

# WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF ECUMENISM?

by Hieromonk Savva (of Kosovo, Serbia)



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The fundamental goal and the primary task of the ecumenical movement is to re-interpret Christianity or, in other words, to annihilate Orthodoxy completely. The dialogue between various Christian confessions as, also, the dialogue between Christianity and Islam and Judaism (and other religions, as well) is one of the tasks that is a part of an over-all plan for unifying the sum-total of humanity. The only thing that is necessary to achieve this aim is the convocation of a new "Ecumenical Council", one that would be truly universal (oikumenikos), because those councils which have been convened are not deemed to be councils by the ecumenists; otherwise, they would respect the decisions and rulings of said councils. This new "Ecumenical Council" will need to declare "new truths" to all the world. To date, we could show how, by a simple, one-sided act, the anathemas against Papism have been annulled; how Monophysites are declared to be "Oriental Orthodox"; how the "holy mysteries" of the heretics are recognized openly as being valid. Much of this would be officially adopted by the [projected] "Ecumenical Council," and would be enforced by way of a conciliar decision. It is at such a

council, for the convocation of which the Patriarchate of Constantinople is striving, and for which it has been preparing itself in the course of many decades no later than the end of this century, according to Patriarch Bartholomew that the worldwide union of Christianity would be declared.

Essentially, the ecumenists envision the universal union of "churches," which will serve as the leaven for the entire oikoumene in its turning of the world into the Kingdom of God on earth. Inasmuch as the consummate aim of ecumenism is to unite all religions, it is entirely logical to conclude that that is why, today, it is evermore underscored that not only do individual [Christian] churches, as such, not possess the fullness of truth, but that even Christianity itself does not possess it. In other words, the truth concerning God the Creator (according to the ecumenists) surpasses all individually existent religious forms, finding its perfect expression only in the vast multiplicity of world religions and traditions. For an explication of this, ecumenists resort to the example of an extremely high mountain, the pinnacle of which can be reached from all sides. It is possible (according to them) to reach God by way of Christianity, as well as by way of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, etc.; hence, there is no need to convert the adherents of one religion to another, because the "inspiration of the Holy Spirit" is ostensibly present in all of these religions. Such thoughts, in essence, have

already been spread throughout Europe and America, in the course of decades, by a multitude of Hindu gurus. It should be noted that the ecumenical movement, which [ostensibly] began for the sake of unifying all Christians, has ever more intensely expanded its dialogue and contacts with non-Christians (for example, in Canberra, in Assisi, in Milan, etc.).

It can be seen, from this, that the goals of ecumenism are not exhausted by the unification of Christian confessions. But it is specifically in relation to this plan that the task appears to be particularly difficult, because true Christianity which is possessed only by the Orthodox Church poses the chief peril to this entire idea.

It is for this reason that such great efforts are being expended to water-down Orthodoxy by way of uniting it with various heresies. Then, the realization of the remainder of this plan will in no way appear difficult, as most of the other religions do not absolutize their teaching as concerns its being the only true and correct doctrine. Consequently, unity in diversity becomes essential. In other words, the task consists not of creating a single new religion with a unified cultus and doctrine; far better is it to declare that all religions are but manifestations of a single spiritual reality.

These concepts are also being developed flagrantly by the freemasons who, in the opinion of many spiritual authorities, are the

foremost motive force behind the entire [ecumenical] movement, which can be divided into two parts: firstly, the political and economic, and secondly, the spiritual unification of the world. Hence, the majority of the movers and shakers behind the secular, worldwide ecumenical movement, if they are not directly involved in, then they are, at the very least, found to be influenced by world masonry.

The question is posed: is it possible to be both a mason and a Christian, at one and the same time? For inveterate ecumenists, there is no dilemma here. They perceive Christianity as being one of the most powerful and most authoritative expressions of Divine Truth although, of course, not the only expression... In accordance with their doctrinal stance, Divine Truth finds expression through all religions, but on various levels. On the lower-most level one finds the totemic and animistic religions, which express the idea of God on a quite primitive plane. At the very pinnacle are the great religions of the world, among which one also finds Christianity. Those initiated into the mysteries of this gnosis perceive the very greatest religions as being various "folkloric and cultural models" of one and the same content. It is for this reason that there is much feverish striving among ecumenists to uplift the so-called "common folk" to the level of a single neo-Christianity; a Christianity purged of all historic and cultural anachronisms, such as church canons, which are viewed by present-day ecumenists as being merely surviving remnants of the

historic past.

