



**Orthodox Christianity and “Modernity”  
Cristianismo ortodoxo y “Modernidad”  
Cristianismo Ortodoxo e “Modernidade”**

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**Abstract:** Nowadays, there is a question about the relationship between patristic and “after patristic” theology, according to Orthodox theology. This theology comes from the writings of the Fathers, the tradition of the Orthodox Church but also from the general revealed truth of the Church. The opposite of orthodox theology is “after patristic” theology. The latter is an extension of the various newer theologies of western Christian Churches. They make a relevance of theology and feminist, or politics, or different social problems, etc. What is the view of the Orthodox Theology, when many Orthodox support these kinds of theologies and some others have negative attitude to these theologies. Is there any real connection between patristic theology and “modern theology”?

**Resumen:** Hoy en día hay una pregunta acerca de la relación entre teología patristica y teología post-patristica, según la teología ortodoxa. Esta teología proviene de los escritos de los Padres, la tradición de la Iglesia ortodoxa, pero también de la verdad revelada de la Iglesia. Lo opuesto a la teología ortodoxa es la teología post-patristica. Esta última es una extensión de las diversas nuevas teologías de las Iglesias cristianas de occidente. Enfatizan la relación de la teología con el feminismo, o con la política o con diferentes problemas sociales, etc. En lo referente a la opinión de la teología ortodoxa, muchos ortodoxos defienden ese tipo de teologías, mientras muchos otros tienen una

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SALVADOR GONZÁLEZ, José María (org.). *Mirabilia Ars 3 (2015/2)*  
*La Imagen del Poder. Epifanías de la Potestas*  
*A Imagem do Poder. Epifanias da Potestas*  
*The Image of Power. Epiphanies of Potestas*

Jul-Dec 2015/ISSN 1676-5818

actitud negativa frente a estas. ¿Hay alguna conexión real entre teología patristica y “teología moderna”?

**Keywords:** Christianity – Modernity – Theology – Post-patristic.

**Palabras-clave:** Cristianismo – Modernidad – Teología – Post-patristica

ENVIADO: 12.05.2015

ACEPTADO: 22.07.2015

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## **I. Introduction. Orthodoxy: The guardian of theological tradition and the doctrines from the Apostles' time, the Ecumenical Councils to today**

Our era is the age of Globalization. The rapid growth of technology, by far the electronic revolution, the rapid circulation of ideas and the effort of man in order not to feel a citizen of one country but of the world has as result a mixture both in culture and religions. This raises the question of the relationship of traditional religions with politics in Modernity. Orthodoxy is one of the traditional religions. It supports that it is the guardian of custody of the doctrines of the Ecumenical Councils and the teaching of the Church fathers from the foundation of the Christian Church to these days.

The Orthodox Church through its historical trend, the missionary activity but also its preaching could also geographically and not only spiritually, be viewed as universal and ecumenical. The Orthodox are faced with a dilemma what attitude will keep on globalization or will be satisfied with the security of doctrinal purity excluding all other religions from heterodox and to know the truth. The danger for some Orthodox is to become who would show the truth of Orthodoxy, or they would become the reason to distort the doctrine and tradition of the Orthodox Church.

The term “Orthodox” is derived from the adjective “ortho: correct” and the verb “doko: believe, think” or “doxazo: praise.” It means men who have the correct opinion or those properly glorify God. The true faith is not insulated from the ecclesiastical, liturgical and sacramental life as God's glory and “Ainos: glorifying anthem”. The correct belief is a resultant those were expressed in Scriptures, Sacred Tradition and Church life. The content of the



doctrine was delivered through the Ecumenical Councils and was taken “shape” within the Church. Then it becomes one glorification of the Trinity through the devotional, liturgical and in general sacramental life of the Church.<sup>2</sup>

