



**DOES THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH NEED TO
PARTICIPATE IN THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT?**

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Saint Seraphim of Sofia



Recently, the Russian Church has been under intense pressure from ecumenists to take part in the ecumenical movement. On August 22 (New Style), the ecumenists will convene their “All-Church Conference,” as they call it. According to the announcement in *Церковный вестник* [Tserkovny vestnik, “*Church Bulletin*”], published by the Bulgarian Synod, 136 so-called “Christian churches,” as well as representatives of Eastern Greek Churches will par-

¹ The Moscow Congress of July 8–18, 1948, included delegates of the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches of Alexandria, Antioch, Russia, Serbia, Romania, Georgia, Bulgaria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Albania, and addressed four topics: (1) The Vatican, (2) the Anglican Hierarchy, (3) the Ecumenical Movement, and (4) the Church Calendar. It was held on the eve of the founding of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam, August 22–September 4, 1948 (New Style). Although Archbishop Seraphim read two reports at this Congress as a Hierarch of the Patriarchate of Moscow, his uncompromising theological defense of Orthodox Tradition applies not only to the local Russian Orthodox Church, but to the Church Catholic, that is, all local Orthodox Churches.—Ed.

ticipate in this “All-Church Conference.”² No doubt, representatives of Russian ecclesiastical organizations abroad will also be present at the assembly. The ecumenists have invited the All-Russian Church as well to participate in the work of the Amsterdam conference.³ Up to this point, the Orthodox Church of Russia has not joined the ecumenical movement. It is desirable that it continue to have nothing to do with this movement, for the reasons given herein.

The Russian Orthodox Church has been invited to participate in this ecumenical conference as one of many ecclesiastical organizations, each of which understands itself to be the Church. But we Orthodox Christians confess that, strictly speaking, only one community of true, faithful Christians can be called “the Church,” as established by God Himself for our salvation. To call every heretical community “the Church” is to have an incorrect understanding of the word and to trample upon the dogma of the Church as it is taught in our Faith, as laid down by the ninth article of the Symbol of the Faith. Evidently, ecumenists, pointing to the great number of denominations—so-called “Christian churches”—which are members of the ecumenical movement and whose representatives will be taking part in the Amsterdam conference, attach great significance to their numbers. But the manifestation of a falsehood in large numbers rather than in small ones does not make it the truth; on the contrary, it all the more distorts and negates the truth.

However, numbers are not the crux of the issue; it is that ecumenists, and unfortunately even some Orthodox Christians, understand the concept of the Church incorrectly. They consider all those who have received Christian baptism, of whatever kind, to belong to the Church, thereby placing both genuine Christians and heretics in the same ranks and recognizing all of them as the Body of Christ. For example, let us

² *Церковный вестник*, № 13–15 (1948), p. 17.

³ With the theme “Man’s Disorder and God’s Design,” this conference was held from August 22 to September 4, 1948 (New Style), and constituted the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches, which was formally inaugurated on August 23, 1948 (New Style). At the First Assembly, two earlier ecumenical movements—Life and Work, and Faith and Order—merged and 147 churches—including several Orthodox Churches—became members of the World Council of Churches.—ED.

look at an article by one of the most influential Russian ecumenists in Paris, Professor and Assistant Rector of the [Saint Sergius Orthodox] Theological Institute in Paris, [Protopresbyter] V[asily] V[asilievich] Zenkovsky [1881–1962]. He writes the following in the journal of the Russian Y[oung] M[en's] C[hristian] A[ssociation],⁴ *Вестник русского студенческого христианского движения* [Vestnik russkogo studencheskogo khristianskogo dvizheniya, “*Bulletin of the Russian Students' Christian Movement*”] (№ 5, pp. 17–18):

We must ever unlearn and grow unaccustomed to the proud thought that the Spirit of God is solely in us and with us [Orthodox].... While...outside of Orthodoxy, I nevertheless felt myself to be in the Church. I saw that the limits of the Church were infinitely wider and more accommodating than we might normally think them to be. And, truly, who can say where the fence of the Church ends and the green field of Christ begins?

Who dares to claim that outside of the fence of Christ there is no Church, no servants or disciples...? Must we really cast others aside just because they serve Him in a different way than we...? I am now convinced that Protestants, too, abide within the Church and labor for the Church, even if unwittingly and not recognizing or calling things by their proper names.... No, Christ's Church is wider than our limited understanding of it; the Church includes within itself all believers in God and lovers of Him, no matter how their faith and love is manifested.

In another one of his articles in the same magazine, entitled “Основы экуменического общения” [“*Osnovy ekumenicheskogo obshcheniya*,” “Fundamentals of Ecumenical Association”], Protopresbyter Zenkovsky expresses even more bizarre ideas, ideas wholly unacceptable to an Orthodox consciousness. In defining the association of different ecclesias-

⁴ The first Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) was founded by Sir George Williams (1821–1905) in London in 1844, and in 1855 the Y.M.C.A. adopted its mission statement, “The Paris Basis”: “The Young Men's Christian Associations seek to unite those young men who, regarding Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour, according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to be his disciples in their faith and in their life and to associate their efforts for the extension of His Kingdom amongst young men.” Originally a strictly Evangelical organization, it is now thoroughly interdenominational and ecumenical in its orientation and concentrates primarily on issues of social justice.—Ed.

tical bodies and their union “through love,” within the framework of the bases and the goals of the ecumenical movement, he makes the following statement, demanding complete assent to it from all of the denominational representatives seeking union with each other. He says: “Their salvation is possible only through the church to which they belong, and in their churches there is absolute (if not full) truth” (January–February 1935). Father Zenkovsky is saying, here, that salvation is possible in every creed. And, by contrast, if a Christian of one creed should leave his own confession and join with others of another confession, or even with the Orthodox Church, then salvation for that person is no longer possible. Of course, the ecclesiastical union envisioned here disregards dogmatic differences entirely, making this a union through love, *i.e.*, a sort of amicable association.

