

Papism, the Hagiorite Fathers, and the Aftermath of the “Balamand Union”¹

[Translated from the Greek by Patrick G. Barker]

I

Fifteen years ago, because of the impending establishment of diplomatic relations between the Greek government and the Vatican, an important text entitled “The Holy Mountain and the Vatican: Declaration of the Sacred Community of the Holy Mountain” (Karyes, July 13, 1979) was released.²

This “Declaration,” which was signed by “all of the Representatives in the Common Assembly and the Superiors of the Twenty Sacred Monasteries of the Holy Mount Athos,”

—*characterized* Papism as “an enemy of Orthodoxy”;

—*decried* the “Papal régime” as “hateful to God”;

—*censured* the Papists for “resorting to all possible means to destroy Orthodoxy”;

—*emphatically stated* that the goal of Papism is “the subjugation of everyone to the Pope by making all mankind Catholic”;

—*observed* that Papism is a “derelict and destructive institution”;

—and finally, *sounded an alarm*, so all might come to know into what calamity “the Orthodox Greek people” are being drawn “through the machinations of the Papal *Nuncio* in the middle of Athens, with the deplorable Unia as his instrument.”

This “Declaration” was indeed a noteworthy text, even though the Greek government still fell into the “snare” of the Vatican’s “diplomatic skills” and concluded a “Concordat.”

Now, however, we behold a serious about-face:

—*at that time* (1979), the Papists came under fire from Mt. Athos, indeed a hail of fire, over a proposal, in the first stages of diplomatic exchanges between the Greek government and the Vatican, that through the “Concordat” diplomatic cover would be provided for “Papist propaganda in Greece”;

—*today* (1994), when through the “Balamand Union”³ the Orthodox ecumenists now officially recognize Papism, with its manifold heresies, and Uniatism, that wolf in sheep’s clothing, as “Sister Churches,” and when certainly the potential for harm is beyond compare more fearful, since the soteriological and ecclesiological exclusiveness of Orthodoxy as the One and Unique Church of Christ is thereby simply abolished, the Hagiorite Fathers are silent and fail to offer with courage a public renunciation and repudiation of the treacherous “Balamand Agreement,” or, in any event, of the ecumenical context of its theological and ecclesiological presuppositions, which is assuredly the main point at issue.

Why is it indeed, we wonder, that the “entire Holy Mountain” is not disconcerted, especially now that Papism is not a simple “enemy of Orthodoxy,” but is “equated” with Her, and now that Papists and Orthodox are “discovering” and “recognizing” each other as “Sister Churches”?

II

Almost eight months have passed since the “Seventh Plenary Session of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue” between Orthodox and Papists at Balamand, Lebanon (June 17-24, 1993)—in which twenty-four Papists and thirteen Orthodox, representing only nine out of the fifteen Orthodox Churches, took part—and the signing of the “Balamand Union.”

Although the Hagiorite Fathers did not reckon it their highest duty to promulgate another critical and informative “Declaration,” they did issue a very interesting list of five points entitled “About the Assembly of Orthodox and Papists concerning the Unia,”⁴ by means of which they quite satisfactorily dissected and condemned the “Balamand Agreement.” Towards the end of this document, they make note of the following:

In any case, questions remain, and it would be good for those responsible to give definite explanations.... They are obliged to do this in their capacity as representatives of the Orthodox people in the union dialogue. *And this should be done as quickly as possible.* The avoidance of explanations leads to the thought that certain suspicions [about betrayal—our note] have a basis and contain some truth. *Let us hope that the necessary explanations will be forthcoming in a timely manner.*⁵

Were “the necessary explanations,” *in fact*, forthcoming, let alone in a “timely manner”?

Alas, unfortunately anyone who awaits “explanations” from the Latinizers of Lebanon must show great patience, for following Bala-

mand, the successive falls of the Orthodox ecumenists—in 1993 alone—have been so great that these “necessary explanations” will require no small amount of time, if indeed they are ever offered!

