

EXPERT OPINION

Namely,

a Theological Evaluation of the ecclesiological text prepared jointly by a group known as the Synod of the "Opposites" headed by their Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili and a group known as the Synod of the "Florinei", headed by their Archbishop Mr. Kallinikos, on the basis of whose text their unification took place in 2014.

DECEMBER 2015

EXPERT OPINION

**of
the Synodal Commission,
established by decision of the Holy Council of Bishops of
the Church of the Orthodox Church of Greece
Registered with protocol No. 3443 of 15.01.2015**

Composition of the Synodal Commission :

**Chairman – His Eminence Metropolitan
Ignatius of Laris**

Members of the Commission :

**His Eminence Metropolitan of Kiti, Mr. Sebastian
His Eminence Metropolitan of Patras, Mr. Eustathius
His Eminence Hieromonk Fr. Neophytes Tsakiroglou
His Eminence Archimandrite Fr. Panteleimon Tsalanga
His Eminence Monk Fr. Chrysaphios Kouyumzogli**

All-learned theologian Mr. Dimitri Katsura
All-learned theologian Mr. George Gledzakos
Most God-loving Mr. Anesti Hadzi

PRELIMINARY COMMENTS

After the publication in the spring of last year (2014) of the ecclesiological text, on the basis of which there was a unification and establishment of church communion between the group of "Opposites" ("Oropos and Fili" Cyprian Kutsumba) with a group of Akakievites (headed by the "Archbishop" Mr. Kalinik), the question arose of studying the above-mentioned text from an Orthodox point of view and, unconditionally, from the church positions of Our Church.

To this end, during the session of 15/28 January 2015, the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Church of the Greek Orthodox Church, under the chairmanship of His Beatitude Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, Mr. Stefanos, decided to establish a Theological Commission, to which it would entrust, among other things, the study and preparation of an appropriate Expert Opinion on this issue.

The commission includes:

1 Metropolitan Ignatius of Laris and Tyrnava – chairman of the commission.

Members of the commission:

2 Metropolitan Sebastian of Kiti (Cyprus)

3 Metropolitan Eustathius of Patras

4 Hieromonk Neophyte Tsakiroglu

5 Archimandrite Panteleimon Tsalanga (now Metropolitan of Phthiotis)

6 Monk Chrysaphios Kouyumzoglu

7 Theologian Dmitri Katsura

8 Theologian Georgios Gledzakos
9 Teacher Anesti Hadji.

The Commission held several meetings in the period from February to June 2015.

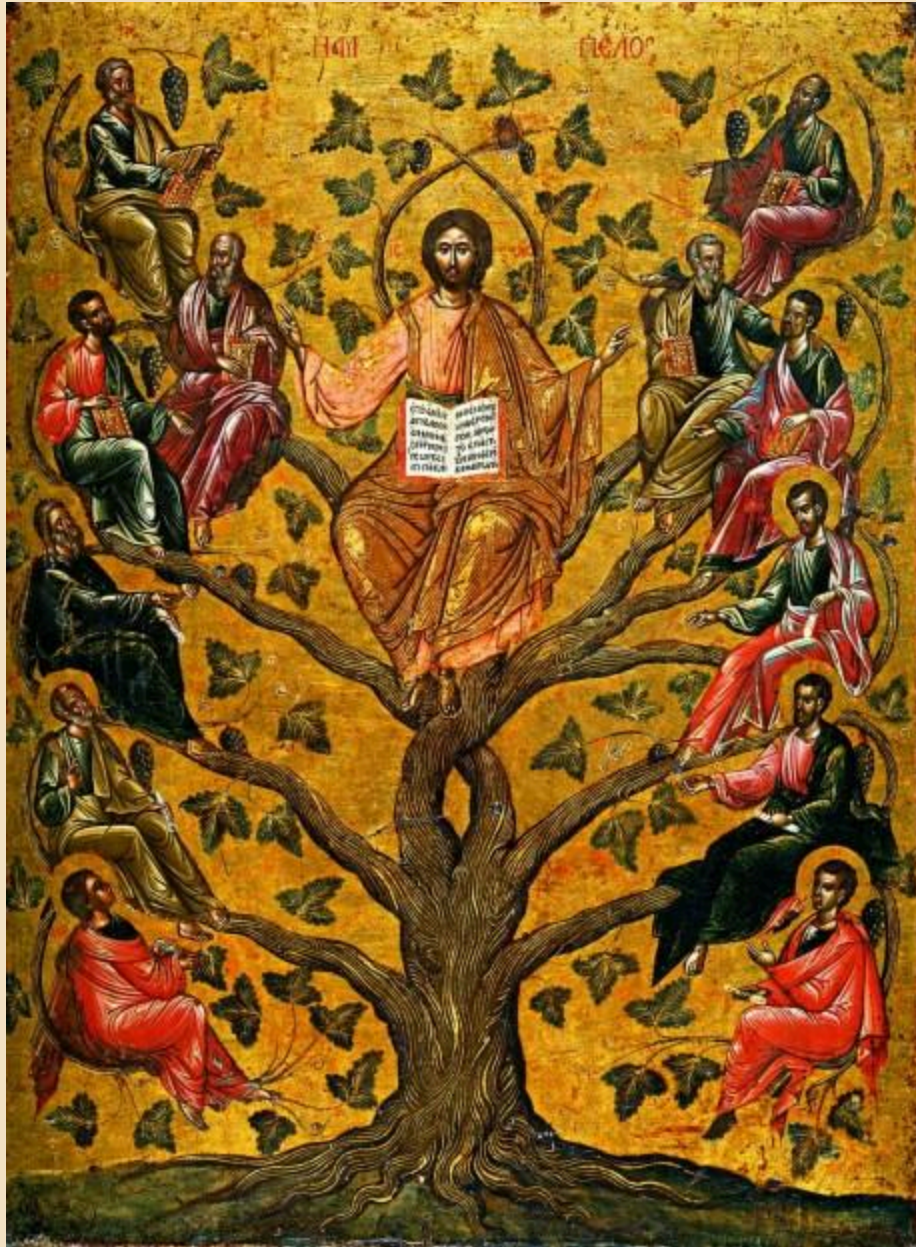
The expert conclusion, developed and unanimously approved by the aforementioned Theological Commission, was presented on 05.06.2015 to the Holy Synod for further consideration by the hierarchs - members of the Synod, which was held.

At its meeting (09)22.10.2015, the Holy Synod of Bishops ordered the publication of the above-mentioned Expert Conclusion for the information of the faithful, as well as for the information of all interested persons, as well as for its compilers and signatories themselves for wider discussion.