Protopresbyter Stefan [Stanchev] Tsankov [1881–1965], a Professor at the Sofia Theological Faculty (and another highly authoritative figure for ecumenists), expresses a similar opinion in his article “Актуальные проблемы и задачи православного богословия и Православной Церкви” [*Aktualnye problemy i zadachi pravoslavnogo bogosloviya i Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi*], “Present-Day Problems and Tasks of an Orthodox Theologian and the Orthodox Church”. He writes:

The question of Church unity has become highly complicated and can no longer be considered...in an idle or self-satisfied way, as it has been up to now.... Even now, the real relationship of the Orthodox Churches of today with a series of churches of other creeds (the recognition of their baptisms, of some of their hierarchies, and other matters) and the recognition by the Orthodox Church of its own weaknesses and inadequacies as they exist among its members demonstrate as incorrect those who say that only Orthodox Christians belong to the mystical body of Christ (the Church) and that beyond visible division there does not exist an invisible, mystical unity in the Church of Christ.⁵

⁵ Ежегодник Богословского факультета при Софийском университете [Ezhegodnik Bogoslovskogo fakulteta pri Sofyskom universitete, “Yearbook of the Theological Faculty of the University of Sofia”] (Sofia, 1946–1947), p. 25.

The review by Professor Iliya Tsonevski [1903–1992], of the Theological Faculty at the University of Sofia, of Father Tsankov's *Die Orthodoxe Kirche des Ostens in ökumenischer Sicht* [*The Eastern Orthodox Church from an Ecumenical Viewpoint*] (Zürich, 1946) is noteworthy. In his review, Professor Tsonevski states:

The nature of the Church and its fundamental attributes are, in the most intimate possible way, linked to its unity, because it is the Body of Christ and Christ is its Head. The Church could never be either holy, or catholic, or apostolic, unless it were one. The whole reason for and the full significance of the ecumenical movement consist in the unity of the Church; this is its basis, as well as its task and its goal. The very fact that Orthodox Churches are actively taking part in the ecumenical movement indicates that already the old view, that only Orthodox Christians are true Christians and that only they belong to the Church of Christ, is gradually being dismissed.⁶

In this manner, Orthodox ecumenists have the unity of the Church, or one Church, as their main objective. However, their understanding of “One Church” is incorrect, for they comprehend thereby not only Orthodox Christians, but also all Christians of every other creed—*i.e.*, heretics—as being included in Her. This ecumenical point of view is at complete variance with an Orthodox outlook. The Orthodox viewpoint always defines the One Church as consisting only of right-believing Orthodox Christians. Our Church has never considered heretics to be included in Her ranks, as members of the Body of Christ. And how else could the Orthodox regard this matter, given that the Œcumenical Synods always anathematized heretics, *i.e.*, excommunicated them? Obviously, in their ecclesiological doctrines, ecumenists no longer recognize the authority of the Œcumenical Synods. But their refusal to recognize the authority of the Synods is tantamount to a denial of the authority of the whole Orthodox Church and to an acknowledgement, in this case, of personal intellect as the sole criterion of truth—which is a denial of the Orthodox dogma of the Church.

⁶ *Духовная культура* [Dukhovnaya kultura, “*Spiritual Culture*”], № 6 (1947), p.

Using rationalizations and their disbelief in the True Church of Christ, Orthodox ecumenists furthermore give their own interpretation to the term “Catholic Church.” Together with the Holy Fathers, we Orthodox call the Church “One,” “Catholic,” or “Œcumenical” because “She is not limited to any place, time, or nationality, but contains within Herself right-believers of all places, times, and nations.”⁷ Ecumenists misunderstand the Œcumenical Church to include not only all right-believing Orthodox Christians, but also all heterodox Christians.

Orthodox ecumenists also err in their use of the term “Apostolic Church.” Odd as it may seem, they adopt the same attitude toward the Apostolic Church that they do in regard to other so-called “Christian churches,” despite the fact that the latter have absolutely no Apostolic origin or succession. They consider all heterodox confessions to belong to the Apostolic Church, even though the great Apostle Paul sets heretics apart from Orthodox Christians, anathematizing the former when he says, “*But though we, or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*”⁸

But Orthodox ecumenists sin most of all against the ninth article of the Symbol of the Faith in their understanding of the name “Holy Church,” for they include heretics as members thereof. The Church is called “Holy” because She distributes the Grace of the Holy Spirit, which is imparted to the faithful in the Mystery of Chrismation during Baptism.

This revivifying, enlightening, and saving Grace is the most precious and highest good for us. Its gift to us was the goal of Christ’s coming to earth, of His suffering on the Cross, and of His death: “*I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?*”⁹ According to the explanation of this passage by Saint Anthony the Great [ca. 250–356] and Saint Macarios of Egypt, fire signifies the revivifying Grace of the Holy Spirit poured out upon us in the Mystery of Chrismation during

⁷ Metropolitan Philaret, *Пространный христіанскій катихизисъ* [Prostranny khristiansky katikhizis, “*An Extensive Christian Catechism*”] (Moscow, 1894), p. 48.

⁸ Galatians 1:8.

⁹ St. Luke 12:49.

Baptism (for which reason Grace is also called “Baptismal Grace”).¹⁰ As a counterpart to the aforementioned Divine words, these words of Christ also merit our attention: “It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.”¹¹ This is why Saint Symeon the New Theologian [949–1022] says:

Such was the aim and the goal of all of Christ’s oeconomy: that the faithful might receive the Holy Spirit..., and that He should be the soul of our soul..., and that by the action of His Grace we might be enlightened, renewed, and recreated in mind, conscience, and in all our senses.¹²

This great Holy Father of the Church agrees with the teaching of Christ and of Saint Paul about the Kingdom of God,¹³ together with the Holy Fathers Saint Anthony the Great,¹⁴ Saint Macarios of Egypt,¹⁵ and Saint Ephraim the Syrian [ca. 306–373],¹⁶ who even teach that the Kingdom of God, which God commands us to seek before all else,¹⁷ is the revivifying Grace of the Holy Spirit and, as such, the source of holy life.¹⁸ But this precious blessing for us, this revivifying Grace of the Holy Spirit with its holiness, is not and cannot be present among Protestants, because they do not have the Mystery of Chrismation. At Baptism, as is affirmed

¹⁰ *Добротолюбіє* [Dobrotolyubiye, “*Philokalia*”], Vol. 1 (Moscow, 1895), p. 29; *Творенія Макарія Єгипетскаго* [Tvorenija Makariya Egipetskago, “*The Works of Macarios of Egypt*”] (Moscow: Holy Trinity–Saint Sergios Lavra, 1904), Discourse 25, p. 190.

¹¹ St. John 16:7.

¹² *Слова преп. Сумеона Новаго Богослова* [Slova prep. Simeona Novago Bogoslova, “Sermons of St. Symeon the New Theologian”], Pub. 1 (Moscow, 1882), Sermon 38, p. 291.

¹³ See St. Matthew 13:33, 45–46; St. Luke 19:12–27; St. John 3:5; Acts 1:3–8; Romans 14:17.

