talk about Mysteries and Saints outside the Church?

If it is the Great High Priest Who celebrates the Mysteries in the Church, is it possible for the Same to celebrate the mysteries of those who have fallen away from love, unity, and Catholicity?

It is, assuredly, impossible for us to speak about salvation through the mysteries of heretics, thereby violating a basic ecclesiological principle: that *salvation is accomplished within the context of communion in Christ*, that is, within the Body of the Church as a charismatic and therapeutic organism, in which the Head—Christ—finds fullness in the entire Body and the entire Body finds fullness in the Head: “The fullness of Christ is the Church. And rightly, for the complement of the head is the body, and the complement of the body is the head.”⁷

If the isolation of some member of any organism whatever spells doom for that member, how can we speak about the Church if, in the end, one does not experience, either as an individual or as a community, this unique life of the Theanthropic Body, with its complementary relationship of Head and Body?⁸

Let it be clearly established that “Grace in truth acts, but is not salvific outside catholicity”;⁹ though it acts, it does so not by effecting Mysteries and producing Saints, but by mystically prompting those outside the Church to repent and return to the Truth and catholicity of the One Church.

In conclusion, there really is an indisputable “boundary” whereby the “definitive contour” of the Body of the Church is delineated and which reveals the “ultimate limits” of the Church: *the correctness of Faith, of which the Mysteries are an expression.*

The Holy Hieromartyr Hippolytos of Rome is quite clear in stating that “the Apostles, having received the Holy Spirit bequeathed to the Church, have transmitted Him to those who rightly believe.”¹⁰ The Holy Spirit “was bequeathed” to the Apostolic Church at Pentecost, and since then “has been transmitted to those who rightly believe.”

* * *

Let us see in brief what the Holy Tradition of the Orthodox has to say:

- Heretics are “*alien to God.*”¹¹
- “Those who have been baptized or ordained by such (heretics) *can be* neither members of the Faithful *nor of the clergy.*”¹²
- “Heretics do not have Priesthood, and so the rites performed by them are *profane and devoid of sanctifying Grace.*”¹³
- “Quite simply, the baptisms of all heretics are *impious and blasphemous* and have nothing in common with the Baptisms of the Orthodox.”¹⁴
- If, in general, “those supremely Divine Names (‘Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit’ [St. Matthew 28:19]—*Author’s note*) are *idle and inefficacious* when uttered by the mouths of heretics,”¹⁵ how much more are they “idle and inefficacious” for the polyonymous heretics of the West, who have “*distorted, or rather, totally corrupted* the Tradition” and theology “regarding Baptism”?¹⁶
- The Saints of our Church reject the baptism of heretics, since “consecrating Grace has left them”; they characterize it as “completely useless and vain”; they consider it, rather, a “drowning,” because heretics “*have baptism, but not illumination.*”¹⁷
- In the *Constitutions of the Apostles* the following strict commandment is given:

‘Be ye likewise contented with one Baptism alone, that which is into the death of the Lord; *not that which is conferred by wicked heretics*, but that which is conferred by blameless priests, “in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”; *and let not that which comes from the ungodly be received by you,* ‘for those that receive polluted baptism from the ungodly will become partners in their opinions. *Indeed, they are not Priests’; ‘nor are those that are baptized by them initiated, but are polluted, not receiving the remission of sins, but the bond of impiety.*’¹⁸
- At the Seventh Œcumenical Synod, “John, the Right Reverend Legate of the Apostolic Throne of the East, said: ‘Heresy separates

every man from the Church.’ The Holy Synod declared: ‘This is abundantly clear.’”¹⁹

- St. Theodore the Studite, writing about a heretical bishop, says that “it is impossible for those whom he ordains to be truly ministers of God.”²⁰

Metropolitan John of Pergamon stands condemned and guilty of accepting the baptism of heretics, for “not making a distinction between true and false Priests,”²¹ and for failing to apply the Patristic injunction that: “Heretics should be reproved and admonished by Bishops and Presbyters, in the hope that they might understand and return from their error.”²²

This “veteran ecumenist,” Metropolitan John, is a classic example of an Orthodox Christian whose ecclesiology has been corrupted by his participation in the so-called ecumenical movement and who has, for this reason, forgotten that heresy means “*a cessation of communion with the Church and is alien to the Heavens,*”²³ that “*heresy is hateful to God,*”²⁴ and that it entails “*the ultimate fall of the soul.*”²⁵

When, then, does one betray the “fundamental ecclesiological principles” of the Orthodox Church? The case of Metropolitan John of Pergamon demonstrates incontrovertibly that this comes about by way of active participation in the ecumenical movement, despite what the fallen Metropolitan says to the contrary.

