

The Church of Christ and the Contemporary Movement for Unification in Christianity
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We should not be astonished at the search for ways to unite un-unit-ed Christianity in our times. In communist nations a direct campaign against Christianity is being waged before our very eyes; but, in a form more externally moderate, the campaign against Christianity also has spread to the nations of the so-called free world. A struggle is imminent, and it will demand a unification of those people who are true to Christ and a firm stand in the truth. The enemies today are prepared to bury Christianity. In vain! The words of the Lord are given: Take heart! for I have overcome the world. They should be engraved within our hearts in fiery letters. But the imminent struggle will be lengthy and fierce. Who among the faithful does not regret that in these grave historical hours such masses of Christians remain outside the walls of the Church created by the Lord? Who among the faithful would not take joy in the unification of all Christianity, un-united and scattered about, into the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Orthodox Church?

But frightful temptations lie ahead if the noisy, externally strong unification process proceeds along a deceitful way and, in particular, if in proceeding along its false way it should even partly touch our Holy Orthodoxy.

Protestantism has declared itself the initiator of the unification movement in our days. What has inspired the movement there? The motives were not exclusively of one sort, they were varied in different individuals.

It is natural to think that one of the reasons, benign and justified by life itself, is the one already indicated, namely, the demand of the times to prepare for Christianity's self-defense. It is possible to see yet another inspiration. In the depths of the strivings of many Protestants there are searchings for the one, apostolic, Christian Church of long ago.

After four hundred years of divisions, Protestantism has arrived at a dead end. In America alone there are more than 250 sects; the time for the opposite movement has arrived, not towards any center, but towards the organic center.

There is also another reason, however, not directly expressed, but nonetheless allowing itself to be felt: an extreme weakening of faith in contemporary Protestantism. While in the lower echelons of Protestantism there are those that to an extent still live by simple faith, the theological faculties have become the vehicles of positivism in biblical and church-historical science, a method which considers even miracles and the element of the supernatural in history to be foreign. They have made religion a support for "objective science." The leaders and instructors of Protestantism, the pupils of these faculties, vacillate between faith and faithlessness in the basic truths of the Gospel, concerning which they sometimes openly declare: beliefs in the truths of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, His resurrection, in the immortality of the soul is vanishing. The interest in questions concerning eternal life is vanishing in Protestantism. So among the motives for unification, there is the subconscious searching for a healing source of renewed faith, similar to a renewal of powers in physical organisms that takes place through a transfusion of blood. However, if one observes this from the sidelines, one cannot but already see in these searchings a host of false harbingers.

One of these delusions is the idea in the contemporary world that there is no true repository of the unsullied Christian Truth; that all subdivisions of Christianity are defective. In this error is to be found the main delusion of the strivings for unification in Protestantism. This false principle in particular has been accepted as the basis of the ecumenical movement, concerning which a discussion is to follow.

Another false supposition, clearly a paradox, is that if one combines all the defective parts into one complete whole, a fullness of the truth will be attained. A third similar mistake: if one combines the various Christian confessions which are weak in faith, weak in spirit, and weak in their influence on social life, then, in our age of religious skepticism, a power will be created, a power which would be able to oppose the anti-Christian powers of the world.

The Idea of the Establishment of a Kingdom of God on Earth. Ecumenism

In one way or another, the striving for unification in Protestantism has been aroused. But how is it to be realized? Through what means is one to arouse the will of people to activity? By what means is one to replace the moving force of faith when faith itself ceases to move the heart? A new idea that would enliven the mind and heart was needed. It was discovered and proclaimed as the ecumenical movement, and Christianity is summoned to make it a reality. This is in fact an old idea revitalized, which the Roman Catholics tried to realize in a monarchistic manner through the papacy, and now Protestantism is trying to bring it into movement in a democratic manner through ecumenism. This idea is "the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth."

In terms of ecumenism, what does "the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth" mean? It means the social erection of the future world on earth. The new world must replace the former, old, decrepit, and supposedly destined-for-wreckage, social structure on earth. Now all attention, all strivings of Christianity, must be directed towards the idea, not of the personal salvation of each person, not concerning one's soul, not about the future eternal life, but of building a society on new foundations. From this it is determined that the church of our time is the "serving church," dienende Kirche, i.e., is to serve social aims.

Even before the formation of ecumenical organizations these ideas were born in the minds of those active in Protestantism. In order to understand the origin of the ecumenical movement, let us present the ideas of two important figures in Protestantism, ideologists of the Kingdom of God on earth: a) the German pastor, called among Protestants "the great prophet of our times," Christoph Blumhardt, who called for unification on this basis, although he did not live to see it realized, and b) the present leader of ecumenical movement, the general secretary of the Council of the Ecumenical Movement, W. A. Vissar d'Hooft. We shall present a brief excerpt from an address given before representatives of the press at Bad Boll, Germany in 1946 in the Evangelical academy.

Christoph Blumhardt died in 1919, before the formation of the ecumenical movement, but in his appeals the ideas now being carried through in ecumenism are very clearly expressed, Vissar d'Hooft cited Blumhardt repeatedly in his address at Bad Boll.

