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*Prof. Petros Vassiliadis
President of WOCATI*

**ESCHATOLOGICAL ECCLESIOLOGY:
BEYOND THE CONVENTIONAL EUCHARISTIC ECCLESIOLOGY**

It is indeed a great honor for me to be invited by the Synodical Committee on Theological Education of the Russian Orthodox Church to this extremely important for the future of Orthodoxy conference on eschatology, the foundation of Orthodox theology. On behalf of WOCATI (the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions), of which I am honored to be for this current 4-years period its President, representing COTS (the Conference of Orthodox Theological Schools), I wholeheartedly extend to you all warm greetings from all theological institutions around the globe and of course beyond denominational boundaries. WOCATI, a confederation of all the existing associations of theological institutions, has as its task to serve, support, and enhance theological education in all its constituent parts. On the assumption that theological education is a worldwide enterprise fundamental to the mission of the Church, WOCATI was established almost 20 years ago (1987) as a world network of theological institutions in order to provide a sound, coherent, effective and truly ecumenical vision for theology, by cultivating a broad and informed understanding of theological education, and by serving as a prophetic advocate locally and globally for excellence in theological education, and especially by underlining the importance of theology for the church, for the society and for the academic world in general.

As my title indicates, I will concentrate on the eschatological dimension of ecclesiology. My paper will very shortly deal with: (a) the importance of eschatology and the significance of Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology; (b) the «eschatological ecclesiology» through a Christological biblical approach; (c) the consequences of the eschatological ecclesiology for a proper understanding of the Eucharist; and (d) the doctrinal, missiological, and canonical implications of the eschatological ecclesiology.

I

Eschatology constitutes the central and primary aspect of ecclesiology, the beginning of the Church, the conception which gives the Church her identity, but also sustains and inspires her in her existence. Eschatology, however, in order to be authentic is to be related not to an abstract idea about the future but to the dominical kerygmatic teaching about the Kingdom of God. It was this «kingdom-theology» that led all ecclesiological considerations to give priority to the expected Kingdom of God. Everything belongs to the Kingdom. The Church in her institutional expression does not administer all reality; she only prepares the way to the Kingdom, in the sense that she is an image of it. That is why, although to the eyes of the historian and the sociologist the Church is yet another human institution, to the theologian it is primarily a *mystery*, and we very often call her an *icon* of the Kingdom to come.

Equally important, however, is also the relationship between the Church's (*eschatological*) identity and her (*historical*) mission.ⁱ As we shall see in a few minutes, eschatology also constitutes the starting point of the Church's witness to the world. Ecclesiology and missiology are irrevocably related to each other as two sides of the same coin. The mission of the Church is but a struggle to witness and to apply this eschatological vision of the Church to the historical realities and to the world at large. Christian theology, on the other hand, is about the right balance between history and eschatology.ⁱⁱ We should never forget that theology and the Church exist not for themselves, but for the world. The tension, therefore, between eschatology and history, or to put it more sharply the relationship between the ecclesial community and our modern pluralistic society, is one of the most important chapters in the Church's witness today.

Especially for our Orthodox Church, all our shortcomings or lack of success at a global level is not the result of our theology, of our ecclesiology, but of our witness, of the application of our traditional theology in the every day life. Those of us «who live in the 'global' Jerusalem» are well aware of the fact that *the canonical anomaly and the obsolete jurisdictional claims among almost all autocephali Churches are a real*

hindrance in an effective Orthodox witness in our days. And this unsolved perennial problem can only be tackled through the rediscovery of an authentic eschatology and a correct application of the Orthodox ecclesiology.

It is to the merits of modern Orthodox theologianⁱⁱⁱ who reaffirmed the paramount importance of eschatology for Christian theology. Almost all of them developed their ecclesiological views on the «*eucharistic ecclesiology*». I am referring to N. Afanasiev's contribution,^{iv} which despite its deficiency^v has started a process throughout the Christian world for a reassessment of the ecclesiological question.^{vi} We should remind ourselves that this ecclesiology not only heavily influenced the major Christian development of the last century, namely the 2nd Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church; it has also given a new impetus to the ecclesiological and general ecumenical deliberations of the multilateral dialogue, especially within the WCC.^{vii}

