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# The Recognition of the Baptism of the Heterodox as the Basis for a New Ecclesiology (In Step with Vatican II)

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**W**ith the push for a pan-Orthodox acceptance of the Pre-Synodical text, “Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Rest of the Christian World,” a century long process of distortion of Orthodox ecclesiology is coming to fruition. Inasmuch as the Pan-Orthodox Council accepts the erroneous teaching that heretical ministrations are mysteries of the One Church, so much so will it acquiesce to the adoption of a new ecclesiology.

In this lecture, in the brief time allotted me, my intention is to succinctly present the origins of this erroneous teaching, two of the pillars of the new Vatican II ecclesiology which largely rest on this teaching, the adoption of this error by Orthodox ecumenists and the attempt to secure pan-Orthodox reception of it via the pre-Synodical text on the heterodox.

## 1. The Post-Schism, Western Origins of the Acceptance of Heretical Baptism *Per Se*

The historical origins and development of the idea that the Church shares the “one baptism” with heretics, and that, indeed, this is the basis for recognition of the “ecclesial nature” of heresy, lie exclusively in the West, and indeed in the post-schism West. Although it cannot be denied that the peculiar Latin sacramental theology owes much to Blessed Augustine, the decisive break with the patristic consensus on heretical baptism came with the views of Thomas Aquinas.

Thomas Aquinas, in developing the medieval doctrine of Baptismal character<sup>1</sup> cites Blessed Augustine as his main source. Aquinas’ use of the term character is, however, quite different than Augustine’s. For Aquinas, character is an indelible mark *on the soul*,<sup>2</sup> which can never be removed.<sup>3</sup> For Augustine it is *an external sign*.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Summa Theologica* III Q. 63, 1, 66 (especially A.9) and 69.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.5. As John P. Yocum writes concerning Aquinas’ view of the indelibility of character as opposed to grace in the soul of the recipient of the sacraments: “Thomas distinguishes the two effects of the sacraments, grace and character, according to their permanence. The character is a kind of deputation to the service of divine worship, in which one is empowered to give or to receive the sacraments. As such it is indifferent to good or evil use, and may be misused, but is not effaced (ST, III, 63, 2; 63, 4). While grace, he says, is in the soul as a form it is changeable as long as the soul itself is changeable; that is, it is subject to the effects of the exercise of free

He is “referring quite literally to a mark on the body, and using it as an analogy to explain the validity of the sacred sign of Baptism.”<sup>4</sup> His theory is based upon the idea that the external sign of Baptism can be possessed by someone who is actually internally alien to the body of the Church and so bereft of the sacrament’s effectiveness. This difference has grave implications for the meaning of sacramental efficacy.

For Aquinas the Baptismal character produces spiritual effects and is sealed on the soul of all who are validly baptized. The sign, therefore, simply on account of being externally valid brings about an enduring effect on the soul. This is exactly what does not happen in Augustine’s theory: valid sacraments can be and many times are totally without spiritual efficacy.<sup>5</sup> In this teaching of Aquinas we may have the first step toward the full, conciliar acceptance at Vatican II of the presence and workings of the Holy Spirit in the mysteries of the schismatics and heretics.<sup>6</sup>

As with Augustine, whose “new theology” of the church was intended as a guarded development of the patristic concensus expressed before him, but who nevertheless laid the first foundation stone for much greater innovations, Aquinas can also be said to have laid the groundwork for later theological development.

In his *Summa Theologie*, question 64, answer 9, Aquinas does maintain in principle what Vatican II will later abandon with regard to the “separated brethren,” namely the Augustinian distinction between the “sacrament” and the “reality” of the sacrament. Therein he states that there are heretics who “observe the form prescribed by the church” and that they “confer indeed the sacrament but not the reality.” He is referring, however, as he stresses, to those “outwardly cut off from the Church,” such that one who “receives the sacraments from them, sins and consequently is hindered from receiving the effect of the sacrament.” It is important to stress here, that their sin in receiving the sacrament from known heretics is what obstructs their reception of the reality, not the impossibility of the sacramental reality being imparted outside of the Church.

Aquinas writes that anyone who receives the sacraments from one excommunicated or defrocked “does not receive the reality of the sacrament, *unless ignorance excuses him.*” Thus, for Aquinas, the obstacle to efficaciousness and the reality of grace in the mystery is not necessarily the lack of unity, as Augustine would

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will, because its subject is the person who receives it. The character, however, is a kind of instrumental power and its subject is the principal agent, Christ, whose priesthood lasts forever” (Yocum, John P., “Sacraments in Aquinas” in *Aquinas on Doctrine: A Critical Introduction*, edited by Thomas G. Weinandy, et. al. (London: T & T Clark, 2004, p. 172-173).

<sup>4</sup> Cary, Philip, “Outward Signs,” p. 201.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> In contrast to both Augustine’s and Aquinas’ understanding of the term “seal,” for the Church Fathers of the East, according to John D. Zizioulas, “the term σφραγίς [seal] would never acquire...a strictly ontological meaning in the sense of πράγμα [thing]; it would be understood rather as σχέσις [relation], which is usually contrasted by them with πράγμα” (Zizioulas, John D., *Being As Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1993, p. 235). It is also important to note that the unique Aquinian development of “character” or “seal” is totally absent in the sacramental theology of St. Nicholas Cabasilas, who sees “seal” as essentially synonymous with “anointing” and the other terms used to describe baptism: “Baptism is called ‘anointing’ because on those who are initiated it engraves Christ, who was anointed for us. It is a ‘seal’ which imprints the Saviour Himself. As the anointing is actually applied to the whole form of the body of him who is anointed, so it imprints on him the Anointed One and displays His form and is really a sealing. By what has been said it has been shown that the seal has the same effect as the birth, just as the clothing and the plunging [baptism] effect the same as the sealing. Since the free gift, the illumination, and the washing have the same effect as the new creation and the birth, it is evident that all the nomenclature of Baptism signifies one thing – the baptismal washing is our birth and the beginning of our life in Christ” (Cabasilas, Nicholas, *The Life in Christ* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1974, p. 69).

have it, but knowingly participating in the sin of disobedience and rebellion. “The power of conferring sacraments” remains with the schismatic or heretical cleric, such that one ignorantly receiving Baptism from him has not only received a true sacrament, but has also received the spiritual reality of Baptism, which includes initiation and incorporation into Christ.