"We have no need to tremble in fear that the old is coming to an end," Blumhardt announced during the First World War. "Yes, it is dying! All that is dear, all that is beautiful, to what we were tied, which we loved, is past! For all time, for all eternity, it is past! The old world caved in and a new one is arising on its ruins. Christianity must take

a most active part in its construction" (Easter sermon of 1915). Blumhardt posed three problems before Christianity: the realization of a better social structure; secondly, the overcoming of confessional contradictions and, finally, collaboration in the formation of a completely peaceful co-existence between peoples, with the complete eradication of wars between nations. The realization of the first issue, a just social structure, he imagined in the form of socialism realized peaceably, with the help of Christianity. With regard to the second issue, the eradication of confessional barriers, Blumhardt wrote in 1895: "We must finally divorce ourselves from the idea that the Lord Jesus Christ would have allowed Himself to be cloistered up in some one of many churches or sects which have arisen, and would want to bring happiness to the world only through this one... For the omnipotent God, through Jesus, we are obliged to clear out much more space than any one of the churches could offer... Christ does not meddle in the quarrels of churches. His Kingdom is much higher... Now, in our century the question of creeds and churches should not be posed: the time for that is past, it had meaning forty years ago. All this is far from me, this is already ruins!" Blumhardt ecstatically exclaimed.

The third problem: the creation of a peaceful state of co-existence between all nations. According to Blumhardt, the first step towards this should be in the mutual repentance of peoples before each other, and in the unification of churches, i.e., the repentance of churches. Away with anti-Christian fatalism, which has the view that wars are unavoidable and that humanity's history consists of such wars. For this peoples and nations must be prepared to sacrifice their nationhood as Abraham was ready to give up his son Isaac, and offer him in sacrifice. As it is said of the apostles: they forsook all and followed Him. Of course do not expect the fulfillment of this hope in our time, - we are only at the threshold. Says Blumhardt: "We must receive a new Spirit, enter upon a new era. There is no other help but help from God, Who directs the world, and His victory will come in Jesus Christ." (19)

The present general secretary of the Council of the Ecumenical Movement, Vissar d'Hooft, confirms the ideological tie of the ecumenical movement with the mood expressed by this evangelical pastor.

In an address given in 1946 in Bad Boll, the homeland of Blumhardt, d'Hooft formulated the task of ecumenism in those very same three points, although in more reticent words, since the results of the Second World War were too far removed from the previous optimistic expectations. He calls the "church," firstly to social service in the world. He sets forth the task of the "serving church," i.e., the church which has entered into the service of social aims. "The world says to the church: your concern is private life; religion is something to do with the beyond and, specifically speaking, there is nothing for it to seek on this earth. No, the church has to be the soul of humanity, her task is service in the decisive affairs of the world." Vissar d'Hooft brings to mind Blumhardt's call to Christianity, that it should enter the world as the creative source for the erection of the Kingdom of God on earth. However, for this, he says, the church itself has to become renewed: it must pass through repentance. And this repentance has to have practical consequences. Renewed, it has the possibility, for example, of preparing a path to socialism. Unfortunately, churches after the war again manifested weariness, a spirit of restoration, social and political reactions, adjustment to the post-war situation; in many countries the churches became overly bourgeois. This is why a metanoia is needed (metanoia: a change in thought process, repentance). He points to Holland, where during

the war a friendship arose between the 'people of the church' and the socialistic parties. The serving church should preach that Jesus Christ is the Lord not only of the church but also of the world. The Bible must become a cosmic book, i.e., to serve all of humanity. That form of piety where all accent is placed upon the salvation of separate souls and of the internal world of the human represents a lack of understanding of the breadth of the Bible. Christ must penetrate into the life of all people; we are in need of Christian physicians, artists, journalists... Thus, according to Blumhardt, serving social problems is the first task of the church.

Secondly, he says that the serving church must overcome confessionalism and become one church. Service to one's neighbor is something to be shared by all. The ecumenical assembly is a society of churches which in many aspects are different from one another, but in the ultimate sense are unified by the Lord Himself.

Thirdly, he says that the serving church is a church which, calling things by their proper names, declares: we have chosen false paths, we have gone in directions that gave us no promise, no future, for the very reason that we have chosen such paths; and now nothing else remains but to make a complete turn, a 180 degree turn. Repentance is required in order to change the thought process, to come to our senses. Is it possible that only now we have come to learn that we are on a false path? The church must make deductions from the experience of past centuries and say: turn about, for the Kingdom of God is near! What does this mean? That the Kingdom of God desires to enter this world and that Jesus Christ even waits to be our king (W. A. Vissar d'Hooft: *Der Dienst der Kirche in der grossen Entscheidungen der Welt - in Zeitwende*, Marz 1947, Munchen). In these rather unclear, enigmatic words is seen the idea of the establishment of a single world government as the Kingdom of God on earth