***None of the Orthodox will accept them into communion if they do not renounce
their error.***

*(Study of Josephus Bryenius on the accession of the Cypriots, Τὰ Εὐρεθέντα, vol. 2,
p. 50) .*



In accordance with the honorable order and assignment of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Church of the IPH of Greece (Decision 15/28-01-2015), we have begun to give a “theological assessment of the ecclesiological text (hereinafter referred to as the Document) *prepared* jointly with the Synod of the “Opposites” of Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Filia and the Synod of the “Florineites”, headed by Archbishop Callinicus, on the basis of which their unification took place

more than a year ago, and after a “deep theological analysis” to compile and present to the Synod a thorough and convincing expert conclusion based on the criteria of Orthodox Theology and the Church’s Patristic Tradition”. Taking into account the clarifying recommendations of the Chairman of the Theological Commission, Metropolitan Ignatius of Larissa and Tyrnava, that our task is “to analyze and evaluate the theological positions of the ecclesiological document in comparison with the position of our Church on the relevant issues in full accordance with the teaching of the Holy Fathers and the centuries-old presentation of the Church”, we have compiled the following Expert Conclusion, which is divided into four parts, as follows:

- 1 Historical context and general remarks on the Document;**
- 2 Definition and fixation of the semantic theses of the ecclesiological Document;**
- 3 Theological evaluation and criticism of basic positions, as well as errors and shortcomings of the Document;**
- 4 Conclusions.**

1. HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND GENERAL REMARKS ON THE DOCUMENT

The historical context for the creation of this Document is the rapprochement and unification of the Akakievites and the Opposers. It should be clarified that we prefer the term Akakievites, not the Florinai, named after Akakiy Pappas, whose first episcopal ordination by the bishops of the Synod of the ROCOR [Russian Orthodox Church Abroad] in America (in 1960) laid the foundation for the entire chain of episcopal ordinations. In 1984, Oropos and Philia Cyprian Kutsumba broke church communion with his Synod (led by Anthony of Attica and Megarid), and the following year he created and headed a community and synod called the Opposers. His previous synod deprived him of his rank on charges of treason in matters of the Orthodox Faith. In 2008, an informal dialogue began between the

two Synods (the Akakievites – with the archiepiscopal cadence of Chrysostomos Kiusis and the Opposing Ones). This dialogue lasted for a year (from February 2008 to February 2009) and ended with a statement of lack of identity in points of view on church matters. Meanwhile, Metropolitan Cyprian, who fell seriously ill and was in a coma for several years, died in 2013.

The interrupted dialogue resumed in 2013 and ended in 2014, this time with an agreement between the contracting parties. To mark this, the ecclesiological text itself was published, entitled “ **The True Orthodox Church Faces the Heresy of Ecumenism** ”, which became the subject of our study. This text is supposed to have been compiled by the “True Orthodox Churches of Greece, Romania and the ROCOR”. The unification of the Akakievites and the Opposers was cemented by the joint service of their hierarchs with the participation of clergy and laity in the monastery of St. Nicholas in Piania Attica in 2014 on the Sunday of the Adoration of the Cross. It should be noted that the synod of the IPC of Romania, led by Metropolitan Vlasiy, and the ROCOR (A), led by Metropolitan Agatangel Pashkovsky, took part in the discussed unification.

Considering it unnecessary to engage in further presentation of any additional details of the general historical context relating to the unification under discussion, with the exception of those already mentioned above, since they mainly constitute a settlement of procedural formalities, although it is extremely interesting from a canonical point of view, let us nevertheless focus on the ecclesiological text created by the united countries.

We believe that it is interesting what the study of this ecclesiological text with a theological approach will yield from a first reading, because it is presented as an expression of the contemporary ecclesiological position and “credo” of the so-called Florinaeans or Akakievites. After all, the latter continue to refer to the former Metropolitan of Florina Chrysostomos Kavouridis (+1955) as a model of personality and of the church path.

The ecclesiological differences recorded in 1937, as well as the subsequent split among the IPH, with an obvious consequence – a schism that has not been healed to this day – compel us to responsibly present here the course of these events.

In our opinion, even regardless of whether or not the then followers of the former Florin Chrysostomos Kavouridis, who deviated from the correct Ecclesiology and fell away from the original good Confession (1935), showed interest, in order to heal the gaping wound of the schism, we are obliged to examine new data.

Since it is quite obvious, judging by all the material presented, that some new ecclesiological positioning on the part of the Florinians forces us to examine data and facts that most likely demonstrate, attest and confirm persistence, differentiation, deviation, modification, expansion, abandonment and perception of old and new ecclesiological positions and views.

Our desire, interest and goal is that the approach and study of the above processes have been produced with impartiality and objectivity and fully based on Orthodox criteria, i.e. *“in accordance with the divinely inspired theology of the saints and pious church thought”*, expressed in the teaching and Decisions, in the Statutes and the centuries-old practice of the Church.

We must always, from the very beginning, when dealing with the ecclesiological text under discussion, not forget that we are studying a structured and carefully verified text, maintained in an appropriate style and written in the appropriate language in its form and structure. The lack of specific references to a very large number of postulates, which are appropriately applied in the publication and reflect the positions and views generally accepted in Orthodoxy, should not be perceived as underestimating the value of the text in accordance with the above.

In fact, it is desirable in this situation to primarily point out the positions and views in the text that, in our humble opinion, probably do not reflect Orthodox

ecclesiology, are innovations, and need comment, as well as to identify any serious shortcomings or errors in it.

2. DEFINING AND FIXING THE MEANINGFUL THESES OF THE ECCLESIOLOGY TEXT

General remarks:

With regard to the studied unifying Ecclesiological text (presented by the Akakievites), it was established that four fundamental and, as a consequence, serious ecclesiological questions (in the sense of a problem) stand out, which we are obliged to discuss from Orthodox and possibly full-fledged ecclesiological positions.

Of these, one question is unfinished, while for the other three, the position stated in the text under consideration is condemnable. Therefore, it is a question of:

1st. For an unclear, if not feigned, manifestation of a position, although in need of precise and obligatory definition, regarding the schism that arose in 1924 due to the imposition of calendar innovations in the Greek (though not only) Orthodox Church and their consequences for Its fullness;

2nd. For an unclear, but ultimately problematic positioning on the issue of preserving and transmitting true Apostolic Succession in the True Orthodox Church

3rd. For a clear and unequivocal rejection of the confession of the Church's teaching on the non-recognition and non-acceptance of the "sacraments" of the Church performed outside the Church in the environment of the Novostilts-Ecumenists, and moreover, even the opposite - an expression of

categorical support for their possible "grace"[1] and soteriological effectiveness!
And

4th. For stubbornly maintaining the theory of the need to convene a “General and Great Council” in the future, as the only authorized body for the complete and final rejection of the calendar innovation and all the heresies of Ecumenism, and to adopt a verdict that has exclusive legal force against them!

Specific remarks:

After studying the content of the Ecclesiological text under discussion, we have listed below the problematic situations and statements discovered:

(listed here in the order of their appearance in the commented text)

In Section A, paragraph 3, where reference is made to the Catholicity (Coloniality/Ecumenicality) of the Church, it is assumed that this is “*Her (exclusively) qualitative and internal, not quantitative and external characteristic*”. It is clear that with regard to catholicity both distinctive meanings contained in this concept are valid. The Catholicity of the Church, for example, as a manifestation of the Body and as a foreseeable re-ecclesiasticization of the whole world, is a quantitative and external characteristic. Thus teaches St. Cyril of Alexandria: “*Catholic (Conciliar) is actually called because it spreads throughout the whole earth from one end to the other and because it teaches everywhere and without exception all the dogmas necessary for people to acquire knowledge of visible and invisible things, heavenly and earthly; and because the entire human race with piety subdues rulers and subjects, intelligent and simple; and because everywhere She heals and cures every kind of sin committed by the soul and body, contains within Her every idea called virtue, which is manifested in deeds, and in words, and in every spiritual gift.*” (Cyril of Jerusalem, Annunciation Discourses No. 18, section 21, teaching on the words In the One, Holy, Cathedral and Apostolic Church).

As follows from the text set out in part Δ(D), under the name “*so-called official Orthodoxy*”, the term “official Orthodoxy” and its derivatives “Official Church” and “official local churches” are accepted and used. The definition ecclesiological is inapplicable, especially for such an ecclesiological text, because semantically it does not convey the meaning of the concept and literally does not mean anything clear and concrete, while at the same time adding, albeit phraseologically, ecclesiasticism to this concept.