It was this great Russian Orthodox canonist, who almost half a century ago successfully argued for the existence from the very old times of the Church's life of two clearly distinguished views about the Church: the widespread «universal ecclesiology», which for centuries now has become the basic ecclesiology of the Roman Catholic Church, and what Afanasiev labeled as «eucharistic ecclesiology», which seems more appropriate to the ethos and theological tradition of our Eastern Orthodox Christianity. I do not propose to enter into more details of this ecclesiological view, since all of you – I am sure – know its principle parameters; nor do I insist in Afanasiev's total rejection of the idea of primacy in the Church.^{viii} I only want to underline that, by using the eucharistic ecclesiology as a tool, the Eucharist remains the basic criterion of any structural expression of the Church, the only expression of unity of the Church, and the point of reference of all the other sacraments^{ix} (and of course of the priesthood and of the office of the bishop). That is why the catholicity of the Church is manifested completely in every local Church. «Wherever there is a eucharistic meeting there lives Christ too, there is also the Church of God in Christ»^x. All these, of course, on the condition that the catholicity and the universal character of the Church are not irreversibly lost.^{xi} In contrast to this, according to the universal ecclesiology first in importance and extremely determinative is the role of the bishop, whose office constitutes the preeminent expression of the unity of the Church, and in consequence the Eucharist one of his functions.

Unfortunately, this conventional Eucharistic ecclesiology proposed by Afanasiev and all the rest, has never acquired so far a sound *biblical foundation*, and as a result of it an *eschatological* basis. In addition to this deficiency, almost all the Roman Catholic ecclesologists who have systematically dealt with the «eucharistic ecclesiology» proposed by Afanasiev and others – without of course denying its significance – they criticize the lack of a coherent synthesis between local and universal, between unity and autonomy.^{xii} With all these in mind, and in view of the fact that Afanasiev's genius theological construction is rightly considered as the heavy artillery of our contemporary Orthodox theology, I decided to offer to this distinguished gathering as a humble contribution some insights from the biblical scholarship and to develop *the eschatological dimension of the eucharistic ecclesiology*; to provide, in other words, a new ecclesiology, which without deviating from the conventional eucharistic ecclesiology is nevertheless more biblically grounded: the «*eschatological ecclesiology*».

II

To elaborate this eschatological ecclesiology I propose to follow a *christological* methodological approach, despite my firm conviction that a *trinitarian* (i.e. *pneumatological*) one is more appropriate and common to Orthodox theology. I decided to have as an overall starting point Christ and his basic *kerygma* – without of course avoiding trinitarian (i.e. pneumatological) augmentations – not only because the Church in developing her theology concentrated exclusively on the second person of the Holy Trinity, but because I firmly believe in a synthesis of the two above briefly described ecclesiologies (eucharistic and universal).

After all ecclesiology must be based on, and determined by, the teaching, life and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Finally, the biblical background of any ecclesiology is the *sine qua non* of any sound theological and canonical proposal. Jesus' teaching, however, and especially his life and work, cannot be properly understood without a clear reference to the eschatological expectations of Judaism. These expectations were in fact nothing but the coming of a Messiah, who in the «last days» of history («the *eschaton*») would establish his kingdom by calling all the dispersed and afflicted people of God into one place to become one body united around him. As it was expressed in the prophetic tradition of Judaism (Joel 3:1; Is 2:2, 59:21; Ez 36:24 etc.), the start of the eschatological period were expected to be sound by the gathering of all the nations, and by the descent of God's Spirit upon the sons and daughters of God. A statement in the Gospel of John – generally overlooked in ecclesiological reflections – about the role of the Messiah is extremely important. In that statement the Evangelist interprets the words of the Jewish High Priest by affirming that «he prophesied that Jesus should die...not for the nation only, but to *gather into one* the children of God who are scattered abroad» (John 11:51-52).

Throughout the Gospels Christ identifies himself with this Messiah. One can clearly see this in the various Messianic titles he chose for himself («Son of man», «Son of God», «Servant of God» etc., most of which had a collective meaning, hence the Christology of «corporate personality»). One can also identify it in the parables of the Kingdom, which summarize his teaching: i.e. that his coming inaugurated a new world order, the world of the Kingdom of God; this idea is also present in the Lord's Prayer, and above all in his conscious acts, and most significantly in the selection of twelve disciples, signifying the establishment of new *eschatological dodekaphylon*, the new twelve tribes, of a new Israel. In short, Christ identified himself with the Messiah of the *eschaton*, who would become the center of the gathering of the dispersed people of God.

