

**SOME SOTERIOLOGICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS  
OF THE SEVEN ECUMENICAL COUNCILS<sup>1</sup>**

**Lutheran-Orthodox Preparatory Meeting  
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NOTE

The Franks and their mostly Teutonic allies came to call themselves Latins. We call this alliance of mostly Teutons by the name Franco-Latins in order not to confuse them with the real Latins of Roman history.

**I. Formulations of dogma and the Mystery of God.**

1) Formulations of dogma are not to be confused with the Mysteries of the Holy Trinity, of the Incarnation and of the life within the glory of the Angel of Great Council both before and after His Incarnation and the life of His faithful in His Body, the Church. Doctrinal formulations are guides through the maze of heretical deviations on the narrow path of cure which leads to glorification/crucifixion in Christ.

Therefore, what leads to the cure of glorification is Orthodox and what leads away from this cure is heretical. Another way of saying this

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1. This should be studied in conjunction with this writer's papers for the Lutheran Orthodox Dialogue: 1) *Church Synods and Civilisation*. Vith Meeting 31/5-8/6/1991 Moscow, USSR. Revised for Subcommittee Meeting, June 17-21, 1992, Geneva, published in *Theologia*, Athens, vol. 63, Issue 3 \* July - September 1992, pp. 423-450. 2) *A Progress Report on our Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue*, for the Seventh Meeting, Sønderborg, Denmark, 4-11 July 1993, of the Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission, now published in *Theologia*, Athens, vol. 65, 1994, issue 1, pp. 25-28, and especially to the added Addendum now distributed and first published in 1983 under the title «Christ in the Old Testament and the Ecumenical Councils», *XENIA OECUMENICA*, No. 39, Vammala, Finland, pp. 233- 239.

is that doctrine is not metaphysical in nature. The Orthodoxy of doctrine is determined by the success of the cure it leads to, since dogma is not an end in itself. At the end of the path lies the «*coming of the Perfect*» (1 Cor. 13:10) when one sees the Lord of Glory in this life (1 Cor. 12:26) «*face to face*» (1 Cor. 13:12) wherein words and concepts about God are abolished.

This experience of glorification/theosis is what produced the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles and prophets of the New Testament and the patristic tradition. Formulations of dogma are only pointers on this narrow path, but they do not describe the uncreated glory «*of the Perfect*», nor reveal His essence or nature which is known only to Itself, i.e. to the Persons of the Holy Trinity.

2) The *credo ut intellegam* presuppositions of Franco-Latin theology whereby by faith one may reach at least a partial comprehension of the substance or essence of God behind dogmatic formulations is unknown to the Fathers of the Roman Ecumenical Councils. This Franco-Latin starting point developed by Anselm of Canterbury was based on Augustinian speculations about the substance of God, the so-called universals within the divine essence, the Holy Trinity, predestination, the Incarnation, inherited guilt, salvation, etc. In these two endeavours (of Augustine and the Scholastics) one finds a confusion between the formulations of dogma and the mysteries of union with God to which dogmatic formulations only point. That one believes in the teachings of the Church in order to intellectually understand the mysteries in question had been to some degree a peculiarity of such heretics as Paul of Samosata, the Arians, the Eunomians and the Nestorians.

3) The above place of doctrinal formulations is known only from the experiences of all the glorified at least from Abraham till today whereby *there is no similarity whatsoever between the uncreated God and His creatures, and it is therefore not only impossible to express Him, but even more impossible to conceive Him*. We repeat that this fact is known only by the glorifications/crucifixions/reconciliations/theosis<sup>2</sup> of the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets, by the New

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2. See John S. Romanides, *ΤΟ ΠΡΟΠΑΤΟΡΙΚΟΝ ΑΜΑΡΤΗΜΑ*, Chapter 3, e, Athens 1957, 1989. Herein one finds a summary of the patristic tradition that the prophets of the Old Testament had become reconciled friends of God because they participated in the Cross by means of their glorifications.

Testament apostles and prophets and their successors within the Body of Christ.