The Orthodoxy can not be seen as an ideological or philosophical system. Of course, it will not obviously be an exhibit in a museum, or a popular tradition. Finally, it is not the component that ensures the timeless and the universal unity of Hellenism. The Orthodoxy is the Church. The Church of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ. The “One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church” to which we declare faith and devotion with the confession of Creed, formulated in A.D. 325 at the First Council of Nicaea and in A.D. 381 AD at the Second Council of Constantinople –known as Symbol of Nicaea–Constantinople.<sup>3</sup> The Orthodox Church makes up the body of the Incarnate Word, Christ.<sup>4</sup> The participants in His body are the people of God. Basic requirement for someone to become a member of Christ's body, His Church, is to be baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity –In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Finally, clergy and people together constitute the Church, who are joined through the sacrament of the Eucharist.

Although the teaching of Orthodoxy was delivered in a specific place, in a specific time, and by a particular person, it was not be limited in these contexts but from the beginning its universal and eschatological character were emphasized. 2013 years from the birth of Christ, the Orthodox Church adheres to what Christ taught, to what the Apostles preached, to what the Tradition preserved or delivered through the ecclesiastic and liturgical life.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> A. Bazdekis, *We and the others. The Orthodox Church and the other Churches and Confessions. Which are our common things and our differences?*, publ. C. Sfakianakis, Thessaloniki 2012, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> S. Koustas, metropolitan of New Smyrna, «The meaning of our Orthodoxy», in greek, [http://www.oodegr.com/oode/orthod/genika/noima\\_orthod\\_1.htm](http://www.oodegr.com/oode/orthod/genika/noima_orthod_1.htm) (2012)

<sup>4</sup> E. Artemi, «The mystery of the incarnation into dialogues “De incarnatione Unigenitii” and “Quod unus sit Christus” of St. Cyril of Alexandria», master thesis, in *Ecclesiastic Faros of Alexandria*, 75 (2004), 145-277 (in greek). E. ARTEMI, «Cyril of Alexandria’s critique of the term Theotokos by Nestorius Constantinople», in *Acta Theologica* 2012 32(2): 1-16.

<sup>5</sup> A. Giannoulatos, Archbishop of Tirana, *Globalization and Orthodoxy*, publ. Akritas, (in greek), Athens 2001, p. 263.



The Apostle Paul calls the Church “the pillar and base”.<sup>6</sup> The Church, with the help of its fathers, who were enlightened by the Holy Spirit, preserved the revealed truth by Christ. Because the Fathers knew that only if the believers kept this truth, they would be led to salvation. Many struggles against heresies had being conducted through the centuries, by God-bearing people, pastors, and generally teachers of the Ecumenical Councils. All these had a single aim to preserve the revealed truth: “The Apostles' preaching and the Fathers' doctrines have established one faith for the Church. Adorned with the robe of truth, woven from heavenly theology. It defines and glorifies the great mystery of Orthodoxy!”<sup>7</sup> This truth that liberates and leads everyone to salvation, who has experience from this divine truth. The life in Christ is the denaturing of faith in life and in experience.

The Christianity is the experience of the presence of the uncreated Word of God in history and the possibility or the created man to be God “by God’s grace”. So does Christianity make people able to reach deification through a particular lifestyle and keeping some “principles and rules”.<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that other thing is a natural religion and other a church. Other thing is individual religiosity and different one is ecclesiastical life in Christ. Other thing is altruism and other one is selfless and sacrificial love. Altruism leads far away from the atomic shell us and leads us close to others. This love turns Me on us. This is true love, that corroborates the world for the love of God the Father: “If God had such love for us, it is right for us to have love for one another”.<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, the establishment of the Orthodox Church dates back to times of Apostles and its course is inherent in the apostolic succession of its clergy. The Orthodox Church accepts as the foundation of its truth the Bible, the theology and the canons of the Seven Ecumenical Councils and the teaching of the holy Fathers. Its governing system is synodical. Finally, it should be understood that the Orthodoxy entered in various struggles in order to ensure the continuation of Christian evangelical apostolic tradition. This tradition is

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<sup>6</sup> 1 Timoth. 3:15: “But if I am long in coming, this will make clear to you what behaviour is right for men in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of what is true”.