In the first two decades after Pentecost the Christian community understood its existence as the perfect and genuine expression of the people of God. With a series of terms taken from the Old Testament the early Christian community believed that it was the «Israel of God» (Gal 6:16), the «saints» (Acts 9:32, 41; 26:10; Rom 1:7; 8:27; 12:13; 15:25), «the elect» (Rom 8:33; Col 3:12 etc.), «the chosen race» (1 Pe 2:9), «the royal priesthood» (ibid.) etc.; namely the holy people of God (*laos tou theou*), for whom all the promises of the Bible were to be fulfilled at the *eschaton*. During this constructive period the concept in which the early Church understood herself was that of a *people* and not of an organization. An examination of both the Old and the New Testament terminology makes this quite clear. The chosen people of God were an '*am* (in Hebrew, especially in the prophets) or a *laos* (in Greek), whereas the people of the outside world were designated by the Hebrew term *goim* and the Greek one *ethne* (cf. Acts 15:14).

This consciousness that when God created a new community, he created a people, distinguished the Church from those guilds, clubs or religious societies so typical of the Greco-Roman period. It is quite significant that the first Christian community used the term *ecclesia* in the Old Testament meaning; it is not accidental that the term *ecclesia* in the Septuagint corresponds to the Hebrew *qâhâl*, i.e. to a term denoting the congregation of God's people. The Septuagint never translates by *ecclesia* the Hebrew '*edhah*, the usual translation of which is *synagoge*. In this primitive period, therefore, the members of the Christian community did not just *belong to* the Church; i.e. they were not simply members of an organization; *they were* the Church.

The second generation after Pentecost is certainly characterized by the great theological contribution of St. Paul. The apostle takes over the above charismatic notion of the Church, but he gives it in addition a universal and ecumenical character. To the Church belong all human beings, Jews and Gentiles; for the latter have been joined to the same tree of the people of God (Rom 11:13ff). The Church, as the new Israel, is thus no longer constituted on grounds of external criteria (circumcision etc.), but of its faith to Jesus Christ (cf. Rom 9:6). The term, however, by which St. Paul made a significant ecclesiological contribution, is *body of Christ*. With this metaphorical expression St. Paul was able to express the charismatic nature of the Church by means of the Semitic concept of corporate personality. He emphasized that in the Church there exists a variety of gifts, exercised by the individual members of the community, and necessary for the building up and the nutrition of this body, Christ alone being its only head and authority. The Johannine figure of the vine (John 15:1-8) is equally important. As with the Pauline term *soma*, the double scheme vine-branches indicates the special relationship existing between people and Christ, which reveals the inner basis of ecclesial life. This is also true with the other N.T. Church terminology: «household of faith» (Eph 2:11ff), «fellowship» (1 Cor 1:9 etc.), «bride of Christ» (Eph 1:31f; Rev 21:9), «little flock» (Lk 12:32 etc.), «family of Christ», *oikos* etc., all pointing to the same direction: namely that the new community is a *people*, bound together by love and the Spirit provided by God in Christ, and not by external structure. The latter were always expressive of this charismatic, eschatological, communal dimension of the ecclesial self-consciousness.

III

It was inevitable that this ecclesial eschatological self-consciousness was perfectly expressed *in and through* the Eucharist. I have argued, elsewhere,^{xiii} that out of the three main characteristics that generally constitute the Orthodox theology, namely its «eucharistic», «trinitarian», and «hesychastic» dimension, only the first one can bear a universal and ecumenical significance. If the last dimension and important feature marks a decisive development in eastern Christian theology and spirituality after the final Schism between East and West, a development that has determined, together with other factors, the mission of the Orthodox Church in recent history; and if the trinitarian dimension constitutes the supreme expression of Christian theology, ever produced by human thought in its attempt to grasp the mystery of God, after Christianity's dynamic encounter with the Greek culture; it was, nevertheless, only because of the eucharistic experience, the matrix of all theology and spirituality of Christianity, that all theological and spiritual climaxes in our Church have been actually achieved.