Aquinas writes the same in his *Commentary on the Sentences* of Peter Lombard, holding that “heretics and those cut off from the Church confer true sacraments, but that no grace is given, *not from defect in the sacraments, but because of the sin of those who receive sacraments from such against the prohibition of the Church*”<sup>7</sup>. This is the most crucial point and that point which separates post-schism Catholicism from Augustine and the pre-schism Church in the West. When, later with Vatican II’s re-evaluation of schismatics and heretics as “separated brethren,” the Council will not only lift any such prohibition but even encourage limited intercommunion, then the “life of grace” will be seen as springing from the dissidents’ liturgical life and prayer, a life which opens up access to the assembly of those being saved (*Unitatis Redintegratio* 3c).

It is precisely on this point of efficaciousness by way of ignorance and in seeing “character” as the sign of ecclesiastical membership that the fashioners of the new ecclesiology will form their new view of schism, heresy and the church. Aquinas provided, as it were, the building blocks with which to shape the new vision of the Church. The most important of these is that which would have every valid sacrament producing spiritual effects for all but those who *knowingly* commune with schism and heresy. Hence, following Aquinas, Bernard Leeming could state, even in 1960, before the advent of Vatican II, that “if the sacrament is valid, its fruitfulness depends exclusively upon the disposition of the recipient.”<sup>8</sup>

## 2. Two Essential Characteristics of the New Ecclesiology at Vatican II

Nearly seven centuries of important modifications to Latin sacramental theology and ecclesiology would pass from the concise references of Thomas Aquinas to the “new vision” of the Church at Vatican II. During the middle ages, the once given unity of the mysteries, both practically and theologically, was lost, such that baptism alone came to be regarded as sufficient for initiation into the Church.

However, it wasn’t until the advent of ecumenism and the trail-blazing boldness of one thinker, “the father of Vatican II”, Yves Congar, that the seed planted by Aquinas would sprout forth into the ecumenical tree that is the new ecclesiology.

Already in 1939, in his seminal work, *Divided Christendom*,<sup>9</sup> the French Dominican theologian laid down the pillars of the new ecumenical ecclesiology which would be proclaimed at Vatican II and adopted in the ecumenical movement.

### A. Ecclesial Elements

Congar “affirmed that ecumenism begins when we start to consider the Christianity not just of schismatic Christian individuals, but of schismatic

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<sup>7</sup> Leeming, p. 541 (emphasis mine).

<sup>8</sup> Leeming, p. 542.

<sup>9</sup> Congar, M. J., O.P., *Divided Christendom, A Catholic Study of the Problem of Reunion*, trans. M.A. Bousfield (Geoffrey Bles: The Centenary Press: London, 1939).

ecclesiastical bodies as such.”<sup>10</sup> On the basis of this innovative approach, he was then led into other innovations, namely, “to put forward his own version of the concept that the schismatic communities retained *elements* of the *Una Sancta* in their schismatic situation.”<sup>11</sup> Moreover, if these elements, chiefly the holy mysteries, first of which is Baptism, preserve “through good faith” “the essential[s] of [their] efficacy,” they bring about in the soul of the dissident “a spiritual incorporation (*voto*) in the Church,” making the dissident a member of the Church, tending toward “an entire and practical incorporation in the ecclesiastical Catholic body.”<sup>12</sup>

It is this critical assumption, that “elements” of the Church, such as Baptism, can be extracted from the whole and still have life to give, which underlies and supports the entirety of the new ecclesiology. Far from being a return to the Fathers, this theory of autonomous ecclesiastical elements has its origins in none other than John Calvin’s doctrine of *vestigia ecclesiae*, which Congar developed with a slight change of emphasis.<sup>13</sup> In his theory, the schismatic and heretic is made a member of the Church on the account of the ‘baptismal character’, in spite of lacking an orthodox

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<sup>10</sup> Aidan Nichols OP, *Yves Congar* (Morehouse-Barlow, London, 1989), p. 102. This move from considering the individual heretic to considering the heretical group as such is precisely what is not happening in the Holy Canons, and in particular in the 95th Canon of the Penthekte Synod, which is cited in the pre-Synodical draft document. This is a fundamental difference between the Orthodox approach to the heterodox and the new, post-Vatican II ecumenist approach, a difference which sets each on a totally different trajectory. The Orthodox consideration of schismatics and heretics always aims toward their union with God which takes place within the Church, such that the economy of God in their lives is exercised on the basis of personal and ecclesiastical criteria, never impersonal or ideological.

<sup>11</sup> Nichols, p. 102 (emphasis in the original). Avery Dulles, S.J., in his article *The Church, The Churches, The Catholic Church*, provides background information on Congar’s important “elements” theory: “It asserts that although the Church of Christ exists fully or perfectly in one communion alone, it is found imperfectly or by participation in others, inasmuch as they too possess certain gifts or endowments that belong by right to the one true Church. This nuanced position derives from the doctrine of *vestigia ecclesiae*, which has been traced back as far as John Calvin (John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 4 (1559 ed.), chap. 2, nos. 11-12). After being revived in the twentieth-century ecumenical movement, this doctrine was taken into Roman Catholic theology by Yves Congar and others. Since about 1950, however, it has been customary to speak not so much of “vestiges” of the Church as of “elements,” “gifts,” “endowments,” etc.—expressions which seem more irenic and positive....[T]he idea that there are “elements” of the true Church outside of Roman Catholicism has given rise to theories that other Christian communions may be “imperfect realizations” of the Church of Christ or even, in an analogous sense, “Churches.” (Theological Studies, 33.2 (1972), 199-234.)

<sup>12</sup> Congar, *Divided Christendom*, p. 234-35. As Douglas M. Koskela notes in his study *Ecclesiality and Ecumenism: Yves Congar and the Road to Unity*, one of the most striking changes to take place with Vatican II is that, prior to the Council, more progressive Roman Catholic theologians were only willing “to speak in terms of non-Catholic *individual* Christians being imperfect members in the church of Christ.” After Vatican II, theologians began to speak “in terms of the imperfect presence of the church of Christ in non-Catholic communities.” (Koskela, Douglas M., *Ecclesiality and Ecumenism: Yves Congar and the Road to Unity* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2008), p. 59).

