

“Water and Eco-Theology from Orthodox Perspective”

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ABSTRACT:

Water is the source and basis of life on this planet, to which every form of living being, or biological life owes its existence. Water is a prerequisite but also a harbinger of the continuation of life. Water and life, man and water, world and water, are among the interrelated philosophical, theological and scientific schemes that determine the relationship of man with God, environment, and the ecological crisis today. The special place of water in theology, from the primary Biblical references of Creation to an-created brought the subjective questions about man's relationship with the material world. The answers from the point of view of the Orthodox go beyond the dichotomy of man and the world, offering a deeper ecology in which relationships and interactions in the context of Divine Economy are determined. Water is a divine gift and a common good for all creation and for all people. Cooperation at interreligious and interchristian level is therefore a de facto reality. Starting from the Garden of Eden and reaching out to how to deal with the proper use, fair distribution and conservation of water

resources. These correlations express a lot of positive orientations and assumptions of initiatives and anthropological experiences in every man and every human being, for the continuation of life on planet earth. Our shared responsibility must be based on solidarity, interdependence and proper water management, a need for dialogue between Science and Theology. This interrelated character, the common basis between Ecology and Eco-Theology that preserves man in the ecosystem, are some elements of the interventions underlined by the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

Key Words: Water, Orthodox, Theology, Ecology, Creation, Ecological sin, Greening of Religion, Churches, Ecumenical Patriarch

a) Water, the biblical background and its perspective

In references to the Book of Genesis, the water is part of Creation, originally coexisting with chaos, as God concentrates the waters in a place he calls "seas"¹. This duality may reflect the dual power of water, experienced primarily as a catastrophe before becoming the giver of the life (ζωογόνος/zoogonos). Since always human beings

¹ Ιωάννης Ζηζιούλας, Μητροπολίτης Περγάμου, (1997), “Θεολογική θεώρηση του οικολογικού προβλήματος”, στο Πρακτικά Συμποσίου, Διατμηματικό Συμπόσιο, *Ορθοδοξία και Φυσικό Περιβάλλον*, Θεσσαλονίκη, σσ.32-34. John Chryssavgis, (2010) ‘Icons, Liturgy, Saints: Ecological insights from Orthodox Spirituality’, in *International Review of Mission*, 99, 2, p. 181.

have amusement and a deeper fear when facing the seas or oceans. At first the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters² before creation began, stating the fact that water is a source before creation and becomes the basis for the creation that followed³. The sky and the earth came from the waters. The waters were blessed with abundant living creatures⁴. God uses water to nourish and sustain creation and gives it as a blessing to His entire Creation⁵. Water becomes a creation means of God. In other words, this is the salvation of God's creation. It is also important to note that water can become a tool of destruction in the face of human wickedness and ecological destruction⁶. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem underlines this importance:

«water is a wonderful thing and the most beautiful of the four sensible elements of the creation, the sky is the dwelling of angels but the skies are made of water; earth is the home of human and creations, but the earth has come out of the

² Γεν. 1, 2: «ή δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος, καὶ σκότος ἐπάνω τῆς ἀβύσσου, καὶ πνεῦμα Θεοῦ ἐπεφέρετο ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος». Μιλτιάδης Κωνσταντίνου, (1997), “Βιβλικές προϋποθέσεις αντιμετώπισης του οικολογικού προβλήματος”, στο Πρακτικά Συμποσίου, Διατμηματικό Συμπόσιο, *Ορθοδοξία και Φυσικό Περιβάλλον*, Θεσσαλονίκη, σσ. 114-116. Ευθυμίου, Στύλιου, (2003), *Ἀνθρωπος και Φυσικό Περιβάλλον*, εκδόσεις Γρηγόρη, Θεσσαλονίκη, σσ. 10-11.

³ Γεν. 1, 6-10. Ευθυμίου, Στύλιου, (2003), *Ἀνθρωπος και Φυσικό Περιβάλλον*, εκδόσεις Γρηγόρη, Θεσσαλονίκη, σσ. 12. Ηλίας Οικονόμου, (1996) *Θεολογική Οικολογία*, θεωρία και πράξη, εκδόσεις Δ. Μαυρομάτη, Αθήνα, σσ. 56-65.