¹⁴ *Добротолюбіє*, Vol. 1, p. 50.

¹⁵ *Творенія Макарія Єгипетскаго*, pp. 182–183.

¹⁶ *Добротолюбіє*, Vol. II (Moscow, 1895), p. 358.

¹⁷ See St. Matthew 6:33.

¹⁸ *Творенія св. Сумеона Новаго Богослова* [Tvorenija sv. Simeona Novago Bogoslova, “Works of St. Symeon the New Theologian”], Pub. II (Moscow, 1882), Sermon 44, p. 335; *ibid.*, Sermon 81, p. 348.

by *Православное исповѣданіе* [Pravoslavnoye ispovedaniye, “*Orthodox Confession*”],¹⁹ we cleanse ourselves from sin, die to the world, and are re-born in the Holy Spirit for a new and holy life. But this new and holy life is only possible for us with the help of the Grace that we receive in the Mystery of Chrismation. In this Mystery, the Holy Spirit, with all of His gifts, is imparted to us, renewing us and strengthening us for a spiritual, holy life.²⁰ This Grace-filled, holy life is not even possible for Christians of other creeds, who may have received baptism of a kind, but on account of their having cast aside the Orthodox Church for heresy, any Grace that might be present with them is neither active nor soul-saving.

Hence, Orthodox ecumenists are not correct when they include all of the heterodox in the Holy Church, or when they declare, as they did through one of their ecumenical leaders, that those of other creeds, both individually and as a group (churches of other confessions), as well as individual, sinful members of the Orthodox Church, “become saints through the Grace of God and through love within the community.”²¹ Here, Orthodox ecumenists are confusing individual members of the Orthodox Churches—who are sinners and, in general, weak people—with peoples of other Christian creeds and “churches,” and assuming that both can attain sanctity through the Grace of God and through the love

¹⁹ *Православное исповѣданіе Каѳолической и Апостольской Церкви восточной* [Pravoslavnoye ispovedaniye Kafolicheskoy i Apostolskoy Tserkvi vostochnoy, “*Orthodox Confession of the Catholic and Apostolic Church of the East*”], Pt. 1 (Saint Petersburg, 1840), Answer to Question 105, p. 80.

²⁰ Metropolitan Makary, *Догматическое богословіе* [Dogmaticheskoye bogosloviye, “*Dogmatic Theology*”], Vol. II (Saint Petersburg, 1868), pp. 348–352; Metropolitan Philaret, *Пространный христіанскій катихизисъ*, p. 54; Bishop Theophanes, *Что есть духовная жизнь и какъ на нее настроиться* [Chto est dukhovnaya zhizn i kak na neye nastroit'sya, “What the Spiritual Life Is and How to Be Attuned to It”], (Moscow, 1904), p. 248; *Св. Маркъ Подвижникъ и св. иноки Каллистъ и Игнатіе* [Sv. Mark Podvizhnik i sv. inoki Kallist i Ignatiye, “*St. Mark the Ascetic and Sts. Kallistos and Ignatios*”] (Moscow, 1889), p. 336.

²¹ Protopresbyter Stefan Tsankov, “Православное христіанство, его сущность и его современный образ” [“*Pravoslavnoye khrіstianstvo, ego sushchnost i ego sovremennyy obraz*,” “*Orthodox Christianity: Its Essence and Its Modern Form*”], *Ежегодникъ Богословскаго факультета при Софійскомъ университетѣ* (Sofia, 1942–1943), pp. 62–63.

present in their communities. But the difference between the two is vast. Members of the Orthodox Church who are sinners, no matter how great their sins may be, are always able through the Mystery of Repentance and with the help of active and saving Grace to become Saints; they can attain to a true and perfect Grace-filled sanctity. But for the heterodox, whether as individuals or as a group, it is not possible to become Saints, because the Grace of the Mystery of Chrismation and the Grace of the Mystery of Repentance are not active among them. Heterodox are only able to become Saints if they repent, renounce all of their heresies, and unite themselves with the Orthodox Church; only then can one include other Christians in the Holy Church of Christ.

But what sort of Grace is this, which, according to ecumenists, allows Christians of other creeds to become Saints? According to the teaching of the Holy Fathers, the Grace of the Holy Spirit is manifest in two forms: firstly, as an external, providential Grace, which acts in and throughout the lives of everybody, enabling anyone to accept the True Faith; and, secondly, as an internal, salvific Grace, which revivifies, redeems, and functions solely in the Orthodox Church. Undoubtedly, in the previously cited quote by the Orthodox ecumenist, external Grace was not what he had in mind, since when it acts in the lives of Christians of other creeds, and even in the lives of non-Christians, it does not make them Saints.²² It follows, then, that what he had in mind was the internal, revivifying Grace. But this Grace is either wholly absent in Christians of other creeds or is present but inactive, unable to save or to make them Saints. So neither the one nor the other type of Grace can make heterodox Christians into Saints. Subsequently, it is inappropriate for Orthodox ecumenists to speak at all about either Grace or sanctity in connection with Christians of other creeds.

Furthermore, can communal love actually make Saints out of heterodox Christians or out of sinners in general? If one were to imagine the most loving group of Orthodox Christians—and these would have to be Orthodox Christians with undistorted views and a clear understanding

²² Писанія преп. Иоанна Кассіана [Pisaniya prep. Ioanna Kassiana, “*The Writings of St. John Cassian*”] (Moscow, 1892), p. 404.

of Orthodoxy—and non-Orthodox Christians, then from their association with one other, the non-Orthodox Christians—provided that they were not fanatical heretics—would merely be left with pleasant feelings, and that is all. Again, in order to become Saints, heterodox need, not just to unite with the Orthodox Church and partake of Her saving Grace, but also to start on the path of a true Christian life, on the path of uncompromising warfare with the passions and with sin, through the unwavering fulfillment of God’s commandments, on the narrow, sorrowful, and thorny way. Only then can Christians of other creeds, with the help of God’s Grace, become Saints. Therefore, the talk of Orthodox ecumenists about the possibility of heretics becoming Saints, it must be said, is completely groundless and deluded.