<sup>13</sup> See: John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 4 (1559 ed.), chap. 2, nos. 11-12 and Congar, *Divided Christendom*, pp. 224-248. See also the recent study: Arenas, Sandra, “Merely Quantifiable Realities? The *Vestigia Ecclesiae* in the Thought of John Calvin and its Twentieth Century Reception,” in *John Calvin's Ecclesiology: Ecumenical Perspectives (Ecclesiological Investigations)*, Gerard Mannion and Eduardus Van der Borgh ed. (London: T & T Clark, 2011), pp. 69-89. Calvin develops his theory of *vestigia Ecclesiae* as a part of his reflections on the nature of the Church and critique of Roman Catholicism. In spite of holding that the Roman Catholic Church holds false dogmas and practices, he nonetheless concedes to the existence of some ecclesiastical elements in it, elements he calls *vestigia Ecclesiae*. Calvin concludes that on the strength of Baptism the papal institution contains certain *vestigia* of the ancient church which testify to the presence of God, however, since “those marks [of the true church] . . . are effaced, I say that the whole body, as well as every single assembly, want to the form of a legitimate Church” (4.2, 11-12). See also: Walter Kasper’s essay “The Decree on Ecumenism – Read Anew After Forty Years,” where he also informs us that this idea “was first brought into play in an *extension* of the anti-Donatist position of Augustine by Y. Congar” and that “In the Toronto Declaration (1950) it also entered into the usage of the World Council of Churches.”

confession of faith, full sacramental life or communion or unity in faith and love. Congar writes: “In this way it is that the Church includes members who appear to be outside her. They belong, invisibly and incompletely, but they really belong.”<sup>14</sup>

## B. Recognition of the “Ecclesiality” of Heterodox Confessions

It is a very short step from recognition of “ecclesial elements” among the heterodox to recognition of the “ecclesiality” or “ecclesial nature” of heterodox confessions. This step was easily taken at Vatican II.<sup>15</sup> It is now a step that Orthodox ecumenists would like the Pan-Orthodox Council to take.

Allow me to quote a prominent theologian and interpreter, Johannes Feiner, to describe the celebrated “communio” ecclesiology of Vatican II, which will make it clear what recognition of “ecclesiality” means in post-Vatican II ecumenism:

Because the Church is seen as a “communio,” or a “complex reality in the form of a communion, the unity of which has been brought about by numerous and various factors, the possibility remains open that the *constituent elements* of the Church may be present even in Christian communities outside the Catholic Church, and may *give these communities the nature of a Church*. Thus, the one Church of Christ can also be present outside the Catholic Church, and it is present, and also, indeed, visible, in so far as factors and elements which create unity and therefore the Church are here.”<sup>16</sup>

This, then, is the purpose of recognizing elements of the Church, such as baptism, outside of the Church, and also the ecclesiality of the heterodox: in order to broaden the Church such that the Orthodox Church is not identified *exclusively* with the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Indeed, the aim of the introduction at Vatican II of the incendiary phrase *subsistit in* to replace the earlier formula *est*, which expressed a strict identity between the One Church and Catholicism was to differentiate between the Church of Jesus Christ and Catholicism. The new phrase was meant to say that, while the Church of Christ is really present or concretely real and is to be found in Catholicism, *it is not to be strictly identified with it*.

A similar effect has been achieved in the consciousness of many Orthodox with the widely heard phrase first made popular by Paul Evdokimov and later through Metropolitan Kallistos Ware’s works: “We know where the Church is; it is not for us to judge and say where the Church is not.”<sup>17</sup> This sort of apophatic, almost agnostic,

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<sup>14</sup> Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 234.

<sup>15</sup> See: LG 11, 15; UR 22; *Acta Synodalia*, III/2, 335. Cardinal Kasper explains this thus: “Baptism...is the sacrament of faith, whereby those who have been baptized belong to the one body of Christ which is the church. Non-Catholic Christians are therefore not outside of the one church, they already belong to it in a most fundamental way. On the basis of the one common Baptism ecumenism . . . has an ontological foundation and an ontological depth. It is an event of the Spirit” (Kasper, “The Decree on Ecumenism – Read Anew After Forty Years,” Section IV, paragraph 3)

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68-69 (emphasis mine). The “elements ecclesiology” put forth by Congar, which was initially drawn from Calvin, is apparent here. Feiner’s interpretation is consistent with the official explanation, or *Relatio*, which refers to the “ecclesial communities” in the West thus: “[they] are not merely a sum or collection of individual Christians, but they are constituted by social ecclesiastical elements...which confer on them *a truly ecclesial character*. In these communities the one sole Church of Christ is present, albeit imperfectly....” *Acta Synodalia*, III/2, 335 (emphasis mine).

<sup>17</sup> P. Evdokimov, *L’Orthodoxie* (Neuchatel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1959), 343. Metropolitan Kallistos Ware echoes these words of Evdokimov in his book *The Orthodox Church*: “Many people may be members of the

view of the Church was, not surprisingly, influential in the formation of the new ecclesiology of Vatican II.<sup>18</sup> It appears to be connected to a gross, out of context misreading of St. Irenaeus' famous phrase "For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church."<sup>19</sup> Although the Saint spoke these words in the context of juxtaposing those with "perverse opinions" with the "apostles, prophets, teachers" and mysteries through which the Spirit works in the Church, his words are taken out of context to claim that wherever (and in whatever manner) the Spirit works (among the heterodox especially) the Church is present making members.<sup>20</sup>

This inversion of St. Irenaeus' view of the Church is consistent with the ecumenists' refusal to identify the canonical and charismatic boundaries of the Church,<sup>21</sup> which was certainly the patristic consensus of the ancient Church,<sup>22</sup> without which the canons lose their meaning and force.<sup>23</sup> In light of these views, it is not surprising that some have ceased viewing the Church as the continuation of the Incarnation.<sup>24</sup> At the root of these innovations lies an inability to crucify the intellect

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Church who are not visibly so; invisible bonds may exist despite outward separation. The Spirit of God blows where it will, and, as Irenaeus said, where the Spirit is, there is the Church. We know where the Church is but we cannot be sure where it is not; and so we must refrain from passing judgment. . . ." Timothy Ware [Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia], *The Orthodox Church* (London: Penguin, 1997), 308.

<sup>18</sup> Orthodox friendly theologians at Vatican II, such as Bishop Christopher Butler from England, cited this sentiment of P. Evdokimov as influential in the formation of the new ecclesiology of Vatican II. Christopher Butler, *The Theology of Vatican II* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1967; rev. ed. 1981). Evdokimov also states, as cited by Butler, that "the non-Orthodox, considered from the point of view of their denominational allegiance, are no longer in the Orthodox Church; but for all their separation, the Church continues to be present and to act in presence of their faith and their correct intention of salvation" (as quoted in Christopher Butler, *The Idea of the Church* [Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1962]). Evdokimov was an official observer at Vatican II and had personal contact with those theologians who shaped the new ecclesiology.