In Section E(D), entitled “True Orthodox Church”, paragraph 6 declares that “ ***the dogmatically necessary hierarchical structure for the formation and continuation of the local True Orthodox Churches through God’s Grace was provided either by the transition to it of the hierarchs from the Neostyles, of course, after professing the Orthodox Faith, or by the ordination of bishops by the hierarchs of the true Orthodox Church hierarchy in the Diaspora, as having indisputable apostolic succession*** ”. However, this section does not explain what “transitions” from the Neostyle innovations are meant, nor how their transition ensures the transmission of Apostolic Succession, nor who are *the “True Orthodox Church Hierarchy in the Diaspora”* and why it is believed that there is “*indisputable apostolic succession*”.

In section ΣT(E), entitled “Return to True Orthodoxy,” in paragraph 6, it is openly stated that “*the True Orthodox Church does not affirm either the reality of the Sacraments performed in the so-called official Orthodox Churches, nor their saving efficacy.*” And of course, an expanded clarification is given to the statement of non-affirmation of the reality of the “sacraments” performed outside the Church, “*especially for those who are consciously in communion with syncretic ecumenism and Sergianism.*” (It is worth noting that a distinction is made between those who are “consciously” in communion with heresy and those who remain in communion “out of ignorance.”) And, in addition, this whole issue is also linked to the convening of a “Great Council,” at which this issue is to be the subject of consideration and decision in the future.

5. In the same section, paragraph 8, it deals with permissible ways in which the Church accepts and joins both schismatics and heretics. Here the position is defended according to which both *akrivia* and *oikonomia* can be applicable, and that “*different schismatics and heretics are accepted in different ways – either only by a written Confession of Faith and Repentance, like the Nestorians and Monophysites condemned centuries ago, or by Chrismation or Baptism*”. In this way, this question is considered in a generalized and rational way, although here a specific answer should be given as to how to accept those of the new-style ecumenists who turn to true Orthodoxy. Moreover, the reader is confused because he expects to receive an answer to the question posed in the title of the section; and he is "informed" only about the Church's practice in many and different situations, of course, without specifying that the Church does so according to the circumstances and based on specific data in each individual case, without unjustified change and without "variability" of methods when faced with uniform situations.

6. The same section in paragraph 10 discusses the manner in which those who convert from the Neostyle-Ecumenists are “received” into “communion” with the True Orthodox Church. Here the position is defended that they are received only by “chronicle,” and the clergy “in the same way” and then by a special rite of Hierothesia.” However, it is not specified that such a rite is prescribed by Canonical Order and by the Tradition of the Church in relation to schismatic-heretics, where, however, there is no mention at all of the use in this case of the Symbol of Faith and a written renunciation of innovations and heresies.

7. In the same section, paragraph 12, separate mention is made of the future “*Great General Council, having pan-Orthodox authority,*” which is entrusted with and recognized as having the exclusive authority to “*establish general criteria and conditions that will determine the practice of accepting converts from various newly emerged schismatic and heretical communities into the True Orthodox Church.*” And finally

8. Section Z(Z). The entire section emphasizes and emphasizes the issue of the need to convene in the future *the “General Council of the True Orthodox Churches” or the “Small General Council of the Local True Orthodox Churches”* or the Great and General Council of the True Orthodox Churches, which with great authority will issue a decree regarding the introduction of the new style and anti-evangelical syncretic ecumenism”, and at which will be “proclaimed” ... *“the complete and extreme opposition as mutually exclusive of each other, between Orthodoxy and Syncretism, the ecumenical and Sergian trend ...”*

3. THEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AND CRITICISM OF THE MAIN PROPOSITIONS, AS WELL AS ERRORS AND DEFICIENCIES OF THE TEXT

Before discussing anything on this subject, it is advisable to recall that the schism that occurred in 1937 was caused by the attachment of the former Florin Chrysostom to the erroneous theory of a potential, rather than an actual, new calendar schism. It is precisely this theory that is connected with and due to which the demand for the convening of a “Great Council” for a categorical condemnation and decision on this issue, as well as on the topics of the validity of the “sacraments” performed by the newly introduced ones, and the order of acceptance of those who convert from the innovations to patristic piety is due.

Since then, the course of events that occurred in the midst of the Novostilts-ecumenists has developed rapidly. The apostasy continues and expands more and more (the creation of the WCC, the lifting of the anathemas of 1054, the mutual recognition of ecclesiasticism and sacraments with the Papacy and the Monophysites, the adoption of the practice of joint prayers and joint church services with heretics, and so on).

The initially clear and consistent position of Hierarch – Confessor Matthew against the Innovation is honored by us, as it is fully justified. On the other hand, the

concessions, caution and inconsistency, as well as the hope of the former Florinsky to restore (correct) the situation that had arisen, turned out to be very empty and useless.[2]

We are also obliged to mention that, like the former Florinsky himself, as well as those who exalt his name as their spiritual leader, his spiritual successors sometimes (regardless of the reasons and goals that prompted this) resorted to actions that showed a greater or lesser degree of convergence with the position stated by Matthew of Vrest.

The situation with the famous Encyclical of 1950, issued by the former Florinsky, and with the message of 1974, issued by the Synod of the Akakievites, under the chairmanship of Archbishop Auxentius, is indicative.

The new ecclesiological text (2014), on the basis of which the Union of Opposers entered the composition or joined the jurisdiction of the Synod of the Akakievites of Archbishop Callinicus (Sarandopoulou), seems to be in the vein of the ecclesiological assumptions inherited from the spiritual predecessors (the Florineites).[3] It is precisely on this side, however, that in some key points the intervention, in fact, of the ecclesiological approach of the former Opposers is clearly visible.

Namely:

It is noteworthy, if not to say impressive, (as they say – its absence is clearly gaping) a declaration that in such an important text, as the ecclesiological text under discussion is obviously trying to present, there is almost no mention of an enlightenment of paramount importance for us on the ecclesiological position of the “True Orthodox Church”. Namely, the issue of introducing the New Style as the first step in the process of spreading the omni-heresy of Ecumenism and the subsequent Schism in 1924, as a result of its (the new calendar’s) anti-canonical implementation, is not considered.

Of course, from the title of the ecclesiological text under discussion, “*The True Orthodox Church in the Face of the Heresy of Ecumenism*,” the textual orientation and focus on the topic of Ecumenism generally follows. However, due to the fact that the text under discussion is proposed as a confessional text containing Orthodox ecclesiology, and even as a basis for the church unification and the establishment of communion of the majority of Akakievites of the IPH together with the Opposers in Greece, as well as due to the fact that the issue of instilling the calendar innovation, in one way or another, is the critical moment, and the omission (obviously by no means accidental) of a clear positioning with respect to the new calendar schism caused by it in 1924, as well as with respect to its quality and consequences, creates a significant problem. So, instead of, albeit briefly, but clearly and directly positioning the issue of the New Calendar Schism and its consequences as a key issue on which much depends, although the text has sufficient data on the calendar (they are distributed in 6 paragraphs out of 14 in part C(B), entitled “Ecumenism: a syncretic pan-heresy”, pp. 4, 5 and 6 of the text – (in the Russian version from p. 5 to the beginning of p. 9), the only relevant reference is the mention of the Decision of the Pan-Orthodox Council of the 16th century – in the following phrase: “... *these conciliar decrees remain in force and burden the New Stylers who are in schism.*” (Par. 6, part C(B)). And besides, and without even the simplest comment, nothing more about the New Style Schism.