Perhaps this is that "Christianity" which is being sought after by Archbishop Iakovos of America [former head of the Greek Archdiocese of North and South America]. A "Christianity" free of "disquieting" patristic terminology and of truths that can now be accepted only with extreme difficulty. These "obsolete archaisms" are the foremost obstacle to ecumenism; therefore, the response is clear to the question: why do ecumenists so openly trample upon the canons and traditions of the [Orthodox] Church? It is because, for them, these possess only museum-piece and archaeological value. If the ecumenists' way of thinking is clear to us, we should not find it difficult to understand how the Patriarch [of Constantinople] (and not he alone) can extend felicitations to Muslims on their festival of "Bayram" and pray in a mosque, alongside an imam. The leaders of the ecumenical movement believe that all religions serve a single, common God, and that Divine inspiration is present in each and every one of them attired, of course, in a local cultural and civic form.

Those who have reached such a level of convergence in the unity of all religions perceive the God to whom they pray in their own way. There are no essential differences. But, in order that there might be an opportunity for the broad masses of humanity to sense this truth, it is necessary to free Christianity (and all religions) of all those elements peculiar to them, which encourage proselytism, an aggressive spirit,

and the conviction that "my religion alone is correct, and all others are in error" in other words, to develop a spirit of tolerance and mutual understanding.

As a result of such understanding, people will begin to recognize their brother in every man, and their own faith and God in every other faith. The problem, it appears, is an hermeneutical one; i.e., one of interpretation. It is necessary to understand what lies concealed behind the signs and symbols of the various religious traditions of the "inspired books." The ecumenists re-interpret in their own fashion the fundamental evangelic idea of the churching of all men into a single Church of God; into a single faith (that which is the Kingdom of Heaven in its fullness). Likewise, the Second Coming of the Lord, and the general resurrection. Fundamentally, whether consciously or unconsciously so, they preach the chiliastic idea of an historic "Kingdom of God" here on earth. We all know well from Holy Writ and from patristic literature that such an idea is not realizable. All men are called to salvation, but not all men respond to this call.

Christ manifested the name of God to such men as were given to Him by His Heavenly Father before the creation of the world (John 17, 6): "It is for them that I pray..." (John 17, 9). The Lord came not to save the world, which lieth in evil, but to save men from the world and from the prince of this world, because the world is his weapon in his battle against the Lord and His Church. It is for this reason that

the Church and the world are on a collision-course, the one with the other. The Church and Christians are not of this world (comp. John 17, 16). They dwell in the world temporarily, as strangers, because their [true] fatherland is in the heavens. The Lord teaches us: "Were ye of the world, the world would love its own; but, as ye are not of the world, but I chose you from out of the world, therefore doth the world hate you." (John 15, 19) "Love not the world; neither that which is in the world: for whosoever loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (I John 2, 15) It is possible to see clearly in all of Holy Writ that a clear distinction must be made between the members of the Church and the rest of mankind, which is outside the Church.

There exists no evidence capable of showing that the entire world will accept the Gospel prior to the end of this age. There is not a single word concerning the transformation of the entire world into the Church during this period of time as the zealots of ecumenism believe. On the contrary: Holy Writ teaches us that the number of true Christians will diminish, because the Lord asks whether He will find faith in men when He returns again to earth. The Lord teaches us that Christians will needs be given over to torments; that many will be destroyed; and that all nations will hate them, for His name's sake. There will appear many false prophets and shall deceive many... (Matt. 24: 9-12) He openly says to heretics and to all those who have

fallen away from truth: "Many will say to Me in that day: Lord! Lord! was it not in Thine name that we preached? And was it not by Thine name that we cast out devils? And was it not through Thine name that we wrought many miracles? And then will I declare unto them: I never knew you; depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity!" (Matt. 7: 22-23)

These clear witnesses of Holy Writ show that ecumenism, in its essence, is a chiliastic heresy; a heresy which reveals itself through its insistence upon the realization of unity through a compromise between truth and falsehood between good and evil, between Christ and Belial so that a single "new Church" might be created thereby, and a "new world" therewith, as well.