The Eucharist, heart and center of Christian Liturgy, is always understood in its authentic perception not as a Mystery cult, but as a foretaste of the coming Kingdom of God, as symbol and image of an alternative reality, which was conceived before all creation by God the Father in his mystical plan (the *mysterion* in the biblical sense), was inaugurated by our Lord, and is permanently sustained by the Holy Spirit, as a proleptic manifestation within the tragic realities of history of an authentic life of communion, unity, justice and equality, with no practical differentiation (soteriological and beyond) between Jews and gentiles, slaves and free people, men and women (cf. Gal 3:28). This was, after all, the real meaning of the Johannine term *aionios zoe* (eternal life), and St. Ignatius' expression *pharmakon athanasias* (medicine of immortality). This eschatological understanding of the Church is also reflected in liturgical order and the offices of the Church: the bishop is «εις τόπον και τόπον Χριστού» (in the place and as image of Christ), while the presbyters around him re-present the Apostles, etc.

This Kingdom, as I said earlier, was expected to culminate at the *eschaton*. All great theologians of the early Church have stressed, in one way or another, the *eschatological* and not the *historical* dimension of the Church. Even the episcopocentric structure of the Church, was understood eschatologically. The bishop e.g. as *primus inter pares* presiding in love over the eucharistic community, was never understood (except very late under the heavy influence of scholasticism) as a vicar, representative, or ambassador of Christ, but as an *image* of Christ. So with the rest of the ministries of the Church: they are not *parallel to*, or *given by*, but *identical* with those of, Christ. It is not accidental that the entire Orthodox theology and life, especially as this latter is expressed in Sunday's liturgical offices, are centered on the resurrection. The Church exists not because Christ died on the cross, but because he is risen from the dead, thus becoming the *aparche* of all humanity.^{xiv} It is to be noted, that a conviction began to grow among Church writers, beginning with the author of Hebrews (10:1) and more fully developed in the writings of St. Maximus the Confessor, that the events of the Old Testament were «σκιά» (shadow) of future riches, and that present Church reality is only an «εικόνα» (image) of the «αληθείας» (truth), which is only to be revealed in the *Eschaton*.

Above all, the primary element of the «eschatological ecclesiology» is the centrality of *Pneumatology*, and of course by extension the concept of *communion*. The Holy Spirit in the N.T. is not only by definition a «relational» divine person, directing our attention towards the communion event (II Cor 13,13), it is also unequivocally related to the *eschaton* (Acts 2). In opposition to this, the «universal ecclesiology» is characterized by the priority it gives to historical dimension of the Church and the *external structure*; and closely related to that is the importance it gives to *Christology*, and by extension to the role of the bishop, and consequently to primacy. As Metropolitan John Zizioulas rightly argues,^{xv} the universal ecclesiology, having as its point of departure the *historical* expression of the Church, understands the unity and catholicity of the Church, as well as the apostolic succession, in a *linear way*; that is why the bishop has priority over the eucharistic community. This theoretically leads to the unbelievable theological construction that the Sacrament of Priesthood surpasses the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist!

The eschatological ecclesiology, on the other hand, having as its point of departure the eschatological understanding of the Church, which after all characterizes our Orthodox tradition, understands all the offices of the Church and especially those of the ordained priesthood, not as authorities or offices in the conventional secular sense, but as *images* of the authentic eschatological Kingdom of God.

IV

This ecclesiological development, and in fact the ensuing «eschatological ecclesiology», is not a theoretical conception; it also has *doctrinal*, *missiological*, and above all *canonical* implications. With regard to the **doctrinal** aspect, i.e. in expressing the faith, determining the truth, and authoritatively preserving it, all these functions within the life of the Church are related to the eucharistic identity of the Church.^{xvi} And all these are in fact the responsibility of the eucharistic community as a whole. Even synodality, the ultimate criterion of truth, cannot be isolated from, but is mutually inter-related with, the Eucharist.^{xvii} The Patriarchs of the East were not far away from such an awareness, when they underlined that the ultimate authority of the Church lies neither on doctrinal *magisteria*, nor on any clerical (even conciliar) structure, but to the entire people of God, the Eucharistic community.^{xviii} The only limitation in this «communal» *magisterium*, is that the «many» in the Church's life, cannot function in isolation from the «one» who in theological terms is the image of Christ, i.e. the presiding in love over the local (bishop), regional (protos or primate), or universal Church (Pope or the Ecumenical Patriarch). And this «one» is, of course, only the visible expression of unity in the Church.^{xix}