⁴ Γεν. 1, 20-21: «Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Θεός· ἐξαγαγέτω τὰ ὕδατα ἐρπετὰ ψυχῶν ζωσῶν καὶ πετεινὰ πετόμενα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς κατὰ τὸ στερέωμα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. καὶ ἐγένετο οὕτως...». Ηλίας Οικονόμου, (1996) *Θεολογική Οικολογία*, θεωρία και πράξη, εκδόσεις Δ. Μαυρομάτη, Αθήνα, σσ.85-88.

⁵ Γεν. 1, 20-23, 2, 6. Ιωάννης Ζηζιούλας, Μητροπολίτης Περγάμου, (1997), “Θεολογική θεώρηση του οικολογικού προβλήματος”, στο Πρακτικά Συμποσίου, Διατμηματικό Συμπόσιο, *Ορθοδοξία και Φυσικό Περιβάλλον*, Θεσσαλονίκη, σ.35.

⁶ Γεν. 7, 1-24. Ηλίας Οικονόμου, (1996) *Θεολογική Οικολογία*, θεωρία και πράξη, εκδόσεις Δ. Μαυρομάτη, Αθήνα, σσ. 66-71.

waters; and before the creation of the visible things in six days, the spirit of God hovered over the waters. The water is the principle of the cosmos and the Jordan of the gospel»⁷.

The aim of this brief biblical overview is to highlight the creative thinking that underlines the importance of water to human communities as a life-giving and conservator of this complex called the ecosystem. As early as 1993, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, accepting the invitation of the European Commission, pointed out then that the ecological problem of our time requires a radical reassessment, of how we view the whole world. It needs a new attitude towards nature and a new understanding of the way we acquire and use material goods:

«the ecological problem of our times demands a radical reevaluation of how we see the entire world; it demands a different interpretation of matter and the world, a new attitude of humankind toward nature, and a new understanding of how we acquire and make use of our material goods»⁸.

The presence of water ensures life and the absence bring death. Can there be a theological justification or

⁷ *Catechetical Lecture 3*. In Salim Thanka Kumar, (2015), *Eco-theological Significance of water* (New Delhi: Christian World Imprints, p 59.

⁸ Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I. “Unity and Commonality: Address to the Plenary of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, April 19, 1994”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I*. Elizabeth Theokritoff, (2017), “Green patriarch, green patristics: reclaiming the deep ecology of Christian tradition”, in *Religions* 8 (7), p.118. For more see: Gschwandtner, Crina, (2010), “Orthodox ecological theology: Bartholomew I and Orthodox contributions to the ecological debate”, in *International journal for the study of the Christian church*, 10), 2/3, pp.130-143.

explanation for this situation⁹? What is the background behind the privatization of the source of life, which maintains and nourishes and additionally represents the presence of God in creation¹⁰? Finally, how do we deal with God's gift to humanity¹¹? The global ecological crisis that affects the air, water and earth of the planet, especially the gift of water, has led to obvious in destroying of the creation of man according to the image of God. Father John Chryssavgis, Archdeacon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as the Orthodox expert¹² on ecological and environmental issues, looks forward to a restoration of this fragmented image through the mysterious acts of secular transformation, secular interconnection and secular reconciliation¹³.

The Nature needs the man and man needs the nature, will underline the Metropolitan of Pergamon John Zizioulas¹⁴. On the teaching of Great Athanasius, in the

⁹ Armstrong, A. & M. Armstrong, (2006), “A Christian perspective on water and water rights. *The History of Water*”, in *The World of Water*, Ed. by T. Tvedt & T. Oestigaard. London: I. B. Tauris, pp. 363–364

¹⁰ Gleik, P., (1999), “The human right to water”, in *Water Policy* 1, 5, pp. 487–503.

