

A Commentary on the Union Between The GTOC and The Greek Synod in Resistance (Cyprianites)

In considering the recent union between the synod of the GTOC under Archbishop Kallinikos and the Synod in Resistance (Cyprianites), or for that matter, the possible union of any of the Greek synods since the wholesale apostasy of the Greek Church in 1924, and the subsequent emergence of the many competing True Orthodox synods, one might consider that a miraculous event has transpired. If, on the other hand, all that has occurred was a merger between a True Orthodox synod and a heretical synod, we have witnessed a tragedy, or another apostasy. As the saying goes; adding clean water to polluted water does not cleanse the polluted water. It merely pollutes the clean water.

In considering the example given to us by the Holy Fathers of the Church, when making any decisions, a church council always looks to past decisions in order to make decisions for the present and future. The Great Ecumenical Councils (sobors) of the Holy Church would always begin their meetings by ratifying the decisions of the previous sobors. In this manner, the decisions made by the present sobor would not contradict any previous decisions, unless it intentionally wished to reject a decision that was clearly contradictory (i.e., heretical) to all previous sobors. In this manner, the bishops are able to maintain their sobornost, and be guided by the Holy Spirit. It stands to reason that Sobors, where bishops knowingly ignore the decisions of previous sobors in order to achieve their own desired goals, risk alienating themselves from the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

A most recent example of this would be the ROCOR Sobor of 1994. By ignoring the decision of the ROCOR Sobor of 1983, where the bishops of ROCOR condemned Ecumenism as a heresy, the bishops of the 1994 Sobor not only departed from the tradition of the Holy Fathers, but also brought their own 1983 anathema upon themselves (according to Bishop Gregory Grabbe). The 1994 Sobor adopted the heretical ecclesiology of the Greek Synod in Resistance (Cyprianism) as its own ecclesiology. This event led directly to the apostasy of ROCOR in 2007, when it united with the Moscow Patriarchate.

Setting aside the personal intrigues and desired outcomes driving individual bishops toward self-serving decisions, let us view the decisions made in the recent union of the GTOC and the Cyprianites, and past decisions, which were ignored.

The decisions made by the TGOC regarding the Synod in Resistance, first under Archbishop Auxentios and later upheld by Archbishop Chrysostom, were quite clear and direct. On July 5, 1974, in a special encyclical, the Synod of the True Orthodox Church of Greece, under the presidency of Archbishop Auxentios (Pastras) of Athens, reaffirmed the traditional Confession of Faith of 1935, and declared all New-Calendarists (Ecumenists) to be schismatics, their Sacraments to be without Grace, and in order to be received into the Orthodox Church, such people must first be chrismated.

Of course, the evil one only awaits such challenges. By 1977, Archimandrite Cyprian (Kutsumbasos), along with the present Archbishop Kallinikos, and several other clergy were uncanonically consecrated bishops without the knowledge of the synod to which they belonged at that time.

Not accepting his synod's punishment for his disobedience and heretical confession of faith, Metropolitan Cyprian remained alone. To further annoy his Orthodox detractors, on August 27, 1984, he concelebrated in his own monastery with the new-calendar Patriarch of Alexandria, Nicholas VI. For this, he was defrocked by his synod.

In 1986, under the tenure of Archbishop Chrysostom (Kuisis), seeing that Cyprian of Oropos had not repented, and that his heresy had begun to grow, the Synod of the TGOC once again declared him and the members of his synod to be defrocked for their heretical teaching concerning the Church, and for allowing the modernists, schismatics, and ecumenist-New-Calendarists to receive holy communion. ("Because he has fallen from the Orthodox Faith, and accepted the false and unholy faith of the Ecumenists, namely that the schismatic New Calendarists continue to belong to the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, which is the only treasure-house and the giver of Grace.")

As we know, the Cyprianites continued with their false teachings, attracting and infecting others worldwide up until the present time.