Metropolitan John of Pergamon far exceeds the heretical Anglicans in dogmatic syncretism and minimalism, since they, on the basis of the “Lambeth Quadrilateral” (1888), restrict the “essential signs of the Church” to four (*Vestigia Ecclesiae*: Holy Scripture, the Symbol of Faith, Baptism and the Eucharist, and the Episcopacy)^{25a}, while he reduces them to one, and only one: Baptism!

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In the meantime, the doctrines of so-called “baptismal unity” and “baptismal theology” are gaining ground and have become officially accepted by the World Council of Churches (wcc).

- I. The “Final Assembly Report” at Canberra asserts that “as members of the body of Christ, *we are already united by our common baptism,* and the Holy Spirit is leading us to a communion founded on the life of the Holy Trinity.”²⁶

- II. In addition, the Anglican Primate, Archbishop George Carey of Canterbury, during...[an]...official visit to the headquarters of the wcc in Geneva (June 2-3, 1992), said in his address, there, that “the theology of baptism is what unites us” and that “in our search for visible unity we have taken too little from that common baptism in which we all share.” The Anglican Primate then continued: “It is my strong conviction that, as churches, we still have to face up to the implications

of baptismal theology. If we believe that *baptism in the name of the Trinity unites us with God himself and makes us members of his family*, what does this mean for the churches separated eucharistically?"²⁷

iii. It is also well known that Roman Catholics have fully accepted the doctrines of St. Augustine concerning the validity of mysteries performed outside the Church, doctrines which were subsequently developed by Scholastic theology.

The Papists teach that those in heresy who have been baptized by heretics according to the correct formula have received the Baptism of the true Church, in line with the decision of the Council of Trent, which decrees: "*Baptismum ab hæreticis datum cum intentione faciendi quod facit Ecclesia, esse verum Baptismum*" ("A Baptism which is administered by heretics, with the intention of doing what the Church does, is a true Baptism") (First Period of the Council, Session VII, Canon 13).²⁸

However, these doctrines of St. Augustine, and subsequently those of the Papists, "place excessive emphasis on the external form of the mystery at the expense of the right Faith that endows it with life, of which this form must always be the practical expression, and run the risk of lending a *kind of magical efficacy* to the formal celebration of the mystery,"²⁹ and for this reason, "the sacramental theology of St. Augustine was not adopted either by the Eastern Church in antiquity or by Byzantine theology."³⁰

Indeed, St. Athanasios the Great is very clear on this subject, for he regards right Faith as a *sine qua non* for the performance of a genuine and salvific Mystery:

On this account, therefore, the Savior also *did not simply command to Baptize*, but first says, '*Teach*'; then thus: '*Baptize in the Name of Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit*'; *that the right faith might follow upon learning, and together with faith might come the consecration of Baptism. There are many other heresies too, which use the names only, but not in a right sense, as I have said, nor with sound faith, and in consequence the water which they administer is unprofitable, as deficient in piety, so that he who is sprinkled by them is rather polluted by irreligion than redeemed.*³¹

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The indirect exhortation by the General Secretary of the WCC, that the Orthodox "*take the risk of being more deeply influenced by the ecumenical encounter*,"³² finds a full response in Metropolitan John of Pergamon, even though the basic preconditions for the participation of the Orthodox Church in ecumenical dialogue are always violated by the ecumenists.

What are these preconditions?³³ On the one hand, that the content of the Orthodox Faith be made known to the heterodox, that they

might be aided in the discovery of their own identity; and, on the other hand, that the self-identity of Orthodoxy should be preserved. Rather, the opposite occurs: our Church comes to as much harm as the heterodox, who are supposedly searching for the genuine Apostolic Faith.