We could regard these plans, expressed by two outstanding representatives of Protestantism, simply as fantasy, as a Utopia, not the first in the history of social thought. But such people as the present leader of the ecumenical assembly can hardly be called dreamers: they, apparently, are headed towards realistic goals. There can be no doubt but that the ecumenical movement is being joined and supported by, if not directed by, secret and overt world organizations who are alien to religious tasks, and perhaps even inimical to them. Finally, while there is expressed a hope that ecumenism may help to oppose the advance of godlessness and anti-Christian forces in the world struggle, the USSR sends its own people to the ecumenical council and the World Council of Churches, as if in the name of the Soviet Church. A permanent representative from this church has been dispatched to Geneva as a member of the secretariat of the World Council of Churches (Archpriest Borovoy). In such a manner the Soviets will control all the activities of the World Council of Churches. It is evident that participation of representatives from the Soviet Church was expressed at the ecumenical assemblage at New Delhi, and likewise at the Orthodox gathering on the island of Rhodes, in that no one had the right to raise a voice concerning a struggle with atheism. Red Moscow, according to the directives of Lenin, utilizes such doubtful coalitions until it sees benefit for itself, in the conviction that such a doubtful ally can easily be discredited, discarded, and destroyed at the opportune time.

So at first, separate Orthodox individuals entered into the world organization of the ecumenical assembly, as if merely representatives of Orthodox theological science, and then later clergymen and hierarchs, as representatives of a series of local Orthodox

churches, and these churches themselves are included in the World Council of Churches and the ecumenism connected with it.

Of course, in ecumenism the Orthodox Church is regarded as its most conservative member. However, its entry into the organization was very much stressed and even boisterously acclaimed. Why? On the one hand, because it has apostolic succession, and by this it brings into the world organization - into this conglomerate of Protestant sects - an element lacking: apostolic succession. According to the ecumenical view, defectiveness of some parts of a given whole is covered over or filled by the appearance of that element which is lacking in the membership of the organization, in the given case by the entry of the Orthodox Church. On the other hand, the entry of the Orthodox Church annuls its possible opposition to ecumenism. For the local Orthodox churches, their entry into the given supraconfessional organization, claiming itself to be the Church of Christ, has no justification.

This step is not justified from the point of view of practicality: not by sermons on Orthodoxy, since in the given conditions it would be an absolute fantasy to hope to convert these Protestants to the Orthodox Faith, to draw them nearer to the authentic Orthodox Church. Ecumenism has a ready-made, already worked-out creed, and the Orthodox representatives are aligned into a ready-made frame within which they are allowed to function. But more importantly, the recognition of all the Christian confessions and sects as being part of a single church, and of equal status, means a distortion of the dogma of the Church. In such a case neither dogmas, nor the canons of councils are obligatory, nor succession from apostles. Such an attitude is equal to self-destruction for the Church. Now we have the result before our eyes: we do not see Orthodoxy witnessing to itself in ecumenism; on the contrary, and unheard of in Orthodoxy, the new, ecumenical, teaching about the Church has already infiltrated into us and is energetically being spread among us by Orthodox ecumenists.

Is it possible to accept the idea of the establishment of a kingdom of God on earth? Is the teaching of a Kingdom of Christ on earth acceptable to Orthodoxy? What does the Gospel say about the Kingdom of God?

Everywhere in the Gospel of St. Matthew, the Kingdom of God is directly called the "Kingdom of Heaven." Throughout the course of the whole Gospel according to the evangelist John the Theologian it is called "eternal life."

In the evangelists Mark and Luke it is called the Kingdom of God, but with that very same meaning: And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink... for all these things do the nations of the world seek after,... prepare for yourselves... incorrupted treasure in heaven] Let the dead bury their dead (Luke 12:29-30, 33; 21:34; 9:60). They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;... it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed (Luke 17:27-29). These are the words of the Saviour.

At the tribunal of Pontius Pilate Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should be delivered... (John 18:36). Here is my answer to the question concerning the building of earthly well-being: Although the blessedness of the life in Christ, not only the personal life of each

separate Christian, but also the life of Christian communities, a life thoroughly influenced by the Church, already begins here, on earth, the Kingdom of Christ is not of this world. This has been tried and tested through innumerable examples of holy people. Father John of Kronstadt many times speaks of himself concerning his feeling during the Church services: "Where am I? I am in heaven." This is the feeling of many pure souls. Here heaven is brought down upon the earth; but for this one has to raise oneself to heaven, and not turn away from it towards earthly interests, earthly plans. The Gospel calls us to build our life in such a manner that earth becomes part of heaven in a moral sense, as the Earth is a particle of the heavens in a physical sense. Tikhon of Zadonsk, makes a general summation of Orthodox Christian thought of all ages concerning the Kingdom of God when he writes:

"Our life is in heaven, and it is from heaven that we are awaiting our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. The life of Christians in this world is nothing but a wandering and continual moving and hurrying towards one's homeland, as the Apostle says: For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. This is why we are wanderers and strangers, and are so called in this world, as it is written of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: They were strangers and pilgrims on the earth... The Christian homeland is heaven, where the glory of the Heavenly Father is to Whom we pray Our Father Who art in the Heavens, where His most glorious abode is, in which there are many mansions, where is the great holy city of Jerusalem, possessing the glory of God...; with the eye we view and sigh, desiring to assume our heavenly dwelling."