The lack of such a clear position regarding the creation of a schism by the imposition of a new calendar in 1924 leads directly to a problematic position regarding the preservation of apostolic succession in the IOC, preserved as a result of the “*passage to It of hierarchs from the Novostilts*”. (Part E(E), paragraph 6, p. 12 in the Russian version) According to Canon 1 of Basil the Great: “*Those who have apostatized from the Church no longer have upon themselves the grace of the Holy Spirit . For the transmission of Grace has become impoverished, because the legitimate continuity is interrupted . For the first apostates received initiation from the Fathers and through their ordination had a spiritual gift . But the deposed, having become laymen, had no authority either to baptize or to ordain and could not transmit the Grace of the Holy Spirit to others from Whom they themselves have fallen away .*” If this is accepted as the true attitude of the Orthodox Church towards schismatics, it becomes clear that the signatories of this ecclesiological

text, by stating that the Apostolic Succession of the IOC was ensured by the “*passing over of the hierarchs of the Neo-Stil schism,*” thus assume that those who passed over were not “resigned from the Church” and “cast out” by Her, i.e. schismatics coming from the schism and therefore lacking the Grace and power to transmit the Grace of the Holy Spirit. But they recognize them as canonical bearers of Grace and Apostolic Succession when they were still in the Neo-Stil schism, and then became transmitters (of Grace and Succession) in the IOC through the Orthodox Confession when they passed over to Her.[4]

Moreover, the very avoidance of recognition that the anti-canonical and carried out within the framework of the implementation of ecumenism and the measures envisaged in the Encyclical of the Ecumenical Patriarch of 1920 and the Ecumenical “Congress” of 1923, the implantation of a new style causes a schism in the Orthodox Church with corresponding consequences, canonically determined both for the neo-stylers and for those who are in church communion with them. This avoidance of recognition leads to the establishment of the position in the discussed ecclesiological text that the Apostolic Succession of the IOC “*was ensured by the ordination of the bishops by the True Orthodox Church Hierarchy in the Diaspora, having indisputable Apostolic Succession.*” In this excerpt, “The True Orthodox Church Leadership in the Diaspora” unambiguously implies the so-called “Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia,” with whose ordinations a hierarchy of Old Style groups participating in the unification is built.[5]

Another important ecclesiologically difficult topic, which is also a key point, is a clear and frank statement in the text regarding the “Sacraments” (in the original of the text under discussion it is without quotation marks) performed in the so-called “official Orthodox Churches”, i.e. performed by schismatics, neo-style heretics, Ecumenists and those who are in full church communion with them.

The "True Orthodox Church" thus always, after presenting the text under discussion, unequivocally asserts that “*it confirms neither their (the sacraments') reality nor their saving effect!*”[6]

Oh, if only that were all. But with surprising frankness and clarity, the question is continually raised about the respective dependence, inspiring us with apprehension, of the reality or rather the unreality of the “sacraments” of schismatics and heretics, members of the so-called “official Orthodox Churches,” on the consciousness or unconsciousness of their being in communion with heresy and heresy! And in the end, the whole question is left in the text to the judgment of the “Great Council of True Orthodoxy.” We believe that it becomes absolutely clear that here we are rather dealing with^[7] not with simple mistakes or deliberate omission of essential issues. Here a substantial problem arises and the question of the orthodoxy of such an ecclesiological positioning.

First of all, we must mention that the above formulation of the non-affirmation, or better to say, the refusal to confirm, regarding the reality of “*the sacraments that are performed in the so-called official Orthodox Churches*”, is open to different interpretations and misreadings, since it carries within itself polysemy at the very least. We emphasize, however, that the framework and responsible preparation of the ecclesiological text at this level do not justify the presence of polysemy in its content, and even more so on such an important issue.

The question of the sacraments concerns the foundations of Orthodox ecclesiology, and, of course, this is not unknown to the compilers of the text. Also, the context of the paragraph in which the disputed formulation is found excludes the chance and possibility of a positive understanding and Orthodox interpretation of such a positioning.^[8]

In this case, however, we are faced not only with the general position of the attitude towards those outside the Church, but also with a clear message in the direction of schisms and heresies, where, of course, the so-called “official Orthodox Churches” are located and are sinking deeper and deeper. Considering that according to the Teaching of the Church, the Holy Spirit acts mystically only in the Church (St. Irenaeus): “*In the Church God has placed the apostles, prophets, teachers and other manifestations of the action of the Holy Spirit, in which those who are not united in the Church have no part. They are deprived of*

life through their heretical views and because of their evil deeds. Where the Church is, there is also the spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God is, there is also the Church and all Grace. For the Spirit is the Truth.” (St. Irenaeus “*Refutation and Exposition of False Knowledge*”). The same holy father notes the connection between Faith and the Sacraments, especially with regard to Holy Communion, saying that “our reason (Faith) is in agreement with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist sets our consciousness in a chain.” (St. Irenaeus Against Heresies 4 18,5)

The theses of the ecclesiological text, unfortunately, converge and allow them to be identified only with malicious content. The field for the “legalization” of its tactics of disorientation from Orthodoxy to agnosticism remains open, as happens when similar expressions are used in relation to the controversial statement of the Russian theologian Pavel Evdokimov, who says in his essay: “*We know where the Church is, but we have no right to condemn and say where there is no Church!*” (Orthodoxy. Rigopoulou Publishing House, Athens 1972, p. 462)

The corresponding formulation of the (ecclesiological text on the sacraments) actually denies the Faith and Church Teaching, since, on the one hand, it does not confess it, and, on the other hand, it leaves it theoretically acceptable that the sacraments exist and are recognized outside the True Orthodox Church, i.e. outside the Church of Christ. This is precisely what justifies the unacceptable mutual connection of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the performed “sacraments” among heretics or schismatics with the conscious acceptance of (heresy) or simple communion (unknowingly) of individuals with the heresy.

So, from the above, it is absolutely obvious that the discussed position of the ecclesiological text ignores *the “boundaries established by our holy Fathers”*, and also contradicts the Holy Canons, as well as Rule 46 of the Holy Apostle, which strictly prescribes: “*A bishop or presbyter who has accepted the baptism or sacrifice of heretics, we command to be deposed. What agreement can there be between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?*” [*Кѡе же согла́сiе Христѡви с бели́аромъ? Или́ кѡя часть вѣ́рну с невѣ́рнымъ;* (2 Cor 6: 15)] – just like the Teaching of the Church as a whole,

which unequivocally refuses to assert, as well as resolutely declares and states that there are no sacraments outside the Church!

In this, the teaching of the Holy Apostle and the Holy Fathers is unanimous. (Like the Apostle Paul, the Apostle John the Theologian, Cyprian of Carthage, Ignatius the God-Bearer, Irenaeus of Lyons, Athanasius the Great, Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, Maximus the Confessor, Gregory Palamas, etc.), the Church is the Body of Christ, and whoever departs from Her, whether in heresy or schism, does not receive the gift of the divine Economy. The canonical and grace-giving boundaries of the Church are identical.

The attitude towards the sacraments is not subjective, so as to depend on the consciousness or ignorance of the faithful. Just as we say – I believe in the One Holy, etc. Church – we also say – I believe that this is the Body and Blood (of Our Lord Jesus Christ), – receiving Holy Communion. Therefore, such an attitude is objective, ontological, because the Communion of the Sacraments is the Communion of Christ, and the Church is the true Body of Christ.

