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The Christian Gospel and Social Responsibility: The Orthodox Tradition in History*

Both theologically and anthropologically, "society" and "culture" are inseparable concepts, and the one-sided approach to human life which reduces all issues to their socio-economic aspects is wrong. It is probably one of the greatest responsibilities of those who accept the Christian Revelation to be able to evaluate and judge history on the basis of a wholesome, or "catholic" view of human life, which includes the demands of the spirit as well as those of the body, inseparably united.

The concept of Tradition needs clarification. It implies a distinction between Tradition, as inner consistency throughout history with the one apostolic faith, and the human "traditions" which reflect the legitimate variety of historical process and at times conflict with the unchanging and unchangeable content of the Gospel. Clearly, Orthodox theology, which emphasizes the importance of Tradition, must always be able to distinguish—especially in the context of the ecumenical dialogue—between Tradition and "traditions." I will try to make this distinction as clear as possible in reference both to ideas and to events of Orthodox Church history.

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The distinction itself, as well as our evaluation of the various human "traditions" as they have existed in history, can be established only on the basis of theological presuppositions derived from the Christian faith. This faith gives meaning to history and provides it with a goal, an *eschaton*. Christian initiatives in the life of society are not blind initiatives; they are based on knowledge of what can ultimately be *expected* as the end of human history and what cannot. Similarly, it is the same *expectation* which provides them with a criterion to judge the initiatives taken by others.

Our discussion of historical developments in the past of Orthodoxy must therefore start with a definition of "eschatological" categories. It is our belief that at least some contrasting developments will become easier to understand if one applies the same eschatological criteria both to the East and to the West.

1. Three eschatologies

Christianity always rejects the ontological dualism of the Manicheans, and also the idea—common in the Gnosticism of the second century—that visible creation is the work of an inferior Demiurge, distinct from the Transcendent God; instead it affirms the basic goodness of creation, "both visible and invisible." With equal consistency, however, the New Testament maintains an existential dualism between "this world," which is in a state of rebellion against God, and "the world to come," when God will be "all in all." Christians expect "the city to come" and consider themselves as only "sojourners," rather than full-fledged citizens in the present world. However, this New Testament eschatology and its practical implications have been lived and understood differently by Christians at different times in history.

(1) The idea that the "Kingdom" will come suddenly, through a single-handed divine *fiat*, in a not-so-distant future was wide-spread in the early Christian communities. This eschatological conception in effect implied that Christians would constantly pray that "the figure of this world

may pass away." They would not be concerned at all with the betterment of society, simply because earthly society was destined to an early and catastrophic disappearance. They would consider as unavoidable the ultimate condemnation of the vast majority of mankind and the salvation of only a few. In this perspective even the smallest cell of earthly society, the family, would become a burden; and marriage, though permitted, would not be recommended. The eschatological prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus!" would be understood primarily as the cry of the "remnant," totally helpless in a hostile world and seeking salvation *from* it, not a responsibility *towards* it.

Such an eschatology provides no basis for any Christian mission to society or to culture. It attributes to God alone, acting without any human cooperation, the task of bringing about a New Jerusalem, which would come down ready-made from heaven. It also forgets those New Testament images of the Kingdom which precisely imply cooperation or "synergy": the mustard seed, which grows into a big tree, the yeast which leavens the whole dough, the fields ready for the harvest. An eschatology of withdrawal is, of course, psychologically understandable and even spiritually justified in times when the Christian community is forced to return to itself through external pressure and persecution, as in the first centuries and in more recent times as well; but if transformed into a system, it clearly betrays the biblical message taken as a whole. The "New Jerusalem" is not only a free gift of God coming from heaven, but also the seal and the fulfillment of all the legitimate efforts and aspirations of mankind, transfigured and transformed into a new creation.

(2) The emphasis on human achievement leads to another and opposite extreme: a Pelagianizing and optimistic eschatology based on a belief in the never-ending progress of human society. In strongly maintaining that history has a meaning and goal, this belief in progress—in its capitalistic or Marxist forms—is a post-Christian phenomenon. It is still technically an "eschatology" and has inspired much of modern European and American culture during the past three centuries. In the past decade many Christians have more or

less adopted this eschatology. They identify social progress with "new creation," accepting "history" as a guide towards the "New Jerusalem," and defining the primary Christian task in "secular" categories.