But what were these new falls of the Orthodox ecumenists?

1. *Participation* in the “Ecumenical Global Gathering of Youth and Students” (EGGYS), under the aegis of the Youth Division of the WCC, in Mendes, Brazil (July 17-26, 1993).⁶

2. *Participation* in the “Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order” of the WCC in the Spanish city of Santiago de Compostela (August 3-14, 1993).⁷

3. *The participation* of Patriarch Bartholomew in the Jubilee ceremonies of the Swedish Lutherans on the four-hundredth anniversary of the Synod of Uppsala in 1593 (August 20-31, 1993).⁸

4. *Participation* in the seventh annual “Pan-religious Meeting” in Milan, a continuation of the first such meeting in Assisi (September 19-22, 1993).⁹

5. *Participation* in the “Second World Parliament of Religions” in Chicago, on the centenary of the first such event in the same city (1893), which is reckoned to be the beginning of the inter-faith movement.¹⁰

6. *The decision* of the Fourth Assembly of the “Joint Commission for Dialogue” between Orthodox and Non-Chalcedonian Monophysites in Geneva to promote a procedure for lifting the anathemas on both sides and restoring full communion (November 1-6, 1993).¹¹

Hoping that we will be given the opportunity to report at length on further official and more recent falls of the Orthodox ecumenists in these pan-Christian and pan-religious meetings of 1993, we deem that, for the present, a statement by the veteran ecumenist Evangelos Theodorou will most eloquently and adequately suffice: “It is at last time to curb the *run-away confessional syncretism and relativism* of the ecumenical movement, such that ecumenism is but rolling the stone of Sisyphos.”¹²

It should be noted that not only are “confessional syncretism and relativism” taking off at a gallop, but unfortunately for the ecumenists embroiling Orthodoxy in this “adventure,” *pan-religious syncretism*—whose vaulting horse the WCC (Nairobi, 1975) has been for nearly twenty years now—is moving forward at a galloping pace.

As a symptom of this, let us note that in the ecumenical meeting of Christian youth in Brazil this past July, there were, in addition to others, the following tragic things to be cited:

—*there was not* a Christian spiritual atmosphere at the meeting;

—non-Christian symbols were used in worship (e.g., the *Yin* and the *Yang*);

—an invitation to aerobic exercises *was extended* to the participants for their relaxation;

—*the keynote speaker* was the notorious, young Korean Presbyterian feminist and theologian Chung Hyun-Kyung, whose syncretistic presence in Canberra (Seventh General Assembly of the WCC, February 7-20, 1991) provoked a great uproar and who has not hesitated since then to proclaim that “*Buddhism and Shamanism are my mother, and my father is Christianity*”!¹³

In Brazil, Dr. Chung set forth her vision once again: Asian spirituality and experience, paganism, the vital energy *Ki*, ecu-feminism, life-centeredness, and an urging of the young people “*to do greater things than Jesus with the power of the Holy Spirit*”!¹⁴

III

So, *while* we are still awaiting “the necessary explanations,” and though Patriarch Bartholomew has up to now referred approvingly to the “Agreement of Lebanon” at least four times,¹⁵ we are informed that the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Patriarchate convened (July 6-8, 1993), examined and *approved* the text of the “Balamand Union,” and confirmed the “advisory” character of this text for the Orthodox with regard to their behavior towards Papists and Uniates.¹⁶

It is assuredly well-known—and perhaps we shall report on this question at greater length on another occasion—,¹⁷ that the Romanian Patriarchate is the most daring of Churches with regard to practical ecumenical initiatives within its jurisdiction, and its approval of the “Balamand Agreement” precisely expresses the erosion of its confession—a fact which is demonstrated, in addition, by an article by the Romanian Metropolitan Nicholas of Banat on the issue.

