

ORTHODOX AND VATICAN AGREEMENT

(Balamand, Lebanon, June 1993)

by
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I. Introduction

1) Representatives of nine Orthodox Churches signed an agreement with representatives of the Vatican contained in a document entitled, «Uniatism, method of union of the past, and the present search for full communion». This was produced by members of the Orthodox-Vatican Dialogue at their VIIIth Plenary Session, 17-24 June 1993 at Balamand, Lebanon.

2) Six Orthodox Churches did not send representatives. Some boycotted this meeting in protest against the Vatican's anti-Orthodox and anti-Moslem responsibilities for the war in Bosnia, and other anti-Orthodox actions in parts of Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Some Orthodox Churches have come to realize the Vatican's centuries old «pattern» or «tactic» of «simultaneous war and dialogue» which it had transformed in the 1960s into «simultaneous attacks of Love and dialogue in public» and «underhanded activities in private».

3) The classic example of this earlier tactic was the dialogue between the Franco-Latins and the Roman Orthodox at Bari, Italy, in 1098. The Franco-Latins had just completed the expulsion of the Roman Orthodox from the Papacy in 1009/12-1046. This was followed up by William the Conqueror's capture of England in 1066 and by his appointment of the Lombard Lanfranc as the first Franco-Latin Archbishop of Canterbury with the blessings of the Lombard Pope Alexander II in 1070. Lanfranc and his Franco-Latin bishops got their apostolic succession by dismissing all their Celtic and Saxon predecessors *en masse*¹. They condemned them as heretics and schismatics and

1. For documented sources of the details of the murder of the Celtic and Saxon Bishops and abbots and their replacement by nobles from the Frankish realms of Francia, i.e. Gallia, Germania and Italia see Auguste Thierry, «*Histoire de la Conquête de l' Angleterre par les Normands*», Paris 1843, vol. 2 pp. 147 (1071-1072),

sentenced them to prison for life where they were tortured and starved to death². Lanfranc's successor in 1093 was the Lombard Anselm of Canterbury who was the chief exponent of the Franco-Latin positions at the above mentioned 1098 dialogue meeting at Bari.

4) No longer able to use this type of medieval military power, which it was still using openly up to the French Revolution, the Vatican learned by the middle of this century to attack in public by means of «love and dialogue» and «underhanded activities in reality». Thus the sincerity of the Vatican's public «love» and «dialogue», imposed upon it by the modern spread of democracy, is in need of much more substantiation to become convincing. Even the Bosnian Moslems have learned this by tragic experience after their prayer session with the Pope himself.

II. The so-called Schism³

5) Behind this agreement are Latin specialists familiar with modern research on the military, political and social nature of the schism with the East Romans, which the Franks and their allies deliberately provoked. Doctrine played the role of the chief Franco-Latin weapon against the East Romans, who had provoked revolts among the West Romans against Teutonic oppression⁴. Of course the Balamand Latins had no need to touch upon this kind of research.

6) Ignoring the above, the Orthodox at Balamand accommodated the Latins by joining them in using the context of medieval Franco-Latin propaganda about the schism with a more or less Orthodox content, a combination which had been dominating Orthodox schools for a long time.

7) This agreement thus avoids the implications of the fact that since the 7th century the Franco-Latins usually received their apostolic succession by exterminating their West Roman, Celtic and Saxon

215-219 (1075-1076), 284, 313-314, 318 (1087-1094), vol. 3, pp. 35 (1110-1138), 214-215 (1203).

2. *Ibid.*, vol 2, pp. 55 (1068), 111, 145, 184 (1070-1072), 215 (1075-1076), 240-242 (1082), 313-316 (1088-1089), vol. 3, pp. 35, 44, 47 (1110-1140). See also J. S. Romanides, «Church Synods and Civilisation», in *Theologia*, Athens, vol. 63, issue 3, 1992, p. 427-428.

3. In addition to the work mentioned in note 1 see J. S. Romanides, «*Franks, Romans, Feudalism and Doctrine, an Interplay between Theology and Society*», Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, Massachusetts 1982.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 11-14.

predecessors, having reduced the West Romans to serfs and villeins of Frankish feudalism. This happened not only in Gaul, but also in North Italy, Germany, England, South Italy, Spain and Portugal.