<sup>7</sup> Kontakion for Sunday of Orthodoxy

<sup>8</sup> G. Metallinos, “Ecumenical Orthodoxy and Globalization”  
<http://www.impantokratoros.gr/B505BE3B.el.aspx> (2012)

<sup>9</sup> 1 John 4:11.



in danger ahead in globalization, modernity, universalism according to some priests, monks and believers. The other view is that through the presence of a dynamic Orthodoxy, other Christian Confessions would be able to be refocused and correct possible mistakes –if they have– from their past.

## II. The Orthodox Church is ecumenical

The Orthodox Church through its historical trend, its missionary action and its sermon could be considered universal as far as its geographical position and its spirituality. Its universality based on its participation in the chalice of the Eucharist and confession of symbol of a single faith.<sup>10</sup> Since the first centuries of Christianity Fathers had already spoken about the universality of the Church through the dissemination of the sacrament of the Eucharist. This mystery unites all human beings with their participation in the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. Believers pray to God during their participation in the Divine Liturgy in order the kingdom of God be brought, not just for them but for the whole world. At the same time the Orthodox pray for peace for the whole world.<sup>11</sup>

The Church from beginning of its format received the character of a universal State, but not as universal compact Organization but as a galaxy of local churches, each of them retains its identity but it consistent with the other teachings and sacramental life. Although Orthodoxy is ecumenical, it strongly opposes to globalization. It (Orthodoxy) accepts and respects every people's identity, of every believer of any religion, and it preserves its own identity. It resists to the mashing theological, teaching trying to teach others the real truth, because Jesus Christ is the only true incarnate God, and at the same time it attempts to avoid powdering her identity through the efforts of harmonization efforts with the teachings of other religions.

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<sup>10</sup> E. theodorou, “Ecclesiological dimensions of Eucharistic Theology”, *Theology* 80: 4 (2009) 67 (45-75)

<sup>11</sup> Giannoulatos, *Globalization and Orthodoxy*, p. 264.



### III. Religion – Modernity – God

The religion<sup>12</sup> did not cease to have an effect on people's worldviews of modernity. What is it meant by the term “modernity”? The term “Modernity” does not call merely the historical period after the Enlightenment, but it characterizes a demand of autonomy and self-determination in art, politics and philosophy. Alongside this term reveals the conflict with already incumbent “authentic”, like religion and generally denying any authentic. The period of the Enlightenment, severe criticism had brought check to every pundit and had questioned the meaning and content of religion. Besides, it is known that religion was for the Enlightenment and the modern thinking not only an anachronism that acted as a brake on development and human progress, conservative or reactionary ideologies.

Before Enlightenment, religion, and everyone who served it -especially in Western Europe- were accused as the basic keys of the Middle Ages. During this period, any scientific progress striving for personal and social emancipation was doomed to fail because of its demonisation by the Roman Catholic Church.

Because the religion of Christianity was challenged to the fullest extent by the “Age of Light”<sup>13</sup>, many of the supporters of the Enlightenment thought that

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<sup>12</sup> By “world religions”, we understand the five religions or religiously determined systems of life-regulation which have known how to gather multitudes of confessors around them. The term is used here in a completely value-neutral sense. The Confucian, Hinduist, Buddhist, Christian, and Islamist religious ethics all belong to the category of world religion. A sixth religion, Judaism, will also be dealt with. It is included because it contains historical preconditions decisive for understanding Christianity and Islamism, and because of its historic and autonomous significance for the development of the modern economic ethic of the Occident--a significance, partly real and partly alleged, which has been discussed several times recently. References to other religions will be made only when they are indispensable for historical connections”, M. Weber, *Sociology of World Religions: Introduction*,  
[http://www.ne.jp/asahi/moriyuki/abukuma/weber/world/intro/world\\_intro\\_frame.html](http://www.ne.jp/asahi/moriyuki/abukuma/weber/world/intro/world_intro_frame.html)  
(2012)

