

Cyprianism

Crypto-Ecumenism – The Heresy of Our Days

Protopresbyter Victor Melehov

In 1984, Bishop Cyprian (Koutsoumbas) of Oropos and Fili (formerly of the Callistite Schism) broke with his former brethren and formed his own Synod, the "Synod of Those in Resistance," otherwise known as the "Cyprianite Synod." With this event came an entirely new challenge to the True Orthodox Church of Greece. The ecclesiology developed by Metropolitan Cyprian, while appearing to stand against Ecumenism, actually served to disarm the True Orthodox into accepting it, albeit in a veiled version.

At first glance, Cyprianism appears to offer a "middle-of-the-road" ecclesiology to those seeking to avoid harshly judging "World Orthodoxy," from Sergianism to the "New Calendar," to Ecumenism. In certain cases, the ecclesiology of Cyprianism offers special solace to those coming to True Orthodox jurisdictions from "World Orthodoxy" jurisdictions. For many such clergy and laity, it is difficult to admit that they were in error to the extent that they were not in the True Church of Christ. Without giving serious thought to the consequences of their self-contradicting ecclesiology, they console themselves with the erroneous perspective that they left a flawed or ailing church to join a purer version – a True Orthodox jurisdiction. This error not only impedes their own salvation, but it also infects the True Orthodox jurisdiction with the virus of "Crypto-Ecumenism."

Crypto-Ecumenism is a sly and subtle form of Ecumenism, the very same heresy anathematized in 1983 by the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR) under the leadership of our holy hierarch, Metropolitan Philaret. Although the term itself is relatively new, it will probably serve as an apt descriptor for other heresies aimed at the True Orthodox Church in times to come. Cyprianism is indeed a sly and subtle form of Ecumenism. While claiming to be in "resistance" (to the New Calendar State Church of Greece), Cyprianites still maintain a relationship to, and a position within, the same Mother Church (i.e., the New Calendar State Church of Greece). While satisfying their need to "resist" such errors and heresies as the New Calendar and Ecumenism by keeping their own separate synodal administration, they claim to still be a part of the Mother Church, which is ailing.

The purpose of this article is to reveal the error of the Cyprianite ecclesiology, and of those who practice it to this day. The Church cannot possibly be ailing or sick. Those who espouse heresy have embraced spiritual death. They cannot be within the Church. They cannot represent the Church. They are outside of the Church. By not condemning Ecumenism as a heresy, but rather seeking to define it as a form of

ailment, the heresy of Cyprianism becomes Ecumenism. All of the so-called churches of “World Orthodoxy” have accepted Ecumenism. To call Ecumenism an ailment is a sly and subtle deception. It only serves to disarm Christians into believing they should stay within the “ailing” (i.e., heretical) Mother Church to “resist” or “fight from within.”

Of course, it is easier, and perhaps more attractive for those of a compromising disposition, to adopt the Cyprianite position. One is not obliged to say, “There is heresy there, and you must leave,” and then suffer the onslaught of arguments regarding whether or not these heretical institutions have Grace. It is far more popular to say, “Yes, there are problems here, but we must fight from within to correct them.” Although taking this populist tact is less problematic, it serves no one any benefit. Truth is avoided, and souls may be lost. The Cyprianite ecclesiology is one of compromise, rooted in heresy.

There are some who will say that Cyprianism is but a “Greek issue.” To such people we shall demonstrate that Cyprianism has long ago left the borders of Greece and its ethnic diaspora. Since 1994, it has catastrophically infected ROCOR, and is presently destroying the souls of those attached to the schism of Metropolitan Agafangel.

Then, there are those who dismiss Cyprianism as a mere thesis, not a heresy, nor a teaching, but merely a personal opinion of Metropolitan Cyprian, which even the Cyprianite Synod of Those in Resistance allegedly does not follow. To such let us ask: If the Pope of Rome were to repent and abandon the Roman Catholic heresy today, does it make his former ecclesiology any less heretical for others to adopt? Furthermore, a thesis is merely an untried statement in theory. Cyprianism is far from this. Judging by their very name, the Synod of Those in Resistance still adheres to its same ecclesiology, and judging by the number of their members throughout the world, this ecclesiology has grown in popularity. In 1994, ROCOR officially adopted the ecclesiology of the Synod of Those in Resistance as its very own ecclesiology. More recently, in keeping with this official ecclesiology of ROCOR since 1994, Metropolitan Agafangel created his entire “ROCOR-A” synod with the approval and participation of the bishops of the Synod of Those in Resistance. So, how is Cyprianism a mere thesis?

How is it that Cyprianism was so attractive to ROCOR in 1994, and why did Metropolitan Agafangel go into schism from his Orthodox confessing brother-hierarchs over this same issue in 2007? How is it that this “Greek issue,” this ecclesiology of a single Greek bishop defrocked and rejected by his former brethren and other synods, has now come to infect the Russian Church?

In 1983, the ROCOR Synod under the leadership of our holy Hierarch, Metropolitan Philaret, had unanimously adopted the following Anathema against Ecumenism:

Those who attack the Church of Christ by teaching that Christ's Church is divided into so-called "branches" which differ in doctrine and way of life, or that the Church does not exist visibly, but will be formed in the future when all "branches" or sects or denominations, and even religions will be united into one body; and who do not distinguish the priesthood and mysteries of the Church from those of the heretics, but say that the baptism and eucharist of heretics is effectual for salvation; therefore, to those who knowingly have communion with these aforementioned heretics or who advocate, disseminate, or defend their new heresy of Ecumenism under the pretext of brotherly love or the supposed unification of separated Christians, Anathema!

Throughout all the post-revolutionary years of the ROCOR's existence, this was the first clear statement of its ecclesiology relative to contemporary times. The Holy Hierarch, and Metropolitan, Philaret had led his Synod of Bishops to crystallize and articulate this momentous and historic benchmark, delineating the boundaries of the True Faith.

Unfortunately, wishing to unite with the Moscow Patriarchate, as well as to become recognized in the eyes of "World Orthodoxy," the ROCOR bishops of 1994 found such an ecclesiology an impediment to their desired direction. To officially reject the 1983 Anathema would certainly serve to alarm too many faithful, and would bring down the charge that these bishops are changing the direction of the Church, established by the earlier beloved Metropolitans.