8) The birth of Frankish Civilisation is described in a letter of St. Boniface to Pope Zacharias (*natione Graecus*)⁵ in 741. The Franks had rid the Church in Francia of all Roman bishops by 661 and had made themselves its bishops and clerical administrators. They had divided up the Church's property into fiefs which had been doled out as benefices according to rank within the pyramid of military vassalage. These Frankish bishops had no Archbishop and had not met in Synod for eighty years. They had been meeting as army officers with their fellow war-lords. They are, in the words of St. Boniface, «voracious laymen, adulterous clergy and drunkards, who fight in the army fully armed and who with their own hands kill both Christians and pagans»⁶.

9) Already in 794 and 809 the Franks had condemned the East Romans as «heretics» and «Greeks», in other words some 260 years before the so-called schism of 1054. The Franks had begun calling the East Romans by the names «Greeks» and «heretics» in order that the enslaved West Romans might gradually forget their fellow-Romans in the East.

10) The Franks then also split the Greek-speaking and Latin-speaking Roman Fathers into so-called Latin and Greek Fathers and attached themselves to the so-called Latin ones. They thus created the illusion that their Franco-Latin tradition is part of an unbroken and continuous tradition with the Latin-speaking Roman Fathers. Because the enslaved West Romans had become the serfs and villeins of Franco-Latin feudalism they stopped producing Church leaders and Fathers and all but a few recorded saints.

11) During 1009-1046 the Franco-Latins completed their expulsion of the Orthodox Romans from the Church of Old Rome and finally replaced them with themselves, thus inventing today's Papacy.

12) The 8th century Franks began their anti-Roman heresy hunting on the questions of icons and the Filioque when they were illiterate barbarians. The then Roman popes protested. But they did

5. I.e. a native of the Roman Province Magna Graecia in Southern Italy. Migne P.L. 89,744; *Mansi* 12,313-314.

6. Migne P. L., 89, 744; *Mansi* 12, 313-314.

not yet condemn the Franks. They imagined that they would eventually prevail upon the Franks like one does with stubborn children. Little did the Romans of Old and New Rome suspect that the Franks were deliberately provoking the schism between themselves and the free Romans as part of their permanent defensive strategy against the East Roman Empire and their own plans for world dominion.

13) The Roman popes had no choice but to tolerate Frankish tyranny in the interest of alleviating their enslaved fellow West Romans and of guaranteeing their own freedom and that of the Roman citizens of the Papal States.

14) But Roman Pope John VIII took part in the 8th Ecumenical Council of 879 in New Rome, which condemned the Frankish heresies on icons and the Filioque, without however naming the heretics for fear of reprisals⁷.

15) With the appearance of the Pseudo-Isidorean Decretals by 850 the Roman Popes began to feel strong enough to aggressively demand that the Frankish leadership accept civilised standards of behaviour. But these efforts finally backfired. The Franco-Latins reacted forcefully to the popularity of these Decretals by expelling the Romans from their political and Church leadership in Rome and the Papal States. The Franco-Latins began their final attack on the freedom and Romanity of the Papacy in 973-1003 and completed the subjugation of the Roman Papacy and the freedom of the Papal States between 1009 and 1046⁸. Thereafter the Popes are all members of the Franco-Latin nobility, who use the name Roman Pope and Roman Papacy in order that the West Romans may continue to believe that they still had a Roman Pope.

16) From all the above it should be clear that the fixing of the date of the schism in 1054, within the fabricated distinction between «Greek East» and «Latin West», is not correct. *The schism was between the Franco-Latins and the West and East Romans. 1054 was only one of the later manifestations of a schism, which had already existed from the time the Franks decided in 794 to provoke the schism with the so-called «Greeks» for political reasons. The Church of Old Rome fought heroically to remain united to New Rome up to 1009.*

17) *From 809 onward the Franks never deviated from their position that the East Romans, i.e their Greeks, are heretics. Up to 1009*

7. J. S. Romanides, «*Franks, Romans, Feudalism and Doctrine*», pp. 19-20.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-38.

the Church of Old Rome vigorously resisted this deliberate Frankish policy which was finally imposed by force.