It is all too obvious that the self-identity of Orthodoxy is corrupted by so-called “baptismal theology,” which is generally accepted by Orthodox ecumenists as a natural consequence of their “being more deeply influenced” by “the ecumenical encounter.”

Indeed, the depth of this “influence” is so great that another “veteran ecumenist,” who also departs from Patristic theology, declares:

The Church is one and unique and united before the Triune God, *in Whose name all her members are baptized*, thus attaining their justification, *independently of which Confession they belong to, united with Christ and with each other in one body*, which cannot be divided into a plurality of bodies!³⁴



The “baptism” by this priestess, according to Metropolitan John, falls within the boundaries of the Church!
(From the periodical *One World*, No. 158, 1990)

The fall goes on:

*The division that now exists between churches derives from external and earthly factors and not from internal and heavenly ones; it derives from human beings, from their imperfections and sins. It diminishes as we ascend higher and practically disappears in the sight of God, from Whom, conversely, derives the internal mystical unity of the Church!*³⁴

And to cap it all:

‘All of us Christians are sacramentally and ineffably united with Christ and with each other through the sacramental Grace of Holy Baptism,’ and subsequently through the communion of the Divine Eucharist’!^{34a}

Such is the significance of “baptismal theology” for ecumenists,

that the anti-Orthodox Patriarchal Encyclical of 1920 takes it as one of its presuppositions:

For this reason the Œcumenical Patriarchate did not hesitate to address its famous proclamation of 1920 ‘to the Churches of Christ everywhere,’ *characterizing the Christian confessions as ‘Churches,’* and emphasizing ‘that it is above all imperative that love between the Churches be rekindled and strengthened, *and that they not regard each other as foreign or distant, but as kith and kin in Christ, as fellow-heirs and of the same body, [and partakers of] the promise of God in Christ’* (cf. Ephesians 3:6).³⁵

Unfortunately this Encyclical, which the ecumenists never cease to praise as a bedrock and the “Founding Charter” of the so-called ecumenical movement, is reckoned a “Dogmatic and Credal Monument of the Orthodox Catholic Church”! *What a downfall!*

* Source: *Orthodox Tradition*, Vol. XVII, No. 1 (2000), pp. 2-11.

Footnotes

1. *Ekklesia* [in Greek], No. 7 (May 1, 1988), p. 267a. Metropolitan John spoke thusly as the speaker of the day appointed by the Holy Synod (of the Œcumenical Patriarchate) at Vespers in the Stavrodromion Church of the Entry of the *Theotokos* (in Constantinople), on the occasion of the celebration of the millennium of the Christianization of Russia, February 27, 1988, in the presence of Œcumenical Patriarch Demetrios, the Synod of Metropolitans of the Œcumenical Throne, pan-Orthodox representatives, a delegation from the Holy Mountain, and official representatives from the entire spectrum of the heterodox. • How could the Athonites have tolerated this blasphemy? “*Silence is, indeed, in part assent*” (St. Theodore the Studite, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XCIX, col. 1121A). • See, in this regard, Professor Andreas Theodorou, “Narcissism or Love of Orthodoxy?” [in Greek], *Orthodoxos Enstasis kai Martyria*, Nos. 24-25 (July-December 1991), pp. 319ff.

2. “Orthodox Ecclesiology and the Ecumenical Movement,” *Sourozh*, No. 21 (August 1985), pp. 16-27. • For a fuller grasp of this talk by the Metropolitan of Pergamon, we should add by way of clarification that St. Basil’s House is the center of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, which was founded in 1928 by Russian Orthodox and Anglicans; it has proved to be “an important unofficial forum for relations between Orthodox and Western Christians” and has had wide influence on ecumenical activities. By means of this inter-confessional fellowship, a climate of “mutual trust” has been fostered, while “a spirit of true friendship and respect has been the fruit of the Eucharistic union which the members of the Fellowship discovered”! (See N. Zernov, *The Russians and Their Church* [in Greek] [Athens: Astir Publications, 1972], pp. 193-194. Also see *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, No. 2 [1984], p. 65: “The Ecumenical Movement and the Russian Orthodox Church Before She Joined the W.C.C.”)