Instead, the 1994 ROCOR bishops chose to "move on," as modern politicians prefer to say, and proclaim an oneness-of-mind with Met. Cyprian's ecclesiology, and, of course, that of his Synod. They gambled, reasoning that no one would realize that their new "ecclesiology" would replace and negate the spirit of the 1983 Anathema; their former ecclesiology. They succeeded. A few clergymen winced, and a few left. The rest went on celebrating with their new-found Greek friends, while their severed, former Greek brethren looked on with disbelief. Only one ROCOR bishop protested. Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), who was previously forced to retire, wrote the following:

"The Dubious Orthodoxy of Metropolitan Cyprian's Group"
by Bishop GREGORY Grabbe

(Translated from *Church News* [in Russian], No. 5, Sept. - Oct. 1994, pp. 2-4.)
The newspaper *Pravoslavnaya Rus*, in its issue number seventeen of the present year, published the Decision of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad concerning the establishment of prayerful Eucharistic communion with the group of Old Calendarists headed by Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili.[1]

In its concluding section the Decision elucidates the causes that prompted the Sobor to take this step. However, in not one of its six points does it mention that the Sobor of 1975 resolved not to have communion with the Greek groups until they themselves

had become united, and the Synod, already presided over by Metropolitan Vitaly, reaffirmed this wise decision in the spring of 1993, that is, a mere year and a half ago. Everyone is aware that the Greek groups can in no wise boast of having already achieved unity, yet the present Conciliar Decision offers no explanation whatsoever for this abrogation by the Sobor of its previous resolutions.

Thus, in the Decision it is stated, "After deliberation and analysis of all aspects of these questions [concerning the history and ideology of this group][2] the Council of Bishops maintains that at the present time, when apostasy is spreading and the so-called official representatives of Orthodoxy, such as the Patriarchate of Constantinople and other patriarchates, are succumbing to and embracing the position of the Modernists and Ecumenists, it is very important for the True Orthodox to unite, make a stand together, and oppose the betrayers of the Orthodoxy of the Holy Fathers. In this regard, the Council of Bishops has decided:

"1) To establish communion in prayer and the Eucharist with the Greek Old Calendarist Synod of Metropolitan Cyprian, as well as with His Grace, Bishop Photios of Triaditsa, who heads the Bulgarian Old Calendar diocese." Bishop Photios was consecrated for the Bulgarians by the self-same Metropolitan Cyprian, and thus his legitimacy is dependent upon the legitimacy of Metropolitan Cyprian. It is of interest that our Sobor, while seeking union with the "True Orthodox" Greek groups, made no effort whatsoever toward unity with the far more numerous and decent group of Archbishop Chrysostom (Kiouisis) of Athens, who has a Sobor consisting of nineteen bishops.

The second point [of the decision] deals with informing the flock abroad of this event. In point number three it is stated, "During the deliberations, the statements of those opposed to the union were also taken into account, in which the question was raised concerning the canonicity of Metropolitan Cyprian's group and their allegedly un-Orthodox teaching on Grace."

Aside from his personal teaching on Grace (more on this below), Metropolitan Cyprian has likewise been accused of preaching the heresy of chiliasm. Concerning the "canonicity" of this group enough has already been said and written. But what then is their "allegedly un-Orthodox teaching on Grace"?

Preparing the ground for possible union with the Church Abroad well in advance, Metropolitan Cyprian issued a pamphlet entitled "An Ecclesiological Thesis, or Exposition on the Doctrine of the Church, for the Orthodox Opposed to the Heresy of Ecumenism"[3] It would seem that, judging from the title of the pamphlet, nothing could be said against such a program. The pamphlet is quite handsomely printed, even to the point of using the old orthography [i.e., pre-Revolutionary]. It was very widely distributed, and each member of the Bishop's Sobor undoubtedly received a copy. However, with great consternation and dismay one is forced to point out that apparently the very members of the Bishops' Committee investigating the Greek question themselves, [4] and all the members of the Bishops' Sobor together, failed to pursue sufficiently what is called "reading between the lines" of this pamphlet, which abounds in ancient texts and is deftly put together, but which bears little relation to the contemporary ecclesiastical situation. Moreover, it is obvious that they took scant notice of the canonicity (very doubtful) of Metropolitan Cyprian's group, for the subject is not at all reflected in the text of the Sobor's Decision. Likewise evident is the fact that the committee took no account whatsoever of the motives behind our own previous resolutions.

Let us now attempt to determine precisely what sort of Orthodoxy Metropolitan Cyprian does confess and whether or not one can actually say with a clear conscience

that both he and his synod *adheres wholly to the exact same ecclesiological and dogmatic principles as our Russian Church Outside Russia* (point five of the Sobor's Decision).

In the chapter [of the pamphlet] entitled "The Church and Heresy," page two, it says: "Sinners and those who err in correctly understanding the Faith, yet who have not been sentenced by ecclesiastical action, are simply considered ailing members of the Church. The Mysteries of these un-sentenced members are valid as such, according to the Seventh

Ecumenical Council, as, for example, the President of the Council, Saint Tarasios, remarks: "[their] ordination" "is from God." [5] Later, in the third chapter, the author turns to the matter, "The Division in the Church Over Ecumenism" - as he calls it. It seems strange to hear from a bishop who proclaims his Orthodoxy the idea that the Church can be "divided." The Holy Fathers have taught that She always was, is, and shall be the indivisible Bride of Christ. One can only fall away from Her or be reunited to Her through repentance. Metropolitan Anthony [Khrapovitsky] especially emphasized to his priests the necessity, after confession, of reading the ancient Prayer of Absolution which contains the word, "reconcile and unite him to Thy holy Church," thereby indicating that he who sins falls away from the Church. Although private confession can heal personal moral falls, it in no wise cures a public and obdurate inclination to heresy. Metropolitan Cyprian correctly points out that the beginning of the malady was the introduction of the Western calendar into the life of the Church in 1924. But then later he advances an opinion which in no wise corresponds to the present ecclesiastical situation. "The followers of the festal calendar innovation," says he, "have not yet been specifically judged in a pan-Orthodox fashion, as provided for by the Orthodox Church. As Saint Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain writes, the violator of established precepts is considered sentenced, insofar as he is judged by 'the second entity (which is the Council or Synod).' Since 1924, the innovators have been awaiting judgment and shall be judged on the basis of the decisions of the holy Councils, both Ecumenical and local, and, to be sure, on the basis of the ecclesiastical pronouncements of the sixteenth century against what were then Papal proposals for changes in the festal calendar. *In this respect those who have walled themselves off from the innovators have actually broken communion 'before conciliar or synodal verdict,' as is allowed in the Fifteenth Canon of the First-and- Second Council. That is to say, the innovators are still un-sentenced. Consequently,*

[according to the teaching of Metropolitan Cyprian],[6] *their Mysteries are valid.*[Emphasis mine.][7]

Metropolitan Cyprian chooses a convenient quotation from this canon to suit his purpose, but intentionally does not cite the subsequent text of the canon concerning those who separate themselves from their presidents before a synodical judgment in cases where the open preaching of heresy is taking place: "Such persons as these not only are not subject to canonical penalty for walling themselves off from communion with the so-called bishop before synodical clarification, but [on the contrary] they shall be deemed worthy of due honor among the Orthodox. For not bishops, but false bishops and false teachers have they condemned, and they have not fragmented the Church's unity with schism, but from schisms and divisions have they earnestly sought to deliver the Church. (Canon Fifteen of the so-called First-Second Council)"

The adherents of Roman Catholicism in Russia have from of old cited the fact that not one Ecumenical Council has ever condemned Roman Catholicism and therefore it,

they say, is not a heresy. Such an opinion was quite widespread among our intelligentsia, and especially in military circles.