However, the Orthodox ecumenists’ interpretation of the term “the Holy Church,” as with their interpretations of other terms for Her, is not just a simple mistake. In its essence, this error is a subversion of our Orthodox Church. Our Church demands of us belief in One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, ascribing these attributes uniquely and exclusively to our Orthodox Church. Orthodox ecumenists refuse to obey the Church, distorting the ninth article of the Creed beyond recognition. This results in an unnatural mixture of truth with falsehood, Orthodoxy with heresies. Orthodox ecumenists end up with an extreme distortion of the true understanding of the Church, so much so that while members of the Orthodox Church, they are, at the same time, members of ecumenical churches, or more specifically, some sort of ecumenical heterodox community composed of innumerable heresies. It is proper to remind them always of Christ’s words: “*But if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*”²³

Their disobedience leads ecumenists to declarations such as the following: “The walls dividing the churches do not reach up to Heaven itself, to Christ, the Head, and they do not go down to the very heart of the Church, to the Holy Spirit.”²⁴ Yet these dividing walls—*i.e.*, the separation of heretics from the Orthodox Church—were originally instituted

²³ St. Matthew 18:17.

²⁴ Tsankov, “Православное христианство, его сущность и его современный образ,” p. 63.

by the Œcumenical Synods. They were instituted with the goal of preserving the Orthodox Faith from ruin, to protect it from being mixed with destructive heresies. By such divisions were Christ's words fulfilled: "*Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division.*"²⁵ At the Œcumenical Synods, Christ's words, which He spoke to the Apostles and to their successors, the Hierarchs, who stand at the helm of the Church, were also realized: "*Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.*"²⁶ It is clear, then, that these divisions *do* reach to Heaven itself—and how could ecclesiastical boundaries not reach Christ, when they are founded on His very Own words?

Next, the dogmatic decrees set forth at the Œcumenical Synods with regard to the anathematization of heretics were founded on the following words of the Apostles: "*For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us.*"²⁷ Consequently, these decrees against heresies had their source, not just in the Holy Fathers of the Œcumenical Synods, but also in the Holy Spirit Himself. The words that Christ spoke to His disciples when He appeared to them after His Resurrection are significant here: "*Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*"²⁸ It is obvious, then, that the anathemas of the Œcumenical Synods, grounded in the words of Christ, were placed upon heretics jointly by the Holy Spirit and by the Church. The question thus arises, How is it that dogmatic boundaries are not able to reach the Holy Spirit, since He is the source of those self-same boundaries?

And this is not all. Christ's words, "*Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven,*"²⁹ show that the anathematization of heretics, *i.e.*, their excommunication, carries over into the next life, and that all heretics after death go to eternal torments. It is worth noting, here, a highly-instructive revelation given to the great Fool-for-Christ Saint Symeon

²⁵ St. Luke 12:51.

²⁶ St. Matthew 18:18.

²⁷ Acts 15:28.

²⁸ St. John 20:22–23.

²⁹ St. Matthew 18:18.

of Emesa [fl. 6th cent.]. God revealed to him that the soul of Origen [ca. 185–ca. 254], the famous theological scholar, had perished and was in the torments of Hell on account of his heretical teachings.³⁰ Monk Theophanes had a similar revelation, as narrated in the famous book by Saint John Moschos [ca. 550–619], *The Spiritual Meadow*. He also saw Origen, as well as Arios [ca. 260–336], Nestorios [ca. 351–ca. 451], and many other heretics in fiery flames.³¹ The following vision of Saint Kyriakos the Anchorite [448–557] demonstrates just how hateful heresy is to God: The Mother of God appeared to him with Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Theologian; however, she refused to enter his cell, because at the end of one of the books on his shelf there were two writings by the heretic Nestorios.³²

Orthodox ecumenists are not only disobedient to the Orthodox Church; they also openly charge Her with the sin of division. True, they attribute this sin not only to the Orthodox Church but to all churches of other confessions as well.³³ Yet it was heretics who created heresy, not the Orthodox Church; on the contrary, the Orthodox Church has defended, with the blood of Her Martyrs, the purity of the Orthodox Faith from heresies. Had the Church not struggled thusly, then Orthodox truth, through its having intermingled with heretical falsehood, would have ceased to exist, and, together with it, the Orthodox Church would have vanished from off the face of the earth. One cannot fault the Orthodox Church for not mingling with heretics and for separating Herself from them; rather, one must bless Her for Her martyric decision to make such a division, a division that occurred because of the heretics' rebellion

³⁰ *Книга житію святихъ на мѣсяць іулій* [Книга zhity svyatykh na tesyats iuly, "Book of the Lives of the Saints for the Month of July"] (Moscow, 1898), July 21, pp. 489–490.

³¹ St. John Moschos, *Лугъ Духовный* [Lug Dukhovny, "The Spiritual Meadow"] (Moscow: Holy Trinity–Saint Sergios Lavra, 1915), ch. 26, p. 32.

³² *Ibid.*, ch. 46, pp. 61–62.

³³ V. V. Zenkovsky, "О такъ называемомъ экуменическомъ вопросѣ" ["О такъ называеотомъ екуменическомъ вопросе," "On the So-called Ecumenical Question"], *Вестникъ русскаго студенческаго христіанскаго движенія*, № 6 (1930), p. 5; Tsankov, "Православное христіанство, его сущность и его современный образ," p. 116.

against the Church, against God-revealed and Patristic truths, and even against God Himself.

However, the fact that ecumenists even make such an accusation shows just how great are the sins of audacity, self-opinion, and pride into which they have fallen: They have appropriated for themselves the right to judge the Orthodox Church. It appears that the time has come when one can no longer be silent. One must show the ecumenists the whole of their error in equating Orthodoxy with other creeds. And one must caution them against the dangerous and ruinous path that they are treading, a path that has incited them to disobedience and even to public accusations against their Mother, the Church. Finally, one must not fail to bring attention to the negative impact the participation of Orthodox representatives at ecumenical conferences has. Their presence at these conferences confirms heterodox Christians in their belief that all Christian confessions belong to the One, Œcumenical, Orthodox Church.

For our part, we do not consider the presence of Orthodox ecumenists at ecumenical gatherings to signify at all that Christians of other creeds belong to the True Church of Christ. Just as far from the truth of the Orthodox Faith as they are on account of their religious errors, so do they remain. Orthodox representation at ecumenical conferences simply informs us that the Orthodox have begun to fall away from their Orthodoxy. It is difficult to decide where Orthodox fall away from the Orthodox Church more—in their writings or by their presence at ecumenical conferences? Their presence at ecumenical gatherings is, in essence, a betrayal of the Orthodox teaching on the Church, expressed in the ninth article of the Creed. Orthodox representation at such gatherings—which ecumenists call “all-church conferences,” “meetings of Christian churches,” and “the one, holy church of Christ”—is, to all intents and purposes, a confirmation of the Orthodox Church being “the One, Holy Church of Christ” together with every heretical error. Consequently, without one word, without anything written, Orthodox representatives, merely by their presence at the Amsterdam conference, will be contributing to the subversion of our faith in the dogma of the Church.