¹¹ Resane, Thomas, (2010), “The theological responses to the socio-economic activities that undermine water as a resource”, in *Theological Studies*, 66, 1, pp.1-3.

¹² Gschwandtner, Christina M. (2010), “Orthodox ecological theology: Bartholomew I and Orthodox contributions to the ecological debate”. in *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 10, pp. 1–15.

¹³ John Chryssavgis, (2019), *Creation as Sacrament: Reflections on Ecology and Spirituality*, London: T & T Clark, p.1-2.

¹⁴ Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, (1997a). *The Book of Revelation and the Natural Environment. In Revelation and the Environment: AD 95-1995*. Edited by Sarah Hobson and Jane Lubchenco. Singapore: World Scientific. Του ιδίου, (1992), *Η Κτίση ως Ευχαριστία*, Θεολογική

point that creation requires salvation, the Metropolitan of Pergamon will point out that mortality, flow, and decomposition are natural consequences for the created class precisely because it is created out of nothing¹⁵. There should not be a reason to see in it any contempt for the material world: it is a purely realistic description of the situation in which all material creatures are found, people no less than others¹⁶. But this means that Creation must transcend itself to survive. And this move, continues the Metropolitan of Pergamon, is possible only through man with the Image of God, who as a person can realize his true self only overcoming himself.

The Man is created to relate to God and refer to God. But what if man fails to relate to God? Man's basic position means that he also has a destructive ability to overcome the nightmares of the most misanthropic deep ecologist. Usually in Orthodox thought, the modern man-made destruction of the environment simply represents an ancient history: disorder, conflict and evils of creation are rooted in human apostasy from a proper relationship with God. As fr. Alexander Schmemmann says, the story of falling has to do with the way people use the world: either

προσέγγιση στο πρόβλημα της Οικολογίας, εκδόσεις Ακρίτας, Σειρά «Ορθόδοξη Μαρτυρία», αριθ. 44, σσ.39-46.

¹⁵ Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon. (1990), *Preserving God's creation (Part 3)*. *King's Theological Review* 13, pp.1-5.

¹⁶ Ιωάννης Ζηζιούλας, Μητροπολίτης Περγάμου, (1997), “Θεολογική θεώρηση του οικολογικού προβλήματος”, στο Πρακτικά Συμποσίου, Διατμηματικό Συμπόσιο, *Ορθοδοξία και Φυσικό Περιβάλλον*, Θεσσαλονίκη, σ.36.

this use is in or out of relationship with its Creator.¹⁷ The biblical background of the importance of water as a creative cause and the provision of life on planet earth, is embedded in a vision of ecological justice¹⁸. The theological ecology must consider human responsibility as a primarily spiritual matter for an ecological disaster and the basic links, such as water for a fair distribution and exploitation¹⁹.

b) The Planet and the Human Responsibility

The root of the ecological crisis in the use, distribution, and pollution of water resources is based on the way we view the human position and this world. The Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, repeats several times pollution as an ecological sin, and in Santa Barbara in 1997 he refers:

«To commit a crime against the natural world is a sin against ourselves and a sin against God»²⁰.

The «Ecological sin» is a new concept and has not been properly understood. The «Ecological sin» lies

¹⁷ Schmemmann, Alexander. (1976). *Water and the Spirit*, London: SPCK, p. 96.

¹⁸ Ανέστης Κεσελόπουλος, (1997), “Το οικολογικό ως πνευματικό πρόβλημα”, Πρακτικά Συμποσίου, Διατμηματικό Συμπόσιο, *Ορθοδοξία και Φυσικό Περιβάλλον*, Θεσσαλονίκη, σσ. 155–157.

¹⁹ Νικόλαος Στάμου, (1997), “Οικονομία περιβάλλοντος και οικονομία Θεού”, στο Πρακτικά Συμποσίου, Διατμηματικό Συμπόσιο, *Ορθοδοξία και Φυσικό Περιβάλλον*, Θεσσαλονίκη, σ.129.