Chapter Four is entitled "Repentance and Return." That which is expounded therein, concerning the principle of repentance, is entirely correct and in accord with the canons. Yet while offering us numerous examples of repentance which took place at one or another Ecumenical Council, Metropolitan Cyprian never so much as mentions the fact that the New Calendarists/Ecumenists not only have no intention whatsoever of repenting, but on the contrary, they persecute the True Orthodox in a most cruel manner. We have before our eyes the example of how quite recently they "strangled," one could say, Patriarch Diodoros of Jerusalem, who was attempting to defend the Orthodoxy of the Holy Fathers. Only a few months have now passed since they, by means of threats of expulsion from their monasteries, and canonical sanctions, have forced to repent before them that last bastion of Orthodoxy, the Holy Mountain, which was defending the Church from the inroads of the heresy of Ecumenism. Metropolitan Cyprian sees no grounds for severing communion with the New Calendarists/Ecumenists until such a time as it will be possible for a future Ecumenical Council to judge them. But who could not be aware (including the Metropolitan himself) that for almost twenty years now the Ecumenists have been preparing the program for the future - and not in the least Orthodox - "Eighth Ecumenical Council"? The Preconciliar Committee has already on more than one occasion published its drafts for the reports to be delivered at this future "Council." The issues to be discussed at it include the unification of all Christians, the total abolition of the fasts, married bishops, and second marriages for the clergy. Who, then, will be the president of this dishonorable assembly, which, according to Metropolitan Cyprian's daydreams, is supposed to condemn the Ecumenists/New Calendarists? Obviously, that crypto-Roman Catholic, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, and those like unto him, will prove to be its members: the Patriarch of Alexandria, Parthenios (who has officially declared Mohammed to be a great prophet and personally considers him an Apostle!); the Patriarch of Antioch (who has already issued a directive to his clergy granting them permission to concelebrate with the heretical Monophysites); the Patriarch of Moscow (who has signed both the Balamand Unia and the agreement concerning the Monophysites, and who has even initiated a dialogue with the Jews "on the highest possible level").[8]

I have been given the opportunity to acquaint myself with several letters written by one of the bishops of Metropolitan Cyprian's group. From these it is quite evident that he and his fellow bishops confess their own personal, and in no wise Orthodox, doctrine concerning the possibility of the Grace-filled activity of the Holy Spirit within churches which have become manifestly heretical. *ALL the New Calendarists - without the least exception - are likewise very active Ecumenists.*[9] The Old Style Churches (Russian and Serbian) have for a long time now also confessed this very same heresy. But behold, this hierarch of Metropolitan Cyprian's group insists on the opinion that, so he says, "the New Calendarists, besieged by the heresy of Ecumenism and Innovation, have not been deprived of Grace,[10] or at any rate, it is not within our competency to make such a pronouncement on our part ... we are not speaking of union with Belial, but (only) with those ailing in faith, several of whom are in need of spiritual treatment ... in view of this, we do not totally break off communion with them." [11] In another letter the same hierarch expresses the thought - totally unacceptable and absurd from a dogmatic point of view and from that of the Holy Fathers - that this group, while recognizing that the Ecumenists have Grace, is only "walling itself off from their errors." In pronouncing its Decision concerning

communion with Metropolitan Cyprian's group, our Sobor, unfortunately, did not also call to mind the text of that Decision taken formerly, under the presidency of Metropolitan Philaret, anathematizing the heresy of Ecumenism. Among others it contains such words as these *"Therefore, to those who knowingly have communion with these aforementioned heretics, or who advocate, disseminate, or defend their new heresy of Ecumenism: Anathema." *[12] Indeed, by not investigating the matter seriously and by forgetting about this previously confirmed anathematizing of the New Calendarists/Ecumenists (or perhaps not venturing to abrogate this resolution), our Sobor, as frightful as it may be to admit, has fallen under its own Anathema. Had it probed the net spread before it more carefully, it would never have issued such a contradictory Decision.

Our previous Bishops' Sobors never raised the particular question concerning whether or not the New Calendarists have Grace. But the fact that formerly concelebrations with them were never permitted already testifies with sufficient clarity that the Church Abroad considered them to be without Grace. Must we consider that our Synod has entered upon the path of betrayal of the traditions of the Holy Fathers, or did it merely commit an error owing to poor judgment which it is still not too late to correct at the next session of the Sobor to be held in November in France?[13]

+ Bishop GREGORY

Fortunately, Metropolitan Vitaly had lived long enough to see his mistake in the 1994 decision, and denounced Cyprianism quite thoroughly in 2001. The fact that Metropolitan Vitaly chose to do this as one of his first decisions after departing from his false brethren under the new ROCOR Synod of Met. Laurus further serves to underscore the danger of this ecclesiology as a heresy, and not a mere "thesis." His decision contains the following:

15/01/M

16/29 December 2001

The Resolution of the Pastoral Conference of the Canadian and American Clergy Regarding the Issue of Terminating Eucharistic Communion with Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili.

Having studied and discussed Metropolitan Cyprian's teaching concerning ailing and healthy members of the Church in "the realm of a correct understanding of the faith" by the General Committee, whose creation was approved by Archbishop Varnava and Bishop Varfolomey and, likewise, having attended to reports and theological analyses from several volumes of documents regarding this subject, we have come to the following conclusion:

The Conclusion Concerning the Ecclesiology of Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili.

On the basis of having studied the ecclesiological teachings of Metropolitan Cyprian, which are set forth in the book "Ecclesiological Thesis, or the Exposition of the Doctrine of the Church for the Orthodox, Resisting the Heresy of Ecumenism" (pub. Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, Fili, Attica, Greece, 1993), Metropolitan

Cyprian's report at the 6th Orthodox Conference "The Heresy of Ecumenism and the Patristic Position of the Orthodox" (23 February 1998), and also a host of publications and declarations of other hierarchs of the Synod of the Resisters, we have arrived at the following conclusions:

1. Metropolitan Cyprian and his Synod, while recognizing ecumenist world Orthodoxy to be heretical, nevertheless, considers it to be a part of the Church of Christ, thus contradicting the teaching and tradition of the Church, which clearly bears witness in Conciliar decrees and the writings of the Holy Fathers to the effect that heretics are fallen away from the Church.