This second eschatology, whether or not it calls itself Christian, takes no account of sin and death, from which mankind cannot be redeemed through its own efforts; and thus it ignores the most real and the most tragic aspect of human existence. It seems to aspire at an unending civilization, ever imprisoned by death, which in fact would be "as horrible as immortality for a man who is prisoner of sickness and old-age."¹ By accepting historical determinism, it renounces the very center of the Christian message: *liberation* from "the powers and principalities" of history through Christ's resurrection and through the prophetic promise of a cosmic transfiguration, brought about by God, and not by man.

(3) The biblical concept of "prophecy" leads us to a third form of eschatology which does justice both to God's power and to man's freedom and responsibility. Prophecy, both in the Old Testament and the New, is neither a simple foretelling of the future nor a declaration of inevitability; it is "either a promise or a menace."² In other words, as the Russian religious philosopher Fedotov rightly points out, it is always *conditional*. The "good things" of the future are a promise to the *faithful*, while cataclysms are a menace to the *sinners*. Both, however, are ultimately conditioned by man's freedom. God would refrain from destroying Sodom for the sake of ten faithful, and when the Ninevites repented, he pardoned Nineveh, sparing it from the doom promised by Jonah.

For God is not bound by any natural or historical necessity. Man himself, in his freedom, is to decide whether the coming of Jesus will be a frightful judgment or a joyous marriage feast for him and for his society. No eschatology will be faithful to the Christian message unless it maintains both the power of God over history and the task of man,

¹G. P. Fedotov, *Novy Grad* (New York, 1952), p. 323.

²*Ibid.*, p. 327.

which resides in the very real freedom which was restored to him in Jesus Christ for the building of the Kingdom of God.

II. The legacy of Byzantium

Rome and its imperial tradition exercised an indelible influence, both in the West and in the East, on the way Christians approached all issues involving society and culture. The Christian Church condemned apocalyptic Montanism, with its preaching of withdrawal from history and its negation of culture; but it welcomed the opportunity offered to it by the conversion of Constantine, and in the East even counted him among the saints, "equal to the apostles." This was a clear option taken in favor of assuming responsibility for the whole of the "inhabited earth" (οἰκουμένη). This world was to be influenced not only directly through word and sacrament, but also indirectly through the means which were at the disposal of the State: legislation, administration, and even (more questionably) military force, since now all wars waged against the infidels were seen as holy wars.

There are innumerable legislative texts which illustrate the fact that the Christian empire, without any formal objection on the part of the Church, considered the emperor as a direct appointee of God to rule and protect society. "It is in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," writes Emperor Justinian (527-565), "that we always start every undertaking and action. For from Him we received full charge of the empire; by Him, we concluded a permanent peace with the Persians; through Him we have dethroned the fiercest and strongest tyrants; through Him, we have overcome numberless difficulties; by Him it has been given to us to defend Africa and reduce it under our power; by Him, to govern [the state] wisely and keep it strongly under our sway . . . Hence we place our life under His Providence and prepare to organize our armed troops and our officers . . ."³

As is well known, the tradition of Christianized autocracy

³*Codex Just.* I, 27, 2.

produced different historical forms in the West and in the East. The West experienced the fall of Rome in the fifth century and after having faced the ephemeral attempts of Carolingians and Ottonians to assume the old Roman imperial power, and after epic struggles by popes to ensure the Church's independence, it finally recognized in the *Roman pontiff* a legitimate successor of the Caesars, acknowledging him as the religious and the political leader of Christendom. By contrast, in the East the original empire lasted until 1453. But if this is so, are historians right in assuming that the system of government accepted by the Byzantine State and Church was a form of "caesaropapism"? This is a serious contention. If it were true, it would imply that in the medieval period the Orthodox Church did in fact capitulate to the "secular," i.e. did accept the second type of eschatology which sees the Kingdom of God as fully "continuous" with secular history. In that case Orthodox theology today would be inconsistent with its own past in criticizing "secularism."