²⁰ *John Chryssavgis*, (2016), *Bartholomew, Apostle and Visionary: Twenty-Five Years of Guiding the Christian East*, East.Nashville: W.Thomas Nelson, pp. 176–178. Elizabeth Theokritoff, (2017), “Green patriarch, green patristics: reclaiming the deep ecology of Christian tradition”, in *Religions* 8 (7), p.12. Gschwandtner, Christina M. (2010), “Orthodox ecological theology: Bartholomew I and Orthodox contributions to the ecological debate”, in *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 10, p.132.

between the planet and human responsibility, individually and collectively. The «Ecological sin» is therefore not a matter of blaming others, except us²¹. The Ecological or green actions, however much, they are based on our goodwill, will remain ineffective if we do not recognize that the causes of ecological destruction, the lack of drinking water and the pollution of water resources, but more so the fair distribution of water, lie in a selfish, insatiable and irresponsible desire sin, which depletes natural resources²².

The planet as the place of living of humans and creatures, exists for the life and place of the manifestation of our relationship with God²³. Among them is the ecological sin, which for the planet, as pointed out by the Metropolitan of Pergamon John Zizioulas, every destruction, every contamination caused in nature, directly renders nature itself incapable of becoming the

²¹ John Chryssavgis, (2003), *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I.*, Grand Rapids, Michigan and Cambridge: Eerdmans, p.221. Elizabeth Theokritoff, (2017), “Green patriarch, green patristics: reclaiming the deep ecology of Christian tradition”, in *Religions* 8 (7), p.12. Gschwandtner, Christina M. (2010), “Orthodox ecological theology: Bartholomew I and Orthodox contributions to the ecological debate”. in *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 10, p.132.

²² John Chryssavgis, (2003), *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I.*, Grand Rapids, Michigan and Cambridge: Eerdmans, p.335. Elizabeth Theokritoff, (2017), “Green patriarch, green patristics: reclaiming the deep ecology of Christian tradition”, in *Religions* 8 (7), p.12. Gschwandtner, Christina M. (2010), “Orthodox ecological theology: Bartholomew I and Orthodox contributions to the ecological debate”. in *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 10, p.132.

²³ John Chryssavgis, (2003), *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I.* Grand Rapids, Michigan and Cambridge: Eerdmans, pp.148-149.

carrier of the communion of man with God. The «Ecological sin», the rape of nature and the exploitation of people in society and in the case of water, are deeply understood as part of a reality, creating destruction in both.

We are not looking at the past, but at a new future, caused by social repentance and conversion to divine commandments. As the fact of nature and society becomes hostile through injustice, so it will be restored to harmony through justice²⁴. The restoration of just relations between nations restores peace in society and at the same time, heals the hostility of nature. Simply, peaceful societies in which people are not exploited also create peaceful, harmonious, and beautiful natural environments.

From a religious and Christian point of view, the issue of water, placing, use, and fair distribution comes as a threat to the planet and life, of people and buildings. Ecological sin has implications for our fellow humans. It has implications for future generations. It also has implication towards the poor peoples, who will be affected primarily negatively. If we can make a positive contribution to these aspects of linking ecological sin and the water problem, we will face the real dimensions, environmental degradation, habitat destruction, drought, and lack of drinking water. Issues that disturb the

²⁴ ²⁴*John Chryssavgis, (2003), Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I. Grand Rapids, Michigan and Cambridge: Eerdmans, p.221. Zizioulas, John, (1997), 'Man the Priest of Creation: A Response to the Ecological Problem'. In *Living Orthodoxy in the Modern World*, ed. Andrew Walker and Costa Carras. London, SPCK, p.78.*

ecological system. When stressed from this perspective, the ecological sin, then it becomes a complete category of human sinfulness and underlines our fault, actions, inactions, or omissions, which adversely affect most natural resources, such as water.

c) The Ascetics and Prosperity

Prosperity and culture have an impact on the ascetics of man, as underlined by the Ecumenical Patriarch²⁵. The ascetic within the context of the culture for the ecological approach, takes an attitude towards the material things, that have already been deeply entrenched in the Christian spiritual tradition, that connects it with the requirements of the current environmental crisis. As the Ecumenical Patriarch says:

«as the Church Fathers also teach, the root of all evils that plague humankind is selfishness, and the highest expression of virtue is selfless love. It is, therefore, not permissible for faithful Christians who are seeking sanctification to remain indifferent to the effects of their acts on their fellow human beings»²⁶.