4) The difference between the Old and the New Testament is the Incarnation of the Lord and Angel of Glory whose friends the prophets had already become and the abolition of their death in the resurrection of Christ together with that of the New Testament faithful. The glorified before the incarnation of the Angel of Great Council had died. But their souls were co-resurrected with the incarnate Angel of Great Council to become members of his Body, the Church. The illumined and glorified in the Incarnate Angel of Great Council participate in the first resurrection of their spirits, which do not die with the body (*John 8:51ff*), and continue to be members of the Body of Christ together with the Old Testament faithful awaiting the general resurrection of their bodies.

5) The *only* purpose of the formulation of dogmas at Local and Ecumenical Councils is to protect the faithful from the speculations of those who would lead them *away from the cure of glorification/crucifixion/reconciliation in the Lord of Glory. All the Truth revealed on Pentecost and extended in each historical glorification can neither be improved upon nor added to.*

## II. Soteriology.

6) The Bible is a record of the glorifying (*shekenising*) and saving act of God in His Angel of Glory both before and after His incarnation. This Angel of Great Council both guided and saved His people by means of His patriarchs and His prophets of the Old Testament and guides and saves His faithful by means of His apostles and prophets of the New Testament from Pentecost until the consummation.

The people of God are not saved as kinds of Platonic souls searching for a *beata vita* and indeed without the body. Unlike the Moslems, the Franco-Latin Scholastics could never really figure out why the body was necessary in the future state of the *beata vita*. In contrast to this the people of God are members of their society with their bodies. Humans are neither only their souls nor only their bodies, but both, and indeed within their society of being the faithful people of God.

7) The hymns of the Orthodox Church repeatedly praise the pre-incarnate Christ, i.e. the Lord of Glory, for saving Israel from her

physical and spiritual enemies and incorporating her into His Body, the Church.

8) There are two aspects of salvation: one with glorification in Christ's Body, the Church, and a second one which is the seeing of this same uncreated glory of Christ as the eternal fires of hell and outer darkness. Both are the result of God's love for all creation whereby He loves both the damned and the glorified equally «...*God is the Saviour of all people, indeed of the faithful (1 Tim. 4:10)*». All are saved, but the faithful are indeed saved because they chose to be cured by their co-glorification and co-crucifixion with Christ and each other.

9) This is so because glorification is not imposed upon humans and angels against their will. Glorification is a gift of God which humans must both choose and work for. Once chosen God gives His faithful the power to pass through the purification and the illumination of the heart and arrive at glorification, which in this life may have varying durations. In the next life the glorified go from glory to glory without end.

10) The choice of the angels for God's glory or not took place within the created ages (αἰῶνες) before the creation of time (χρόνος). The angels within their dimension of the ages either rejected the way of glory or else accepted it. Because this happens within the ages and not in time there is no *metanoia* – repentance. The angels who had accepted the way of glory are eternally perfected without end. They are joined by the members of the Body of Christ who are also glorified from glory to glory within time and unto the ages of ages. In contrast to this salvation is that of hell which by one's own choice is to be reduced to *actus purus* stagnation, i.e. to the *beata vita* of certain pagan religions and of the Augustinian tradition.

11) Unlike the God of the Platonists and the Scholastics, the God of the prophets is Himself not only unmoved mover, but also moved, since He is in no way to be compared to His creatures.

12)<sup>3</sup> Therefore the Franco-Latin Beatific Vision of God in perfect actuality and motionless bliss is in reality what hell is all about. This hell of the *Beata Vita* is the natural reward for those who all their

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3. The Orthodox decided to drop this paragraph from the final version because it is in reality a repetition of paragraph 10 above.

lives worked for happiness, either earthly and/or heavenly. This reward of happiness is the result of God's love for those who refuse His gift of glorification/crucifixion, i.e. selfless love. God gives them the happiness they strove for all their self-centred lives not for a punishment, but out of love.