<sup>19</sup> "For in the Church God hath set apostles, prophets, teachers and all the other means through which the Spirit works; of which all those are not partakers who do not join themselves to the Church, but defraud themselves of life through their perverse opinions and infamous behavior. For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church, and every kind of grace; but the Spirit is truth." Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3: 24.1; PG 7.966 C (32).

<sup>20</sup> The Spirit does indeed blow where He wills (John 3: 8), but as He is the Spirit of Truth, we know that He wills to blow in the direction of Christ (John 16: 14), which can only mean He leads them to "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3: 15), which is the Church.

<sup>21</sup> Post-Vatican II commentators take it for granted that the visible and invisible Church are not to be identified, for outside the Roman Catholic Church "any validly ordained priest, including priests of the Orthodox Church, can administer Baptism and consecrate the Eucharist, thus making their communicants members of the One Body" (Francesca Aran Murphy, "De Lubac, Ratzinger and von Balthasar: A Communal Adventure in Ecclesiology," in *Ecumenism Today: The Universal Church in the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Francesca Aran Murphy and Chris Asprey [Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2008], 47). This amounts to a nuanced version of the "invisible church" theory of the Protestants because the boundaries are indeterminate and do not coincide with the canonical boundaries of the Church, which is another way of saying, with unity in the Eucharist and in faith.

<sup>22</sup> "Irenaeus . . . holding as he does with all primitive Fathers that the Church is the sole fountain of grace, and that outside it none can be assured of salvation or of sacramental grace, would have ruled out as entirely worthless the sacraments of schismatics . . ." (Geoffrey Grimshaw Willis, *Saint Augustine and the Donatist Controversy* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock, 2005; reprint of London: S.P.C.K., 1950), 145, emphasis added). Cf. also Ἰωάννου Ζηζιούλα [John Zizioulas], *Μητροπολίτου Περγάμου, Ἡ ἐνότης τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐν τῇ Θεῷ Εὐχαριστίᾳ καὶ τῷ Ἐπισκόπῳ κατὰ τοὺς τρεῖς πρώτους αἰῶνας*, 1965 (Athens: Grigori, 2009), 132: "Both [St. Cyprian and Pope Stephen] held that the Holy Spirit is not imparted to those baptized outside the Church. . . . [T] his is the consensus of the entire Church in the middle of the third century."

<sup>23</sup> The authority to bind and loose would be hollow if the excommunicated schismatic or heretic were able to continue on his own in the communion of the One Church's mysteries. Canonical boundaries which are bereft of charismatic force are meaningless.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Cardinal Walter Kasper, *That They May All Be One: The Call to Unity Today* (London/ New York: Burns and Oates, 2004), 50– 74, especially p. 70 (emphasis added). For the views of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (by

and accept “the scandal of the particular,” but also a failure to explain in terms consistent with Orthodox incarnational ecclesiology the nature of the work of the Holy Spirit outside of the Eucharistic Synaxis.<sup>25</sup>

The new image of the Church which has emerged, on the basis of the recognition of the “ecclesiality” of the various Christian confessions, is well-described by Jesuit scholar Francis Sullivan:

“one can think of the universal Church as a communion, at various levels of fullness, of bodies that are *more or less fully churches*.... it is a real communion, realized at various degrees of density or fullness, of bodies, all of which, though some more fully than others, have a truly ecclesial character.”<sup>26</sup>

It is crucial to have this idea of the Church in mind when reading the pre-synodical draft text “Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Rest of the Christian World.” In the warped ecumenical ecclesiological framework of post-Vatican II ecumenism, the mere identification of the Orthodox Church with the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church *does not preclude* the simultaneous recognition of other Churches as possessing an “ecclesial nature” or even as being “more or less fully churches.” Such an unorthodox reading is, of course, quite likely when the text makes particular references to heterodox confessions as “churches.” In a dogmatic text of this nature it should be obvious that the term must be used strictly in accordance with the Orthodox meaning of the word, so as to exclude any possible misinterpretation.

Given the unorthodox ecclesiological paradigm of post-Vatican II ecumenism, there is sufficient basis for the hierarchs of the Local Churches to reject the draft text on relations with the Heterodox. If, however, we also consider the views of leading ecumenist theologians among the Orthodox, some of whom have been involved in the drafting of the pre-Synodical texts, there is pressing need for a condemnation of

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this time Pope Benedict XVI), see Maximilian Heinrich Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger: Life in the Church and Living Theology: Fundamentals of Ecclesiology with Reference to Lumen Gentium*, trans. Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 300– 330. For the Orthodox, to deny that the Church is the continuation of the incarnation is nothing less than to depart from the miracle of Chalcedon—the unutterable union of the two natures in the Person of the Theanthropos Christ — which is the essence of the Mystery of the Church. As St. Justin Popovich states unequivocally: “The Church is Christ the Theanthropos extending through all ages and all eternity” (Αρχμ. Ιουστίνος Πόποβιτς [St. Justin Popovich], *Ερμηνεία της Επιστολής του Αποστόλου Παύλου προς Εφεσίους* [Interpretation of the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Ephesians]. (Thessaloniki: εκδ. Β. Ρηγοπούλου, 1989), 64).

<sup>25</sup> See chapter 10 in my book, *The Ecclesiological Renovation of Vatican II: An Orthodox Examination of Rome’s Ecumenical Theology Regarding Baptism and the Church* (Thessaloniki: Uncut Mountain Press, 2015), 167-181: “All men, then, of whatever background or belief, participate in the creative, sustaining, and providential energies of God, without which the world would cease to be. In this sense, and only in this sense, there is a differentiated participation for schismatics and heretics, not in the life of the Church, as Congar and his colleagues supposed, but in those divine energies common to all creation— the creative, sustaining, and providential energies of God. This participation, however, does not make them members of the Church, for they, not having fulfilled the necessary presuppositions for such participation, are not participating in the purifying, illuminating, and deifying energies of God” (171).