The ecumenists seemingly forget that "The Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; then shall the heavens pass away with a great noise; the elements, kindled with a great heat, shall be destroyed; and the earth and all the works upon it shall be consumed by fire." (II Peter 3, 10) They forget that it is only at the conclusion of this age that new heavens and a new earth will appear; and that it is along with them that all of the Lord's faithful will be united in that unity which is not the fruit of human effort, but of the creative power of God.

The history of the Church teaches us that Christianity never

spread abroad by means of dialogue and compromise with the godless, but rather by means of a living witness to the truth and of its conflict with every falsehood and error.

Did the Apostles attend the temples of the godless in order that they might there entreat God for the world alongside pagan priests? and did they offer up incense to Him there? The ecumenists, meanwhile, triumphantly declare that the times of "intolerance and disaccord" have become a thing of the past. They proclaim a false peace: not that [peace] which comes from Christ ("My peace I give unto you!"), but the peace which is a result of false compromise.

From all of this, it is clear that ecumenism represents an important feature of that entire multitude of attempts by European Man to replace God with Man; to replace truth with falsehood; and to replace the heavens with a putrid world. We recognize in ecumenism those selfsame elements which can be seen in papism, humanism, communism, and in the many other "-isms" of fallen European Man. And, as the counterfeit of all this, are the intentions of the "prince of this world," the devil, to establish on earth his kingdom, his pseudo-church, and to place at her head his chosen one, the false Christ, Antichrist. This is the fundamental goal and direction of the ecumenical heresy.

In order that all these ecumenical ideas might penetrate into the

fabric of society, and in order that they might prove acceptable to the common man, it was necessary to create the necessary corresponding conditions. And what played into the hands of the ecumenists, to a great extent, was the loss, among Orthodox believers, of the awareness that there are not only bishops and clergy in the Church, but believers, as well. And although the pastors of the Church discuss questions of the faith, their decisions have no true worth if they are not adopted by the entire body of the Church, and if these decisions do not find a place in the daily liturgical life of the Church. Throughout Church history there have been many examples of how bishops brought about various unions, introduced heresies, and did other such things; but the people did not accept these and openly withstood their iniquitous decisions, not infrequently also throwing off these false pastors who turned out to be wolves-in-sheep's-clothing. Such, too, was the example of the Florentine union, which was officially concluded.

Today we are witnesses to that complete indifference, on the part of the majority of the faithful, to the most essential and fundamental questions of our faith. There exists a general conviction that these questions must be discussed only by theologians and by hierarchs, and that the people must accept unconditionally that which is offered up to them. There is a great peril concealed in this [viewpoint]. Nevertheless, one of the faithful guardians of the Orthodox Church

is monasticism. Throughout its entire history, it was never indifferent to its faith.

The lives of monks consist of a podvig [(spiritual) exploit] of repentance and of withdrawal from the world. They flee from judging their neighbor in his moral falls, considering themselves to be sinners and the worst of all men. But, when it is demanded of monks that they remain humble and indifferent to questions of faith, then do they cast off false humility and false obedience. They always rise up when the truth of Orthodoxy is threatened. They are supported in this by a living conscience and by a sense of responsibility for that faith for which our forebears, martyrs and confessors alike sacrificed everything, even their very lives.

It is possible to come to salvation through repentance after every sin committed, but if we lose the true faith, we lose unity with Christ and fall into unrepentant pride, which is that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit for which there is no forgiveness. Not, of course, because the Lord will not forgive us [even] this, but because by falling into heresy the Christian loses his living unity with God. Alienating himself from Divine Grace, he becomes an idolater, the worshiper of a false God, of a counterfeit Christ, directly behind whom stands Satan himself, as the creator of all evil and deceit.

There is not, and cannot be, any authentic spiritual experience in

heresy; there is no Divine Grace nor sanctity there, nor salvation, but only an ever-greater fall into heresy. Man falls into the realm of prelest [(spiritual) beguilement], of spiritual deception and falsehood, and becomes a communicant of the devil and of his evil energies. It is a great mistake to believe that heretics serve the same God as do right-believers; but this, alas, is an important element of present-day ecumenism, which goes even further and supposes that a genuine spiritual life, holiness, and salvation exist outside of Christian confessions, as well.

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