18) That this tradition continued into the middle of the 20th century was so evident during this writer's youth. In Latin books on Apologetics the Orthodox were vehemently described as heretics and without saints. Evidently this was due to the Filioque controversy which broke out in earnest prior to the Eighth Ecumenical Council of 879. So supposedly the Orthodox had no Fathers of the Church after St. John of Damascus (circa 675-749) and St. Theodore of Studium (759-826)⁹.

19) But the Franco-Latins and their Papacy continued their conquests accompanied by the extermination and/or expulsion of the Orthodox bishops and abbots and the reduction of the faithful to the status of serfs and villeins by completely taking over their properties. This the Moslem conquerors – neither Arab nor Turk – never did.

20) But even up to early part of this 20th century the Vatican was still doing its thing. In 1923 Italy took possession of the Dodecanese (The Twelve) Islands from Turkey. The Orthodox bishops were re-placed by Tuscano-Frank and Lombard bishops, who since 1870 were posing as Italians. The Vatican hoped that the Orthodox faithful would accept clergy ordained by these Vatican bishops or else be left without sacraments. The situation changed when Greece took possession of these islands. The exiled Orthodox bishops returned under the oversight of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople.

21) But then the Vatican made an about face and produced Vatican II's *unilateral* recognition of Orthodox sacraments. The question remains: Is this transformation from War to Love real? Or is it still the love of the wolf now dressed up in sheep's clothing out to catch its traditional prey? The Vatican's invasion of Orthodox countries with so many clerics hunting for prey seems to speak for itself.

22) What the Vatican is doctrinally up to will depend on what it will do with all its Ecumenical Councils. At least on the primacy and the infallibility of the pope Vatican II continues to maintain that it is a matter of divine revelation and not of canon law.

9. See for example vol. 2, pp. 314-349, of F. Cayré, *A. A. Manual of Patrology and History of Theology*, (English version), Tournai vol. 1, 1935, vol. 2, 1940. Beginning from p. 351 of vol. 2 and onward we are told about the Scholastic Successors of the Fathers and then the Great Successors of the Fathers and finally beginning on page 661 we are told about the «General Decadence of Scholasticism.»

III. Ecclesiology

23) Neither from the 7th century till 1054, nor since, have the Franco-Latin bishops and popes had the slightest knowledge of, or interest in, the cure of the human personality via the purification and illumination of the heart and glorification (theosis). They still have a magical understanding of apostolic succession which many Orthodox also have been accepting since the so-called reforms of Peter the Great.

24) The Balamand agreement is also based on an interpretation of our Lord's prayer in John 17 which is not part of the Patristic tradition. Christ prays here that His disciples and their disciples may in this life become one in the vision of His glory (which He has by nature from the Father) when they become members of His Body, the Church, which would be formed on Pentecost and whose members were to be the illuminated and glorified in this life. The Old Testament prophets saw in their own glorification the pre-incarnate Lord of Glory. Likewise the disciples had seen Christ's uncreated glory which He has by nature from His Father up to and before Pentecost, but not as members of his Body. Pentecostal glorification (theosis) was part of the Old Testament Church's becoming the Body of Christ. Thus this final form of glorification constitutes the core of the history of the Body of Christ, which is the real core of Church History. Christ's prayer in John 17 is for the fulfilment of His Old and New Testament prophecies, teachings and promises, especially those recorded in John's Gospel and especially in 16:13. This final glorification is what is repeated in the life of each of the saints in history, and which can neither be added to nor improved upon, especially since this experience transcends words and concepts, even those of the Bible. This is how the Fathers understand this prayer.

25) This prayer is not for the union of the members of the Body of Christ with those who are not in the states of purification, illumination and glorification (theosis). Of course this prayer implies the entry into these states of cure by non-members of the Body of Christ, but it is certainly not a prayer for the union of churches. That John 17 can be applied to churches which have not the slightest understanding of glorification (theosis) and how to arrive at this cure in this life is very interesting, to say the least.