3. These paradoxical ideas of Father Georges Florovsky are developed in his article, “The Limits of the Church,” in [Protopresbyter] Georges Florovsky, *The Body of the Living Christ: An Orthodox Interpretation of the Church* [in Greek], trans. J.K. Papadopoulos, 2nd ed., in *Theological Essays*, Vol. III (Thessaloniki: Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies, 1981), pp. 129-148. The article was...[originally written in English and]...published in Russian...and French, and the [Greek] translation was made from the French version, entitled “Les limites de l’Église,” which appeared in the *Messenger of the Exarchate of the Russian Patriarchate in Western Europe*, Vol. X, No. 37 (1961), pp. 28-40. [Let us note, here, that Father Florovsky offered his

comments in this inchoate and rather incoherent article, written very early on in his career (1933), in a heuristic spirit. Its subsequent reprinting in a number of different publications was, in fact, a cause of concern for him later in life. After serving in the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in Serbia, where he was awarded the gold pectoral Cross and where he embraced a more cautious and conservative ecclesiology, he went on, as one of the founders of the World Council of Churches, to argue rather vociferously for the primacy of the Orthodox Church and to insist that Her ecumenical witness be clearly defined in terms of Her sole claim to the legacy of the Apostolic Church. Not only did he write ensuing articles that expressed this far different and more conservative ecclesiology, but he publicly expressed his regrets about his earlier views, drawn from the doctrines of St. Augustine, as well as about the general course of the ecumenical movement, at a Patristic symposium at Princeton University in 1975. His original English article on the limits of the Church appeared in *The Church Quarterly Review*, Vol. CXVII, No. 233, pp. 117-131. Readers should consult Constantine Cavarnos, *Father Georges Florovsky on Ecumenism* (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1996), for a clearer understanding of Father Georges' overall understanding of the rôle of the Orthodox Church in the ecumenical movement (see "Publications" at the end of this issue)—*Translators*.]

4. Florovsky, *The Body of the Living Christ*, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
5. P.N. Trembelas, *Dogmatic Theology of the Orthodox Catholic Church* [in Greek], Vol. III [Athens: 1961], p. 56.
6. St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite, *The Rudder* [in Greek], p. 54.
7. St. John Chrysostomos, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXII, col. 26 (*Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, Homily 3, § 6).
8. Cf. N.A. Matsoukas, *Dogmatic and Credal Theology* [in Greek], Vol. II (Thessaloniki: P. Pournaras Publications, 1985), p. 428. Worthy of study with regard to the subject under discussion are pp. 425-428.
9. Florovsky, *The Body of the Living Christ*, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
10. St. Hippolytos, *Bibliothèque ton Ellenon Pateron kai Ekklesiastikon Syngrapheon*, Vol. V, p. 199, ll. 15-17 (*Refutation of All Heresies*, Book I, Prologue).
11. Canon XXXIV of the Council of Laodiceæ.
12. Canon LXVIII of the Holy Apostles.
13. St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite, *The Rudder*, p. 91.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 305.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 589.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 52, note on Canon XLVI of the Holy Apostles, with references to St. Basil the Great, St. Athanasios the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian, St. John Chrysostomos, St. Leo, and St. Ambrose.
18. *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. I, col. 948AB (Book VI, ch. 15: "That we ought not to re-Baptize or to receive that baptism which is given by the ungodly, which is not Baptism but a pollution").
19. *SMPs*, Vol. II, p. 733a (First Session).
20. St. Theodore the Studite, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XCIX, col. 1057A (*Epistle I.40: "To Navkratios, His Spiritual Child"*).
21. Canon XLVII of the Holy Apostles.
22. St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite, *The Rudder*, p. 51.
23. St. Athanasios the Great, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XXV, col. 689A (*Epistle to Serapion*); *Bibliothèque ton Ellenon Pateron kai Ekklesiastikon Syngrapheon*, Vol. XXXIII, p. 178, ll. 38-39.
24. St. Athanasios the Great, *Bibliothèque ton Ellenon Pateron kai Ekklesiastikon Syngrapheon*, Vol. XXXI, p. 241, l. 22 (*Epistle to Monks*). • Concerning the "heresiology" of St. Athanasios, see the marvellous article by Barbara Kalogeropoulou-Metallinos, "Heresy and How to Deal with It on the Basis of the *Discourses Against the Arians* by St. Athanasios the Great" [in Greek], *Koinonia*, Vol. XXX, No. 2 (April-June 1987), pp. 183-208. • Also very illuminating with regard to the Baptism of heretics is the work by Protopresbyter George D. Metallinos, "*I Confess One Baptism...*": *An Interpretation and Application of the Seventh Canon of the Second Ecumenical Synod by the Kollyvades and Constantine Oikonomos (Contribution to the*