It is extremely disappointing and at the same time disturbing and surprising that for an ecclesiological text dedicated to the Orthodox Confession and Identity, and to the opposition of “True Orthodoxy” against Ecumenism, a position was chosen regarding the sacraments that allows it to be subjected to the influence of ecumenism. Moreover, this particular positioning represents a change in the ecclesiological symbol of faith of the Akakievites, at least in the way we imagined it. But they, at least recently, have sought to take the correct position on the issue of the “sacraments”, considering them invalid for the neo-ecumenists. This is worthy of astonishment, but not at all praise, such an impressive deviation towards uncertainty and absolute vacillation. Among other things, this distances them from the original good Confession, adopted in 1935 by the three Hierarchs who had returned from the innovation of the direct path of the Holy Fathers, among whom was their spiritual leader, the former Chrysostom of Florina (Kavouridis).

In conclusion, we will consider another problematic, in our opinion, topic of convening the "General and Great Council" as the sole authority for the complete and final condemnation of the calendar innovation (in the meantime, 90 years have already passed since its creation) and the pan-heresy of Ecumenism and for expressing an authoritative verdict regarding them!

From the very beginning, we will say that it is possible that the expression of caution in connection with the recommended need for the resolution of church issues by the Council could be misunderstood and directly condemned. After all, it is known that the Church resolves issues and speaks about various problems at the Council. Especially when there are questions of Faith or heresy that concern the entire Church. What is remarkable, St. Nicodemus the Athonite says: *"Hence, first of all, not Holy Scripture, but the Ecumenical Council proclaims the final judgment on church issues."* (Kormchaia – νομοκανών (nomokanon), p. 120)

To understand the meaning and role of Councils in the life of the Church, we need to make two clarifications. The first is that the Church itself is a continuous Council, and therefore the Council is the voice of the Church. It is known that during the first centuries of its existence the Church of Christ served canonically without the need to convene Ecumenical Councils. Of course, Local Councils were convened. As in the last twelve centuries, there were again no Ecumenical Councils, although Pan-Orthodox and Local Councils were held.

The second clarification is that the decisions and theology of the Holy Fathers who convened the councils constitute their essential spiritual value and express the opinion of the Church within or outside the councils. Furthermore, it is important to note that the Councils, even the Ecumenical ones, received their authority not from the multitude of bishops gathered, but from those present at them, either personally or through the works and teachings of the greatest Fathers and their Theology presented there. It is enough to mention the important role that the Theology of St. Athanasius the Great played for the 1st Ecumenical Council, the Theology of St. Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and Gregory of Nyssa for the Second Ecumenical Council, the Theology of St. Cyril of Alexandria for the

Third Ecumenical Council, the Theology of St. Maximus the Confessor for the 6th, and the Theology of St. John of Damascus for the Seventh. As well as later, in the 14th century, what an important role the participation and theology of St. Gregory Palamas played in the authority of the Council of 1351. Here it is worth recalling what the Church says in the absolution troparion of the Holy Fathers, that “*and through them (regardless of whether in the composition of the Councils or outside them, regardless of whether they are at that moment in the majority or in the minority) instructs us to the true faith,*” i.e. through them Christ has led us and leads us to the True Faith, as through pointers and infallible guides to Salvation. This is also shown by the veneration in the church of the memory of the Holy Ecumenical Councils, not of them themselves as such, but as a celebration of the memory of the holy and God-bearing Fathers who convened them.

Everything stated above, although it is known and, we hope, shared by the authors of the ecclesiological text, is expressed and concentrated in a familiar phrase from the Synod of Orthodoxy – “*and not those who confess according to the holy God-inspired theologies and the Church’s pious wisdom*” (against Akindin and Varlaam), but it is not mentioned or manifested in any way in them, although it should be.

A consequence of this is the manner and structure of the reasoning aimed at supporting the need for a "Great and General Council", which incorrectly assess the significance and importance of the Council, and absolutely incorrectly create the framework and necessary conditions for its comprehensive and fruitful activity.

In this case, the position of the Council is institutionalized, if not absolutized, and is cut off from the entire ministry and Church life, and even from the very bearers of Her grace, the bishops present. (Note! Here an analogy with the “theology of grace” of Zizulia is necessary, depending on the personality of the bishop) The questions, problems and topics for discussion that arose after the advent of the innovations and pan-heresy of Ecumenism for decades in the fullness of the Local Orthodox Churches were not considered in the usual order^[9], i.e. canonically as

current church problems, for the resolution of which the Church must immediately proceed, presenting solutions according to Her Statutes and Tradition.

Perhaps unconsciously – and we hope that this is so – and absolutely unjustifiably, the resolution of serious questions of Faith and Church life is being postponed for an indefinite future, in view of the alleged exclusive, extraordinary and special competence of the “Great and General Council” to be convened in the future. However, at the same time, the competence of the modern successors of the holy Apostles – the Orthodox bishops – and the local Councils, which are obliged and can meet and between which, according to Church order and Tradition, all questions, and first of all questions of Faith, can be considered with complete legitimacy, is being diminished.

Since no one can directly object to the expected convening of the Great and Pan-Orthodox Council (these are more appropriate epithets than the “Great” and “Universal” that the ecumenists too often use), when this becomes possible, which will absolutely firmly and officially formulate accusations against those who deviate and move away from patristic piety, and even more officially condemn those who are in heresy. To the same extent or more than this, no one can today forbid, as in all times, the Living Church of Christ through Her pious children and canonical Shepherds to canonically serve and do everything necessary, following in this the Holy Fathers, confessing, teaching, observing and fulfilling everything that the Holy Ecumenical and Local Councils before them have established and commanded.

This, of course, is bold, but we must remind ourselves that the canonically unfounded persistent demand for the necessity of convening the “Great and General Council” as the only authorized body, solely given the power to make a clear and decisive decision on questions of Faith, which at the same time undoubtedly require immediate and long-term investigation, thus leaving them without a solution and in ambiguity for an indefinite period of time. And this causes harm to the faithful and confuses them, creating an unattested among the Fathers and practically extremely dangerous situation.

Of course, their intonation and orientation of the entire life of the Church (in the sense of bringing order to emerging issues) into the distant future is an unheard of pastoral inconsistency and error. The Church always lives in the present and experiences even the last times, both the future and the past, as a continuing present.

The Lord, as the eternal Head of the Church, continually gives life to Her as to His Body and is always with the Father and the Holy Spirit, with the faithful. As it is said: “*Where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them*” (Matt. 18:20) and also “*Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*” (Matt. 28:20). The Church’s fullness is the Lord Himself, Who is “*the same yesterday, and today, and forever*” (Heb. 13:8). We believe that the postponement of the most important questions, such as the question of the “*reality of the sacraments*” outside the boundaries of the true Orthodox Church, is an ecclesiological outrage, which testifies either to the absence of Faith, or to the doubt and neglect of the Church’s heritage and the duty before It, which the People of God have undertaken and still maintain as the defenders of Orthodoxy. (Clergy, monks and laity). The only thing that still needs to be said is that ultimately all this works against Orthodoxy in favor of the same Ecumenism.

Because, indeed, the last part – Z(Z) – of the ecclesiological text, instead of the hope that it should give to the faithful people tormented in the struggle, causes confusion and a sense of uncertainty, postponing for an indefinite future the decision and settlement of all vital issues, – from the strong resistance to the heresy of ecumenism and the preservation of the bonds of peace and love in Christ, to the Confession of Faith itself!

The ending of the ecclesiological text (paragraph 7, part Z(Z)) is indicative and causes astonishment, according to which even the repetition of the words of the Fathers as the Confession of the Pan-Orthodox Council of 1848, and this is postponed to the near future, when the "Great and General Council" will convene!

The clarifying and encouraging dissonance (in paragraph 5 of the last part) to the text about the "Great General Council", which finally states the already accomplished apostasy of the heretics, besides demonstrating the contradiction of the entire remaining part in what was stated above in this text, itself is literally lost in its quest to prove the necessity of convening this Council, to which everything is left.