<sup>26</sup> Francis A. Sullivan, S.J., “The Significance of the Vatican II Declaration that the Church of Christ ‘Subsists in’ the Roman Catholic Church,” p. 283 (emphasis mine). Likewise, according to I. Spiteri, “[f]rom a reading of the encyclical UUS] a new image of the Church emerges, a Church which is constituted by a communion of Churches, in which, in some way, all Christian Churches belong.” (Ι. Σπιτέρης, «Η Καθολική Εκκλησία και οι άλλες χριστιανικές Εκκλησίες» [The Catholic Church and the other Christian Churches], Θ. Κοντίδης (επιμ.), *Ο Καθολικισμός*, Αθήνα 2000, p. 246)

the new ecclesiology, lest the heterodox notions of the Church be accepted as Orthodox.

### 3. The Adoption of Key Components of the New Ecclesiology by Orthodox Ecumenists

Although lacking the developed sophistication found in Vatican II, the ecclesiological views of leading ecumenists find agreement with their Latin counterparts in the fundamentals of the new ecclesiology. The two foundational characteristics of the new ecclesiology referred to above – the recognition of heterodox baptism *per se* and the subsequent recognition of the “ecclesial nature” of heterodox confessions – have been embraced by today’s leading ecumenists, such as Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan John Zizioulas, Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Messenia, Professor Stylianos Tsompanides, Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, Professor Michel Struve, and others. Here I can only briefly refer to the most representative voices, focusing mainly on the views of those theologians directly involved in the drafting of the pre-synodical document.

His All-Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew, the main protagonist in the calling of the Pan-Orthodox Synod, has consistently expressed himself, both in word and deed, in harmony with the new ecumenical ecclesiology.<sup>27</sup> Accordingly, following the Balamand Agreement, he declared with Pope John Paul II that the Orthodox Church and the Papacy are “Sister Churches, responsible together for safeguarding the one Church of God” and called upon all Orthodox to recognize that we share with the Latins a common baptism and sacramental life.<sup>28</sup>

The *de facto* division of the Church, which flows from the acceptance of a common baptism and common Eucharist, was also stated cataphatically by the Patriarch as recent as 2014 in the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. There, he preached bare headed the pan-heresy of the new ecumenical ecclesiology, which posits a divided church and a multiplicity of partially true churches. He presented clearly a major tenet of the new ecclesiology, namely, that the One Church does not exist today exclusively within one or another Church, and that in spite of having lost the unity of the Faith the separated Churches are still one.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> The examples of common liturgical prayer and other symbolic actions and statements of recognition of the Latin heresy as co-responsible for the Church of Christ are many and well-known. To cite just one: In a speech to Cardinal Cassidy, representative of the Vatican, at the Feast of St. Andrew at the Phanar, in which the Patriarch referred to “those of our forefathers from whom we (Orthodox and Latins) inherited this separation were the unfortunate victims of the serpent who is the origin of all evils” he concludes thus: “Εἶθε να ἀξιῶση ημᾶς ὁ Κύριος να ἰδῶμεν καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν τῆς ἐνότητος τῆς Μίας, Ἀγίας, Καθολικῆς καὶ Ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας Αὐτοῦ. Ἀμήν” [May the Lord make us worthy to behold the resurrection of the unity of His One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Amen] (*Επίσκεψις, αρ. τεύχους 563 (1998), σελ. 4-8*).

<sup>28</sup> *Επίσκεψις*, τ. 520 (31 Ιουλίου 1995), σελ. 20, *Κοινή διακήρυξις τοῦ Πάπα Ἰωάννου Παύλου ΙΙ καὶ Πατριάρχου Βαρθολομαίου* [Common Declaration of Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Bartholomew] “Call to Unity,” 29 Ιουνίου 1995, section 4: “[O]ur Churches recognize one another as Sister Churches, responsible together for safeguarding the one Church of God. . . . We urge our faithful, Catholics and Orthodox, to reinforce the spirit of brotherhood which stems from the one baptism and from participation in the sacramental life.” See also online: <https://www.apostolicpilgrimage.org/common-declarations-popes-and-patriarchs>.

<sup>29</sup> The pertinent paragraphs (4 and 5) are the following: “The One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, founded by the Word ‘in the beginning,’ by the one ‘truly with God,’ and the Word ‘truly God,’ according to the evangelist of love, unfortunately, during her engagement on earth, on account of the dominance of human weakness and of impermanence of the will of the human intellect, was divided in time. This brought about various conditions and groups, of which each claimed for itself ‘authenticity’ and ‘truth.’ The Truth, however, is One, Christ, and the One Church founded by Him. Both before and after the great Schism of 1054 between East and West, Our Holy Orthodox Church made attempts to overcome the differences, which originated from the



Please note that, like the pre-synodical draft text, the Patriarch states two contradictory ideas: that the Church is one, apparently only outside of time, and yet it exists in separated local churches. This supposed paradox is a cornerstone of the new ecclesiology which rejects the so-called “ecumenism of return” and insists on the “ecumenism of integration.”<sup>30</sup>

The most notorious example of such an “ecumenism of integration” is the Balamand Agreement. At Balamand, the recognition of mysteries and “ecclesiality,” essentially the same divided but somehow still united church ecclesiology held by the Patriarch and apparent in the pre-synodical text in question, was embraced.<sup>31</sup> This is what led Fr. John Romanides to refer to Balamand as a sequel to Vatican II.<sup>32</sup>

Numerous “common baptism” agreements in the same ecclesiological vein have also been signed since Balamand by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, most notably in Germany, Australia and America.<sup>33</sup>

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beginning and for the most part from factors outside of the environs of the Church. Unfortunately, the human element dominated, and through the accumulation of ‘theological,’ ‘practical,’ and ‘social’ additions the Local Churches were led into division of the unity of the Faith, into isolation, which developed occasionally into hostile polemics.” See the original speech, in Greek: <http://www.ec-patr.org/docdisplay.php?lang=gr&id=1914&tla=gr>.

<sup>30</sup> See also: Yves Congar, *Essais oecumeniques*, pp. 212-213 as quoted in Aidan Nichols OP, *Yves Congar* (Morehouse-Barlow, London, 1989), p. 103. Congar expressed the consensus of Latin theologians thus: “On the eve of the decree on ecumenism, a certain consensus existed among Catholic theologians, in favour of a *theology of the differentiated participation* of the non-Roman communions in the treasure of the single Church, and in favour, too, of an ecumenism of integration which would be something other than ‘return’, pure and simple.”