It is not only the «one-and-many» communal understanding of the Church's *magisterium*, which is implied by the eucharistic ecclesiology; it is also the far-reaching consequences it has for the Church's **mission**, for it makes the Eucharist the springboard of the Church's witnessing *Exodus* to the world. The Christians are commissioned to proclaim not a set of given religious convictions, doctrines, moral commands etc., but the coming Kingdom, the Good News (*Gospel=evangelion*) of a new eschatological reality, which

had as its center the crucified and resurrected Christ, the incarnation of God the Logos and His dwelling among us human beings, and His continuous presence through the Holy Spirit, in a life of communion, experienced in their «eucharistic» gatherings. What, however, is of even greater importance, is that apart from the imperative for a *common evangelistic witness*, the eschatological ecclesiology calls for a mission that goes far beyond denominational boundaries, beyond Christian limitations, even beyond the religious sphere in the conventional sense. For its ultimate purpose can be nothing but the manifestation of the Kingdom of God in its majestic eschatological splendour, the restoration the «household» (*oikos*) of God, the reconciliation and healing of humanity and the entire creation.

With regard, finally, to the **canonical** implications of the eschatological ecclesiology, these were clearly manifested – from the post-apostolic period onwards – in the structural expression of the Church, more clearly in the *episcopocentric* (but by no means episcopocratic) canonical tradition of the Orthodox Church. Under these provisions one can no longer speak of clergy and laity, nor of a hierarchical order (which in the secular conventional sense is a reflection not of the kenotic divine order, but of the fallen earthly/historical one), but of a diaconal one. That is why traditionally the Orthodox use the «iconic» and not the «hierarchical» understanding of all the priestly ministries. And this consequently implies clearly that women too, not only men, are integral part of, and have equal share in, the ecclesial witnessing responsibility, both in teaching the truth and in determining and preserving it. This is what better establishes a genuine community of women and men within the Church, than any secular initiative demanding redistribution of power. For there can be no such words as «power» and «authority» - except those of God the Father - in the Kingdom to come.

All the subsequent canonical developments (Metropolitan system, Patriarchal sees, Pentarchy etc.) were actually influenced by secular developments, and in some cases were imposed by imperial authorities. The only theologically (i.e.) oriented canonical provision of the eschatological ecclesiology is the 34th Apostolic Canon, by which both the eschatological-charismatic dimension of the Church and the historical functionality were secured.^{xx} These developments, of course, were not deviations from the original and authentic eschatological understanding of the Church, but the result of another, equally important aspect of the Church, her *missional responsibility*. The Church as a «New Jerusalem,» i.e. as an eschatological Kingdom to come, is also a historical institution. This is why, when the Roman state accepted Christianity, the Church welcomed the opportunity and the responsibility that fell to her, in spite of all the risks and temptations it entailed.

This remark brings my presentation to its final clause, namely to the Church's relationship with the secular structures. One of the goals of modernism is the complete separation of Church and State. Of course, the constituencies which the Orthodox Churches traditionally render their services and witness have not yet fully undergone the process of modernization. But with the speedy process of the European integration, as well as of globalization in a universal level, such a development is in front of our gates. Personally, I am totally convinced that the Orthodox Church cannot exercise her mission in today's pluralistic world in a meaningful and effective way without a reassessment of the present context, without a certain encounter with modernism.^{xxi} Today we no longer believe, at least in mission theology, that the secular progress contradicts the divine economy, as it was believed for a long period among the fundamentalist (mostly – but not exclusively – evangelical) missionaries. The only thing the Church must preserve intact is her identity and her prophetic voice over the historical process. To put it in concrete terms, the Serbian Orthodox Church on the ground of her missionary responsibility, should take any opportunity to secure her presence in today's modern society, to even take the risk to embrace the new «empire» and reject the isolation, i.e. the «desert» in Fr. Georges Florovsky's words,^{xxii} but only if such a role in whatever scheme (tight or loose constitutional relations) is offered to her.