The ascetic way of approach, a well-known practice, such as fasting, is predominantly borrowed from monastic tradition and sets the limits of insatiable desire and of overconsumption and waste of water resources. The

²⁵ ²⁵ John Chryssavgis, (2003), *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I*, Grand Rapids, Michigan and Cambridge: Eerdmans, p.219.

²⁶ Ecumenical Patriarch, (2008), *Encountering the Mystery: Understanding Orthodox Christianity Today*. New York: Doubleday, p. 250.

mentions of the Ecumenical Patriarch that fasting means loving, seeing more clearly to restore the primitive vision of creation, original beauty or the beauty of creation. Between man and the environment, the ascetic practice leads to an empirical recognition, a deep concept for the creation itself. This concept is that creation itself is a gift from God.

The ascetic practice is key to the sacrifices that are inevitably needed, especially to deal with large-scale environmental problems. It is not just that of a simpler or religious life, but a more satisfying path that considers environmental requirements. Asceticism is so important and has to do with the paradox of the world. Fr. John Chryssavgis points out that the Christian vision of creation consists of three fundamental intuitions: the world which is made good, the world is in a declining state and the world is redeemed. He points out that when one of them is either isolated or violated, the result is an unbalanced and destructive vision of the world.

The ascetics in civilization, in the way in which man shapes his daily course and life on the planet, ascetic practice contributes to control and overturn the degradation of the water issue. It leads to the reshaping of initiatives at social, economic, and political level, which will constitute a commitment at individual and global level, which through our spiritual and moral origins will achieve a shift, a change towards saving, the common

good, respect for the common ecological good, such as water²⁷.

Epilog

The globalization and the recently planned development strategy have the effect of identifying water as a precious commodity for economic interest. Privatizing this natural resource that nourishes life is a serious mistake²⁸. Privatization of the natural resources are one of the main causes of the shift in view of water, as an economic good rather than a life good. Koffie Annan says:

«Lack of access to water for meeting basic needs such as health, hygiene and food security undermines development and inflicts enormous hardship on more than a billion members of the human family»²⁹.

In the Orthodox liturgical tradition water is a source of life³⁰. According to Orthodox Theology, it is the duty of humanity to see the interconnections in creation,

²⁷ John Chryssavgis (1999), *Beyond the Shattered Image*, Minneapolis: Light and Life Publishing, pp.33-38.

²⁸ Mark. J. Allman, (2012), "Water as Sacrament Global water crisis and sacramental stewardship" in *Concilium*, 52. 2.

²⁹ Kofi Anan, (2003), "Forward," *Water for people: Water for life*, New York: UNESCO & Berghahn Books, p. 11.

³⁰ John Chryssavgis, ed., (2003), *Cosmic Grace Humble prayer, the ecological vision of the green patriarch Bartholomew I* (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), pp.31-33.

especially the water for the existence and survival of the world. As the Ecumenical Patriarch underlines: “How we treat the earth and all of the creation, it defines the relationship that each of us has with God”. He further suggests that the crisis is the world. The treatment is not primarily ecological, but it is about the way in which man envisions or imagines the world. In modern water crisis is not just a natural calamity, it is the consequence of systematic evil that legitimizes the greed of desires at the expense of the life of common goods. As Orthodox morality refers, the first change must begin in the human mind, that water is a gift of God. The task is to deal with the causes rather than the symptoms. From this perspective, the water crisis, pollution, its commercialization, and privatization must be addressed at the root causes of the emergence of unsaturated human consumption.