In addition, joint prayer of Orthodox with heretics occurs at all of the ecumenical conferences. Joint prayers are, however, forbidden by the

Holy Canons of our Church. The Tenth Apostolic Canon says, “If any one shall pray, even in a private house, with an excommunicated person, let him also be excommunicated.” And the Forty-fifth Apostolic Canon states: “Let a Bishop, Presbyter, or Deacon, who has only prayed with heretics, be excommunicated: but if he has permitted them to perform any clerical office, let him be deposed.” In his commentary on this latter Canon, Bishop Ioann of Smolensk [1818–1869]³⁴ writes:

The Canons strive not only to preserve the Orthodox from becoming infected with a heretical spirit, but also to preserve them from indifference to the Faith and to the Orthodox Church, which easily arises from having contact in matters of the Faith with heretics. This Canon, however, does not contradict in any way the Christian spirit of love and tolerance that distinguishes the Orthodox Church. There is a great difference between tolerating those errant in their faith...and living with them peacefully in a civic community, and entering indiscriminately into religious contact with them, inasmuch as the latter action signifies that we are not only not trying to bring them to Orthodoxy, but that we ourselves are weakening in the Faith.

In regard to this commentary by Bishop Ioann of Smolensk on the previously-cited canonical regulations, one needs to keep in mind the following thought of Saint Cyprian of Carthage [*ca.* 200–258], who main-

³⁴ A celebrated preacher and commentator on Canon law, Bishop Ioann remains a leading authority on the interpretation of the Holy Canons. He was born in Moscow on June 5, 1818, to the family of a Priest. After graduating from Moscow Theological Academy in 1842, he held the Chair in Canon Law at Saint Petersburg Theological Academy from 1844 to 1854, during which time, while still an Archimandrite, he wrote his most important work, the two-volume *Опыт курса церковного законовѣденія* [*Opyt kursa tserkovnogo zakonovedeniya*, “*The Experiential Course of Ecclesiastical Jurisprudence*”] (Saint Petersburg, 1851–1852), the first attempt by a Russian clergyman to treat with the Holy Canons systematically, which earned him a doctorate of theology in 1853; in this work, he emphasizes the necessity of placing any given Canon within the context of Patristic tradition by considering the historical circumstances that lead to its issuance and by comparing it to other similar Canons and even to parallel secular legislation. Appointed Rector of Saint Petersburg Theological Academy in 1855 and Rector of Kazan Theological Academy in 1857, he held these posts until 1864. In 1865, he was Consecrated Bishop of Vyborg, a Vicariate of Saint Petersburg, and in 1866, he was appointed Bishop of Smolensk; his Episcopate was brief, however, as he reposed on March 17, 1869.—ED.

tains that heretics will never come to the Church if we strengthen them in their belief that they also are members of the Church and possessors of the Mysteries.

There is only one instance in which Orthodox representatives can be present at ecumenical conferences, and that is if the conference organizers were to announce to the Orthodox Church, on behalf of all of the so-called “Christian churches” (the members of the ecumenical movement), a readiness to renounce all of their heretical delusions and reunite themselves with the Orthodox Faith. But, of course, those in charge of ecumenical conferences have never made any such announcement nor will they ever do so, because heterodox Christians, in general, simply do not think about renouncing their heresies and reuniting themselves with the Orthodox Faith. One should not forget how stubbornly and fanatically heretics hold on to their religious convictions. Reunion with the Orthodox Church, as reality shows, occurs only in isolated cases, very rare and exceptional ones. Let us always remember the prophetic words of Christ: “*Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?*”³⁵ In view of all of this, we have no grounds on which to hope for a reunion of other so-called “Christian churches” with the Faith of the Orthodox Church; instead, we should anticipate a greater and greater reduction in the numbers of the true faithful.

The very head of the Ecumenical Council has no conception of Christians of various creeds reuniting with the Orthodox Faith. Through his personal assistant, [Willem Adolph] Visser 't Hooft [1900–1985],³⁶ he has clearly announced that the Ecumenical Council will not constitute a centralized form of ecclesiastical unity, in which denominations would lose their independence and distinctive character.³⁷ Thus, at ecumenical conferences the question of the reunion of non-Orthodox churches with the Orthodox Church is not even raised. In the programs of ecumenical

³⁵ St. Luke 18:8.

³⁶ Instrumental to the founding of the World Council of Churches, he served as its first General Secretary, from 1948 to 1966.—ED.

³⁷ *Церковный вестник*, № 13–15 (1948), p. 18.

conferences, this issue is never on the agenda, nor is it included in the agendum of the upcoming Amsterdam conference.³⁸

It is true that, at their conferences, ecumenists, both heterodox and Orthodox, try to find points of commonality in their faiths in order to attain—insofar as this is possible—unity. A significant letter signed by all of the attendees of the Oxford [Life and Work] Conference [1937], states:

We are one in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the embodied Word of God. We are one in our commitment to Him, the Head of the Church, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. We are one in the confession that this commitment takes priority over all other commitments.... We are one, because we are all subjects of the God of love and grace.³⁹

But all these unities have no relationship whatsoever to the question of a genuine union of Orthodox with those of other creeds. Yet Orthodox ecumenists, at least in the persons of their leaders, ascribe tremendous significance to these vague unities, pointing to the words of Saint John the Theologian: “*Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist.*”^{40, 41}

Yes, in Apostolic times such a confession of faith in Christ was sufficient to distinguish who was with Christ’s Church and who was against Her. At that time, the chief opponents of the Apostles were the Gnostics, who, in their *science falsely so called*,⁴² admitted no direct contact between God and His creatures, since they denied the Incarnation of God—the basic dogma of Christianity. But when other heresies made their ap-

³⁸ *Ibid.*, № 26–27, p. 14; see also № 5–6 (1947), p. 14.

³⁹ Protopresbyter Stefan Tsankov, *Две всемирные конференции в Оксфорде и Эдинбурге* [Dve vseмирnye konferentsy v Oksforde i Edinburge, “Two Ecumenical Conferences in Oxford and Edinburgh”]: “Практического христианства” [“*Prakticheskogo khrīstianstva*,” “Practical Christianity”] and “Единения церквей” [“*Edineniya tserkvei*,” “Unity of the Churches”] (1937); *Духовная культура*, № 8–9 (1938), pp. 273–282; *ibid.*, № 10, pp. 303–310.