2. Metropolitan Cyprian replaces the concept of "heretics" with a description of those who are essentially in error in their judgments concerning the Orthodox. Thus, in regard to ecumenist-heretics, he writes: "Persons in error concerning the correct understanding of the faith -- and thereby sinning, but not yet judged by an ecclesiastical court -- are ailing members of the Church" ("Ecclesiological Theses," ch. 1, 4; pp. 2, 7). Calling for a walling-off from these ailing members, Metropolitan Cyprian, nonetheless, considers them to be within the Church. However, to permit membership in the Church outside an Orthodox confession of faith is by no means possible; hence, "those ailing in the faith" cannot be members of the Church, which is also confirmed by the teachings of the Holy Fathers. "Without a doubt," says the venerable John Cassian the Roman, "he who does not confess the faith of the Church is outside the Church." The same is confirmed also by Patriarch Jeremiah II of Constantinople: "Members of the Church of Christ are wholly devoted to the truth, and those not wholly devoted to the truth are not members of the Church of Christ." And St. Cyprian of Carthage teaches: "Just as the devil is not Christ, although he deceives in His name, so also such a one cannot be accounted a Christian as does not abide in the truth of His Gospel and Faith." In agreement with all the Fathers, the Great Hierarch Gregory the Theologian, in his Second Epistle Against Apollinarius, also teaches: "Avoid those holding to another doctrine and consider them alien to God and to the Universal Church." The Epistle of the Eastern Patriarchs Concerning the Orthodox Faith states: "We believe that all amongst us are members of the Catholic Church, even the faithful themselves, i.e., those who unconditionally confess the pure faith of Christ the Saviour." And St. Gregory Palamas also explains: "Those who are of the Church of Christ, the same are of the truth; and those who are not of the truth, the same are also not of the Church of Christ..."

Metropolitan Cyprian declares in his thesis that "the Orthodox have become divided into two parts: those who are ailing in the faith and those who are healthy..." (Ch. 3, p. 4), but then he immediately goes on to speak of "restoring to Orthodoxy" those ailing in the faith (Ch. 3, p. 5), whereby he clearly falls into a doctrinal contradiction, for how is it possible "to receive into Orthodoxy" those who already are Orthodox?!

3. Metropolitan Cyprian makes a statement concerning the division of the Church by reason of ecumenism, by drawing an analogy between the present state of the Church and Her state during the time of the iconoclastic heresy. In his ecclesiology, he attempts to compare the present-day new-calendarists and ecumenists with the iconoclasts, whom the Fathers of the VII-th Oecumenical Council united to the Church through repentance and the renouncing of their heresy. Likewise, Metropolitan Cyprian refers to the VII-th Oecumenical Council, the Acts of which

employ the expressions "severance," "divisions," etc. He reaches a totally unfounded conclusion, that the iconoclasts, prior to their having been judged by the Council, were not yet heretics, as such; and that their mysteries were therefore recognized as being valid. However, concerning the iconoclasts who were joined to Orthodoxy, neither did the Oecumenical Council consider them as having belonged previously to the Church, nor did they themselves make any pretences as to their comprising Her. Here are the testimonies of the joining iconoclasts themselves. Basil, Bp. of Ancyra: "To the extent of my ability, I investigated the question of icons, and with complete conviction turned to the Holy Catholic Church." Theodore, Bp. of Myra in Lycia: "...I pray God and your holiness to join me, a sinner, to the Holy Catholic Church, as well." John, the most-God-pleasing Locum Tenens of the Apostolic Throne in the East said: "Heresy separates every man from the Church." The Holy Council stated: "that is obvious."

But Metropolitan Cyprian, in his ecclesiology, changes the terminology: "they were received into Orthodoxy," thereby inferring an unthinkable distinction between the Church and Orthodoxy, which is impossible.

The Church, as the Body of Christ, cannot be divided. Such a phenomenon is ontologically impossible, inasmuch as the Lord Jesus Christ cannot have several bodies. Those divisions mentioned at the Council, and in the writings of the Holy Fathers, relate exclusively to a temporary division between Christians, like those arising during times of troubles when heresies are being spread, and when, initially, it can be difficult to discern just who is who. St. Basil the Great compared an occasion like this to a night-battle when, in the darkness, it is not immediately possible to discern friend from foe.

In the Church there can be no division; there can only be a falling away from Her. The Catechism of Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitski) states the same concerning this: "Question: Is it possible to grant that there once took place, or that there will take place, a division within the Church, or a separation of Churches? Answer: In no case: heretics and schismatics fell away from the one indivisible Church at various times and thereby ceased to be members of the Church, but the Church, as such, cannot lose her unity" (Experience of Christian Catechism. Pub. Australo-New Zealand Ep. 1989, p. 65). In its Epistle of 18 November/ 1 December 1962, the ROCOR Sobor of Bishops likewise confessed: "We cannot accept their (the ecumenists') point of view, that the Church has become divided. We believe in One, Exclusive Church, the Head of Which is Christ. As there is one Head, so also is there one Body – the Church. If a house is divided within itself, then it cannot stand. Thus, also, the Church, having become divided, would cease to be the Church. There can only be a falling-away from the Church – a departure from Her of individuals -- or of entire groups who are not of like mind with Her." In accordance with this confession, the 18/31 December, 1931, Declaration of the ROCOR Synod of Bishops states: "Preserving the Faith in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, the Synod of Bishops confesses that this Church has never been divided."

4. Contradicting the decrees of the Church, Metropolitan Cyprian declares that "the new-calendarists have not yet been condemned, to this day" and that he recognizes "their Mysteries" to be "valid" (Ch. 3, p. 5). But the Gregorian paschalion and the Gregorian menologion were thrice condemned by Local Councils of the Church of

Constantinople: in 1583, in 1587 and in 1593, with the Eastern Patriarchs taking part. For example, the 1593 conciliar definition of the Church states: "Whosoever does not follow the customs of the Church, but desires to follow the Gregorian menologion and paschalion, is subject to anathema, to being excommunicated from the Church and from the entire assembly of the faithful." Patriarch Cyril's 1756 Encyclical declares: "he who accepts the Gregorian menologion will be separated from God."