<sup>13</sup> “Enlightenment” or “Age of Light “was called, in the history of European intellectual movements, the big subversive current, which had strong British roots and focused on 18th century France, spread across the European continent and it left deeply its footsteps in the regions of the Ottoman Empire. It had as its main features, the secularization of knowledge, faith in rationality and in the idea of progress, the worship of science,



with the pass of time, the social and cultural role of religion would be continually declined and eventually would be disappeared. The translucent argue that religion had no place in society that supports progress in science. The “Age of Light” was the secularization of religious metaphysics of light, so that the faith of man in God turned into man's faith in himself. Kant gave the traditional definition of the Enlightenment: “Enlightenment is the output of man by his ownership of the minor age. The minor age is man’s inability to use his intellect without the guidance of another. His ownership is this minor age, because the cause doesn’t lie in defectiveness of intellect, but of man’s determination and courage to use his intellect without the guidance of another, “Saper Aude”, “Dare to be wise”! Have the courage to use your own intelligence! This is the word emblem of the Enlightenment”.<sup>14</sup>

Although many of the supporters of the Enlightenment questioned religion openly and its power that was being acted through its representatives, they did not question the existence of God. Many of them believed in deism, a form of religious belief, according to which God was creator of the world, but after the creation did not interfere in the world. The cult of the Supreme Being as the creator of the universe introduced by Robespierre<sup>15</sup>, in order to consolidate the achievements of the revolution and replace the Roman Catholicism as the official religion of the state. The existence of God was necessary even for Enlightenment. Voltaire emphasized that “even if there was no God, we would have to invent a God.” Religious faith was therefore considered necessary to the extent that it prevailed the grounds that the questions they could not be found answers through human reason, they would be answered through the omnipotence of faith, which quieted the mortal spirit.

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experiment and observation, and it undermined the Christian religion. At the same time, it expressed a widespread questioning of power of the old regime, with a corresponding projection value of the Rights of Man and of Citizens “, F. Iliou, “Greek Enlightenment”, Greek History, 1770-2000, vol. 2, *Hellenic Grammata*, Athens 2003, p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> E. Kant, *What is Enlightenment*, Berlinische Monatsschrift, Berlin 1784, p. 8

<sup>15</sup> “By the decree of Robespierre on 7th May 1794, the political religion was established in France. It was the cult of the Supreme Being. It was based on the ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, which was contained in 'The Social Contract' and the contradictions of Rousseau with both Catholicism and atheism which was taught by Hembert”, <http://www.sansimera.gr/biographies/136> (2012).



Modernity was not only the result of the Enlightenment but a consequence of some specific social, political and economic conditions. The Renaissance<sup>16</sup>, the religious Reformation<sup>17</sup>, the Enlightenment<sup>18</sup>, the French Revolution<sup>19</sup> as well as the Industrial Revolution<sup>20</sup> were the bisector with which the European Enlightenment divided the tradition from the modernity.

The fault between tradition and modernity had resulted in the forcible cut-off of European civilization from its Christian cultural roots.<sup>21</sup> Today, many people support that Christian Churches are now in a difficult position: for decades the Christian Churches have been going through a crisis of credibility. Only to a limited extent a number of them proceeded in a partially self-criticism and one ecumenical dialogue among them. On the other hand, the contradictions of modernity led to resurgence of religious phenomenon, so that the secularization does not perceive today as a one-way, and a trend of disappearance of religion.