What a difference in interpretation of the Kingdom of God in the above understanding, and there in modern Christianity!

Well, well! - they interrupt us - to hand over the earth to blind and evil forces, and think only for the salvation of one's own soul! This is what you continue to call for... - No, we answer. We continue merely by indicating the words of Christ: Seek ye first of all the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you, seek the heavenly and the earthly will be added. For Christians the heavenly kingdom begins already here, bright and blessed, a pledge of the future eternal life. It blesses earthly life, not only individual life, but also the life of Christian communities. It orders it, lightens it, makes it blessed. It introduces brotherly relations into society and transforms the most difficult experiences in life into light ones, as it already has been tested through numerous examples in the history of Christianity. This earthly reflection of heaven may indeed take on broader dimensions, spreading to the life of the society and the state. But for this there must be faith and prayer in the first place. Nothing of this sort will be attained if we turn our gaze away from heaven and towards the earth. Without faith and prayer, let life even be happy and without sorrow, yet it will not be the Kingdom of God.

Why does ecumenism, for the sake of the idea of building the Kingdom of God on earth, abandon Christian teaching concerning the salvation of the soul? For the reason that faith in external life has completely weakened it, if not caused it to be lost altogether, because their total view of reality is limited to earthly life. But is not the Orthodox Christian teaching concerning the salvation of the soul connected with the idea of humanity as a whole? The teaching on the soul is a teaching of the moral perfection of humanity, of the good of all humanity attained by each separate individual through the path of working on oneself. This perfection aims not only at eternity: it is necessary also for the improvement of relations in the human society of this world. How is it possible to build the Kingdom

of God under conditions of contemporary depraved morality, in an atmosphere of faithless, materialistic, immoral license? Is it really possible to seriously assert that if people will begin to think less of heaven they will become better Christians? Unfortunately, in the theological editorials of Orthodox ecumenists the idea is resolutely being preached that it is time to renounce the teaching of "the salvation of the soul beyond the grave" and turn to the concern of building a Kingdom of Christ on earth.

The Orthodox dogma of the Church

The most dangerous element, however, connected with the entry of the Orthodox churches into the ecumenical movement is the acceptance of the Protestant-ecumenistic conception of the Church. Indeed, such a conception is repeated in spoken addresses and in the printed matter of Orthodox ecumenists. Along with the destruction of the authentic Orthodox understanding of the Church the significance of the seven Ecumenical Councils is undermined, and this means that the firmness of Christian dogmas established by them is undermined, and in such a manner Orthodoxy is undermined and destroyed at its foundations. With cautious circumspection the apostles erected the structure of the Church of Christ on earth. They clearly determined who belongs to it and who does not belong. They likened the Church to an ordinary building: We are the laborers.. ye are God's building, the Apostle instructs us. The basis of the structure is Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest (I Cor. 3:9-13). Apparently there may be more than one structure, but the true Church is one. There will come the time of the last day, and the truthfulness of this Church the day shall declare, as the apostle teaches because it shall be revealed by fire; and fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is, whether it will stand or will be consumed! (I Cor. 3:13-14). For this reason we must firmly believe in the single apostolic building, in the one apostolic Church.

A believing person enters the Church through Baptism with water. However, it is necessary for the Baptism to be recognized and affirmed. For it may happen that he who performs the Baptism is a heretic or schismatic, himself not in the Church. So it was also at the time of the apostles. When the Apostle Paul first came to Ephesus there were about twelve people who regarded themselves as disciples of the Christian faith and as having been baptized. But with questioning it turned out that they were baptized only with the Baptism of John. The Apostle Paul explained to them the insufficiency of their Baptism. He himself baptized them and then placed his hands on them in order to bring down upon them the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-7). The laying on of hands for this bringing down of the Holy Spirit, being a Mystery [sacrament], was at the same time a confirmation of a correctly performed Baptism and a uniting to the Church; being a Mystery, it also had the formal significance of the stamp of acceptance into the Church. So it was called by the ancient Church: a "seal" or "impress". The Mystery of the laying on of hands, soon taking on the form of anointment, was always carried out by the apostles themselves: in imparting the gift of the Holy Spirit, the apostles simultaneously confirmed the acceptance of the given individual into the Church. In the book of the Acts it is related how the Apostles Peter and John had to undertake a journey from Jerusalem to Samaria in order to personally carry out the Mystery of the laying on of hands upon people there who had already received Baptism.