5. The unification Council that Metropolitan Cyprian is hoping for can unite only these "separated Orthodox." But heretics do not belong to the Church and can return into the Bosom of the Church of Christ only through being united to Her. Metropolitan Cyprian sets forth a false theory of uniting those of unlike mind, at the same time making the very convening of said Council dependent upon this unnatural union.

In this fashion, Metropolitan Cyprian's doctrine, being the fundamental position of the Synod of Resistors, contradicts the Patristic traditions of the Church. He declares that he is not in communion with heretical ecumenist churches. Meanwhile, however, he and his Synod fail to sever themselves from these churches spiritually, considering themselves to be the "healthy" part of the one Church at the same time as the heretical, ecumenist and new-calendarist churches are the "ailing" part. Thus, Metropolitan Cyprian's Synod, despite the absence of communion in the mysteries, finds itself, de facto, in a total "healthy-ailing" union with heretical world "Orthodoxy." This "Orthodox" crypto-ecumenism, so to speak, even as open ecumenism, falls under the 1983 anathema against the heresy of ecumenism, which was proclaimed by the ROCOR Synod of Bishops under presidency of the third First Hierarch of the Church Abroad, Metropolitan Philaret. (This anathema was subsequently confirmed by the ROCOR Sobor of Bishops in 1998):

"and to those who have communion with these heretics, or who aid and abet them, or who defend their new heresy of ecumenism, supposing that to be brotherly love and the uniting of separated Christians: Anathema!"

Thus, by appending our signatures hereunto, we ratify the 2nd Point of the Declaration of the Synod of Bishops of our Church, No. 7/01/M, on 26 October/8 November, 2001, wherein is announced:

"(In accordance with the decree of the 1974 ROCOR Sobor Of Bishops) The termination of the 1994 ROCOR Sobor's rashly-established Eucharistic communion with the Synod of the Resistors under the Presidency of Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili on account of his unorthodox teaching concerning the Church (regarding ailing and healthy members of the Church in the realm of "the correct understanding of the faith") and the recognition of the Mysteries of the new-calendarists as being valid" (see Met. Cyprian "Ecclesiological Thesis," pp. 2 and 5).

+ Metropolitan Vitaly
(signature)

+ Archbishop Varnava (in agreement with the resolution)
(signature)

+ Bishop Sergii
(signature)

+ Bishop Vladimir
(signature)
+ Bishop Varfolomei (in agreement with the resolution)
(signature)

Protopresbyter Victor Melehov,
Archpriest Sergii Petrov,
Archpriest Joseph Sunderland,
Archpriest Spyridon Schneider,
Priest Anatolii Trepachko,
Priest Andrew Kencis,
Priest Nikita Orlov,
Hieromonk Damian (Hansen),
Priest Mikhail Marcinowski,
Priest Yevgenii Santalov,
Abbess Eugenia (agrees with the Resolution),
Deacon Mark Smith

Holy Transfiguration skete,
Mansonville, Canada

Cyprianism is no longer a thesis for intellectual entertainment. In addition to being the official ecclesiology of the Synod in Resistance since its inception, it has been the official ecclesiology of the ROCOR for almost two decades. Now, we have lived to see its fruits; union with the Moscow Patriarchate, an open door to “world orthodoxy,” and a wholesale betrayal of the Russian New Martyrs and the faith of our Fathers. Cyprianism is an active and malignant ecclesiology.

Nonetheless, one might hope to argue, it has not yet been condemned by an Ecumenical Council. Is it safe to ingest a well-known poison simply because it has not officially been declared to be a poison by some so-called authority? Similarly, there has been no Ecumenical Council to judge Communism, Sergianism, Ecumenism, Roman Catholicism or its off-spring, Protestantism. Shall we remain silent as more souls suffer and perish while we await an Ecumenical Council? And, what churches shall comprise such a council? The True Orthodox Churches are scattered and small, struggling with their own organization while navigating through the perilous reefs of contemporary heresies grounded in Secular Humanism. Perhaps the churches of World Orthodoxy will gather to condemn themselves? In such times, we must act wisely and rely upon our Savior who says that we can judge such things by their fruits.

It is painfully evil to avoid dealing with apostasy and heresy under the pretext of formality, or high-minded philosophy for those endowed with reasoning. Is it possible for a Church to continue being a Church when it recognizes a God-hating regime, and allows itself to be subject to its demands and control to the extent of its own persecution and annihilation? Or, can one remain in the Church while claiming to be within an “ailing Church” and willfully participating in, or at least ignoring, a heresy,

simply by referring to oneself as the “resistance?” Now, these might have been entertaining topics for a fictional conversation some 100 years ago. However, to do so today would be foolishly irresponsible. We already know the disastrous results. We would probably agree that entertaining such thoughts to display one’s intellectual prowess might quickly prove to be blasphemous. For this reason, we must put away the toys of technicalities and formalities (i.e., waiting for an Ecumenical Council) and expose Cyprianism for what it is - a form of Ecumenism, which was anathematized by the Church Abroad in 1983 under the guidance of our holy hierarch, Metropolitan Philaret.

This being the case, ROCOR’s acceptance of the Cyprianite ecclesiology (i.e., heresy) in 1994 must be viewed as a serious fall for ROCOR in matters of Faith. This event alone justified the departure of clergy and laity from ROCOR during the last decades of the 20th century up until Metropolitan Vitaly’s declaration in 2001, and to the present, as both clergy and laity now begin to understand the severity of this error.

As a point of interest, the contemporary ROCOR(MP) of Met. Hilarion, by necessity, has quietly abandoned its Cyprianite ecclesiology. Now, having fully joined their “Mother Church,” it is certainly awkward, if not forbidden, to refer to “Mother” as being “sick or ailing.” By default, and necessity, ROCOR(MP) has silently and obediently adopted the ecclesiology of the Soviet Church (MP), which, in fact, confesses Ecumenism and Sergianism. Logically speaking, nothing else short of this could happen. By entering through the “side door” of crypto-Ecumenism, one must eventually find himself in the broad arena of World Orthodoxy’s Ecumenism.

Having witnessed the fall of ROCOR during this last generation, it is sadly surprising to see how this cancer of Cyprianism still affects the minds and fancies of Russian clergymen and laity outside of the MP worldwide. In stark contradiction to the confession and witness of the Russian New Martyrs and the Russian Orthodox Church struggling in the Catacombs, they still wish to view the Moscow Patriarchate not as the church that Stalin built (i.e., the Soviet Church), but rather as the ailing and struggling “Mother Church.” Having witnessed the ROCOR willingly walk into the jaws of the Soviet Serpent, and selling its soul for the glamour of worldly recognition, they walk the same path at the edge of that same precipice, proudly upholding the banner of the ROCOR just prior to its betrayal. Somehow, they do not see themselves falling toward that very same result. Or, perhaps even worse, they do not see themselves at all. Nonetheless, decisions and actions have consequences.