With the election of Metropolitan Kallinikos to replace the reposed Archbishop Chrysostom, talks of union with the Cyprianites began to escalate in earnest. Already after the date for union was established, Metropolitan Chrysostom (Gonzales) of Aetna, CA, the chief Cyprianite in the USA, announced in a letter (Feb. 02, 2014) that no one plans to criticize or repent concerning Metropolitan Cyprian's confession of faith or ecclesiology. He also stated "nothing of Metropolitan's spiritual legacy will be rescinded or forgotten." The Cyprianite Metropolitan Cyprian (the new) of Oropos also made a similar declaration.

Today, the union and euphoric concelebration has been accomplished. Pictures were taken, and the relatively new Archbishop of Athens, Kallinikos, has been able to demonstrate to the world his prominence, honor and respect, as demonstrated by the many bishops bowing to him homage and adoration. Since then, a few months have passed. In spite of the convincing rhetoric aimed at appeasing the faithful, when one reviews the joint document signed by the TGOC and the Synod in Resistance, nowhere can one find where the bishops of the Synod in Resistance beg forgiveness for ignoring past decisions of the TGOC Synod. Nowhere can one find the Cyprianite repentance of its heretical ecclesiology. Nowhere do the Cyprianites abandon their heretical ecclesiology. Similarly, nowhere does the TGOC Synod rescind its past decisions regarding Cyprianism.

Through this union, all that becomes quickly evident is Archbishop Kallinikos' TGOC Synod ignoring the decisions of the TGOC under the tenure of his predecessors. Meanwhile, the new Archbishop's TGOC Synod convenes to making a contrary

decision. What is most alarming and grievous, is that through ignoring the past decisions of their own synod, the TGOC Synod has accepted the heretical ecclesiology of the Cyprianites. In this case, silence must mean agreement. In contrast to this silence, the Cyprianites boldly pronounce adherence to their heretical ecclesiology.

Unfortunately, within only a few decades, we see history repeating itself. For just as the ROCOR Synod of 1994 fell under its own Anathema of 1983, so too has the TGOC Synod of 2014 fallen under its own condemnation of 1977 and 1986, and ironically by the hands of the same Cyprianites.

Of course, this unfortunate event might be viewed as a problem within the Church of Greece, and the Church of Russia must stand by as a sorrowful witness. However, the Russian Church does not remain directly unaffected.

The course of events officially initiated in 1994, when ROCOR accepted the heretical ecclesiology of the Synod in Resistance (Cyprianism), undoubtedly determined ROCOR's fate. By 2007, ROCOR capitulated to the Moscow Patriarchate, its self-proclaimed "Mother Church." Prior to this capitulation (2001), Metropolitan Vitaly, seeing the disaster planned by his false-brethren bishops of ROCOR, separated himself from them and reestablished the course set by his predecessors, the holy Metropolitans Philaret, Anastasy, and Anthony. Metropolitan Vitaly could not recognize the Moscow Patriarchate as the Church of Christ, not to mention a "Mother Church." Certain other bishops, including the future bishops of the RTOC, also followed his example. Bishop Agafangel, on the other hand, signed all of the documents leading to the union of the ROCOR with the Moscow Patriarchate. It was not until the 11th hour, literally the final days before the actual union, when Bishop Agafangel decided not to follow Metropolitan Laurus into apostasy. It must be noted that Bishop Agafangel left Metropolitan Laurus not for matters of faith, as did Metropolitan Vitaly and those who followed his example. At the time (and to date), Bishop Agafangel recognized the Moscow Patriarchate as the Mother Church. He only disagreed regarding the timing of the event. He felt that it was much too early to unite with the MP.