It would certainly be impossible to present here a full historical discussion of the problem of Church and society in Byzantium, and I will limit myself to a few brief statements, which could easily be backed with texts and facts:

(1) *Byzantine Christianity never accepted the belief that the emperor had absolute authority in matters of faith or ethics.*⁴ It could not accept such a belief for the simple and general reason that it never was a religion of authority. The ever-recurring theological controversies continued before and frequently after the meeting of councils called by the emperors to settle them (cf. the triadological controversies after Nicaea; the christological controversies after Ephesus and Chalcedon, etc.). Imperial edicts did not stop them. At the time of the Palaeologan dynasty (1261-1453), each successive emperor was actively pushing the Church towards union with Rome. The union, however, failed to take place.

(2) *It is not by opposing to the emperors another competing authority (i.e. that of the priesthood) that Byzantine society avoided caesaropapism, but by referring all authority*

⁴I discuss this point at length in my study of "Justinian, the Empire and the Church," in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* vol. 22 (1968), pp. 45-60.

directly to God. This theocentric view of the universe and of the Church is well expressed in the classic text on the subject, the Sixth Novella of Justinian: "The greatest blessings of mankind are the gifts of God which have been granted us by the mercy on high—the priesthood and the imperial authority. The priesthood ministers to things divine: the imperial authority is set over, and shows diligence in things human; but both proceed from one and the same source, and both adorn the life of man."⁵

In the West this famous text provoked an *institutional* struggle between two legally defined powers, the *sacerdotium* and the *imperium*; but in Byzantium it was understood in a *christological* context. In Christ, the two natures are united, without separation or confusion, into one single *hypostasis*, or person, who is the unique source of their united (though distinct) existence. The adoption of this christological model as a pattern for the organization of society illustrates quite well the contrast between the legally-minded West and the eschatologically oriented East.⁶ Indeed, according to Justinian, the common aim of the empire and the priesthood is "a happy concord (ἁρμονία) which will bring forth all good things for mankind," clearly an eschatological goal actually undefinable in legal, political, or social terms.

Of course, Byzantine Christians were aware of the fact that all humans—emperors, patriarchs, priests—would inevitably be in some way unfaithful to the Christian ideal set before them, and thus they never ascribed infallibility to any individual nor even to any legally defined institution. This is precisely why the history of the Byzantine Church offers innumerable examples of highly authoritative voices challenging the arbitrary actions either of emperors or of ecclesiastical authorities. The examples of St. John Chrysostom, St. Maximus the Confessor, St. John of Damascus, and St. Theodore the Studite are well-known. They cannot be considered

⁵Engl. tr. in E. Barker, *Social and Political thought in Byzantium* (Oxford, 1975), p. 75-76.

⁶On the consequences, see F. Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy. Origins and Background II* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies IX, Washington, D.C., 1966).

as exceptions to the rule, because their writings have been widely read by generations of Byzantine Christians, and were always among the most authoritative patterns of social behavior in the Christian East. None of them, however, challenged either the political system or the *eschatological ideal* defined by Justinian. None of them denied the principle that "divine" and "human" things are inseparable since the Incarnation, and must become "Christ-like," i.e. the "human" must live in "harmony" with the divine. None of them preached either an apocalyptic withdrawal from culture or a separation between the spiritual and the secular which would give "autonomy" to the latter.

How did this ideal manifest itself in practice? There is no doubt that Byzantine society, like medieval western society, made continuous efforts to integrate Christian principles into its legislative texts and its daily practice. This applies to both the State and the Church. "We believe that there is nothing higher and greater that we can do," wrote the emperor Leo III in his *Ecloga*, "than to govern in judgment and justice those who are committed (by God) to our care, to the end that the bonds of all manner of injustice may be loosened, the oppression imposed by force may be set at naught, and the assaults of wrongdoers may be repelled."⁷ Similarly, the Church was required, by its canon law, to use its wealth in building and administering institutions of social welfare.⁸ The extent to which both the State and the Church practiced social welfare is wider than one usually imagines,⁹ even if the clearly objectionable institutions inherited from pagan antiquity, such as slavery, were only humanized without being fully suppressed.

The overall concern for the *humanum* implied no clear distinction of jurisdiction between the State and the Church; unity of purpose was the very content of the ideal of "harmony" defined by Justinian. This unity of purpose justified the concern and the power of the emperor to administer

⁷Engl. tr. Barker, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-85.