Since *this hapless Hierarchy* praises the Lebanon text, and especially the theology of “Sister Churches,” he also unreservedly accepts the theology of the “two lungs”:¹⁸

It has been said, and not without reason, that the Orthodox and Catholic Churches resemble the two lungs with which a man breathes. Let [the Churches] breathe from now on with both lungs and let them avoid those instances in which—for legitimate reasons or not—we maintain that we are in the state of a normal man, although we have blocked the one lung or want to ignore it.¹⁹

IV

In concluding this brief report on the aftermath of the “Balamand Union,” we think it worthwhile to add a couple of words about how the Uniates have dealt with the Lebanon text.

The present Archbishop of the Ukrainian Uniates, Miroslav Cardinal Lubachivsky, wrote Edward Cardinal Cassidy a very detailed letter (August 3, 1993), which analyzes and approves the text of the agreement, and sent copies to all of the members of the Joint International Commission for Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue (to both sides that took part in the Seventh Plenary Session), as well as to all the leaders of the so-called Uniate churches.²⁰

Because of the lack of space, we will not undertake an analysis of this letter, except to observe that this act by Lubachivsky was characterized as “a courageous initiative” and “particularly timely,” because a harsh critique of the Lebanon text had already been mounted by various Uniates, who, together with Lubachivsky, fail to display an attitude of repentance for their criminal past and are especially displeased that the Orthodox have not “repented” for their anti-Uniatism!²¹

All of those who have dealt more profoundly with the whole question of the Uniates, its connection with the Orthodox-Papist “Dialogue” and the “Balamand Agreement” (with all of its presuppositions and ramifications), understand the double meaning of the foregoing statements.

The near future will show more clearly the abyss into which the ecumenists are heading “at a gallop,” dragging along with them the Hagiorites, who are keeping a treacherous silence, and the “conservative” New Calendarists who simply continue to protest.

May the Lady *Theotokos* grant enlightenment and awakening!

NOTES

1. Trans. from *Hagios Kyprianos*, no. 258 (January-February 1994), pp. 211-215.

2. “The Holy Mountain and the Vatican: Declaration of the Sacred Community of the Holy Mountain” (Karyes, Mt. Athos: “The Friends of the Holy Mountain,” July 13, 1979).

3. See *Orthodoxos Enimerosis*, no. 14 (July-September 1993), pp. 33-40: “Official Recognition of Papism as a ‘Sister Church’—the ‘Balamand Union.’” • The following, more recent works should be added to the foregoing bibliographical citation: The full text of this special issue of *Orthodoxos Enimerosis* has been translated into English (*The Balamand Union: A Victory of Vatican Diplomacy* [Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1994]) and Russian (Fili, Greece: Holy Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, 1994) for the information of our Orthodox brethren in the diaspora; *Episkepsis*, no. 496 (September 1993), pp. 26-32 (the full text of the “Balamand Agreement”); *Ho Sotir*, nos. 1528-1533 (October 27-December 1, 1993), sections 1-5: “About the Assembly of the Orthodox and Papists concerning the Unia”; *Provoslavno Slovo* (published by

the Old Calendar Bulgarian Orthodox Church), no. 10 (1993), pp. 16-22: "The 'Orthodox' Ecumenists Recognize Papism as a 'Sister Church'"; *Orthodoxos Paratiritis*, no. 47 [108] (September-October 1993), pp. 80-83: "The New Calendarist Innovators Visit the Balamand School in Lebanon for a New Betrayal of Orthodoxy"; *Enimerosis*, 9-1993/12, p. 3: "Meeting of Officials of the WCC with the Leaders of the Pontifical Congregation for Christian Unity"; *Irénikon*, 66:3 (1993), pp. 347-356 (the original French text of the "Balamand Agreement"), 370-371, and 439-441; and *Eastern Churches Journal*, 1:1 (Winter 1993-1994), pp. 17-25 (the full text of the "Balamand Agreement"), 14-16, 26-28, 29-35, 36-44, and 143-145.

4. *Ho Sotir*, nos. 1528-1533 (October 27-December 1, 1993).