Historico-Canonical Evaluation of the Problem of the Validity of Western Baptism) [in Greek] (Athens: 1983). The Kollyvades to whom the work refers are Neophytos Kavsokalyvites, St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite, and Athanasios Parios.

25. St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XLIV, col. 504A (*On the Titles of the Psalms*, Book II, ch. 5).

25a. See P.N. Trembelas, *Semi-Official Documents on the Ecumenical Movement and Theological Dialogues* (Athens: Ho Soter Publications, 1972), p. 30.

26. "Final Report," in *The Seventh General Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Canberra, February 1991: Chronicle, Texts, Remarks* [in Greek], ed. George N. Laimopoulos (Katerine: Tertios Publications, 1992), p. 136.

27. *Ecumenical Press Service*, No. 16 (92.06.04): "Anglican Leader Visits WCC, Meets Leaders of Ecumenical Bodies" [*emphasis ours*]. See also *Enemerosis*, 8-1992/6, pp. 3-4. Archbishop George Carey of Canterbury was accompanied, apart from others, by his wife, Lady Carey.

28. Trembelas, *Dogmatic Theology*, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 333, n. 54. The Papist Council of Trent (Tyrol, Northern Italy, 1545-1563) is regarded by the Latins as the Nineteenth Ecumenical Synod and was anti-Protestant in nature.

29. Trembelas, *Dogmatic Theology*, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 48, n. 42 [*emphasis ours*].

30. Florovsky, *The Body of the Living Christ*, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

31. St. Athanasios the Great, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XXVI, col. 237B (*Second Discourse Against the Arians*, §§ 42-43).

32. *Episkepsis*, No. 332 (March 15, 1985) p. 9 [in Greek] [*emphasis ours*]. Cf. *Ho Soter*, No. 1140 (April 24, 1985), p. 249 [in Greek]: "Where is the WCC Going to Lead Us?" • This concerns statements by the then new General Secretary of the WCC, Dr. Emilio Castro, in the newspaper *The Orthodox Church*, in the USA. The General Secretary, among other things, said the following: "In the framework of the WCC, the Orthodox Churches must be recognized as one of the main branches of the Christian Church as a whole. It is true that they represent a family, a spiritual outlook, and a separate set of teachings." He put forward similar views during his visit to the Church of Greece (February 1, 1985). Are the views of Pastor Castro indeed very far removed from those of Metropolitan John?

33. See Apostolos B. Nicolaidis, *Interpretations and Misinterpretations in the Realm of Theology: Credal Theology and its Apologetic Aspects* [in Greek] (Athens: 1990), pp. 234-238.

34. John N. Karmiris, *Dogmatic Theology*, Part V, "Orthodox Ecclesiology" [in Greek] (Athens: 1973), pp. 241, 242, 243 [*emphasis ours*].

35. *Ibid.*, p. 243 (note) [*emphasis ours*]. • In a detailed study, Professor Basil N. Giannopoulos endeavors to provide a foundation for these erroneous views of John Karmiris by appealing to the Seventh Ecumenical Synod, in an attempt, indeed, to refute what Father George Metallinos correctly put forth in his aforementioned work, "I Confess One Baptism...." (See B.N. Giannopoulos, "The Reception of Heretics According to the Seventh Ecumenical Synod: 'How Those Coming from Heresies Are To Be Received,'" *Theologia*, No. 3 [July-September 1988], pp. 530-579). Basil Giannopoulos' conclusions, especially regarding the Ordination of heretics (see especially pp. 574ff. and footnotes 85 and 76), demonstrate confusion and an inability to understand the prism through which the Holy Synod examined the whole issue. It is truly a very distressing phenomenon that academic theology should attempt, in a variety of ways, to present the Seventh Holy Ecumenical Synod as concurring with its errors, to say nothing of "baptismal theology."