⁸See for example, canons 8 and 10 of the Council of Chalcedon.

⁹See D. J. Constantelos, *Byzantine Philanthropy and Social Welfare* (New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press: 1968).

practical church affairs (choice of patriarchs, convocation of councils, definition of limits of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, etc.) as well as the participation of church officials in political responsibility. Certainly the canon law of the Church forbade both the appointment of clerics by civil authority (II Nicaea, canon 3) and the assumption of any secular dignity by clerics (Chalcedon, canon 7). But these canons never served as a guarantee against abuses. On the other hand, the Church never considered it an abuse to ensure continuity of the Justinianic "harmony" by buttressing the State in times of need. Thus the "ecumenical patriarch" of Constantinople was, in fact, a political official of the empire, the guarantor of imperial legitimacy; and he would automatically assume the regency of the State when the need for this arose. The roles played either as regents or political leaders by patriarchs Sergius I (610-638), Nicholas Mysticus (901-907, 912-925), Arsenius Autoreianus (1255-1259, 1261-1265), and John Calecas (1334-1347) are examples of this. The typically Byzantine notion of the inseparable union between a universal Church and an ideally universal Empire was also expressed in the very last days of Byzantium. Patriarch Anthony (1389-1390, 1391-1397) was asked by the Great Prince of Moscow Basil I whether the commemoration of the Byzantine emperor's name could be dropped at liturgical services in Russia. "My son," the patriarch answered, "you are wrong in saying: We have a church but no emperor. It is not possible for Christians to have a church and not to have an empire. Church and empire have a great unity and community; nor is it possible for them to be separated from one another."¹⁰

The Slavs, spiritual children of Byzantium, certainly learned the lesson. The Byzantine pattern of relations between Church and society was faithfully adopted by them with the same ideal of a "harmonious" union in a common allegiance to Christ. Creating their little "Byzantiums" in Preslav, in Ochrid, in Trnovo, in Kiev and in Moscow, Slavic tsars and princes recognized the Church as their cultural inspiration and guide; and the Church assumed this role will-

¹⁰Engl. tr. in Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

ingly, translating Byzantine texts into the vernacular, and assuming social and political responsibility whenever the need arose. Thus St. Alexis of Moscow became for a time regent of Muscovite Russia (1353-1378), and his example was later followed by Patriarch Filaret (1619-1634). Even the great St. Sergius of Radonezh used his spiritual prestige against the factional feuds of Russian princes.

What then is the legacy of Byzantium to the contemporary Orthodox Church? Theologically, it is primarily in the affirmation that just as man, individually, is destined to "deification" and is fully himself when he is in communion with God, a communion which was realized by Jesus Christ and in Him made accessible to all in the faith, so human society is called to conform itself to God's presence and become the Kingdom of God. The ambiguity of the Byzantine experiment resided, however, on the level of eschatology. Could the Justinianic "harmony," an eschatological ideal, be realized concretely in history? Was Byzantium so fully transformed and transfigured as a society that it found itself in full conformity with God's plan, or was it still a "fallen" society, under the power of evil, sin, and death?

The Byzantine Empire, as a political and cultural entity, never resolved this ambiguity of its claims. The Church, however, always maintained the *distinction* between the priesthood and the empire, between the liturgical, sacramental, and eucharistic anticipation of the Kingdom on the one hand and the empirical life of still-fallen humanity on the other. This polarity between the "already now" and the "not yet" was also constantly proclaimed by the large and prosperous Byzantine monastic movement, whose withdrawal from society and non-conformity to the standards imposed by the empire served constantly as a prophetic reminder that there *cannot* be total "harmony" before the *parousia*, that the Roman Empire is not yet the Kingdom of God, that in order to share in Christ's victory over the world Christians must themselves challenge the laws and the logics of fallen mankind.

III. Modern times

The survival of Eastern Orthodox Christianity after the fall of Byzantium and of the other Christian empires of the Balkans effectively proves that Orthodox Christians did not believe in the empire as a fully "realized eschatology," but rather—as the monks have always maintained—they discovered the Kingdom in the Eucharist and the personal experience of God, accessible to the members of Christ's body.

History itself forced them into recognizing the "other-worldliness" of Christianity, since the "world" had suddenly become hostile again.