<sup>31</sup> The Declaration of the Seventh Plenary Session of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue Between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, “Uniatism, Method of Union of the Past, and the Present Search for Full Communion,” (Balamand, Lebanon, 1993), section 13: “...since the Pan-Orthodox Conferences and the Second Vatican Council, the rediscovery and the giving again of proper value to the Church as communion, both on the part of Orthodox and of Catholics, has radically altered perspectives and thus attitudes. On each side it is recognized that what Christ has entrusted to His Church—profession of apostolic faith, participation in *the same sacraments*, above all the one priesthood celebrating the one sacrifice of Christ, the apostolic succession of bishops—cannot be considered the exclusive property of one of our Churches. In this context it is clear that rebaptism must be avoided.”

<sup>32</sup> *Theologia*, the periodical of the Church of Greece, Vol. VI 1993, Issue no. 4, pages 570-580. Available online at: [http://www.ecclesia.gr/greek/press/theologia/archive\\_all\\_9099.asp?etos=1993](http://www.ecclesia.gr/greek/press/theologia/archive_all_9099.asp?etos=1993). Fr. John wrote: “Now that the Balamand agreement has become a candidate to become a sequel to Vatican II and in which case Uniatism will no longer have any reason for existing, the Orthodox will be faced with the consequences of their continued refusal of communion with the Latins and Uniates. What is most interesting is the fact that according to the Balamand agreement mysteries are valid whether one accepts 7 or 22 Ecumenical Councils and their teachings and practices. The impression will be certainly created that only lack of love could be the reason why the Orthodox may continue to refuse inter-communion and con-celebration with the Vatican.”

<sup>33</sup> *Baptism and Sacramental Economy*, An Agreed Statement of The North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, St. Vladimirs Orthodox Seminary, Crestwood, New York, June 3, 1999: The Orthodox and Catholic members of our Consultation acknowledge, in both of our traditions, a common teaching and a common faith in one baptism, despite some variations in practice which, we believe, do not affect the substance of the mystery. We are therefore moved to declare that *we also recognize each other's baptism as one and the same*. This recognition has obvious *ecclesiological consequences*. *The Church* is itself both the milieu and the effect of baptism, and is not of our making. *This recognition requires each side of our dialogue to acknowledge an ecclesial reality in the other*. . . In our common reality of baptism, we discover the foundation of our dialogue, as well as the force and urgency of the Lord Jesus’ prayer “that all may be one.” *Here, finally, is the certain basis for the modern use of the phrase, “sister churches.”*; “Austalian Churches Covenanting Together,” National Council of Churches of Australia, which the Australian dioceses of the Patriarchates of Constantinople, Antioch, Romania and Serbia signed, by which they recognize the Sacrament of Baptism which is performed in heterodox communities (Roman Catholic, Anti-Chalcedonian, Anglican, Lutheran, Uniate, and Congregationalist) and agree to promote the use of one baptismal certificate. For the entire document, see: [http://www.ncca.org.au/files/Departments/Faith\\_and\\_Unity/Covenanting/2010\\_July\\_Australian\\_Churches\\_Covenanting\\_Together.pdf](http://www.ncca.org.au/files/Departments/Faith_and_Unity/Covenanting/2010_July_Australian_Churches_Covenanting_Together.pdf); In October of 2004 the representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Germany,

The ecclesiological views of the chairman of the Pre-Synodical Commission, the Metropolitan of Pergamon, John (Zizioulas),<sup>34</sup> unfortunately leave no room to doubt that he has embraced the new ecumenical ecclesiology. In his view the boundaries of the Church are not set in the blood of Christ, i.e. the Eucharist, but in the waters of baptism, on the basis of “baptismal unity.” “Within baptism,” he wrote, “even if there is a break, a division, a schism, you can still speak of the Church.” The Orthodox, he believes, “participate in the ecumenical movement as a movement of baptized Christians, who are in a state of division because they cannot express the same faith together.”<sup>35</sup>

Another member of the drafting committee of the pre-synodical text, Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev) of Volokolamsk, has also expressed views in harmony with the new ecclesiology. He does not believe that there are fundamental differences between Orthodoxy and Catholicism.<sup>36</sup> He has said that, “to all intent and purposes, mutual recognition of each other’s Mysteries already exists between us.” “If a Roman Catholic priest converts to Orthodoxy [in Russia], we receive him as a priest, and we do not re-ordain him. And that means that, de facto, we recognize the Mysteries of the Roman Catholic Church.”<sup>37</sup>

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Metropolitan Augustine, signed a declaration with the Evangelical Church in Germany recognizing a common Baptism and vowing not to baptize converts. Bl. <http://www.goarch.org/news/goa.news1213>; In 2007, the Commission of the Orthodox Church in Germany (KOKiD), headed by Metropolitan Augustine, joined eleven German denominations in signing a common Baptism declaration. This, the first national agreement on a common Baptism in Germany, was initially proposed by Cardinal Walter Kasper in 2002.

<sup>34</sup> Zizioulas, “Unitatis Redintegratio: An Orthodox Reflection” in *Searching For Christian Unity*, pp. 37-54

<sup>35</sup> Zizioulas, John D. (present-day Metropolitan of Pergamon, Ecumenical Patriarchate) “Orthodox Ecclesiology and the Ecumenical Movement,” *Sourozh Diocesan Magazine* (England), August 1985, Vol. 21, page 23. Here is the full quotation: “If we take into consideration the canons of the early Church, then we can speak of the limits of the Church on the basis, I would suggest, of baptismal unity. By this I mean that baptism is such a decisive point in our existence that it automatically creates a limit between the pre-baptismal and post-baptismal situation: if you are baptized you immediately cease to be what you were. You die, as St. Paul says, with regard to the past and there is therefore a new situation. Baptism does create a limit to the Church. Now with this baptismal limit it is conceivable that there may be division, but any division within these limits is not the same as the division between the Church and those outside of the baptismal limit...I think we must take seriously the baptismal limits of the Church and accept that outside of baptism there is no Church. Within baptism, even if there is a break, a division, a schism, you can still speak of the Church. Even if you take the Eucharistic model as your basis, you will see that this applies to every Christian. Let us take the Liturgy of the early Church as an example: up to the point of the reading of the Scriptures, or, as we still have in the Liturgy today, up to the kiss of peace which is the sign of unity in love and the Creed, which is the sign of unity in faith – up to this point it was conceivable that someone could take part in the Liturgy and then not be allowed to continue for various reasons (as a penance, for instance, or if he was a catechumen). He would then leave before the Sacrament. Now this suggests that we may understand divisions with the Church as taking place precisely at these points: either at the kiss of peace, or at the Creed. If we are not in a position to love one another and to confess the same faith, then there is a break in communion. But this break does not mean that one falls outside the realm of the Church. The Orthodox, in my understanding at least, participate in the ecumenical movement as a movement of baptized Christians, who are in a state of division because they cannot express the same faith together. In the past this happened because of a lack of love which is now, thank God, disappearing.”