In this case, we will present here what we know from the teachings of the holy fathers, the best that has been said in the work dedicated to these issues, published in the journal "Kyriks Gnision Orthokson", entitled "Anakalipsis Eukolias".[10]

Here are excerpts:

**ON A POTENTIAL, NOT ACTUAL, SCHISM OF THE NOVOSTILIANS
AND A CALL IN SUPPORT OF THIS THEORY TO THE
INTERPRETATION OF THE APOSTOLIC RULE OF ST. NIKODEUM**

"Since the need arose for at least some kind of justification, one was found. What? St. Nicodemus' interpretation of the 3rd Rule of the Holy Apostles. Since there for the first time "to be cast out" occurs, which St. Nicodemus explains in a commentary on punishments - "to be cast out, excommunicated, to be anathema", saying the following:

"The canons prescribe to the Council of the acting bishops to depose priests or to excommunicate from the Church and to anathematize laymen when they violate the canons. And if the Council does not actually depose a priest or excommunicate from the Church or anathematize laymen, then these priests are not actually deposed, and the laymen are not excommunicated and are not anathematized. And those who are subject to deposition, excommunication and anathematization in this world are there subject to the judgment of God." Taking advantage of the

expression “*in reality*,” they conclude from this that the word “*in reality*”^[11] means that those who fall into heresy or schism are only potential, not actual, heretics or schismatics and “*they must be condemned by the Pan-Orthodox Council for this to be actual* .” This is not just an “*apology*,” but also an unforgivable Cunning.

First . The Third Apostolic Rule (it was noted above that it is not even about the rule itself, but a commentary on it) does not concern the issues of falling into heresy or schism. It prescribes that bishops or priests who offer on the altar not what is prescribed, but something else, be deprived of their rank. That is, here we are talking about practical violations, “*for which such a person must be brought before a court, where it must be clarified where and how this happened*” ...

Second . Saint Nicodemus is speaking here of those who “*break the rules*,” not of those who have renounced the faith and what is associated with it.

Thirdly , does the holy canon, which prescribes that “*he be deprived of rank, excommunicated and anathema*,” say this about those who are already outside the church, about heretics and schismatics? ...

Fourth . If those who have caused schism or heresy (otherwise, why are they separated) are residing in the Church – since the canons are in effect with regard to them – when this is revealed, then where are they residing? (already separated)?

Fifth . Saint Nicodemus, on this practical issue, does not speak of a “*possible, potential*” violation, but speaks of imposing a prohibition, which, as is known, if the bishop does not apply it for a certain period of time, he is punished and this prohibition is imposed on others... And they do not trust in “*God's judgment*” at all. ..

BECAUSE A DECISION DOES NOT MAKE ANYONE A HERETIC OR A SCHISMATIC

Is there a law or practice of the Church when a heretic or schismatic (note that all heretics initially become schismatics) must first be condemned by the Pan-Orthodox Council and then be considered such with the corresponding consequences against him by pious Christians? And if so, since, in accordance with their ingenious discoveries set forth above, the use of the new style is not condemned, how do they separate themselves from the neo-stylers? And since they separate themselves, how do they again “*ingratiate themselves*” to the neo-stylers?[12]

Those who say so condemn ecumenism to the depths of hell, considering it a heresy, pan-heresy, godlessness, ... etc. So, what Pan-Orthodox Council condemned ecumenism at the time when it appeared for them to condemn as well?[13] And does Novostilyet differ from ecumenism in any particular way?[14]

BECAUSE NEITHER THE SAINTS NOR THE PIOUS CHRISTIANS HAVE NEVER POSTPONED THE EXPECTED CONDEMNATION OF EVERY HERESY BY THE ECUMENICAL COUNCIL BEFORE DETERMINING THEMSELVES WITH THEIR POSITION

Where will we find in the history of the Church and the lives of the Saints, pious Christians before waiting for the Ecumenical Council to condemn every heresy and only then giving it such an assessment, denouncing it and separating themselves from its creators and fighting it even to the death? Among the countless examples, we will cite some... From the first centuries, when heresies began to appear – Judaizers, Gnostics, Cyrinthians, Manichaeans, Marcionites, etc., did Christians wait for the Ecumenical Councils to condemn such and treat them as heretics? Especially when there was no opportunity to convene an Ecumenical Council? Did our pious Fathers only after the 1st and 2nd Ecumenical Councils begin to denounce and polemicize with the Arians, Macedonians and Doukhobors and

others? Saint Methodius of Patara (311 AD) Saint Epiphanius of Cyprus (403), St. Cyriacus the Anchorite (408) and the other Palestinian Fathers are known to have fought hard against Origenism. And when was Origenism condemned? At the 5th Ecumenical Council in 533. So, were these Fathers wrong (even if it is blasphemy to think so) when they anathematized and polemicized against Origenism 120 or more than 220 years before it was condemned by the Ecumenical Council?

When the wicked Nestorius began to publicly proclaim the blasphemy against the Mother of God, did the pious Christians wait for the Third Ecumenical Council to condemn him, or did they IMMEDIATELY declare him a heretic? And St. Cyril writes that he fell away because he *“began to preach so heretically.”* And St. Celestine of Rome informed him (Nestorius): *“Let it be known to you that if you do not present within ten days, counted from the date on which this notice is dated, a clear and written Confession, which does not contain this erroneous innovation, you will be excommunicated from all communion with the Catholic Church.”* Then the period was *“within ten days,”* and now ten decades, or must we wait ten centuries to condemn the *“erroneous innovation”* ?

St. Maximus the Confessor, a simple monk, not even a priest, who alone opposed the four Patriarchates and the entire autocracy, spoke out against Monothelitism and died almost 20 years (662) before this heresy was condemned at the 6th Ecumenical Council (681). Did he do anything wrong, according to the understanding of these new dogmatists?

The Holy Fathers, disciples of Sava the Sanctified, accused and condemned the papists as heretics for inserting it into the Creed exactly 200 years (in 809) before it was officially legalized by Pope Sergius in 1009, for which he was condemned by the Patriarch of Constantinople Sergius. Thus, these fathers ... *“protestantized”*, *“opening their mouths in vain”* (mouth opening in vain).[15]

ON THE "MYSTERIES" OF HERETICS AND SCHISMATICS

That those who are separated from these would suddenly have a conversation about and an “interest” in their “mysteries” is something that can only be found in these times. Is it possible to find in the practice of the Church and among the words of the Fathers any word about the “mysteries” of heretics, schismatics, whoever they may be, separated from them, do they have “grace”, are they effective, etc., once they are separated from the Church?

It is also an “invention” of the neodogmatists that *“the Holy Ecumenical Councils accepted the sacraments of heretics only if their heresies had not been previously condemned by a council”*. But the heretics, whom the 7th Canon of the 2nd Ecumenical Council and the 95th Canon of the 6th Ecumenical Council name, according to whom the Church accepts not the sacraments, but only their image (form), communicating to them the Grace of the Holy Spirit, despite the fact that these heretics themselves were already condemned decades and centuries ago”.

“When they present their “inventions” regarding the condemnation and assessment of the New Testament and their “sacraments”, they should present evidence from the Holy Canons and the practice of the Church, without limiting themselves only to what the Theological Handbook and their own logic tell them”.^[16]

4. CONCLUSIONS

Concluding this work, which from the first reading alone reflects a theological examination and evaluation of the discussed Ecclesiological Text, on the basis of which, as was announced, the unity of the society of the Opposers and the Synod of the Akakievites was achieved under the chairmanship of Archbishop Callinic Sarandopoulou, we consider it appropriate to briefly summarize all that has been said and noted regarding and on the occasion of this text, reaching tentative conclusions and drawing specific conclusions.