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. P. Burke, *The European Renaissance: Centers and Peripheries (Making of Europe)*, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford 1998. M. Albrow, *The Global Age: State and Society Beyond Modernity*, Stanford University Press 1996. A. G. DEBUS, *Man and Nature in the Renaissance*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK 1978. J. Brotton, «*The Renaissance: A Very Short Introduction*», Oxford University Press, Oxford 2006.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. R. Bainton, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, The Beacon Press, Boston 1952. L. W. SPIITZ, *The Renaissance and Reformation Movements: Volume I, The Renaissance*. Revised Edition. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis 1987. E. Cameron, *The European Reformation*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2012<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. T. W. Adorno, and M. Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, tr. by Edmund Jephcott and edited by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr. Stanford University Press, Stanford: 2002. I. JONATHAN, 2001. *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2001. I. Kramnick, “Introduction” to *The Portable Enlightenment Reader*, Penguin, New York 1995. R. H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1979. James Schmidt, (ed.), *What is Enlightenment? Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*, University of California Press, Berkeley CA 1996.

<sup>19</sup> cf T. Carlyle, *The French Revolution: A History*. The Modern Library, Oxford 2002. J. Censer; L. Hunt, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution*. Pennsylvania State University Press, Pennsylvania 2001. C. Alistair, P. Campbell, *French electoral systems and elections since 1789*. Gower 1989. W. DOYLE, (1990). *The Oxford history of the French Revolution* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press, Oxford 1990.

<sup>20</sup> Cf E. Griffin, *Short History of the British Industrial Revolution*, Palgrave 2010, G. D. Snooks, *Was the Industrial Revolution Necessary?*. Routledge, London 2000.

<sup>21</sup> N. Kokosalakis, “Traditional religion and society in the late modernity, *Religions and Policy in modernity*, in greek, publ. Kritiki, Athens 2002, p. 64.



However, the reintroduction of religiosity in nowadays is associated with a challenge: this is the dissemination of an ambiguous religiosity, of a mixed new paganism, a new knowledge and a diffuse mysticism that reject both Christianity as well as the real and infallible reason.<sup>22</sup> Today, in the 21st century, man is not threatened by traditional religion but by the Globalization, which as rollers trying to sweep all and mash them at the altar of money and globalization, There, all human values and ideals are sacrificed. According to Noam Chomsky, professor of Linguistics, “There are two important consequences of globalization. First, it extends the Third World model to industrial countries. In the Third World, there's a two-tiered society—a sector of extreme wealth and privilege, and a sector of huge misery and despair among useless, superfluous people. That division is deepened by the policies dictated by the West. It imposes a neoliberal “free market” system that directs resources to the wealthy and to foreign investors, with the idea that something will trickle down by magic, some time after the Messiah comes”.<sup>23</sup>

As it is understood the globalization creates a peculiar society. On one side is the class of the excessively wealthy and on the other that which is flooded by people living in poverty and despair.<sup>24</sup> Actually, important decisions are taken by the circle of colossal companies. The influence of parliaments is almost negligible in Late Modernity. Man find that the extreme individualism of the early and middle modernity being unworkable. In the discrediting of man, the patristic teaching comes again in order to lead man from darkness to light. The man in the Christianity has value, he is significant, because he is the image of God and he has in his soul, the divine breath. The purpose of the human life according to the holy fathers of the Church is life into Christ that this life will lead him to deification, in other words to the kingdom of heaven. This teaching as a counterweight to the attempt to mass people gives new ontological dimension in the existence of rational beings today.

In nowadays, the return of the Europeans and especially the Greeks in the awareness of their religious identity has a consequence the resurgence of national identity. The time has gone that people felt that everything was

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<sup>22</sup> A. Lipovatch, “Christianity and modernity” (2001),  
<http://www.academia.gr/content/view/80/76/lang,el> (2012)

<sup>23</sup> N. CHOMSKY, *The Prosperous Few and the Restless Many*, Odonian Press, N. York 1993, p. 63. cf. [http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Chomsky/ChomOdon\\_GlobEcon.html](http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Chomsky/ChomOdon_GlobEcon.html)

<sup>24</sup> Kokosalakis, “Traditional religion and society in the late modernity, p. 79.