26) This agreement takes advantage of those naive Orthodox who

have been insisting that they are a «Sister» Church of a Vatican «Sister» Church, as though glorification (theosis) can have a sister other than herself. The Orthodox at Balamand fell into this their own trap since this presupposes the validity of Latin sacraments. This is a strange phenomenon indeed since the Latins never believed that glorification in this life is the foundation of apostolic succession and the mysteries (sacraments) of and within the Body of Christ. Even today the Latins and the Protestants translate 1 Cor. 12:26 as «honoured» instead of «glorified».

27) But Vatican II had also set its trap of unilaterally recognising Orthodox mysteries (sacraments) into which the Balamand Orthodox fell according to plan.

28) More important than the validity of mysteries is the question of who participates in them. Glorification is God's will for all, both in this life and in the next life. But God's glory in Christ is eternal life for those who are properly cured and prepared. But this same uncreated glory of Christ is eternal fire for those who refuse to be cured. The one group is glorified and the other becomes forever happy in their selfishness like the «*actus purus* god» they believe in. In other words everyone will be saved. Some will be saved by their participation in glorification and in all the Truth. The rest will be saved by knowledge of all the truth which for them will be the vision of Christ's uncreated glory as eternal fire and outer darkness. This is the state of *actus purus* happiness for which they strived for all their lives. In other words mysteries can be valid and not participated in at the same time. As important as valid mysteries are purification and illumination of the heart and glorification in this life, which are the central reality of the mysteries and in the participation of them. This holds true for non-Orthodox and Orthodox equally.

29) It would seem that the Orthodox may legitimately and dutifully wish and hope out of love that Latin and Protestant mysteries are indeed valid and efficacious, but leave the matter in the hands of God. But to pronounce them valid, 1) when the Latins do not accept glorification (theosis) in this life as the central core of apostolic tradition and succession and 2) when they believe instead that happiness is one's final end, is indeed strange. One does not need valid mysteries in order to become eternally happy.

30) Franco-Latin official teachings on the mysteries have been historically not only un-Orthodox, but anti-Orthodox. On this most

Protestants agree in principle with the Orthodox, i.e. that communicated saving grace is uncreated. The Latin heresy that communicated grace is created has not yet been rejected by the Vatican.

IV. The *raison d'être* of Uniatism ceases to exist

31) The representatives of the Vatican proposed this captioned position and the Orthodox at Balamand accepted it. However, the Orthodox at Balamand were supposedly specialists who knew that this proposal was made within the context of both the Latin dogma about the pope and officially also within the context of all the Vatican's Ecumenical Councils. But an Orthodox position on this question is not evident from this agreement. Therefore, the impression is created that the Orthodox, at least implicitly, accepted the Latin dogma about the pope and that of all the Vatican's Ecumenical Councils.

32) At the time of Vatican II the *New York Times* had announced on its title page that the schism between the Orthodox and the Vatican had supposedly ended. This was due to the fact that the Latins understood the lifting of the anathemas of 1054 as a lifting of the excommunication. Constantinople lifted, as it seems, only anathemas. For the Latins this was in keeping with Vatican II on the validity Orthodox mysteries. This made it possible for Latins to take communion at Orthodox Churches and, according to the Latins, vice versa. The Orthodox had difficulties refusing communion to Latins and the Vatican temporarily suspended the practice.

33) This Balamand agreement has been accepted by the representatives of nine out of 15 Orthodox Churches but not yet by their Synods or by a Pan-Orthodox Council. In the mean time the Vatican may once again encourage Latins and Uniates to take communion at Orthodox Churches while encouraging the Orthodox to do likewise. The very fact that the Orthodox at Balamand have extended full recognition to Latin mysteries means that the impression could be easily created that only bigotry could be the reason for refusing inter-communion and con-celebration.

34) It is also possible that the pope at some point may desist from appointing a successor to at least one of his current Uniate Archbishops or even Patriarchs and put his local Uniate faithful under the spiritual leadership of the local Orthodox Archbishop or Patriarch as a trial test.

35) Since at least 1975 the WCC has been carefully and very successfully cultivating the image of the Orthodox as lacking Christian

love for refusing communion to others. A likely refusal of the Orthodox to accept Uniates under one of their Archbishops or Patriarchs may become part of a similar practice of picturing the Orthodox as indeed bigots, especially since in this case they would be refusing communion to and con-celebration with clergy whose mysteries they fully recognise.