Through understanding the significance of this Mystery as a seal, it is evidently explained why in the post-apostolic age the right to carry out this Mystery passed on to the bishops,

as the superiors and administrators of the Church. When it became evident that it was impossible to bring each baptized person to the apostles and their successors, the bishops, this Mystery, as the sign of a blessing from the bishop, took the form of granting the presbyters Chrism which had been blessed by the bishops themselves - perhaps even the apostles themselves - for the anointment of those baptized. In the Apostolic Canons, one of the earliest manuscripts of the ancient Church, we read: "water is the symbol of death; anointment, the seal of the covenant" sigillum pactonis (Constitutionis Apostolicae, [book] 7, 22:2). This shows how the ancient Church expressively and clearly determined the composition and limits of the Church and how the membership of separate individuals was indicated. And of the rest, durst no man join himself to them, the book of Acts emphasizes (Acts 5:13).

Furthermore, unanimity in faith and a singleness of thought concerning teachings was demanded of the Christians who entered the Church. The apostles exhort to labor for the faith once delivered to the saints, to stand in faith, not to accept any innovations of that which was declared by the apostles, even though the initiator of the innovation be an angel from heaven. Of course, individuals who separated themselves from the unity of the faith did appear in the Church. They introduced dissension and made it necessary for the apostles to excommunicate them from church gatherings or to completely exclude them from the Church. And such individuals who were alien to the general spirit of the Church had to remove themselves from association with the Church. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us (I John 2:19). This spiritual unity, this concordance in all, and especially unity in faith, the apostle again compares with the strictness in adherence to a plan in building a structure, rejoicing spiritually at the proportions of the erected spiritual temple: all the building fitly framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord, we read in the epistle to the Ephesians.

And thus this understanding of the Church as a spiritual orderly building forever remains in the consciousness of the Orthodox Church. The manuscript of the second century, The Shepherd of Hermias, gives the following descriptive image of the building of the Church. On the waters, i.e., through Baptism, a great fortress is being erected: the Church. It is being built out of stones. Some stones are smooth, cut, all alike, and are used in the construction. Others, which are uneven, are worked over or laid aside. The square and white stones represent the apostles, teachers, bishops, deacons, who walk undefiled in the holy teaching of God. Those laid aside are those who have sinned but desire to repent. This is how Christian antiquity understood the unity of the Church: not a unity of dissent, but a strict concordance, similar to the pattern of bricks of one and the same form during construction.

The durability and correctness of what followed after the apostles, the erection of the Church, is based upon hierarchal succession. Apostolic succession of hierarchy is the primary sign of the Church. It creates the organic identity of the Church of all ages; it shows, we may say, in the sense of transference, "the inheritance of blood," the inheritance of nature, similar to that which goes from ancestors to descendants. Further, it supports the unity of tradition in the teaching within Church customs, in canons, and in the order of the Church service. But what is most important is that in this way the succession of the Grace of the Holy Spirit is preserved, as received by the apostles on

Pentecost. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery; Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands, the Apostle Paul instructs Timothy. The Grace of God remains, lives, and is given in the apostolic Church of Christ. The Grace of God, however, is in no way obliged to impart salvation where the teaching and life of the Apostolic Church is violated. Although "physically" succession is preserved, apostolic succession is not an automat or calling card. Here, in this temporal, universal, externally and internally unified temple, According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness (II Peter 1:3), and from us who are led into the constructed building of the Church, we are obligated to preserve the Grace in us given by the Church whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear (Hebrews 12:28).

It is likewise extremely important to remember that the foremost element, hierarchic succession, by way of successive laying on of hands of the apostles, has not left the Church. The apostles, having entered the heavenly Church, do not cease simultaneously to participate in the Church on earth. Between the Church on earth and the heavenly Church there is a close, constant, and living tie. But ye are come into mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, ?? the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven Hebrews 12:22-23). For the Orthodox Church these are not dead words but real life, a life in unity with the heavenly Church. Apostles, saintly hierarchs, martyrs, and the righteous, having departed into eternal life do not cease being participators in the Church on earth. "The glorious firmament of the Church you do now radiate as most great stars and always illumine the faithful, ? divine martyrs, warriors of Christ." In the Orthodox divine service (troparia, stichera, canons, kontakia) the Apostles are glorified as the foundations of the Church, forever; saintly hierarchs are called pillars of the Church, i.e., ramparts, strengthening its walls; martyrs are stars, shining in the dome of the Church firmament, of the Church arch extending into heaven; and the righteous, spiritual ascetics, and saints are lamps within the Church. For this reason when the Church is called Apostolic, then it is so not only in the sense that the apostles laid its foundation or were its first builders, not only because they left in it evangelic teaching, gave it order, or even (what is more important for organization) transferred to it an uninterrupted succession of hierarchy, but, we repeat, also because they themselves continue to remain in her, although having entered the heavenly dwelling of Christ. The same applies to all the saints. When we stand before the Icon of the Mother of God, is it only Her Icon with us here on earth and not She Herself in the Church on earth? When we sing "Now the heavenly hosts serve with us invisibly," are these only words? Does not a guardian angel accompany us in our earthly life?

All these qualities of the Church: its oneness, the unity of its teaching, its succession from the apostles, the recognition of the Holy Spirit's Grace remaining in the Church, living in her, and the tie with the heavenly Church - how far removed all this is from the Protestant concept of the Church! How is it possible to neglect such glaring discontinuity for the sake of planning spiritual unity? And furthermore, how is it possible to neglect these qualities of the Church for the sake of ecumenical unity?