The most prominent of Cyprianites among Russian clergy and laity are to be found in the synod of Met. Agafangel (Pashkovsky). Ironically, some of these clergy dismiss Cyprianism as being some sort of “Greek issue.” Others in this synod claim to know nothing about Cyprianism. Met. Agafangel claims to be not bound by the decisions of the “Greeks,” although he consecrated all of his Synod’s bishops with the assistance of

at least one Cyprianite (Greek) bishop. Through their dismissive attitude toward this heresy, the Agafangelites demonstrate a profound ignorance of church ecclesiology. It is one thing to provide a strong argument in defense of their ecclesiology. It is quite another to pretend that it is insignificant.

Such a position only confirms that either Met. Agafangel does not understand the ecclesiological error in 1994 which led to the betrayal of ROCOR and the suffering Russian Orthodox Church by Met. Laurus in 2007, or that he intentionally wishes to keep the road to the MP open for the future.

The Agafangel Synod has not denounced the decision of 1994 and Cyprianism as a heresy, as did Met. Vitaly. Instead, Met. Agafangel and his bishops maintain that they are holding true to all the decisions and direction of the ROCOR up through the tenure of the late Metropolitan Vitaly. They avoid speaking about Metropolitan Vitaly's decision to condemn Cyprianism.

Taking into account the above, along with the fact that Bishop Agafangel signed all of the documents supporting union with the MP while in the ROCOR Synod under Met. Laurus, Bishop Agafangel demonstrates that he fully recognizes the MP as the Mother Church. The only difference between Met. Agafangel and Met. Laurus is that Met. Agafangel did not formally join the MP. Yet, his ecclesiology places him next in line. Whether it is through ignorance, or a sly, hidden intent, Met. Agafangel has placed his flock in jeopardy of repeating history through their self-embraced heresy.

Much like the position of their sister-synod, the Greek Synod of Those in Resistance, the position of Met. Agafangel's synod is indefensible, in that it is fundamentally illogical. If we allow for the sake of argument that the Moscow Patriarchate is the Mother Church, and that it is free and no longer persecuted, then what is the justification for Met. Agafangel to form his newly-founded ROCOR? On what grounds can Russian bishops exist separate from this Mother Church? By adhering to the ROCOR's newly embraced ecclesiology of 1994, Met. Agafangel has de facto placed himself and his flock into schism. ROCOR-A has no reason for existence. Their only logical choice is to return to the Mother Church, even though she may be ailing.

After Metropolitan Laurus' betrayal of the ROCOR in 2007, Bishop Agafangel quickly organized a handful of clergy and declared this group to be the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR). After ordaining several bishops with the assistance of the Cyprianite Synod, Bishop Agafangel persuaded them to elevate him to the rank of Metropolitan of this newly formed ROCOR-A. Now, in spite of the self-confidence of this group to claim to represent the entire Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, who recognizes this to be so inside of Russia?

ROCOR was never an autocephalous church. ROCOR's canonical existence was linked to the Russian Orthodox Church, which was under persecution in the catacombs. By default, due to their own ecclesiology, the Agafangel Synod (ROCOR-A) must recognize Stalin's Moscow Patriarchate as its mother church. If so, then the Agafangel Synod is in schism. Otherwise, what is it that keeps them apart? The MP is proclaimed to be free from persecution. What does the Agafangel Synod claim to be its reason for existence?

On the other hand, if we accept the position of the genuine ROCOR from its founding by Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Anthony, and the position of the Russian Orthodox Church which was forced into the Catacombs, the Moscow Patriarchate becomes exposed as an imposter from its very beginning in 1943 through the directive of Stalin. Furthermore, if we understand that the Moscow Patriarchate's ecclesiology is saturated with at least the heresies of Sergianism and Ecumenism, then the reason for existence separate from the MP becomes imperative, and logically quite defensible. We must realize that heresy is not merely a form of spiritual ailment. Heresy is spiritual death. The holy canons clearly instruct us to reject and flee all forms of heresy.

It is impossible to say for certain what Met. Agafangel's intentions might be at this time. Is it possible that he is truly ignorant regarding the consequences of the actions he has undertaken, or is it that he has his own preplanned, but unstated, agenda; an agenda which will patiently bear the confused burden of its illogical path, simply to justify the end results which he may have in mind? Perhaps, he simply does not understand that he is pretending to steer a rudderless ship.

Before coming to any conclusions regarding Met. Agafangel's intentions let us study the actions he has taken during the past decade, and their observable consequences.

In order to establish himself as the new standard bearer for the ROCOR, Bishop Agafangel (formerly of Tavria and Odessa), left his former brethren in the ROCOR synod of Met. Laurus. He did this at the very last possible opportunity in order to avoid participating in the 2007 ROCOR-MP union. As he expressed at the time, Bishop Agafangel was not so much against union with the MP, he simply thought that it was too early. In other words, Bishop Agafangel fully accepts that the MP is the Mother Church, albeit ailing. He merely objected to joining her at that time.

While departing from the traitorous ROCOR, Bishop Agafangel maintained his allegiance to all of ROCOR's decisions up until its union with the MP. By doing so, the lone Bishop Agafangel placed himself into a position of advantage, at least in his own mind. As the last standing ROCOR bishop, he was in a position to collect all the clergy and laity who waited to the bitter end, hoping that the union would never take place. Then, as these people looked about for what to do, there was Bishop Agafangel

providing them with an immediate “life boat.” Although there were not nearly as many people compared to the number of laity and clergy which joined the MP by following Met. Laurus in 2007, nor compared to the number of faithful who left ROCOR over the last two decades for matters of Faith, nonetheless, Bishop Agafangel did manage to collect a sizeable group.

The other position of “advantage” taken by Bishop Agafangel in his last minute maneuver, was to contrast himself as the “hero and savior” of ROCOR. Thus, he managed to mask his weakness and inability to be a witness for the Faith for decades, during which he would betray his fellow bishops in Russia by succumbing to the Laurites at the Synod in New York. By making this “heroic stand,” Bishop Agafangel would once again betray his former brethren, the confessing Russian bishops, priests, deacons, and laity who left ROCOR’s traitorous and treacherous path, prior to its union with the MP. Instead of uniting his new-found flock with these confessing clergy of the Russian Church, Bishop Agafangel portrayed them as schismatics; breaking from ROCOR prematurely for their own gain. Given such criteria, although he will not admit it, Bishop Agafangel has silently included Metropolitan Vitaly in this same group.