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foreign, it was good too. Through the difficulties, European populations have realised the importance of their national identity and their traditional religion, Christianity. Particular attention should be given to whether the return to the traditional religion lead to the other extreme, that of obscurantism, fundamentalism and the demonization of the other, of the different. This side, especially, should be avoided. A similar example to be is the form of some Muslim countries. There, any different thing, view or religion should be disappeared. The patristic theology argues that the Christians should not sideline any foreign poor, any immigrant, but we have to respect their tradition, values without losing our own. Showing love to a stranger, we show love to Christ Himself. Christ was stranger from sin. He became perfect man, remaining perfect God, in order to save us.

#### **IV. Patristic and “after patristic” theology. Is the “after - post-patristic” (metapateriki) theology an heresy in the context of modernity?**

In our time, many people have puzzled the question of the relationship-if it exists-between patristic theology and “after- or post-patristic” heresy. This new scientific term is amenable to different interpretations. The prevalent two are a) the first part of the word meta: after is imparted temporal significance, in which case we talk about the end of the patristic era and b) to the first composer of the word is attached critical meaning, so that the composite word “post-patristic” means relativism, partial or total questioning, reconsideration, new meaning, and exceedance of the theological thought of the Church Fathers.<sup>25</sup>

The Orthodox theology must stem from the writings of the Fathers, from the tradition of the Church and overall from the revealing truth of the Church. All of them must be accompanied by the share of Theologist in the sacramental life of the Church. By this way the theologian can study in depth the meaning of theology. He can teach and experience this divine truth with the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>25</sup> D. Tselengidis, “post-patristic” or “New-Varlaam” Theology? Ignorance or Denial of holiness? Criterion of an Orthodox theology and unerringly theological thought”, Proceedings of the conference *Patristic Theology and post theology heresy*, 15 February 2012, p 35, 36 (35-46).



The opposite of the orthodox theology is the post-patristic theology *metapateriki*. The latter is an extension of various modern theologies, which were developed in the West and especially in the theology of Protestantism. In the latter, a reference is become for the theology of relevance, the feminist theology, the political one, the social, etc. All these theologies are based primarily on secularization of western trend mainly of Protestant theology. So in the centre of these theologies, we cannot find the Nativity, The Passion, Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Christ but we find the various social, political and cultural conditions of each era. All these many Orthodox priests and people make them as an absolute reality either positive or negative. At the same time they raise questions about whether or whether not relate these issues of “theology” with the orthodox theology.

So as a result of all this controversy between supporters or dissenters for the theology of relevance, the question is raised whether the Orthodox theology should have a positive relationship with all of them. Whether, if the Orthodox keep a totally negative attitude to all these philosophies which are associated with the western Christian theology, they will lose the opportunity to reach out the misled Christians of other confessions and teach them the Orthodoxy? Or whether their positive attitude put the Orthodox in danger to be misled. And this will contribute to the Greek Christian tradition degradation.

Of course, it should be set as an important condition for the negotiation of the above item within the orthodox limits that the Orthodox patristic theology nor can be deleted or reproduced in order to serve any feasibility. This, however, does not mean that any kind of dialogue with the various “Christian confessions” or doctrines have to be stopped. Anyhow, as a goal of the Orthodox must be the presentation of patristic theology as a base for dialogue with all Christian confessions. By this way, the Orthodox will be able to identify the mistakes and deviations beyond the Orthodox theology and they will give to other Christians the opportunity of returning to proper – real teaching of the Scriptures and the Fathers.

## **Conclusions**

Orthodoxy from the first moment of the establishment of the Orthodox Christian church had a universal character. Despite its universal dimension, some Orthodox strongly opposed to globalization. The explanation is simple.



Globalisation is the machine that will crush the uniqueness of the Orthodox faith in conjunction with the national identity of Greeks<sup>26</sup>.

Modernity such as was developed in the Industrial Revolution, it challenged any religion, any type of masters, of status quo and the existing theological conceptions. Because of the historical procession in Greece –Greece was under the Ottomans– modernity was not be able to nurture and grow in Greece as it happened in Western Europe. Even the Greek Enlightenment which came in contrast with the Church, it did not have any extremism. Anyhow, the first period of the Enlightenment, the church through its priests carried the burden for the spiritual awakening of the greek nation.