<sup>36</sup> Der Spiegel, issue No. 51, 2009. “[T]he differences between Orthodoxy and Catholicism are not fundamental. We recognize the Sacraments of the Catholic Church. If a Catholic priest moves over to Orthodoxy we accept him as priest.” See also: <http://byztex.blogspot.com.cy/2009/12/abp-hilarion-sits-down-with-der-spiegel.html>.

<sup>37</sup> See: “Vertograd Orthodox Journal, Newsletter,” No. 76, Oct. 21, 2009. “We do not have communion in the Mysteries, but we do recognize each other’s Mysteries”, declared Archbishop Hilarion (Alfeyev) on the air during a broadcast of the program “The Church and the World” on the television channel “Russia”, on October 17th (video and text, <http://vera.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=237432>).

It is apparent that, despite the patristic renaissance of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>38</sup> Metropolitan Hilarion and the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate are still working within the pre-revolutionary Russian ecclesiological paradigm heavily influenced by Latin scholastic thinking.

Metropolitan Chrysostom of Messenia, representative of the Church of Greece to the pre-synodical meetings, along with Stylianos Tsompanides, Professor of Theology at the Theological School of Thessaloniki, have given us the most direct insights into what the ecumenist-minded theologians understand our text to be saying. Both maintain that in referencing the 7<sup>th</sup> canon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ecumenical Council and the 95<sup>th</sup> canon of the Quinisext Council paragraph 20 of the pre-synodical text supports the “kat’oikonomian’ recognition of the ‘reality’ and ‘validity’ of baptism” among the heterodox.<sup>39</sup> Professor Tsompanides also claims that this recognition “has significant consequences for the way we look at the ecclesiastical state of other Churches and other Christians,”<sup>40</sup> thus following Congar and Vatican II in connecting recognition of baptism with recognition of “ecclesiality.”

#### **4. The attempt to secure pan-Orthodox reception of *per se* recognition of heterodox baptism via the pre-Synodical text on the heterodox**

We must consider closely the very problematic phrase used by both Metropolitan Chrysostom and Professor Tsompanides, “kat’oikonomian’ recognition of the ‘reality’ and ‘validity’ of baptism of the heterodox.” The canons cited in paragraph 20 do not contain this phrase. In fact, none of the canons of the Church having to do with the reception of converts contain this phrase. Indeed, none of the canons even refer to “recognition of baptism,” let alone “kat’oikonomian’ recognition.” What do the canons refer to?

The reference point for the correct interpretation of those canons dealing with the “kat’oikonomian” reception of heretics is Saint Basil the Great’s 1<sup>st</sup> and 47<sup>th</sup> canons. In his first canonical epistle, St. Basil, after explaining why various schismatics (Cathari, Encratites, and Hydroparastatae) ought to be baptized upon their return to the Church, still allows for *oikonomia*, if need be, saying: “Nevertheless, since it has seemed to some of those of Asia that, for the sake of management of the many [οικονομίας ἕνεκα τῶν πολλῶν], their baptism should be accepted, let it be accepted [ἔστω δεκτόν].”<sup>41</sup>

The canon speaks of accepting, not recognizing, the baptism of the schismatic. There is a significant difference. The first, acceptance, is used in the context of the

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, the works of the hieromartyr and champion of the Doctrine of the Church, Archbishop Hilarion Troitsky (1886-1929): <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/32129.htm> and [www.orthodoxinfo.com/general/saint-hilarion-holy-scripture-and-the-church.pdf](http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/general/saint-hilarion-holy-scripture-and-the-church.pdf).

<sup>39</sup> See their respective speeches: <http://blogs.auth.gr/moschosg/2015/12/08/μητροπολίτης-μεσσηνίας-χρυσόστομος-2/> and <http://blogs.auth.gr/moschosg/2015/12/17/στυλιανός-τσομπανίδης-ορθόδοξη-εκκλησία/>. Metropolitan Chrysostomos said the following: “With this paragraph the boundaries of the Orthodox Church are laid down with respect to the other Christian Churches and Confessions. Their existence was not questioned and ‘by economy’ the reality and validity of that baptism which is in accordance with the canonical tradition is recognized.”

<sup>40</sup> “The commensurate application of the spirit of canons such as the 7th of the 2nd Ecumenical Synod and the 95th of the Quinisext, which are mentioned in paragraph 20 of the 5th Pre-Synod Meeting, in the new reality of the modern Ecumenical Movement and the peaceful dialogues, is implicit in the recognition of the ‘reality’ and ‘validity’ of Baptism. . . The recognition of Baptism ‘by economy’ has significant consequences for the way we look at the ecclesiastical state of other Churches and other Christians.”

<sup>41</sup> Προδρόμου Ι. Ακανθόπουλου, *Κώδικας Ιερών Κανόνων και Εκκλησιαστικών Νόμων* (Θεσσαλονίκη: Αδελφών Κυριακίδη, 2000), 509-513.

return of particular persons in repentance, that is, with respect to pastoral management of their salvation. The second, recognition, as employed by Metropolitan Chrysostom and Professor Tsompanides, is used in relation to schismatic and heretical groups as such, that is, with respect to ecclesiology.<sup>42</sup> In the first instance, the context is the acceptance of a returning heretic, whereas in the second instance the context is the recognition of the baptism of the heterodox group *per se*. Hence, the phrase “‘kat’oikonomian’ recognition of the ‘reality’ and ‘validity’ of baptism” is an unacceptable and misleading mixture of pastoral theology with ecclesiology. There is no such thing as “‘kat’oikonomian’ recognition” of baptism, only “‘kat’oikonomian’ acceptance.

The phrase is also shown to be foreign to the patristic mind inasmuch as it refers to recognition of the “reality” and “validity” of heretical baptism, that is, recognition *per se*. In the canons of the Church you will not find heretical baptism referred to in this manner. For example, in his 47<sup>th</sup> canon,<sup>43</sup> Saint Basil attributes the practice of Rome in accepting certain heretics without baptism to some need for *oikonomia* (οικονομίας τινὸς ἕνεκα), but nonetheless insists on baptism, despite the fact that they baptised in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. By at once allowing for *oikonomia* and yet calling for baptism the Saint excludes the possibility of recognizing the baptism of schismatics and heretics *per se*.