The consequences can be accomplished in creating a new commitment that considers water as one of the sources of human existence. The real change lies in human attitude and mentality; as the waters become narrowed for this existence, humanity must be informed of the fact that there is no life without this life-giving resource³¹.

At the Water Week in Amsterdam, on 5 November 2019, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew stressed, among other things, the importance of the cooperation of

³¹ Philip V. Peacock, (2007), “Waters of life and Water of Struggle,” in V.J John ed., Water Struggle (New Delhi: ISPCCK,), p.23,

Science and the Church in matters of ecology and environmental protection, while at the same time stressed the important role of water in the life of man and the world, justifying the strengthening of conservation efforts and new management methods. The Ecumenical Patriarch says:

«All efforts for better water management is the cry of a human soul who recognizes water as a gift, which must interest all creation. Our deep belief is that water is the inviolable and inalienable right of every human being and every creature. This is why, two decades ago, we declared that “polluting the waters of the earth for human beings... is tantamount to committing a sin!” [...] It is the responsibility of everyone — politicians and religious leaders, communities and individuals, businesses and industries — to leave water sustainable, clean and safe for the future of our cities and citizens, as well as for all human beings and our planet»³².

The Christians have every reason to adopt a proper environmental ethics, one that honors creation but distinguishes it from the Creator³³. However, the simply

³² Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, (2019), “Water is a right for every human being and every creature”, in <https://www.ecupatria.org/2019/11/07/ecumenical-patriarch-bartholomew-water-is-a-right-for-every-human-being-and-every-creature/>.

³³ ³³ Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, (2003), “The Power of Joint Prayer and Action”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace Humble prayer, the ecological vision of the green patriarch Bartholomew I* Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, p. 81. Ιωάννου Ζηζιούλα, Μητροπολίτου Περγάμου, (1997), *Η Κτίση ως Ευχαριστία*, Θεολογική προσέγγιση στο πρόβλημα της Οικολογίας, εκδόσεις Ακρίτας, Σειρά «Ορθόδοξη Μαρτυρία», αριθ. 44, σσ.29-47. Alexander Maros, (2017), “The Ecological Theology of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I,” *International Journal of Orthodox Theology* 8, no. 1, p.172. Βασιλείου Γιούλτση, (1997), “Κοινωνικές συνέπειες της

recommending reformation of a simple theological teaching is not enough. Our ability to act responsibly towards nature is hampered by our alienation from God³⁴. The consequences of the downward course and the constant overconsumption, mean that we act selfishly³⁵. In the collective Text *For the Life of the World: Towards a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church*, 2020 will be pointed out the following:

«The current environmental crisis, for instance—anthropogenic climate change, toxic pollution of water sources and soils around the world, ubiquitous damage to the entire ecosystem by microplastics and other contaminants, deforestation, soil erosion, the rapid decline of biological diversity, and so forth—is an

οικολογικής αναστροφής”, στο Πρακτικά Συμποσίου, Διατμηματικό Συμπόσιο, *Ορθοδοξία και Φυσικό Περιβάλλον*, Θεσσαλονίκη, σσ. 51-56. Ιωάννου Ζηζιούλα, Μητροπολίτου Περγάμου, (1992), *Η Κτίση ως Ευχαριστία*, Θεολογική προσέγγιση στο πρόβλημα της Οικολογίας, εκδόσεις Ακρίτας, Σειρά «Ορθόδοξη Μαρτυρία», αριθ. 44, σσ. 67-74.

³⁴ Βασίλειος Ναϊτσάκης, (1997), “Το οικολογικό πρόβλημα υπό το πρίσμα της χριστιανικής κοσμοθεωρίας”, στο Πρακτικά Συμποσίου, Διατμηματικό Συμπόσιο, *Ορθοδοξία και Φυσικό Περιβάλλον*, Θεσσαλονίκη, σσ.169-173. Ιωάννης Πέτρου, (1997), “Το οικολογικό πρόβλημα ως πρόβλημα μιας πολυπολιτισμικής κοινωνίας”, στο Πρακτικά Συμποσίου, Διατμηματικό Συμπόσιο, *Ορθοδοξία και Φυσικό Περιβάλλον*, Θεσσαλονίκη, σσ. 179-188.