Having made his "stand", Bishop Agafangel then began to collect all the ROCOR clergy who also remained until the 11th hour, hoping that Laurus' betrayal would never take place. Regarding the clergy that left at an earlier date (i.e., those who had the foresight of events to come, as did Metropolitan Vitaly), Bishop Agafangel rejected their confession of faith as premature, self-serving, and schismatic. B. Agafangel declared that he would continue the legacy of the ROCOR of Met. Laurus before his union with the MP. In other words, he would adhere to the Cyprianite ecclesiology accepted in 1994, and reject the Anathema against Ecumenism. After announcing himself metropolitan of his own synod, ROCOR(A), the new Metropolitan Agafangel (as recorded in the minutes) declared that his synod is of one mind with the synod of Cyprian. This was an official, deliberate decision, and proclamation.

In establishing his new ROCOR(A), Bishop Agafangel rejected the validity of every hierarch of the Russian Church who left the ROCOR prior to his own "enlightenment" to

envision such a need. He considered all such bishops to be schismatic. Apparently, he thought the same of Metropolitan Vitaly.

Bishop Agafangel, soon to maneuver his way into becoming Metropolitan of his own "ROCOR," reached an agreement with the Synod in Resistance to create his own synod without the participation of any existing bishop of the Russian Church. He proceeded to consecrate a new synod, which he would call ROCOR. Each of his new bishops would be consecrated with the presence and concelebration of a bishop from the Greek Synod in Resistance (i.e., a true Cyprianite). Thus, this proves that from the very beginning, Bishop Agafangel was a conscious Cyprianite with a heretical ecclesiology.

Now, if one were to take into account the decisions of the TGOC Synod under A. Auxentios, and then later under A. Chrysostom, and add to this the 1983 ROCOR Anathema against Ecumenism, then it stands to reason that each of Met. Agafangel's bishops is at the very least uncanonical.

Through such actions, it becomes apparent that the history of apostasy has at least repeated, if not compounded, itself again. In accepting the legacy of Metropolitan Laurus prior to his union with the MP, Bishop Agafangel has rejected the legacy of the true ROCOR, that of the Metropolitans Vitaly, Philaret, Anastasy and Anthony. He has knowingly accepted the legacy of apostasy. As we shall see through the statements below, such a position is not new for the self-proclaimed Metropolitan.

Let us consider the decision of the ROCOR under the Holy Hierarch Metropolitan Philaret in 1971:

The decision of the Council of Bishops of the Russian Church Abroad of 15/28 September 1971 reads:

"On the question of the baptism of heretics who accept Orthodoxy, the following *decree* was adopted: The Holy Church has believed from time immemorial that there can be only one true baptism, namely that which is performed in her bosom: 'One Lord, one faith, one baptism.' (Eph. 4:5) In the Symbol of Faith there is also confessed 'one baptism,' and the 46th Canon of the Holy Apostles directs: 'A bishop or a presbyter who has accepted (i.e., acknowledges) the baptism or the sacrifice of heretics, we command to be deposed.'

"However when the zeal of some heretics in their struggle against the Church diminished and when the question arose about a massive conversion to Orthodoxy, the Church, to facilitate their conversion, received them into her bosom by another rite. St Basil the Great in his First Canon, which was included in the canons of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, points to the existence of different practices for receiving heretics in different lands. He explains that any separation from the Church deprives one of grace and writes about the dissidents: 'Even though the departure began through schism, however, those departing from the Church already lacked the grace of the Holy Spirit. The granting of grace has ceased because the lawful succession has been cut. Those who left first were consecrated by the Fathers and through the laying on of their hands had the spiritual gifts. But, they became laymen and had no power to baptize nor to ordain and could not transmit to others the grace of the Holy Spirit from which they themselves fell away. Therefore, the ancients ruled regarding those that were coming from schismatics to the Church as having been baptized by laymen, to be cleansed by the true baptism of the

Church.' However, 'for the edification of many' St. Basil does not object to other rites for receiving the dissident Cathars in Asia. About the Encratites he writes, that 'this could be a hindrance to the general good order' and a different rite could be used, explaining this: 'But I am afraid of putting an impediment to the saved, while I would raise fears in them concerning their baptism.'