⁴⁰ 1 St. John 4:2–3.

⁴¹ Пийа Tsonevski, review of the fourth lecture of Protopresbyter Stefan Tsankov, “Единения церквей.”

⁴² 1 St. Timothy 6:20.

pearances after the time of the Apostles, Christian dogmas had to be reaffirmed in terms of new heresies, and those who did not accept these reaffirmations became heretics, opponents of the Holy Church, as had occurred earlier with those who did not confess that Christ came in the flesh. For example, Iconoclasts confessed that Christ came in the flesh, as Protestants do nowadays, but for a whole two hundred years the Iconoclasts enervated the Church. There is not a single heresy that caused more evil to the Orthodox Church than Iconoclasm, which the Holy Church has condemned and placed under perpetual anathema.

By pointing to the aforementioned words of Saint John the Theologian, Orthodox ecumenists give the heterodox grounds to think that the Orthodox are ready to unite with them on the basis of a common belief in the Incarnate Christ, even though the heterodox still hold to their misbeliefs. So, then, if our Orthodox Church has not received from the organizers of ecumenical conferences any announcement of the readiness of heterodox denominations to reunite with the Orthodox Faith, and if they have not discussed the question of such a reunion at these conferences, then the question arises, Why should our Russian Church send them our representatives? What fruit will the participation of our Church at these ecumenical gatherings bear? Only *evil fruit*,⁴³ of course, and one of these fruits, about which we have already spoken, will be the falling away of the Orthodox from their Faith through the violation of the Holy Canons and the dogma of the Church as confessed in the ninth article of the Creed.

There is another evil fruit that arises from representatives of the Orthodox Church participating in ecumenical conferences: a falling away from our Holy Orthodoxy. We have in mind the familiarity between Orthodox and Christians of other confessions that develops from their ecumenical association. Of course, ecumenists, especially Protestants, are strong supporters of such familiarity between heterodox Christians and Orthodox Christians, for without friendship between Western Christians of various confessions and Eastern Orthodox Christians, ecumenism will never be able to realize its goal. An announcement made by Dr. Visser 't Hooft, general secretary of the Ecumenical Council, reveals that the of-

⁴³ St. Matthew 7:17-18.

ficials of the Ecumenical Council are aware of this: he has said that without the coöperation of Orthodox Churches, ecumenism cannot be a truly Ecumenical Body.⁴⁴ As a consequence, the Ecumenical Council does all it can at their ecumenical conferences to strengthen firmly the friendship between non-Orthodox and Orthodox Christians. There is no doubt that the Council provides all manner of material assistance to the Orthodox Churches with precisely this goal in mind.⁴⁵

Having taken all of this into consideration, we can say that the friendship formed at ecumenical conferences becomes more and more enduring and profound, but—alas!—more and more detrimental to the Orthodox Church. The familiarity between Orthodox representatives and their Protestant counterparts carries over into Orthodox countries and produces there friendly associations between Orthodox and Protestants, particularly between Orthodox clergy, on the one hand, and Protestant clergy, on the other. How far these friendly associations go at times can be seen from the following. During their missionary trips to Orthodox countries, Protestant pastors organize meetings with pomp and ceremony in both villages and towns, and they invite Orthodox to them, especially Priests. There have even been cases when, in the presence of a great number of Orthodox Christians, Protestant pastors and Orthodox Priests have held hands while singing, “Oh, how sweet is the union of true brothers; how our Lord Jesus Christ holds us in love.” Very often, Orthodox Priests and Protestant pastors jointly serve *molebeny*.

At the Geneva conference [1920], the representative of the Patriarch of Constantinople, Metropolitan Germanos of Thyateira [1872–1951],⁴⁶ and the representative of the Patriarch of Alexandria, Professor Loukaras,

⁴⁴ *Церковный вестник*, № 16–17 (1947), p. 15; *ibid.*, № 38–39, p. 1

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ He was the principal author of “Ἐγκύκλιος Συννοδικῆς τῆς Ἐκκλησίας Κωνσταντινουπόλεως πρὸς τὰς ἀπανταχοῦ Ἐκκλησίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ” [“*Enkýklios Synodikḗs tēs Ekklēsiās Kōnstantinouπόλεως πρὸς τὰς ἡπανταχοῦ Ἐκκλήσιās τοῦ Χριστοῦ*,” “Encyclical of the Synod of the Church of Constantinople Unto the Churches of Christ Everywhere”] (1920), hailed by both Orthodox and Protestant ecumenists as a cornerstone document of the ecumenical movement. The Encyclical of 1920 marks the first time that an Orthodox Church, in an official capacity, implicitly acknowledged as valid the Protestant ecclesiological distinction between “The Visible Church” and “The Invisible Church.”—Ed.

brought to the conference's attention the proselytism that occurs among Christian peoples. They made it clear, at that time, that such proselytizing was impermissible and contrary to the idea of a rapprochement and reunification of the Christian churches. (One must understand, here, the word "proselytism" as a euphemism for the dissemination of heterodox propaganda in Orthodox countries.) Metropolitan Germanos submitted a written statement against proselytism to the conference on behalf of all of the Orthodox participants in order to put an end to the use of such propaganda in Orthodox countries.⁴⁷

As if in answer to this, Protestants proceed on the assumption that because they have an ecumenical friendship with Orthodox, the latter are ready to embrace Protestant doctrines, and, as never before, they indulge, with no restraint whatsoever, in their Protestant propagandizing, which has as its goal the union of Orthodoxy with Protestantism and the consequent liquidation of the Orthodox Church. Protestants use the enormous resources at their disposal to disseminate propaganda by means of the press, publishing books and newspapers. In their literature, they not only drag through the mud our veneration of Icons, our Divine Services, and all of Orthodoxy, but they also speak contrary to the Scriptures. They reject the Biblical narrative of God's creation of the world in six days and do not accept as authentic certain miracles recorded in Scripture. The upshot of all of this propaganda is that a multitude of Protestant sects have sprouted in Orthodox countries, such as Adventists, Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, Evangelicals, as well as others.