First, we give a quote that is important for understanding. It is about the assessment that Archimandrite Akakiy Pappas gave to the former Florin Chrysostom, characterizing him: *«After returning from exile, our bishops managed to obtain permission from those who released them from exile not to speak much about the old calendar in their sermons, so that it would not be extremist, because otherwise no one would be able to help them and defend them. It was then that the former Florin invented his «potential, not actual» (schism) and that now there is a need for the Council to condemn the new and then we would be regular, and the New Style Church would then be schismatic, and their sacraments would be invalid, and now they (the New Stylers) are only accused according to the commentary of (St. Nicodemus)»* .

Here is what else the ever-memorable Father Paul the Cyprian adds to this disarming recognition of the true state of affairs, expressing his opinion: *“After all, they are impudent, they are now working for expansion!”* And he very aptly observes with a series of questions: *“So, is the struggle of Orthodoxy simply “prescribed by Orthodox Tradition”? And does Orthodox Tradition begin with the rule of the Twice-Council concerning the “decoration and state of the Church,” or does it begin before the Twice-Council (which took place in 861) and the aforementioned commentary by Nicodemus the Athonite (1800)?* (Note that something is meant that surrounds the 15th rule of the Twice-Council and *“potentially, not actually”* in the commentary on the 3rd Apostolic Rule). Did not the struggle of the Saints against heresies and for Orthodoxy have “expression” and canonical support?

So, in general, according to the results of the study of the Ecclesiological Text, it can be concluded that through it, for the purpose of a confession of faith with a well-structured and carefully developed content, which includes, in our opinion, unclear positions and inevitable contradictions that arose quite unintentionally and even of a symptomatic nature, a significant progress and change in the ecclesiology of the IPH and in the ecclesiological positions of the Akakievites is expressed and revealed, at least to what extent they have changed to this day and seem to have finally stabilized.

The more characteristic features and context of their ecclesiology are determined by the terms they use:

A) Enclosure, in relation to their position in the face of the new style movement and at the same time regarding their ecclesiological existence.

C) The position of the accused and the pre-conciliar period, in relation to their position on the state of the Church and its ministry in the face of calendar innovations and the pan-heresy of ecumenism.

D) A “Great and General Council”, the convening of which is considered necessary as the only authoritative body capable of judging and making a final and unappealable decision regarding the New Testament – Ecumenism.

Of course, on this basis, the use by the united group of the terms “*True Orthodox Church*” and “*Church of the IPH of Greece*” copied by us is considered to be unreflective and inappropriate. Here, a definition that would contain the words – the definitions “Society”, “Enclosure”, “Anti-ecumenists of the patristic calendar” is more appropriate.

Based on the above and in light of it, serious omissions can be interpreted or (and perhaps precisely in this way) explained.^[17]

In the text, namely:

1 Positioning regarding the nature and properties of the calendar innovation, both in terms of its implementation and in terms of its ecclesiological consequences for the local Churches and their fullness;

- 2 Specific positioning, if not nominal, in relation to the history of preservation of (Apostolic Succession), referred to in the text as a «*dogmatically necessary hierarchical structure*»^[18] regarding the certification of the Apostolic Succession and canonicity of the “True Orthodox Church”. (Note – The text incorrectly states that the Apostolic Succession of the Hierarchy was preserved, at least with regard to the Greek part, through the transition of the hierarchs from the innovation, although, as is known, under the Florineites this branch had no continuation.)
- 3 Positioning regarding the important and urgent issue and phenomenon of the almost universal abrogation of the correct form of Orthodox baptism by newcomers and, as a consequence, the need to perform it again.
- 4 Positioning – Confession of the basic ecclesiological postulate and the Orthodox teaching that outside the Church at all and, unconditionally, among the New Style-Ecumenists, there are no Sacraments, since there is no enlightening and sanctifying Grace either in schisms or in heresies.
- 5 A clarified positioning in relation to the functions and competencies of the Councils and their decisions in general in the sense that the decision of the Council as such does not make anyone a heretic or elevate them in rank, but this does make his very heresy, his very apostasy, violation and deviation from the path of the Fathers. As well as the fact that neither the Saints nor the pious have ever waited (and it is not worth it) for the decision of the Council to move away from heresy, to expose it and to fight it.

Despite our readiness to approve in principle the positive event of the elimination of the division, as well as the publication in our difficult times of great confusion and apostasy of the pretentious ecclesiological text, however, the necessary caution and church criteria force us to act primarily as “*preservers of the truth with love*”. That is why we have placed here, maintaining a benevolent attitude and with due seriousness, the shortcomings and deviations that ultimately negatively affect the authority and trust, and above all, the Orthodoxy itself, of the authors of the text

under discussion. However, they are aimed at defending and testifying to Orthodoxy and to the common good.

As a result of this first study and theological examination of the Ecclesiological Text, we have arrived at the following basic general conclusions regarding it:

- A) The term and definition “*The True Orthodox Church*” – it is not permissible and unjustified to use it as inappropriate when ecclesiological slippery postulates exist and are confirmed in the ecclesiological positioning “Enclosure”, which consist in waiting for an indefinite time for the complete and final condemnation and rejection of the apostasy Novostily – Ecumenism of the future “Great Council”, which must be convened, and which is recognized as the only one capable and authorized to make a legitimate decision against it.
- C) Nothing but verbal delusion is the simultaneous support of the above issue (rather theoretically, in writing and officially) and the creation of a full-fledged church Synodal structure and governance, as a Local Orthodox Church.
- D) It seems contradictory to characterize Ecumenism as a pan-heresy and also as the greatest of heresies throughout the ages and at the same time adhere to a position that fixes uncertainty in the form of a necessity for the faithful and all others of the convened Great Council with the supposed prior unification of all the Local Churches of True Orthodoxy to submit to judgment and make a final and irrevocable decision regarding it.
- Δ) For the Orthodox Confession and for the canonical ecclesiological positioning of the “*True Orthodox Christians*” there is a noticeable lack of^[19] a clear mention of the creation of the Schism in 1924 due to the acceptance and instillation of the condemned Innovation of the New Style and an indication of the canonical consequences of this. This is also hindered by the indirect recognition of the fact that the New Stylers are in practice also ecumenists. Such harmful Confession and

ecclesiology disorient and discredit the True Orthodox Church and her Testimony.
Finally

F) By lacking a clear mention (in the Ecclesiological Text) of the Good Confession of the three hierarchs who returned from the Innovation in the Church in 1935 – among whom was the former Chrysostom of Florin – they belittle the historical testimony of True Orthodoxy in Greece and criminally silence the ecclesiological identity of the first Fathers and Confessor brothers, from whom we have received the Heritage of True Orthodoxy.

The severity of our last words does not come from ill-will. Rather, it comes from the active interest of Orthodoxy, against which we do not wish to sacrifice anything, so that, if necessary, this must first of all be confirmed in practice.

We understand that it is difficult for some to admit when they are forced to say, “Behold, we have deviated from the path of truth.” However, we hope that our benevolent criticism, becoming known to people who are responsible and interested, will lead to rethinking and constructive discussion for the good of Orthodoxy. So be it.

[1] [The influence of Latin theology is felt in the Greek terminology, since in the original there is the word κύριος, i.e. lawful, legitimate.]

[2] [Lit. – something spoiled.]

[3] [Declared in these half-hearted encyclicals in 1950 and 1974.]