The Ottoman Empire, which during four centuries held under its sway the Balkans, Asia Minor, and the Middle East (much of the former Byzantine territories) was a Moslem state, which tolerated the existence of a large Christian population but forbade all Christian mission and made any cultural or intellectual development practically impossible. During all these centuries the Byzantine liturgy, with its rich hymnography, its explicit eschatological character, and its ability to unite the congregation into a real experience of the Body of Christ, became the principal and largely self-sufficient expression of Christianity. Also, following the Byzantine tradition mentioned above, which implied that the patriarch of Constantinople would assume responsibility for society as a whole in the absence of the emperor, the ecumenical patriarch became the *ethnarch*, or civil and religious head of the entire Orthodox Christian population of the Turkish realm by investiture of the Sultan.¹¹ Thus, while the Church did not actually renounce its mission to society, this mission in practice became limited by the boundaries of a ghetto. This situation, enforced by the tragedy of history, was unfortunately to remain as a habit even when times again became more favorable to mission.

Meanwhile, in Russia a new and powerful Orthodox em-

¹¹On the Turkish period, see most conveniently S. Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity: A Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the Eve of the Turkish Conquest to the Greek War of Independence* (Cambridge, 1968).

pire had taken shape and seemed originally destined to assume the role of a second Byzantium or, if one wishes, a "third Rome." However, the political and social ideas which eventually prevailed in Russia were those of a Western secular state, with Byzantine formulae used mainly to justify autocratic power as such. The ecclesial and canonical corrective which had been acknowledged in Byzantium was lacking. It is in Russia, however, at a time when the empire had not yet taken its final turn towards secular ideals, that a significant theological controversy took place precisely on the social role of the Church. The controversy opposed "Possessors" and "Non-Possessors," two monastic and ecclesiastical groups, equally devoted to the idea of a relevant Christian mission to society but standing for different forms of action and witness.¹² The "Possessors," lead by St. Joseph of Volotsk (1440-1515) found themselves in the tradition of Byzantine theocratic society. They defended the right of the Church, and particularly of the monasteries, to possess great wealth, which was destined to be used for social action: hospitals, schools, and various forms of welfare. This social witness was seen by them as essential to the very nature of Christianity. They were not afraid of the spiritual vulnerability of a rich Church, whose wealth could be used by an inimical State to blackmail it. They believed in the future of a "holy Russia," whose benevolent tsars would support the Church's prosperity and whose ecclesiastical leadership would be forever immune to the temptations of bourgeois comfort, using its wealth only for good works.

The "Non-Possessors," meanwhile, considered that wealth inevitably corrupts, especially that form of wealth which was enjoyed by medieval monasteries: serfs working on immense domains. They saw the mission of the Church primarily as a prophetic witness, pointing to the Kingdom to come. St. Nilus Sorsky (1433-1508), the leader of the "Non-Possessors," inherited the ideals of hesychasm, the mystical and contemplative monasticism of the early Church. He did not trust, as his opponents did, the future of a "holy Russia."

¹²For a brilliant analysis of the controversy see G. P. Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind II* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962).

He foresaw its secularization and defended the full independence of the Church from the State.

The controversy ended with the victory of the "Possessors." But the "Non-Possessors" were to be largely vindicated by later historical developments. At the time of the secular Enlightenment the Russian Church was deprived of its lands by Peter the Great and Catherine II. It had no means left for a meaningful social witness. Meanwhile, the spiritual heirs of St. Nilus Sorsky—St. Tikhon of Zadonsk (1724-1783), St. Seraphim of Sarov (1759-1833), the *startsy* of Optino—became the most authentic witnesses to Christian experience in the midst of secular society and succeeded in building bridges between traditional Orthodoxy and the religious revival of the *intelligentsia* in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries.

The past two centuries have witnessed tremendous historical changes in the life of the Orthodox Church. The Ottoman Empire disintegrated; and out of this disintegration new nations, whose religious past is rooted in Orthodoxy, were born. Orthodox Russia, after some hopeful signs of spiritual revival, became the Soviet Union. Millions of Orthodox Christians were dispersed throughout the Western world, where the general frame of reference used in solving "social issues," is determined by Western religious history.