### III. The Lord of Glory, the Doctor of our souls and bodies.

The reason why the Fathers and Orthodox prayers repeatedly refer to the Incarnate Lord of Glory as the doctor of the souls and bodies of the faithful is because He is exactly that. It is not by any metaphor that St. Paul speaks of those «*many*» who «*eat*» and «*drink of the cup*» «*in an unworthy manner*» in a descending scale as «*weak*», «*sick*» and «*dead*» (1 Cor. 11:27-30). These three groups are the «*private individuals (laymen)*» who say only «*amen*» at corporate worship. They are either «*weak*» in a state of being purified, or «*sick*» not really yet on the road of cure, and the «*dead*» whose communion with the glory of Christ is not much different from non - believers. In varying degrees they have not yet become «*members of the Body of Christ*» and «*temples of the Holy Spirit*» since they do not yet «*pray*» and «*recite psalms*» by their «*spirit*» in contrast to the prayers and psalms they recite by their «*intellect*».

13) Underlying this scale of sicknesses is the existence of a biological or neurological function or energy of the heart which is sick. Paul calls this energy a human «*spirit*» in the heart to which the Holy Spirit testifies that one has become a child of God when it has at least «*kinds of tongues*». For reasons I explain elsewhere the Fathers came to call Paul's spirit by the term νοερά ενεργεια which I have been translating as «*noetic faculty*». Thus public corporate worship is called «*intellectual worship (λογικὴ λατρεία)*» and prayer in the heart is called «*noetic prayer (νοερά προσευχή)*».

### IV. Exclusions.

14) It goes without saying that the following positions have no place within the above context:

a) That humanity inherits the guilt of the sin of Adam and Eve and is therefore worthy of eternal damnation.

b) That God chose from among those thus guilty only certain ones to be saved without personal merit.

c) That Christ died on the cross only for them.

d) That Christ loves only those sinners who are destined for heaven.

e) That Christ had to be crucified to reconcile God to man.

15) Commenting on *2 Cor. 5:19* St. John Chrysostom says that one must «*be reconciled to God. Paul did not say, Reconcile God to yourselves, for it is not He who hates, but we. For God never hates*».

16) The phrase «*because of which (ΕΦ' Ω)*» in *Romans 5:12* has a continuous and unbroken history and appears in legal briefs even today. Here we have the masculine form. The only word it can refer to is the masculine word θάνατος (death) which just precedes it. The correct translation is therefore «*because of which death all have sinned*». Here Paul is not only using death as the end of one's life, but as a sickness of the living person because he is deprived of the glory of God which is the root cause of sin. In other words «*all have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God*». This is the basic sickness of humanity which needs the cure of glorification. What the Franco-Latins did to Christianity with this little ΕΦ' Ω is indeed astounding.<sup>4</sup>

17) In this writer's *A PROGRESS REPORT ON OUR LUTHERAN-ORTHODOX DIALOGUE*, at our Seventh Meeting in July 1993, we mapped out some of the most important topics to be dealt with concerning the soteriological presuppositions of the Ecumenical Councils. Obviously the most important is the identity of Christ with the Angel of the Lord in the burning bush, etc. held in common by Orthodox and heretics during the debates of the First and Second Ecumenical Councils. It seems that one must make a distinction between one's personal opinions about whether the Fathers are right on this point and whether they indeed make this identity. All the Ecumenical Councils make this identity. It is for this reason that this writer pointed out that neither Augustine nor his followers have ever accepted any of the Roman Ecumenical Councils.

18) Another of the most important indications why the Franco-Latins never really accepted the Seven Ecumenical Councils is their addition of their Filioque to the Creed. In the experience of glorification what is individual in the Holy Trinity belongs only to one of the Persons. What is common to the Three Person belongs to all Persons.

4. See J. S. Romanides, *Τὸ Προπατορικὸν Ἀμάρτημα*, Athens 1957, 1983.

### **V. The Reception of Councils.**

19) Local and Ecumenical Councils are accepted because they defend the Lord of Glory's method of cure of the human personality from Old Testament times till today. The Church was never interested in Church Union as an end in itself, but only within the context of the cure of the faithful by purification-illumination-glorification. It is within such a context that we must define exactly what we mean by acceptance of the Seven Ecumenical Councils.

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