36) Now that the Balamand agreement has become a candidate to become a sequel to Vatican II, in which case Uniatism will no longer have any reason for existing, the Orthodox will be faced with the consequences of their continued refusal of communion with the Latins and Uniates.

37) What is most interesting is the fact that according to the Balamand agreement mysteries are valid whether one accepts 7 or 21 Ecumenical Councils and their teachings and practices. The impression will be certainly created that only lack of love could be the reason why the Orthodox may continue to refuse inter-communion and con-celebration with the Vatican.

V. The Question

38) It seems that the Orthodox at Balamand are attempting to introduce an innovation in regards to Biblical mysteries. Up to now the Orthodox Churches usually accepted into their membership individuals or churches by means of either exactitude (ἀκρίβεια) or economy (οἰκονομία).

a) By exactitude one is accepted by baptism, chrismation and profession of the Orthodox Faith accompanied by rejection of former errors.

b) By economy one is accepted by chrismation and profession of the Orthodox faith and the rejection of former errors.

39) Neither of these two means of entry into the Church is in itself a judgement on the validity or non-validity of the sacraments of the church of origin, since there are no mysteries outside of the Body of Christ. One is either a member of the Body of Christ by his baptism of the Spirit, i.e. illumination and/or glorification in Christ or one is still in the state of purification by his baptism by water unto forgiveness of sins becoming member and a temple of the Holy Spirit. One may be a believer in Christ without belonging to either of these categories. This holds true for nominal Orthodox also. It is up to each Synod of Orthodox bishops to decide the status of each group of those who are seeking communion within the Body of Christ.

40) In regard to the cure of purification, illumination and glorification there is no difference between Latins and most Protestants since, or if, they are not engaged in this cure which has nothing to do with mysticism. This holds true for nominal Orthodox also. The reason for the increase of the numbers of the latter (especially since Peter the Great) is that professors of Orthodox faculties became no longer aware, and many are still not aware, of this Biblical/Patristic tradition of cure and are therefore prone to copy from non—patristic or non—Orthodox works to write their teaching manuals. The result has been the appearance of large groups of clergy who no longer see any important difference between the Latin and Orthodox understandings of the Mysteries within the Body of Christ.

41) The basic question before us is clear: Is dogma 1) a protection from speculating quack doctors and 2) a guide to the cure of the purification and the illumination of the heart and glorification (theosis), or not?

42) «Let each person test himself, and thus eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For one who eats and drinks not discerning the Body eats and drinks his own judgement. For this reason many among you are weak and sick and many are dead» (1 Cor. 11:28-30). In other words one tests himself to see whether he is a member of the Body of Christ by being in the state of illumination, i.e. with at least *kinds of tongues*. Otherwise one shares in the bread and the cup «unworthily» (1 Cor. 11:27). In such a case one is still «weak» or «sick» and even spiritually «dead» (1 Cor. 11:30), i.e. not sharing in the resurrection of the inner person and so not yet communicating at the Eucharist unto life in Christ, but rather unto judgement. One should not use the Eucharistic gatherings as occasions to simply eat. This one does at home. «If we examine ourselves, we will not be judged. Being judged by the Lord we are instructed, so that we are not condemned with the world» (1 Cor. 11:31-32). In the states of illumination and glorification one is instructed in his spirit by Christ Himself. This is the cure which Paul explains in detail in 1 Cor. 12- 15:11¹⁰.

VI. Formulations of dogmas not to be confused with the mysteries of God

43) It was only to keep the faithful within this tradition of cure in Christ that heresies were condemned by the dogmatic formulations of

10. See study referred to in note 1.

Ecumenical and Local Councils. These formulations have nothing to do with the Augustinian and Franco-Latin *analogia fidei* and *analogia entis*, i.e. with theological and philosophical speculations based on a supposed similarity between the created and the uncreated. Belief in such a similarity was the basic characteristic of heresies; unfortunately it has become common among some Orthodox also. The *only* purpose of dogmatic formulations is to serve as guides to the cure of the human spirit in and by Christ Himself.