It is also remarkable that Protestantism, having broken ties with the Church of apostolic succession, does not even have pretensions of belonging to the hereditary organism of the

apostolic Church, in the direct sense of the word. In this respect it is honest with itself. Protestantism - at least in the new sects such as the Adventists, the Baptists - does not pretend to have the Grace of Baptism: there Baptism is only "a promise of good conscience to God," and the submersion into water a simple symbol. Anointment, that seal of unification with the Church, and the granting of the divine gift of the Holy Spirit that resides in the Church, is regarded as being unnecessary. This is logical since there is no union with that Church which maintains the order of apostolic succession. In the most recent large sects, the Eucharist is, according to their personal understanding, a simple remembrance of the events of the Last Supper. They understand it as a simple eating of bread and wine: such a remembrance can be outside the Church. Protestantism contents itself with the ministry of lay preachers for the reason that it has no successive laying on of hands, as a Grace-filled Mystery remaining within the Church. In them there is no association with the heavenly Church. Further yet, they refuse to honor the Most Holy Mother of God and consciously demean Her, even to the extent of falsifying the Holy Scriptures (thus, in the German Protestant translation of the Gospel, the words of the Lord: Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come received the following sense "What is there in common between you and me?"). The concept of spiritual struggle associated with carrying one's cross according to the Lord's commandment is also absent. The idea of attaining holiness as the aim of the earthly life of a Christian (according to the Apostle Paul: Holiness, without which nobody will see the Lord) is absent. The Church, as a guide and repository of the Grace of God, becomes unnecessary. If there is a dreamy faith in a revelation to one or another individual or some illumination by the Holy Spirit, then it is an individual contact with heaven independent of the Church. Christianity becomes primarily something outside of the Church itself, and the name "church" turns out to be a plain symbol and, finally, only an empty sound. If you want to be a Christian in the Protestant sense, simply call yourself such and own a Gospel. You are a Christian, you already are in the invisible spiritual Church. If you receive Baptism, then you do so only in order that others recognize you as a Christian. From here arises the facility of the Protestant missionary task in heathen nations, the ease of transition from one sect to another. But it does not lead to union with the Church of Christ. Ecumenism as a progeny of Protestantism bears all its features to the fullest extent.

The Church of Christ is the foundation of God - [it] standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His (II Timothy 2:19). The Church is the fortress of Christianity in the world. It is a citadel around which free settlements of Christian and non-Christian trends have spread. It is a bastion which is predestined for the task of enduring all the onslaughts of hell, as the Saviour foretold concerning it and as it is depicted in the Apocalypse of St. John the Theologian - hell in the form of a dragon, effluxing a river out of its jaws in order to captivate and drown the Woman-Church (Rev 12:15). The angel preserved the Church, and the earth swallowed up the river.

Personal salvation is within the Church. And the salvation of the world is through the Church. This first truth must be brought into agreement with a second truth: the apostolic consolation to the people outside the Church, that God, Who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe; that He shed His blood for the sins of the whole world; that in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with

Him, is accepted with God. At the same time, we must understand as well that many are called, but few are chosen and that sons of the Kingdom may be cast into outer darkness. What should be our relation to the movement for unification in Christianity?

We Orthodox, I repeat once more, must not natter ourselves with the thought that we are capable of directing the movement for unification in ecumenism into a course towards Orthodoxy. Rather, it is easier to think that when the ecumenical movement is exhausted, then the more sincere groups in Protestantism will be drawn towards those sources from which Protestantism originated, to which it is more related in spirit, from whence it carried forth the idea of building the Kingdom of God on earth, i. e., towards Latinism. However, if we are approached it is our obligation to "give an answer concerning [the content] of our hope." Protestantism still continues to be prejudiced against the Orthodox Church and does not understand its essence: but it is as if ready to learn about Orthodoxy. Appearing as an open forum, the Orthodox Church must be completely free of the paths, boundaries, and regulations into which ecumenism places its own members, allowing them to function only in an already designated direction. The Church must act independently, standing outside of ecumenism, perhaps associated with it as with a member of mutual discussion, but not subject to it.

The late and most Blessed Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky, when he was invited to London on the occasion of the 1600th Anniversary celebration of the first Ecumenical Council, and an opportunity was offered to him to express himself concerning the question of "unification of Christianity," formulated his opinion: "To carry out such a request is incomparably easier than if you had offered to me to speak of the unification of churches... We from childhood have become accustomed to believe in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church... It is another matter if we speak of the unification of Christianity. Such a unification, first of all, must be expressed in the freedom of our souls not only from every shade of inimical feeling towards those who might think differently, but also from the dominant striving in our minds to refute them." Having in view the Anglican church, Metropolitan Anthony advised to make attempts towards clarifying all that which we have in common (Life of the Blessed Metropolitan Anthony, Vol. VII, page 85 [in Russian]).