NOTES

ⁱMore on this issue in my recent article “L’ eschatologie dans la vie de l’ Église: Une perspective chrétienne orthodoxe et son impact sur la vie de la société,” *Irenikon* 73 (2000), pp. 316-334.

ⁱⁱD. Staniloae was right to strongly criticize the trend in contemporary Orthodoxy to identify the Orthodox spirituality with a disregard to the every day life, a phenomenon described in his own words as “a premature eschatologism.” (D. Stăniloae, *Ascetica si mistica orthodoxa*, Alba Iulia 1993, p. 28, in Romanian).

ⁱⁱⁱAlmost all prominent Orthodox theologians of the recent past (G.Florovsky, J.Meyendorff, A.Schmemmann, from the Russian theological tradition, S. Agouridis, and J. Zizioulas from the Hellenic one, D. Staniloae from the Romanian etc., to name just few) have underlined the eschatological dimension of Orthodoxy. Cf. also E.Clapsis’ doctoral dissertation, *Eschatology and the Unity of the Church: The Impact of the Eschatology in the Ecumenical Thought* (Ann Arbor, MI.: U.M.I., 1988); also his «Eschatology,» in the *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, pp. 361A - 364a; and finally my own

^{iv}“The Church Which Presides in Love,” J. Meyendorff (ed.), *The Primacy of Peter. Essays in Ecclesiology and the Early Church*, New York ²1992, 91-143, whence all references hereafter (¹1963, pp. 57-110). Afanasiev’s views had appeared earlier in a shorter form in French (“La doctrine de la primauté à la lumière de l’ ecclesologie,” *Istina* 4 (1957) 401-420).

^vCf. J. Meyendorff’s introductory remarks in (Metr. of Pergamon,) John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion. Studies in Personhood and the Church*, SVS Press: Crestwood 1985.

^{vi}It is of invaluable significance the recognition of the Orthodox pioneer contribution in the quite recent scholarly debate within the Roman Catholic Church between the Pope Benedict XVI (then Kardinal Joseph) Ratzinger (JR) and Kardinal Walter Kasper (WK) on the relationship between the local and the universal Church. All started with JR’s “Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion,” *Origins* 22 (June 25, 1992) 108-112. WK responded with his “Zu Theologie und Praxis der bisöflichen Amtes,” *Auf neue Art Kirche Sein: Wirklichkeiten-Herausforderungen-Wandlungen* (München 1999) pp. 32-48; and the exchange went on as follows: JR, “On the Relation of the Universal Church and the Local Churches,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* Dec 22, 2000, p. 46; WK, “Das Verhältnis von Universalkirche und Ort kirche: Freundschaftliche Auseinandersetzung mit der Kritik von Joseph Kardinal Ratzinger,” *Stimmen der Zeit* 218 (2000), pp. 795-804 (transl. into English under the title “On the Church” in *America* 184 (April 23-30, 2001); JR, “A Response to Walter Kasper: The Local Church and the Universal Church,” *America* 185 (Nov 1, 2001) 7-11; WK, “ From the President of the Council for Promoting Christian Unity,” *America* 185 (Nov 26, 2001) 28-29. More on this in Kilian McDonnell, “The Ratzinger/Kasper Debate: The Universal Church and the Local Churches,” *Theological Studies* 63 (2002), pp. 227-250.

^{vii}Cf. e.g. M. Edmund Hussey, “Nicholas Afanasiev’s Eucharistic Ecclesiology: A Roman Catholic Viewpoint”, *JES* 12 (1975) 235- 252; P. McPartlan, “Eucharistic Ecclesiology”, *One in Christ* 22 (1986) 314 - 331; K. Raiser, *Ecumenism in Transition*, Geneva 1991, pp. 97ff. Also J. Zizioulas, *The Unity of the Church in the Eucharist and the Bishop in the First Three Centuries*, Athens ¹1965 ²1990 (in Greek); cf. nevertheless the traditionalist reaction by P. Trembelas, “Unacceptable Theories on the Unam Sanctam”, *Ekklesia* 41 (1964) pp. 167ff (in Greek) etc. Also my “The Biblical Foundation of the Eucharistic Ecclesiology”, *Lex Orandi. Liturgical Theology and Liturgical Renewal*, Indiktos Publication, Antiphona 5 Athens 2005, pp. ??? (in Greek).