³⁵ Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, (2003), “Metanoia: A New Vision”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace Humble prayer, the ecological vision of the green patriarch Bartholomew I* (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), pp. 115-116. Ιωάννου Ζηζιούλα, (1992), Μητροπολίτου Περγάμου, *Η Κτίση ως Ευχαριστία*, Θεολογική προσέγγιση στο πρόβλημα της Οικολογίας, εκδόσεις Ακρίτας, Σειρά «Ορθόδοξη Μαρτυρία», αριθ. 44, σσ. 87-91. Βασιλείου Γιούλτση, (1997), “Κοινωνικές συνέπειες της οικολογικής αναστροφής”, στο Πρακτικά Συμποσίου, Διατμηματικό Συμπόσιο, *Ορθοδοξία και Φυσικό Περιβάλλον*, Θεσσαλονίκη, σσ. 56-60. Βασίλειος Ναϊτσάκης, (1997), “Το οικολογικό πρόβλημα υπο το πρίσμα της χριστιανικής κοσμοθεωρίας”, στο Πρακτικά Συμποσίου, Διατμηματικό Συμπόσιο, *Ορθοδοξία και Φυσικό Περιβάλλον*, Θεσσαλονίκη, σσ.173-176.

incalculable catastrophe for the entire planet and for all terrestrial life»³⁶.

In view of these aspects, we must not only rely on a reminder of a mere theological position, but on a more substantial perspective of deeds and actions to lead us to sound decisions on water, but also consider information, incentives, and solutions to tackle the correct and fair distribution of water, which, on a case-by-case basis, require technological action.³⁷

The Environmental problems have traditionally been seen because of buying and consuming, as an excuse for state power, to engage in the economy much more directly and dynamically to solve these problems. Information and motivation are strongly influenced by the institutional order of a society. Social and International institutions which related to environmental and resource issues, such as the water issue, are the rules that assign responsibility, that is, property rights that determine who can do and what actions and who respects these initiatives. The common cooperation, interdisciplinarity are the necessary elements to restart these efforts.

For every human being and every Christian, water is a necessary fundamental issue, both as a gift of God, a

³⁶ *For the Life of the World: Towards a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church*, in <https://panorthodoxynod.blogspot.com/2020/03/for-life-of-world-toward-social-ethos.html>, § 41.

³⁷ ³⁷ Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, (2003), “Relevation and the Environment”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace Humble prayer, the ecological vision of the green patriarch Bartholomew I* (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), pp. 152-153. Βασιλείου Γιούλτση, (1997), “Κοινωνικές συνέπειες της οικολογικής αναστροφής”, στο Πρακτικά Συμποσίου, Διατμηματικό Συμπόσιο, *Ορθοδοξία και Φυσικό Περιβάλλον*, Θεσσαλονίκη, σσ. 61 -63.

common good, and as a spiritual symbol³⁸. These two perspectives are inseparable and lie at the heart of an environmental responsibility³⁹. In this environmental responsibility and in terms of cooperation, Pope Francis, the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Anglican Archbishop will emphasize for the first time in September 2021, in a Joint Declaration, the urgency of this ecological crisis:

«All of us —whoever and wherever we are—can play a part in changing our collective response to the unprecedented threat of climate change and environmental degradation»⁴⁰.

³⁸ Χρήστου Βάντσου, (1997), “Ποιμαντική και παιδαγωγική προσέγγιση του οικολογικού προβλήματος”, στο Πρακτικά Συμποσίου, Διατμηματικό Συμπόσιο, *Ορθοδοξία και Φυσικό Περιβάλλον*, Θεσσαλονίκη, σσ. 203-212.

³⁹ J. Chryssavgis (ed), (2011), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 18.

⁴⁰ Pope Francis with Ecumenical Patriarch and Archbishop of Canterbury, (2020), “Joint Message for the Protection of Creation” in: <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2021/09/07/0543/01167.html>.