If, indeed, separated Christianity was amiably inclined to meet our Church [halfway], then what else could our relationship be to it except to aid it in uniting to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Orthodox Church? This means: to unify un-united Christianity not to "us," not to Russians, Greeks, Syrians or Serbians, but to help them become unified with the Orthodox Church of all times, with the Church in which such hieromartyrs as Ignatius the God-bearer, hierarchs such as Sts. Athanasius the Great, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom served, where there were hosts of martyrs, where there were great ascetics: Anthony, Euthymius, Macarius, John of the Ladder, and others. In short, to help them enter into the kingdom of holiness, the kingdom of Grace, the kingdom of prayer, the kingdom of asceticism, into the Church which in its holiness is the pillar and ground of truth.

Our intense attempts would consist of 1) indicating to un-united Christianity, that without union with the Heavenly Church there can not be completeness in the body of Christ, and that there cannot be true catholicity without this union that without it there is not a true Church; 2) the calling of Orthodox churches to help grant apostolic Church succession and, in such a manner, 3) to help begin a Grace-filled life, united with a 4) confession of

the fullness of Church teaching. Thus it should be. How do those Orthodox proceed, who from the beginning have declared themselves to be friends of the ecumenical movement, and likewise those who have already entered this movement, as if in the name of the Orthodox Church? These individuals, have been carried away by the idea of ecumenism, have adjusted to the situation, desiring to please a fashionable movement, and have quickly changed the teaching of the Church, all for the sake of the dreamy aim of unifying Christianity. They not only falsely inform the non-Orthodox, but strive to convince us, the Orthodox, to accept a disfigured teaching of the Church - to introduce, as if a new revelation from the Holy Spirit, as a moving wind of a new Pentecost, the new ecumenical view of the essence of the Church and its structure. This would replace the truth about the unity of the body of the Church with the conception of some kind of a spiritual Church, embracing all dissension, conflicting teachings, and all divisions in contemporary and historical Christianity. Individuals of a modernistic frame of mind or individuals who have passed through Protestant theological schools and have assimilated their spirit make appearances at gatherings in the name of the Orthodox Church and have been accepted as Her representatives.

Between the First and Second World Wars a book appeared, published by the YMCA, under the heading, *Christian Unification: the Ecumenical Problem in Orthodox*.

Consciousness. In it we find a series of editorials in Russian by Orthodox authors of different nationalities. The most liberal point of view is advanced by Russian theologians. Archpriest Sergey Bulgakov argues for an ecumenical conception of the Church. "Thus," he expresses himself, "we speak of churches quite often in the sense of different Christian denominations" ("we" - evidently, he himself and those in agreement with him). He concludes: "the evidence of the genius of a language cannot be reduced to simple politeness or hypocrisy for the sake of courtesy and amiability before the non-Orthodox." This argument is weak; a reference to the spirit of modernized languages.

Professor Kartashev offers historical information in his article to the effect, that supposedly "all the reunions of the Church, after mutual anathematizations and excommunications, were accomplished on the level of equality, without any hint of being joined to something, without an 'unia,' without recalling excommunications, and without lifting anathemas, which shows that anathemas have a conditional character." However erudite the late Parisian Professor Kartashev may be in Church history, this assertion is not true. Of course, if in some local church a heretical or schismatic bishop was replaced by an Orthodox bishop, then this church became Orthodox: why then should the anathema be lifted from the Church? For, in general, it is heretics and heresies that were anathematized and not churches. But there was no way for a heretical bishop to be reunited to the Church except he reject the heresy or schism. In the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils we constantly read of reunifications, for example, in the following form: "I, so and so, having repented, enter the holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of God" or: "We reunited to the holy, catholic, and apostolic Church" (see the Acts of the 3rd Ecumenical Council). And thus it is proper to apply the words of the Rev. Bulgakov to Kartashev - i.e. in the author's [Kartashev's] extremely exaggerated historical premise one feels either affection or hypocrisy in reaction to the ecumenists. Professor Kartashev kindly affirms that membership in the Church is preserved "even with defects and mutilations in the dogmatic teaching both in canonical and ritual practice... Even Protestant communities," Kartashev continues, "mercilessly breaking contact with

apostolic hierarchic succession and the living sacred tradition of the Church, but having preserved the Sacrament of Baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity, continue through this mystagogical door to introduce their members into the bosom of the one invisible Church of Christ, and to commune to them that very same Grace of the Holy Spirit. All this gives ground for posing the question of a unification of churches on the basis of their equal rights in their mystic realism, and not on the basis of "uniatism," i.e. reuniting heretics to Orthodoxy. The reunification of churches should be a manifestation and a concrete incarnation in visible reality of an already invisibly existing unity of the Church." When one reads these deliberations by Professor Kartashev one involuntarily would like to inquire: if, then, all of Protestantism is already a part of the Church, if there already is a unity, then why the need for reunifications? Why is there need for decades of stubborn exertion for reunification? Kartashev here goes further than the expectations of the Protestants, and his assertions annul all Orthodox Christian dogmas. The very same trend of thought, though not as clear, is followed by the Bulgarian Protopresbyter Stephan Tsankov.