^{viii}N. Afanasiev, referring to the theological discussion between East and West on the issue of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, suggested that the starting point for any solution must be sought in ecclesiology: i.e. whether any idea of primacy is necessary for the identity of the Church (“The Church...”, p. 91).

^{ix}Cf. Nenad Milocevic, *The Holy Eucharist as Center of the Divine Worship*, Thessaloniki 1995.

^xN.Afanasiev, “Una Sancta”, *Irenikon* 36 (1963) 436-475, p. 459.

^{xi}This is perfectly safeguarded in the Orthodox Liturgy by the *mnemosynon* of the *protos* in all levels of ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

^{xii}Cf. notes 6 and 7 above.

^{xiii}Cf. my “The Eucharistic Perspective of the Church’s Mission,” *Eucharist and Witness. Orthodox Perspectives on the Unity and Mission of the Church*, WCC/Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Geneva/Boston 1998, pp. 49-66, p. 50.

^{xiv}J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, pp. 294-303.

^{xv}J. Zizioulas, “Apostolic Continuity and Orthodox Theology: Towards a Synthesis of Two Perspectives”, *SVTQ* 19 [1975] 75-108).

^{xvi}I have argued elsewhere that only through a radical *liturgical renewal* can our Church bear witness to its fundamental characteristics of *unity* and *catholicity*, and give priority to the idea of “communion” with the “others”. And only then will she definitely and once and for all overcome all kinds of exclusivity, thus promoting the visible unity of the Church and at the same time contributing to the struggle for the unity of humankind (“The Eucharistic Perspective...”, pp. 60ff.).

^{xvii}VI. Pheidias, “Synodality and the Local Church”, *Orthodoxia* 2 (1999), p. 44 (in Greek).

^{xviii} This is the famous answer of the Orthodox Patriarchs of the East to Pope Pius IX, when they turned down in 1848 his invitation to participate in Vatican I: “After all, in our tradition neither patriarchs nor synods have ever been able to introduce new elements, because what safeguards our faith is the very body of the Church, i.e. the people themselves”.

^{xix} Quite recently (Archbishop of Australia) Stylianos Harkianakis has placed on a sound theological ground the quite common expression “*eis typon kai topon Christou*” in his editorial column (*Fantasy and Reality*) to the Australian monthly paper *To Vema tes Ekklesias* Oct 2003, pp.3-4; also to appear in a diglot booklet form very soon.

^{xx} Cf. on this (Metr. of Pergamon) John Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church: An Orthodox Approach,” J. E. Pulgisi (ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church*, Liturgical Press: Collegeville 1999, pp.115-125; and more recently “Recent Discussions on Primacy in Orthodox Theology,” Walter Kasper (ed.), *Il ministero petrino. Cattolici e Ortodossi in dialogo*, Città Nuova Roma, 2004, pp. 249-264.

^{xxi} Cf. my recent book *Postmodernity and the Church. The Challenge of Orthodoxy*, Akritas Publications: Athens 2002. By and large, there still exist an aloofness between Christianity and modernity, which is caused not only by the former’s rejection of the latter, and the negative attitude toward the whole range of the achievements of the Enlightenment, but also by the obstinate persistence of the adherents of modernism – and of course the democratic institutions that come out of it – to allow historic and diachronic institutions, like the Church, to play a significant role in the public life, without being either absorbed or alienated by it, with the simple argument that they derive their origin in the pre-modern era. If today this encounter is possible, and even desirable despite the tragic events of Sept 11, this is because of the undisputed transition of our culture to a new era, the *post-modern* era that brought with it the resurgence of religion. See also my English articles “Orthodox Christianity,” in J. Neusner (ed.), *God’s Rule: The Politics of World Religions*, Georgetown University Press: Washington DC 2003, pp. 85-105; and “The Universal Claims of Orthodoxy and the Particularity of its Witness in a Pluralistic World,” in E. Clapsis [ed.], *The Orthodox Churches in a Pluralistic World*, WCC/Holy Cross: Geneva/Brookline, 2004.

^{xxii} G. Florovsky, “Antinomies of Christian History: Empire and Desert,” *Christianity and Culture*. Vol. II of *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, Nordland Publishing Company: Belmont 1974, pp. 67-100.