In the midst of this confusion, it was inevitable that the traditional Orthodox values would be severely tested. The new nations in the Balkans, whose cultural identity the Orthodox Church had maintained for centuries of Turkish yoke, had gained their political independence in an atmosphere of secularized Romanticism, which was itself a fruit of the French Revolution. The *nation* itself, not the Christian eschatological and christological ideas, came to be seen as the supreme goal of social action. The Church was frequently unable either to cope with the situation or to discern the spiritual issues at stake. The hierarchs, whose traditional role as "ethnarchs" placed them originally at the forefront of the liberation struggle, soon accepted the comfortable position of obedient civil servants in states led by secularized politicians. Mistaking the new situation for a return to

Byzantine theocracy, they identified the interests of the Church with that of secular nationalism. The Church condemned this identification in an official conciliar statement (1872), labelling it as the heresy of "phyletism"; but the temptation of religious nationalism remains one of the most basic weaknesses of contemporary Orthodoxy. In fact, it represents a capitulation before a subtle form of secularism, which Byzantium with its universal idea of the empire always avoided.

In Orthodox circles today concern for a social witness of Orthodoxy is frequently voiced. Between the two world wars, and also after World War II, a remarkable revival of Christian social activism took place in Greece. It achieved significant results in the field of evangelism but was later criticized—with some justification—for its pietistic and Protestant-inspired orientation. Meanwhile, on the intellectual level, the Orthodox Church attracted to its fold prominent Russian political economists who had previously been Marxists. This pleiad of "religious philosophers," including S. N. Bulgakov, N. S. Berdyaev, S. L. Frank, P. B. Struve and others, began to exercise its influence in the Church itself; and some of them played an important role in Church affairs just prior to the Revolution. Even if some of them, under the influence of an optimistic Hegelianism, adopted a monistic and static philosophy of the universe, usually known as "sophiology" and not unlike the systems of Tillich or Teilhard, their move "from Marxism to Idealism" is a significant event in the history of Orthodox thought. It still fascinates those involved in the renascent religious thought among Soviet intellectual dissidents today.

What attracted these people back to Orthodoxy? Primarily, its eschatological expectation of a transfigured universe; its belief in "deification" as the ultimate destiny of man; its ability, in its liturgical life and in the spiritual experience of its saints, to anticipate the vision of the second coming. They were drawn to Orthodoxy's ability to maintain a "realized" and not only a futuristic eschatology; to speak of the Kingdom of God not only in terms of concepts, or practical achievements, but also as a real vision of the

divine presence. These are the aspects of the Orthodox Tradition which make it a living hope not only to intellectuals disappointed in Marxist totalitarian socialism but also to those of us whose destiny is to witness to Orthodoxy in the West.

Conclusion

Christian tradition cannot be evaluated only in terms of its "successes" and its "failures." As we all know, the New Testament itself does not offer promises of earthly success to the followers of Jesus. Indeed, this must be so, because the true power of Christ will be manifested to the world only on the *last day*, while the *present* power of the Kingdom is fully revealed only to the eyes of faith. Our brief review of the Orthodox Tradition is certainly not a success story; we have only attempted to suggest the main orientations of Orthodox thought and action *historically*. How these historical facts can find their place in a contemporary doctrinal statement must be left to another occasion.

However, a preliminary conclusion can already be drawn: that a Christian solution of social issues is never either absolute or perfect as long as the *parousia* has not taken place, and that an Orthodox Christian can live with that imperfection because he knows that the *parousia* will eventually come; but he cannot be reconciled with imperfection as such. The Orthodox Church has condemned the eschatology of "withdrawal," which would justify indifference and inaction. But—and this is particularly important for our present dialogue—it will certainly never agree that the Kingdom of God present in the Church as Mystery and as an anticipated eschatological reality, is dependent upon the influence which its members may or may not exercise in secular society. Orthodoxy will always maintain that the starting point, the source, and the criterion for solving social issues are found in the uninterrupted, mysterious, and in a sense transcendent communion of the eucharistic gathering.

Historically Orthodox Christians frequently looked for

substitutes for this initial and basic criterion. The Byzantine Empire provided one; nationalism later presented another. But these historical and spiritual mistakes were ultimately recognized as such. They should not, in any case, justify similar substitutions today.