The point of view of the teaching of the spiritual church is supported by Archpriest V. Zenkovsky. He writes: "In its entire historical content the visible historical Church naturally leans towards divisions into various 'confessions'...: this dismemberment does not affect the unity of the heavenly Church, but, " he adds, "dismemberment also is not healed through uniting."

In his dialogues "At the Feast of the Gods" of 1921, the Rev. Bulgakov says: "It is with a kind of freshness and captivation that the old problem of unification of churches arises before us, towards which the terrible historical hour that has arrived for all of Christianity is calling and coercing us... Having as an analogy the epoch of the persecutions and the catacomb period of the Church." Is not Fr. Bulgakov calling forth before this terrible hour for the destruction of the fortress and rock of Christianity, the apostolic Church, for the breaking down of its walls, for its abolishment?

At the first sessions of the ecumenical gatherings its Orthodox members seemingly tried to stand in defense of the view that for them the Orthodox Church is *Una Sancta*; but then gave in to the general trend. In Edinburgh, during 1950 at the ecumenical assembly, the Orthodox delegates gave "a clear answer," as is described in the report of the convocation of the World Council of Churches in Toronto in that very same year: "Notwithstanding all our differences, we have a common Teacher and Lord, Jesus Christ, Who will lead us towards increasingly more intimate common work in the building up of the body of Christ." With regard to this "clear" answer there remains to be said that unfortunately the ecumenical conception of the body of Christ is too different from the conception of the Orthodox Church.

In that very same ecumenical direction and on those very same principles various separate high representatives of the Greek church are advocating the idea of the reunification of churches, at least as far as one is capable of judging according to the reports of the press. Thus, Archbishop Iakovos (USA) now sees the Church in the divided multiplicity of churches as one organism, one body of Christ. He sees nothing but human pride as the cause of divisions. He sees a way out in living together and praying together, not raising any walls of division determined by racial and religious prejudices. The Orthodox Church, according to his words, must cease making known its "universal teaching" (Church Life, May-July, 1961). In such a manner there is taking place an

obvious disfiguration of the dogmas of the Church and a simultaneous attraction of local Orthodox churches into a completely alien channel, subjecting them to Protestantism, and, in addition, towards a movement directed not only by the mere idea of reunification, but also by different social ideas and plans completely alien to us.

At this time the Moscow Patriarchate is preparing to announce itself as the sole protector of the immutability of the dogmas of Christianity, and she will be listened to with interest, having been accepted as the voice of the historical Russian Church.

At this grave historical moment much courage, firmness, conscientiousness, and readiness for sacrifice are demanded from those who are faithfully preserving themselves in Orthodoxy, and a strong faith in the words of the Saviour concerning the unshakeableness of the Church. There is no doubt that in the depth of each local Orthodox church there is a true understanding of Orthodoxy and a readiness to stand up in defense of it. These voices will be raised and will be heard. One should not become discouraged by the apparent weakness and meagerness of these voices.

In his time St. Gregory the Theologian characterized the state of Orthodoxy in the Church of Constantinople thus: "This field once was small and poor.. .it was not at all a field. It was worth, perhaps, neither a granary, neither a thrashing floor, nor a sickle, but instead only small unripened sheaves..."

Such it was at the time when St. Gregory began to preach in Constantinople in the house church of St. Anastasius; yet this period ended during his lifetime with the triumph of Orthodoxy in all of Constantinople (see his farewell address).

At another time the same hierarch asks: "Where are those who reproach us for our poverty and boast of their wealth? They accept great numbers as sign of the Church, and scorn a small flock. They measure divinity (concerning the Arians, who say that the Son is less than the Father) and weigh people. They highly value grains of sand and degrade the star; they collect into the treasure chest simple stones and ignore the gems." (Chapter 33, Against the Arians). Thus, also as our support we do not have Protestantizing theologians, but the stars of both the Universal and Russian Church, Her holy pastors and teachers.

If it will not be fated for us to attract the non-Orthodox confessions into the one, apostolic and Orthodox Church of Christ, then in any case we must preserve ourselves and guard our brothers in Christ who belong to the same Church from false ways, from being captivated by over extended goals, from being bought out at the expense of betrayal to the teaching of the Church. With sorrow one is forced to admit that there is no possibility of a sufficient exchange of ideas with the non-Russian Orthodox world yet free from the communist yoke, because of difference of language and for other reasons. In part, there is not a sufficient exchange of ideas with the Greek Orthodox world. We are forced to silently observe with bitterness how easily forces unfavorable for Orthodoxy are at work in its midst.

We believe, however, that at the meeting of true ideas with false ideas, both there and also in our midst, living forces will be aroused and will repulse temptations; and faith itself, tested in temptation, will become a firm rock. For many, and many in our own Orthodox milieu, perhaps now yet cool in heart and almost indifferent towards questions of the Church and its dogmas, this faith, made firm through temptation, will become, as the first apostle expresses himself, more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire... (I Peter 1:7), i.e., more dear than material earthly wealth.