"Thus, St Basil the Great, and by his words the Ecumenical Council, while establishing the principle that outside the Holy Orthodox Church there is no valid baptism, allows through pastoral condescension, called *economy*, the reception of some heretics and dissidents without a new baptism. On the basis of this principle the Ecumenical Councils allowed the reception of heretics by different rites, in response to the weakening of their hostility against the Orthodox Church.

"The *Kormchaya Kniga* gives an explanation for this by Timothy of Alexandria. On the question 'Why do we not baptize heretics converting to the Catholic Church?' his response is: 'If this were so, a person would not quickly turn from heresy, not wanting to be shamed by receiving baptism (i.e., second baptism). However, the Holy Spirit would come through the laying on of hands and the prayer of the presbyter, as is witnessed in the Acts of the Apostles.'

"With regard to Roman Catholics and those Protestants who claim to have preserved baptism as a sacrament (for example, the Lutherans). In Russia since the time of Peter I the practice was introduced of receiving them without baptism, through a renunciation of heresy and the chrismation of Protestants and unconfirmed Catholics. Before Peter, Catholics were baptized in Russia. In Greece, the practice has also varied, but after almost 300 years after a certain interruption, the practice of baptizing converts from Catholicism and Protestantism was reintroduced. Those received by any other way have (sometimes) not been recognized in Greece as Orthodox. In many cases such children of our Russian Church were not even admitted to Holy Communion.

"Having in view this circumstance and also the current growth of the ecumenist heresy, which attempts to completely erase any difference between Orthodoxy and any heresy - so that the Moscow Patriarchate, notwithstanding the holy canons, has even issued a decree permitting Roman Catholics to receive communion (in certain cases) - the Sobor of Bishops acknowledges the need to introduce a stricter practice, i.e., *to baptize all heretics who come to the Church, and only because of special necessity and with permission of the bishop it is allowed, under the application of economy or pastoral condescension, to use a different method with respect to certain persons, i.e., the reception of Roman Catholics, and Protestants who perform baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity, by means of repudiation of heresy and Chrismation*" ("Church Life," July-December 1971, pp. 52-54).

Already in 1994, the young Bishop Agafangel already rejects this decision. He wrote the following:

"...the Grace of the Holy Spirit, the Grace of the Sacraments, resides also with the Catholics, Monophysites, and in part, with Old Believers and Protestants who have not violated the formula in performing the sacraments (baptism). The Orthodox Church does not re-baptize those who come from these heresies, but receives them through repentance. Catholics and Monophysites are not chrismated a second time. The Sacrament of Marriage is also accepted. In the Moscow Patriarchate, there are six Sacraments which have been preserved and are recognized as valid – baptism, chrismation, the priesthood, marriage, unction, repentance.”

(Bishop Aganfangel Pashkovsky, Vestnik TOC, No. 2, 1994, pg. 30)

It is clear that from an early age, Bishop Aganfangel was driven to divert the path of our Holy Church. Having been raised in Soviet society, he sought ordination in the Moscow Patriarchate. Having been denied there, he petitioned ROCOR for the priesthood. Although he received that which he desired, he never acquired the spirit of ROCOR. He betrayed the ideals and mission of the Russian Orthodox Church, both abroad and in the catacombs.

In the celebratory euphoria of uniting with the Cyprianites, the new Archbishop of the TGOB, Kallinikos, lost sight of the tainted baggage the Cyprianites brought with them through the back door (i.e., their own defrocked and Grace-less lack of apostolic succession, as well as Aganfangel's heretical ecclesiology and uncanonical status).

In this manner, Metropolitan Aganfangel only reaffirms the schism and heresy of the Cyprianites, adding to it Soviet Sergianism and Ecumenism. Just as the TGOB Synod of Archbishop Chrysostom was surprised and grieved in 1994 to learn that the ROCOR declared its ecclesiology to be that of the Cyprianites, so too now, the RTOB Synod is surprised and grieved to witness the fall of the TGOB Synod to the heretical ecclesiology of the Cyprianites and the apostasy and schism of the Aganfangelites.

Protopresbyter Victor Melehov
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