When, in later synodical decisions or patristic texts, during the second millennium, Latin baptisms are referred to as valid this – properly speaking – is referring to whether or not the form or τύπος of baptism, namely three-fold immersion, had been retained.<sup>44</sup> The purpose of recognizing a baptism as “valid,” that is, in the case of the Latins, as done by immersion, was to determine if the presuppositions for *oikonomia* existed, not to recognize it *per se*.<sup>45</sup> In exercising economy the Church does not recognize the “reality” of heretical ministrations,<sup>46</sup> but only examines its validity in the sense of retaining the apostolic form.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, there is no basis, and it is once again misleading and a departure from the Orthodox *phronema*, to speak of recognition of the “reality” and “validity” of heretical baptism. If there is talk of “recognition” of the ministrations of heretics it is only in the sense of it being validly, i.e. properly, carried out in the apostolic manner. This is for the purpose of determining the possibility – not the necessity – of reception by *oikonomia*, as is clear in St. Basil’s 1<sup>st</sup> and 47<sup>th</sup> canons.

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<sup>42</sup> This subtle move on the part of Orthodox ecumenists from the pastoral consideration of those heterodox who are returning to the Church to the ecclesiological consideration of heterodox groups as such calls to mind Yves Congar’s innovative change of focus from individual schismatics to schismatic and heretical groups as such.

<sup>43</sup> Ακανθόπουλου, *Κώδικας Ἱερῶν Κανόνων και Εκκλησιαστικῶν Νόμων*, 546-547.

<sup>44</sup> See: “The Manner of Reception of Roman Catholic Converts into the Orthodox Church,” by Archpriest Father George Dragas: <http://orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/The-Manner-of-Reception-of-Roman-Catholic-Converts-into-the-Orthodox-Church-Fr-George-Dragas.pdf>, also available here: Fr. George Dragas, *The Manner of Reception of Roman Catholic Converts into the Orthodox Church, with Special Reference to the Decisions of the Synods of 1484 (Constantinople), 1755 (Constantinople) and 1667 (Moscow)*, [http://www.myriobiblos.gr/texts/english/Dragas\\_RomanCatholic.html](http://www.myriobiblos.gr/texts/english/Dragas_RomanCatholic.html).

<sup>45</sup> For the most part, when the Church understood that the Latins were carrying out baptism with one immersion or by affusion, Latins converting to Orthodoxy were baptized, the presuppositions for *oikonomia* not being present. When, on the other hand, those “coming over to the portion of the saved” had been baptized by the Latins according to the apostolic form, *oikonomia* was seen as acceptable, although not required.

<sup>46</sup> This basic and long held understanding was recently restated by Metropolitan Germanos of Ilias in his presentation to the Hierarchical Synod of the Church Greece (March 8, 2016), representative to the Meeting of First Hierarchs in Geneva.

<sup>47</sup> This is clear in the case of the Eunomeans, for which the possibility of reception “kat’oikonomia” was rejected by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ecumenical Council because they did not retain the apostolic form of three immersions, but rather baptized with one immersion “into the death of Christ.”

The misunderstanding or rejection of the *kat'oikonomian* **practice** of accepting heretical or schismatic baptism is at the root of the adoption of the new ecumenical ecclesiology among ecumenist-minded scholars. They fail to grasp that the *oikonomia* of the Church is essentially the freedom of the Church's Head to work salvation in the midst of the Church as He sees fit (if, indeed, it is *oikonomia* and not simply *paranomia* (illegality)). The Lord, Who said all must be baptized *of water and of the Spirit* (Jn. 3:5) to enter the Kingdom of God also said to the unbaptized thief on the cross, "*Today shalt thou be with me in paradise*" (Lk. 23:43). Moreover, many martyrs were baptized in their blood and not water, and others who were hung or died some other bloodless death. Thus, it is clear that the Lord is not bound by His own commandments and is free to work his divine *oikonomia* in the midst of *His Church*.

Yet, this is the key: *in the Church*. *Oikonomia*, which is not without presuppositions, can never be a basis for ecclesiology, just as the Lord's freedom can never be pitted against his own commandments. *Oikonomia* does not equal recognition of mysteries *per se*. This is, however, exactly what some of the authors of the text in question would like the pan-Orthodox Council to endorse. They are pushing for pan-Orthodox recognition of another vision of the Church, a heretical vision, that which has already been accepted by Vatican II and many in the WCC. Now it should be plain to all that rejection of the *akriveia-oikonomia* interpretative key of our pastoral practice leads inevitably to a heretical vision of the Church.

## Conclusion

Today the slippery slope of innovation has brought many ecumenists to recognize not only the Baptism of the Heterodox but also their Eucharist.<sup>48</sup> On account of the unity of the mysteries, recognition of the Eucharist is the expected and logical outcome of the disconnection of the canonical and charismatic boundaries of the Church, which coincide and are manifest in the Eucharist. For, although formally the Orthodox Faith is still *claimed* as the *sine qua non* for the common cup, in fact, by recognizing heterodox mysteries, indeed even the Eucharist, *per se*, the unity of faith has ceased to be a prerequisite.

If the Pan-Orthodox Synod allows for an ecumenist interpretation recognizing heterodox mysteries and "ecclesiality," the common cup will remain as but a formality. A union will already have been achieved, but it will necessarily be a false union, since not one heretical doctrine has been repudiated.

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<sup>48</sup> Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia recently remarked: "Some of [the more strict Orthodox] would say that, outside of the visible limits of the Orthodox Church, there do not exist true Sacraments and grace of the Holy Spirit. Now, I, as an Orthodox, find it impossible to believe that. I am convinced, by the presence of the Holy Spirit in other Christian communities, and I certainly believe that there is true grace of baptism, wherever baptism is performed in the name of the Holy Trinity with the use of water. Certainly, in regard to the Roman Catholics, I believe in the true reality of the Sacrament, that indeed this is a true Eucharist." ([ancientfaith.com/specials/kallistos\\_lectures/what\\_can\\_evangelicals\\_and\\_orthodox\\_learn\\_from\\_one\\_another](http://ancientfaith.com/specials/kallistos_lectures/what_can_evangelicals_and_orthodox_learn_from_one_another))