After declaring his secession, Bishop Agafangel began his attempt to create a credible image of his own succession to ROCOR, and thereby his ascendancy to the position of “first hierarch.” He found the elderly and retired Bishop Daniel (of Erie, PA) to be an unsuspecting and vulnerable target. He sent several priests with a prepared letter for Bishop Daniel to sign. This letter gave Bishop Daniel’s blessing to Bishop Agafangel (Bishop Daniel being the senior of the two bishops albeit retired) to establish a church administration, and to expand this new synod through the ordinations of new bishops, specifically with the assistance of the Cyprianite Synod only.

In this letter, Bishop Agafangel slyly included wording which would forcibly prevent him from communicating with any other Russian bishop who might have already separated from the ROCOR. Bishop Daniel is portrayed as being in full support of Bishop Agafangel’s attempt at re-forming a ROCOR, and placing Bishop Agafangel as its first hierarch. Furthermore, Bishop Daniel is made to insist on no communications or relationships with the Synod of the Russian True Orthodox Church, which was founded several years prior to Met. Laurus’ traitorous union, for reasons of Faith by Bishop Agafangel’s former brethren bishops. While appearing to humbly appeal to a senior bishop for guidance and assistance, Bishop Agafangel introduces his own ideas regarding becoming first-hierarch and church structure, all the while pretending to be the obedient servant fulfilling the council of an elderly hierarch.

The following letter, prepared for Bishop Daniel to sign, along with the subsequent document from Bishop Daniel renouncing his signature serves to expose Bishop

Agafangel attempts to cloak his disdain for his former brethren, the RTOC bishops, through his “obedience” to Bishop Daniel, by rejecting any possible contact with the RTOC before even starting. Furthermore, by attempting to steal any authority Bishop Daniel might have had in his retirement, Bishop Agafangel exposes himself as a sly, self-serving, Janus-faced deceiver.

The letter presented to Bishop Daniel for his signature stated the following:

Declaration of The Right Reverend Daniel, Bishop of Erie, on the forming of a Provisional Supreme Ecclesiastical Authority of the Church Abroad

May 9/22 2007

Translation of the Relics of St. Nicholas

In connection with the canonical crisis which occurred in ROCA, which was caused by the joining of the First Hierarchy, the Synod and virtually all Diaspora bishops, save for Agafangel, bishop of Tavria and Odessa and me, bishop Daniel of Erie, to the Moscow Patriarchate, and the loss by the First Hierarchy of his right to being Primate (prava Predstoyatel'stva),

Taking into account that since Metropolitan Laurus made a schism, enough time has passed, but open declarations by the other bishops of ROCA, against the Act of abolishing the canonical order of ROCA, did not appear,

I, bishop Daniel, following Ukase 362 p.3 of His Holiness the Patriarch, the Holy Synod and the Supreme Ecclesiastical Council of the Orthodox Church of Russia from 7/20 of November 1920 and fulfilling the duties delegated to me by the Ukase, declare that today, 9/22 of May 2007, by the rights of being the senior bishop by ordination, form a Provisional Supreme Ecclesiastical Authority (PSEA) of ROCA composed of the bishops remaining in the Church Abroad - I, bishop Daniel of Erie, and Agafangel, bishop of Tavria and Odessa.

In connection with the poor state of my health, I will not be able to actively take part in the restoration of the canonical order of ROCA, the management of the PSEA, the convocation and carrying, with the rights of President of the Fifth All-Diaspora Council.

I voluntarily delegate my rights for this constructive endeavor to the Right Reverend Agafangel, who will be obliged to keep me posted on activities, but foremost, he must listen to the voice of the Church - the voice of the clergy and laypeople. In connection with that, for participation in the administration of the Church, I commission to reinstate, at the Fifth All-Diaspora Council, the Supreme Ecclesiastical Council of ROCA made of clergy and laypersons.

If God allows, I would joyously participate, together with bishop Agafangel, in the concecrations of new bishops for the Church Abroad, but I would like to draw for this important endeavor, our brethren - the Greek Metropolitan Cyprian, the Romanian [Metropolitan] Vlasie and the Bulgarian [Bishop] Photii.

For that cause it is necessary to restore immediately full Eucharistic Communion with the Old Calendar Synods, and to conduct joint meetings with them in the future.

I do not rule out the possibility of reinforcement of the episcopate of ROCA with [bishops] from the Russian groups which have left ROCA recently, and even from the MP.

It seems to me, that the admission of bishops in their present order is possible for all of the aforementioned structures, except for RTOC (Russkaya Istinno-Pravoslavnyaya Cerkov', Russian True Orthodox Church - the "Tikhonites"). Regarding the breadth of economy, in each particular case it is difficult to say, but in general, we should admit from the MP the way it was accepted for them before, and from the Autonomous Russian Church and Mansonville - through supplementing of hierarchical ordinations.

I entrust the Right Reverend Agafangel with sending out as a Circular letter from my name the given Declaration to all the Dioceses of ROCA for the administration in the necessary cases.

Bishop Daniel of Erie

Not long after he was coerced to sign the above letter, Bishop Daniel, realizing that he was fooled, produced his own letter stating the following:

ERIE VICARIATE: June 15, 2007

Statement of Bishop Daniel of Erie , Vicar of the President of the Synod of Bishops for the Old Believers

Dear Fathers, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I have always welcomed better relations between the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia and the Moscow Patriarchate, but I am not in favor of unification of our Church with the Moscow Patriarchate. We have been independent for about 80 years, and we have a new mission: to make Orthodoxy available to the people of the Diaspora, and to bring Orthodoxy to new converts. And while the Moscow Patriarchate may recognize our independence, I fear they may annihilate our independence and take us over completely.

Some who are against this unification say that the Moscow Patriarchate is without grace or Apostolic Succession, but I have never said this. However I do feel that a union with the Moscow Patriarchate is premature now. If we had to be engulfed and subjected to Moscow , I wished to have been dead before that time.

There are those who think that objection to this union means necessarily breaking Communion with Metropolitan Laurus and his Synod. And while this situation is difficult for me, I do not agree with these people. I have always maintained that I will not separate myself from the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. I do not believe Metropolitan Laurus and his bishops to be without grace or Apostolic Succession, nor to be in heresy or schism. I commune in the Church of the Nativity of Christ, Erie , Pennsylvania , where Metropolitan Laurus is being commemorated. I am not one to start a new Church authority. I am against this. I will not do any ordinations

on my own unless asked to do so by Metropolitan Laurus and his Church Authority. This is my position and I ask all to respect it.

On May 9/22 of this year, I had a visit from two priests and a deacon, who wanted me to sign a paper. So they took me to a separate room, and didn't allow any of my helpers to accompany me. I did not write this document, it was simply given to me to sign. I signed it because I was asked to do so. Immediately after this I recognized that something was wrong and I should not have signed it.