The faith and the adherence to the truth of the teaching of the Orthodox Church will be the boat by which the Orthodox theology would be able to make various opening to the world of modernity and instead of being in danger to be crushed by the modernist perceptions, it could form of a lifeline and of return of Christians of different confessions in the arms of the One Catholic and Apostolic Mother Church. At this point, in Greece, xenophobia, bigotry and intolerance should not be able to the resurgence of the teaching of the traditional religion and especially of Christianity, which is the religion of love.

Generally, the Orthodoxy is the opposite edge of the Modernity. The latter refers to the type of social organization, which as mentioned above it was prevailed in Western Europe after the industrial revolution in England in 1668 and the Revolution of 1789 in France. By the modernity enters the room all the thoughts and ideas associated with the tradition to any area of man's life, for example about government, economy and religion. In the field of religion, it was said before that the modernity identified with the period of the reformations that shook Western Europe and formed the basis for the creation of different confessions, as Calvinists, Lutherans, etc., who broke away from the authority of the Roman Catholic Church and instead of returning to the roots of Christianity, the Orthodoxy, they chose to depart even more from the apostolic tradition.

Today many Christians claim that Orthodoxy should approach other confessions by making a step towards them. Here, then, there is much friction

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<sup>26</sup> M. Bektzos, “Religion and Community. Religion, a big gap”, *Vima*, 10 April 2005.



between proponents of modernity and Ecumenism in the Orthodox teaching and those who shout that the Orthodox Church should not have any relation with the representatives of other Christian confessions, in order not to be pointed that that there is any acceptance or any spuriousness for the content of the Orthodox teaching.

Proponents of the participation of the Orthodox Church in the Council of World Churches emphasize that only through dialogue between the Orthodox Church the other confessions, Orthodoxy will be able to explain the mistakes of other confessions. These mistakes removed them from the Orthodox Christian Church. Many of the supporters of ecumenism accept that the seeds of truth exists in every Christian confession for this reason tried to be the “advocates” of the ecumenical movement and to form a text that is aligned with the beliefs of the other confessions.

The reaction is coming from a part of Orthodox Christians who deny any religious discussion with other confessions and react dynamically to any effort of the reunion of the “Churches”, Orthodox with the Roman Catholics or other followers of Christian confessions. This happens, because many Greek believe they have the real faith and the other Christians are condemned to hell.

On the other hand, those who argue modernity and universalism, consider that it is very important the fact that Orthodox have dialogues with believers of other confessions. So they think that by this way, they ensure Christian teachings and simultaneously they open themselves to those who are away from the Orthodoxy. This is the positive side between Modernity and Orthodoxy. But many of the faithful orthodox people react even with violence in the effort the Orthodox Church to come closer with other Christian Confessions.

A characteristic example of above all was the visit of Roman Catholic Pontifical in Athens in 2001. Then, the Archbishop of Athens Christodoulos was received a lot of reaction. Many Christians cursed him as heretic and even then, they thought that the subsequent illness of Christodoulos was a kind of punishment by God, for his acceptance to Pontifical.

Some others insist that the Orthodoxy as a carrier of the whole truth should not be afraid of the result the dialogue between Orthodoxy and Roman



Catholicism. Since It is the guardian of the tradition of the Apostles, Patristic Fathers and the teaching of the Ecumenical Councils. Then, our faith is that if in the Dialogue of the Orthodox with the various confessions, the proponents of the Orthodox should have a thorough theological training and at the same time do not sacrifice anything on the altar of dogmatic combination of Orthodoxy with other confessions then there is nothing to threaten Orthodoxy, related with the modernity of our age or under the limits of an Ecumenical Dialogue. Anyhow, midst of the dialogue, it is given the opportunity to the believers to the other confessions to determine or how far away are or are not from the teaching of the Ecumenical Councils and how they have distorted or have not distorted the overall teaching and tradition of patristic and Orthodox Christianity.

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