Before ecumenism, no such Protestant propagandizing existed in Orthodox countries, as no ties of familiarity existed between Orthodox and Protestants. These friendships, which are being firmly established at ecumenical conferences, impose on the Orthodox representatives a moral obligation not to impede Protestant propagandizing in Orthodox countries. And herein lies the great evil of ecumenism: "*For every tree,*" said the Lord, "*is known by his own fruit.*"⁴⁸ If harm comes to the Ortho-

⁴⁷ Protopresbyter Stefan Tsankov, *Женевская конференция для соединения церквей* [Zhenevskaya konferentsiya dlya soyedineniya tserkvei, "The Geneva Conference for Union of the Churches"], pp. 15, 20.

⁴⁸ St. Luke 6:44.

dox Church from this friendly relationship, then it is clear that the relationship is the work of opponents of the Holy Church. In the case of ecumenism, these opponents are Freemasons.⁴⁹ They are the ones who encourage the development of friendly relationships at ecumenical conferences, since they are the ones who organize these selfsame conferences, just as they organize the conferences of the Y. M. C. A.

In 1928, a conference was held in Sofia between representatives of Orthodox Churches and representatives of the International Committee of the Y. M. C. A., including representatives of national federations of the Y. M. C. A. in Orthodox countries, under the leadership of the General Secretary of the International Committee of the Y. M. C. A., Dr. John [Raleigh] Mott [1865–1955]⁵⁰—a well-known Freemason. At his directive, the All-American Protestant Congress allocates enormous sums

⁴⁹ With its bloodcurdling oaths, arcane rituals, and atmosphere of secrecy, Freemasonry has long aroused suspicions and fears among cowans (as Masons call non-Masons) that it is a sinister and nefarious movement orchestrating conspiracies and revolutions worldwide. While the truth of this sensationalistic reputation is subject to debate, it is beyond doubt that Freemasonry, while claiming not to be a religion itself, nevertheless demands a specific religious philosophy of its adherents, as James Anderson (*ca.* 1679–1739) states: “[Masons are]...oblige[d]...to that religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves; that is to be good men and true, or men of honour and honesty, by whatever denominations or persuasions they may be distinguished; whereby Masonry becomes the centre of union, and the means of consolidating true friendship among persons that have remained at a perpetual distance. ...[T]he religion we profess...is the best that ever was, or will or can be..., for it is the law of Nature, which is the law of God, for God is Nature. It is to love God above all things, and our neighbour as our self; this is the true, primitive, catholic and universal religion agreed to be so in all times and ages” (quoted in Jasper Ridley, *The Freemasons: A History of the World’s Most Powerful Secret Society* [New York, NY: Arcade Publishing, 2001], pp. 40–41). Ecumenism clearly shares the commitment to dogmatic minimalism pioneered by Freemasonry. Also beyond doubt is the fact that it was Freemasons, led by Patriarch Meletios II of Alexandria (1871–1935), who initiated the Orthodox Church into the ecumenical movement—the most destructive and divisive experience of Orthodoxy in modern times.—ED.

⁵⁰ “If any one individual could be said to personify the modern ecumenical movement, it would be John R. Mott. In him converged uniquely the varied strands of which the ecumenical movement is woven” (*Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, ed. Nicholas Lossky, José Míguez Bonino, John Pobee, Tom Stransky, Geoffrey Wainwright, and

of money for worldwide Protestant–Masonic propaganda. The second of these conferences took place in 1930 in Athens. The Oxford Conference held in 1937 had as its organizer and spokesman none other than the same well-known Freemason, Dr. John Mott. As a member of the steering committee of the Ecumenical Council, in January of 1948, he participated in the development of the agenda for the upcoming Amsterdam conference and in all aspects of its organization.⁵¹ And this same Dr. John Mott will be one of the spokesmen at the Amsterdam conference.⁵² In view of all of this, it is no surprise that eighty percent of the participants at the Stockholm [Life and Work] Conference of 1925 and at the Lausanne [Faith and Order] Conference of 1927 were members of the Y. M. C. A., an organization with Masonic ties and headed by the same Dr. John Mott.⁵³ Highly relevant to all of this is the report made by participants of the Oxford Conference at the foreign council of Hierarchs with clergy and laity in 1938 that revealed that the Oxford Conference had been dominated by Freemasons.

From this, it is obvious who really stands behind the ecumenical movement: Freemasons, longtime foes of the Orthodox Church. It is also clear to what end the ecumenical movement, at all of its gatherings since its inception, has striven: not a dogmatic union of all so-called “Christian churches” with the Orthodox Church, but a commixture of both, achieved by means of the falling away of the Orthodox from their Faith through an ecumenical familiarity with heretics, especially with Protestants. This commixture is equivalent to the destruction of Orthodoxy. Ultimately, when dealing with the ecumenical question, we must recognize that, going back to the very origin of ecumenism, there stands before us, not only the age-old enemies of our Orthodox Church, but the father of lies and ruin himself—the Devil. In former centuries, he sought to destroy the Holy Church by assaulting Her with all sorts of heresies, specif-

Pauline Webb [Geneva: W. C. C. Publications, 1991], p. 703). Mott was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946.—Ed.

⁵¹ *Церковный вестник*, № 5–6 (1948), p. 14.

⁵² *Ibid.*, № 26–27 (1947), p. 14.

⁵³ *Вестник русского студенческого христианского движения* (July 1929), p. 27.

ically, by trying to mix Orthodox with heretics. And he is doing this now by using ecumenism and its inexhaustible Masonic capital.

However, earlier there were more obstacles to his work than there are now. Back then, Christians had a flaming zeal for the Orthodox Faith and defended it to the point of giving their blood as Martyrs. Nowadays, those who embrace Orthodoxy are unparalleled in their indifference to the Faith—an indifference that God loathes. “*I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth.*”⁵⁴ As a result of their zeal for the Faith and their pure Christian lives, Orthodox were granted knowledge from God. Theologically unenlightened people, even simple women, argued at the marketplace over whether Christ was of the same Essence [ὁμοούσιος (*homooúsios*)] or of a similar essence [ὁμοιοούσιος (*homoioúsios*)] to God the Father.⁵⁵ Nowadays, an ignorance in questions of the Faith reigns among the Orthodox, and the foe of our salvation is taking advantage of this. The ecumenical movement has quickly grown over the face of the earth—ensnaring even Orthodox Churches in its intricate webs. Yet the Russian Church, possessing fifty million Orthodox faithful, so far has not become a member of the ecumenical movement.⁵⁶

For the present, then, ecumenism will not celebrate its victory. It has not encircled all of the Orthodox Churches in its worldwide ring.⁵⁷ Let us

⁵⁴ Revelation 3:15–16.