You see, I am used to trusting clergy, and I did not expect to be betrayed in such a simple way. This event is the reason that I am writing all of this now. I immediately contacted Fr Pimen Simon, and asked him to do whatever could be done to straighten this out.

I have never said that I am under house arrest. This is entirely somebody else's invention. And all of the accusations about living in unhealthy conditions or being in danger from my helpers are simply false. It is pure nonsense, and does not correspond to the facts. I am well taken care of. I never dreamed that clergy could be so shameless as to say and do such things.

I do receive my mail. I also receive incoming phone calls, but I have asked Luke Gehring and my other helpers to screen calls. I would not have asked them to do this if all the call I received had been decent calls. Visitors are welcome, but I reserve the right of invitation and will not simply receive anyone.

In ministering to Old Believers, my attempts have been to bring peace, not to create new divisions and schisms.

This is my position, and I will not engage in further discussions with those who wish to form new schisms or lead me into them.

I pray for all the children of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia. May God grant peace and unity to us all!

Bishop Daniel

Ignoring Bishop Daniel's response, Bishop Agafangel proceeded to act according to the first letter, pretending that it gave him the authority to become Metropolitan of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

Very quickly over several years, Met. Agafangel expanded his synod by drawing over two Cyprianite-sympathizing Bishops (Dionysi and Ireniey) from the RTOC. Then, he received the entire Gennady-Sekachov group. His latter acquisition was most astounding. The Gennady-Sekachov group was initially rejected by ROCOR for having no proof of Apostolic succession, or canonicity. Although ROCOR-A had declared itself the successor to ROCOR, Met. Agafangel decided to over-rule ROCOR's original decision. Although they claim to be a part of the catacomb church, the bishops and clergy of the Gennady-Sekachov group are known to be, for the most

part, clergy who come from the Moscow Patriarchate, and often would serve in different capacities in both churches at the same time. In other words, a bishop of this group would serve in his “catacomb” role as a bishop while simultaneously serving as an assigned priest of the MP in an MP church. True catacomb clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church would never compromise their Faith with such nonsense.

Furthermore, the ecclesiology of the Gennady-Sekachov bishops would vary from strains of superstitious black magic to outright Sergianism and Ecumenism. Regardless of how Met. Agafangel received these clergy (baptism, herotesia, or ordination), their influx in such relatively large numbers only serves to create a kaleidoscope of contradictions for ROCOR-A’s ecclesiology. The church mind-set, which developed and existed for decades among the clergy in this group, cannot be changed overnight.

More recently, Met. Agafangel received three clergymen from the MP. In spite of being received, these clergymen remained somehow in the Moscow Patriarchate with Met. Agafangel’s blessing. In other words, Met. Agafangel of ROCOR-A now has jurisdiction over a parallel MP church. Apparently, Met. Agafangel has created and controls a “good” MP vs. the other “bad/ailing” MP.

Summarizing the actions and positions of Met. Agafangel since Met. Laurus’ infamous betrayal and union with the MP, we have at least the following events:

- Prior to ROCOR’s union with the MP, Bishop Agafangel agreed with, signed and accepted all the documents leading to the union.
- At the very last moment, Bishop Agafangel decided to withdraw from the impending union with the MP, stating that such union was premature.
- Instead of seeking union with other bishops of the Russian Church who had in their own time rejected the foreseen union with the MP, Bishop Agafangel sought to prevent any such possibility. He especially sought to prevent union with the RTOC, whose bishops knew him well.
- In the letter prepared for the elderly Bishop Daniel to sign, Bishop Agafangel reveals his plans for forming a new ROCOR-A strictly for himself as its first hierarch by eliminating any possibility for union with existing Russian bishops who also rejected union with the MP. Of course, it is possible that such relationships could impede Bishop Agafangel from becoming first-hierarch.
- In forming his new ROCOR-A Synod, Bishop Agafangel used only bishops of the Greek Synod in Resistance (Cyprianites), while ignoring any assistance or union with other bishops of the Russian Church. In spite of the disorganization of the Russian bishops after ROCOR’s betrayal, by intentionally ignoring his fellow Russian bishops and appealing only to the Greek bishops, Bishop Agafangel’s actions served to create a schism in the Russian Church.

- By embracing the Cyprianite heresy, and ordaining each of his new bishops with the concelebration of two Cyprianite bishops, Bishop Agafangel complicated, if not out-right prevented, the possibility of any direct union with any of the existing Russian synods.
- By manipulating his newly formed synod to quickly elect him as Metropolitan of ROCOR-A, Bishop Agafangel placed himself as senior to most other bishops in the various Russian jurisdictions.
- By accepting priests and bishops from a variety of sources (ROCOR, MP, Gennady/Sekachov, etc.), Met. Agafangel has created a kaleidoscope of contradicting ecclesiologies, all founded upon the heresy of Crypto-Ecumenism (i.e., Cyprianism).
- Finally, in accepting the MP as the Mother Church, Met. Agafangel has set his ROCOR-A solidly on the path to a future union with the MP.

So what is it that Met. Agafangel has accomplished by establishing his own “synod in resistance?” With no clear, thought-out and logical ecclesiology, Met. Agafangel is pretending to steer a ship with no rudder. By taking the positions outlined above, Met. Agafangel is preventing union among the confessing Russian bishops, both in Russia and abroad. Why would anyone opposed to union with the MP create such contrary conditions? What is the over-riding goal of such a movement?

If a synod is opposed to union with the MP for matters of Faith in that the MP is found engulfed in heresy, one could logically accept that the goal of such a synod would be to restore the True Russian Orthodox Church. However, we must recall that Met. Agafangel, much like Bishop Daniel, was not opposed to union with the MP. Rather, they both expressed the opinion that it was too early for such a union to take place. So what is it that must change for such a union to be ripe and timely? This answer has not yet been provided. Perhaps the goal here is to first collect the disparate conscientious objectors under one roof, and then lead them to the threshold of a second betrayal?

For the sake of restoring the Russian Orthodox Church and the salvation of its faithful, insincere imposters must be exposed. We know what the Moscow Patriarch is. We know how it betrayed the Russian Orthodox Church and the Holy New Martyrs. We know what ROCOR-MP has become. What do we know about the Agafangel Synod? We know that it is entangled with heretical positions. Beyond that, we see a synod that was formed out of a schism, has no canonical status, has no desire for union with other Russian bishops, and views the MP as its Mother Church.

Metropolitan Agafangel’s ROCOR-A must be challenged to clearly state its ecclesiology, its fundamental goals, and its reason for existence.