5. *Ibid.*, no. 1533 (December 1, 1993), section 5, p. 663 [emphasis ours].

6. *Enimerosis*, 9-1993/8, pp. 2-3; *Peiraike Ekklesia*, no. 34 [141] (December 1993), pp. 46-47; *Katholike*, no. 2712 (October 26, 1993), pp. 1-2, no. 2713 (November 2, 1993), p. 2; *One World*, no. 189 (October 1993), pp. 4-7; *Ecumenical Press Service*, no. 21 (93.08.01, 93.08.17), no. 22 (93.08.18-29).

7. *Ekklesia*, no. 13 (September 1-15, 1993), no. 17 (November 15, 1993) [part of a continuing series]; Evangelos Theodorou, "Ecumenical Outpourings in Santiago de Compostela," in *Elevtheros Typos* (September 18, 1993 and following); *Katholike*, no. 2709 (October 5, 1993), p. 1; *Pantainos* (October-December 1993), pp. 22-23; *Enimerosis*, 9-1993/12, pp. 1-3: "World Council of Churches: The Two Most Significant Events of 1993"; *One World*, no. 189 (October 1993), pp. 12-17; *Ecumenical Press Service*, no. 21 (93.08.01, 93.08.17), no. 22 (93.08.18-29).

8. *Hagios Kyprianos*, nos. 255-257 (July-December 1993), pp. 172-175: "A New Great Fall of Patriarch Bartholomew in Sweden" (containing a relevant bibliography).

9. *Pantainos* (October-December 1993), p. 16; *Katholike*, no. 2705 (July 20, 1993), p. 4, no. 2714 (November 9, 1993), p. 4; *Ecumenical Press Service*, no. 25 (93.10.02).

10. *Irénikon*, 66:3 (1993), pp. 402-403; *One World*, no. 190 (November 1993), pp. 14-15, no. 192 (January-February 1994), p. 22; *Ecumenical Press Service*, no. 24 (93.09.63); *Synaxi*, no. 46 (April-June 1993), pp. 36-37.

11. *Episkepsis*, no. 498 (November 30, 1993), pp. 2-8; *Ho Sotir*, no. 1541 (February 2, 1994), pp. 65-66 (continuation).

12. *Ekklesia*, no. 13 (September 1-15, 1993), p. 498, no. 14 (October 1, 1993), p. 514b [emphasis ours].

13. *Enimerosis*, 8-1992/5, p. 4 [emphasis ours].

14. *Ecumenical Press Service*, no. 20 (93.07.22).

15. See Patriarch Bartholomew's "message" to the Pope on the Patronal Feast of Rome (*Episkepsis*, no. 493 [June 30, 1993], p. 7); the Patriarch's "address" to Edward Cardinal Cassidy at the Patronal Feast of Constantinople (*Episkepsis*, no. 499 [December 31, 1993], p. 8); and his "statements" to Bishop Michael Kutsmyak, Exarch in the British Isles for the Ukrainian Uniate Church, on November 11, 1993 (*Eastern Churches Journal*, 1:1 [Winter 1993-1994], pp. 14-16).

16. *Irénikon*, 66:3 (1993), pp. 370-371.

17. See, for example, last year's ecumenical events in *Katholike*, no. 2686 (March 2, 1993): "With the Participation of Orthodox, Catholics, Anglicans, and Lutherans: The 'Week for Unity' in the Churches of Romania—the Building of a Church to Serve Everybody."

18. For the theology of the "two lungs," see *Orthodoxos Enimerosis*, no. 14 (September-December 1993), p. 35, and *The Balamand Union: A Victory of Vatican Diplomacy* (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1994), pp. 8-9.

19. *Irénikon*, 66:3 (1993), pp. 370-371.

20. *Eastern Churches Journal*, 1:1 (Winter 1993-1994), pp. 25-35; *Irénikon*, 66:3 (1993), pp. 439-441.

21. *Ibid.*