[4] [Footnote to the original – It should be noted here that the very use of the term “passage”, and not the term “return” from the innovation, signals that their text

lacks an idea of the events of 1935, such as the transfer of the Apostolic Succession of the Church to the IPC of Greece through the return to the IPC of three hierarchs, Metropolitan German of Demetriades, the former Chrysostom of Florina and Chrysostom of Zakynthos, of whom the first two “*received consecration from the Fathers*”, i.e. they were canonically ordained, being within the fold of the Orthodox Church before the schism that occurred in 1924. Although it should be noted that none of the hierarchs participating in the unification effected by the ecclesiological text under discussion, and does not elevate their succession to the episcopal ordinations of these three metropolitans. And the use of the word “passage” was probably chosen to smooth over the situation with the New Style Bishop Galaktion (Cordun) of Romania, ordained after the introduction of the New Style in Romania, who in 1955 passed to the groups of Romanian Old Stylers (who had by then lost their bishops) and who was accepted by them as a canonical hierarch, and from whose ordinations the hierarchy of the Romanian Old Stylers, headed by Metropolitan Blaise, which also participated in the unification and signed the discussed ecclesiological unification document, originated.]

[5] [Footnote to the original – But it is by no means absolutely indisputable that the ROCOR was the “*True Orthodox Church Hierarchy with indisputable Apostolic Succession*”, because on the one hand, from the very beginning of its existence, it was in full Eucharistic communion with those who in the text under consideration are called “official churches” (with the exception of the Moscow Patriarchate), who in turn either themselves adopted the new calendar or were also in full church communion with the Novostilts, and on the other hand, in some places even it itself used the new calendar, and in some cases the new Paschalia. Also of great importance is the fact, well known to all, that one of those who performed the anti-canonical ordination of the first bishop for a group, later known as the “Akakians” of Akakiy Pappas, was the Romanian Bishop Theophil Ionescu, who was always a Novoslite, and remained so even after joining the RPZC and after being elevated to the episcopal rank within the RPZC. And another Bishop Evgraf Kovalevsky, ordained by the RPZC bishops Ioann Maksimovich and Theophil Ionescu, turned out to be not only a Novoslite, but also a supporter of the new Paschalia and also used in his official practice a statute created similar to the Latin one, with the knowledge, of course, of the leadership of the RPZC, with which he

remained in full church communion for many years. For these reasons, the authenticity of this Church, as well as the Continuity of the “Akakians”, is questionable.

Moreover, the recognition of the ROC as “True” and the construction of Apostolic Succession from it for the IOC, regardless of the above-mentioned deviations from the actual truth, contradicts the fact that it proclaims the very ecclesiological text under discussion in Part A, paragraph 10: “ *Every bishop who preaches heresy publicly and openly in the Church, who evangelizes more than we have accepted, or is in syncretic communion with pagans and non-believers, especially if he acts so persistently and constantly, becomes a false bishop and a false teacher .*” (Rule 15 of the Twice-Conciliar Council) . *The bishops who are in communion with him, who show indifference or who allow or accept his views and their practical expression, perish together with him . (Rev. Theodore the Studite) . And thus, they cease to be canonical and in communion with the Church , because the Catholicity of the Church, its unity and true Apostolic Succession, which firmly guarantee the canonicity of the bishop and his abiding in communion with the Church, are founded, derived and secured by the correct and saving Confession of Faith .*

Here we have nothing to object to the above. Since the bishops of the ROC were in communion with the Neostyles or with those who had church communion with the Neostyles, then it can only be perceived as relating to those who “*show indifference or allow or accept their views and their practical expression*”. Therefore, the ecclesiological text itself testifies that these bishops were not in the position of those who were “*canonical and in communion*” with the True Orthodox Church, which has no communion with the Neostyles. For this reason, the statement of the ecclesiological text at the end of section E(D) regarding the transmission of Apostolic Succession through episcopal ordinations to its Church hierarchy, i.e. the ROC, is erroneous and cannot be acceptable to the True Orthodox.]

[6] [Footnote to the original – In connection with the announcement of a specific position on the sacraments, we consider it appropriate and useful to mention and

note that in the past these two united groups held diametrically opposed positions on this issue. On this basis, one might expect that in the officially distributed text, similar to the studies we have conducted, devoted to general ecclesiology, instead of the aforementioned contradictory and confused positioning (of non-affirmation), it would be clearly presented. And what is their current new common position, and therefore either both sides retain (change) their previous positions, or perhaps a silence (avoidance of discussion) of the differences is agreed upon, and perhaps even more, an opportunity is left for each of the parties to adhere to “*their own*” views! Obviously, however, proceeding from the relevant theses, general and particular, from the General Text, one is left with the impression that rather the “Akakians” have significantly deviated from their previous positions. In a situation where it is clearly unacceptable, and according to the general impression both in the spirit and in the letter of the text, confusion is logically created and, whether consciously or not, an attempt is made with this common ecclesiological text to combine incompatible things. Perhaps we have before us the application and use in practice of the “*theory of Comprehensiveness*” (translator’s note – more precisely, of a large-format, multi-structural unification of the multitude without their synthesis). By the way, “*Comprehensiveness or collectivity or breadth of frameworks*”, as Professor Konstantin Skouteris notes, is opposed to Catholicism because it allows disagreement on matters of faith without the need to provoke a schism. And this theory is the cornerstone of Anglicanism and ecumenism, like the World Council of Churches (WCC), and does not differ significantly from the fides reflexive of the Second Vatican Council, through which unification / union is achieved. For example, in this case, Omnipotence would allow each “bishopric” of the now “united” Old Style groups to have the possibility of further accepting at their discretion those New Stylers who come under their jurisdiction, whether by chrism, as heretics, or without it! This also follows from the possibility, even in matters of Faith, given to the bishops, what follows from the text, “*so that they may have free will in the governance of the Church, having to give an account of their actions to the Lord.*” But then we are no longer talking about unity of Faith, but about the consent of tolerance.]

[7] [That is, we may no longer go into detail about the reasons for the silence.]

[8] [Note on the text: Therefore, in order to stop possible attempts to justify such a position on the part of the compilers of the text or its other supporters, we must note that in this case we cannot refer to the Apostolic «*Что́ бо мѝ и внеѣшних судѝти; ... Внеѣшних же Бѡгъ судитъ.*» (1 Cor 5: 12-13). We cannot refer to the position of modern dogmatists such as Professor I. Romanidou, who in his dogmatic study notes that “*where there is no Orthodox dogma (Orthodox teaching) the Church cannot speak positively about the effectiveness of the sacraments.*” (Romanides. Essays on Orthodox Dogmatics, pp. 80-81). And since it explains its position and its content, if we proceed from the position and the correct positioning – when there is no Orthodox Teaching, the Church cannot speak of the presence (availability) of the Sacraments, since it goes without saying that they are not there.]

[9] [Note: translation – in a standard manner, i.e. within the framework of current church issues at the annual local/bishopric councils of the church.]

[10] [Discovering convenience.]

[11] [ἐνεργεία. not realized, ineffective.]

[12] [Translator's note – in the original there is a play on words хоризнать – харизнать I separate myself / I give myself into someone's hands, I give myself to someone.]

[13] [If one follows their logic.]

[14] [To condemn one thing and to treat another with tolerance.]

[15] [Octoich Ch. 7 Matins Fourth 2nd Canon Canto 6th, 2nd Tropar.]

[16] [Kyrix Gnision Orthodoxon, Volume 29 No. 74 pp. 66-75.]

[17] [Lack of reflection in the text on the following issues.]

[18] [Lit., dogmatic necessity of episcopal rank.]

[19] [The text under discussion lacks the necessary elements to be considered an Orthodox confession.]