⁵⁵ See, for example, the remarks of Saint Gregory of Nyssa (*ca.* 331–*ca.* 395) regarding how in his day the topic of the Consubstantiality of the Hypostases of the Holy Trinity was endlessly debated in “every place in the city...: the alleys, the marketplaces, the squares, and the crossroads; the clothiers, the moneychangers, the food vendors” (*Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XCIX, col. 557BC).—ED.

⁵⁶ Unfortunately, the Patriarchate of Moscow joined the World Council of Churches at its Third Assembly in New Delhi in 1961 and has been one of its most active members ever since.—ED.

⁵⁷ Orthodox Churches that are currently members of the World Council of Churches include the Œcumenical Patriarchate, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Russian Orthodox Church, the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Romanian Orthodox Church, the Church of Cyprus, the Church

not give it such a victory! Let us remember its essence and its aim, and let us wholly reject the ecumenical movement. It constitutes a falling-away from the Orthodox Faith, a betrayal of and treason against Christ, which are things that we must avoid in every way so as not to fulfill the words of Saint Seraphim: “Woe to him who even in one iota falls away from the Holy Œcumenical Synods.” The world is hostile to Christ and His Holy Orthodox Church, and for this reason “*the friendship of the world,*” in the words of the Holy Apostle, “*is enmity with God.*”⁵⁸ The Orthodox Church should never join with those of other confessions. Such a union is unfeasible, utopian, and extremely harmful and even disastrous for the Orthodox Church. Orthodox Christians should, rather, join with each other, and so fulfill the commandment of Christ:

*Neither pray I for these alone [i.e., the Apostles], but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us.*⁵⁹

In this context, the word “all” means “believers,” and the word “believers,” here, does not signify Orthodox together with ecumenists and heretical Christians; one can only understand the word to mean “true believers,” *i.e.*, Orthodox Christians. As God declared, “*I am...the truth,*”⁶⁰ He could not have meant, here, heretical Christians, but rather only right-believing ones.

Let us not be disturbed by the accusation ecumenists make against us Orthodox Christians of lacking love toward Christians of other creeds, for our seeming not to want to include them in our Faith. This accusation is, above all, not based in reality. Our Holy Church has always fought

of Greece, the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church in Poland, the Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania, the Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands and Slovakia, the Orthodox Church in America, the Orthodox Church of Finland, and the Orthodox Church in Japan. Orthodox Churches that were formerly members of the World Council of Churches (yet still maintain ties with it) include the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the Georgian Apostolic Autocephalous Orthodox Church.—Ed.

⁵⁸ St. James 4:4.

⁵⁹ St. John 17:20–21.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 14:6.

against heresies, even *unto blood*,⁶¹ yet She has always pitied those who, at the suggestion of the Devil, fall into heresies, and moved by love for them, She places upon them an *ἐπιτιμία* [*epitimía*, “penance”],⁶² which even goes as far as excommunicating them from the Church. Nonetheless, the Church has never ceased and never will cease Her prayers—this breath of Grace-filled, true love—for the restoration and the return of heretics to the path of saving truth. Here is how the Church teaches us to pray for heretics: “Those who have departed from the Orthodox Church and have been blinded by destructive heresies, enlighten with the light of Thy knowledge and bring back to Thy Holy, Apostolic, Catholic Church.” In this way, the Holy Church differentiates heterodoxy from the truth, demanding of those who have fallen into heresies an uncompromising struggle against their misbeliefs and always reaching out to them with Her maternal, loving embrace.

For not joining the ecumenical movement as the Orthodox ecumenists have, we are accused of an essential lack of love for non-Orthodox Christians. However, through their involvement in the ecumenical movement, Orthodox ecumenists break the Holy Canons; violate Orthodox ecclesiological dogma; establish friendships with Protestants and Freemasons at ecumenical gatherings, which makes them lenient toward Protestants propagandizing in Orthodox countries; and assist the enemies of the Orthodox Church in their work for Her elimination. The Orthodox ecumenists’ behavior in their relationship to ecumenism is a complete outrage; it is egregiously unseemly behavior, in which, according to the teaching of Saint Paul, there is no love: “*Love*,” he says, “*doth not behave itself unseemly*.”⁶³ It is obvious, however, that any lack of love is not to be found with us, but with the Orthodox ecumenists, since they do not express love, but rather behave unseemly. Let them ask their conscience—it will answer them with the truth—, at the base of their ecumenical ac-

⁶¹ Hebrews 12:4.

⁶² An *epitimía* is a chastisement that, in accordance with the Canons, a Priest places on a repentant Christian with the aim of healing the latter’s moral weaknesses. The character and duration of an *epitimía* depends upon the gravity of the sin and on the contrition of the penitent (One-hundred-second Canon of the Synod in *Trullo*).—ED.

⁶³ I Corinthians 13:5.

tivities and their relations with the heterodox, is there is genuine love for one's neighbor, or is there something else?

May God spare us from such "love," from such a relationship with the ecumenical movement. May God grant that our Russian Church henceforth stay the course of isolation in its relationship to ecumenism and its conferences—a course that it has hitherto maintained. Yes, we are alone. But in our solitude, in this isolation of ours, lies the security for salvation from the destructive onslaught against the Russian Church waged by Freemasons—and the security of salvation, not only for the Russian Church, but, perhaps, for the whole Œcumenical Orthodox Church.

Therefore, let us not participate in the ecumenical movement. We need to stay as far away from it as possible. There are some who hope that instead of the Russian Church immediately joining as a full member at the Amsterdam conference, it will rather send representatives to act in the capacity of observers from our Church.⁶⁴ But does it not follow that our presence, even as mere observers, will somehow sully our great Russian Church? Our presence at heretical and Masonic societies will have, to a certain degree, the nature of an endorsement of those societies. The words of the Apostle Paul should be wholly applicable to our Russian Church:

*Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*⁶⁵

Therefore, let us have absolutely nothing to do with any association with the ecumenical movement; let us be guided in this matter by the words of Holy Scripture:

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he

⁶⁴ Церковный вестник, № 13–15 (1948), p. 18.

⁶⁵ Ephesians 5:25–27.

*that believeth with an infidel?*⁶⁶ *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the impious.*⁶⁷

⁶⁶ II Corinthians 6:14–15.

⁶⁷ Psalm 1:1.



Note: The text of this timely article is excerpted from a recent book by the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies (*Saint Seraphim of Sofia: His Life, Teachings, Miracles, and Glorification* [Etna, California: C.T.O.S., 2008], pp. 88–115.), where it appears in English for the first time.