



**04-04-2011**

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## **The Moscow Patriarchate's Utopian Vision Of Russian Civilization**

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The events of the world in the last 20 years and the fundamental changes in the national life of many countries demand from us to articulate theological thought contextually. The political and social changes in our globalized world are immediate and stimulating and as such they have to be viewed on various levels of human life. The globalization of the world presents the subject as a complex and multidimensional challenge that has to be addressed by the Orthodox Church in order to authenticate the message of Christ. The aspect of globalization carries within it a multifaceted dimension of national and personal identity and as such cannot be marginalized. A lack of response equals an inability of the Church to tackle the question.

As we observe these political, philosophical, social and ideological changes, it is extremely important and helpful for us to articulate this perception of a particular national and personal identity based on the life of a particular Local Orthodox Church. In Orthodox theological thought, it is extremely important to address these questions, as they are exemplified in the life of the local saints. The importance of saints in the life of the Serbian or Greek Orthodox Church and nations is evidence of intrinsic correlations between the life of the Church and the people's identification with the particularity of culture and nation. For the Greek Orthodox Church, St. Gerasimos and St. Nectarios are the ambassadors of heaven on earth that inspired people of Greece to fight for their identity.<sup>[1]</sup> In the case of the Serbian Orthodox Church, St. Basil of Ostrog, St. Peter of Montenegro, St. Stephen the First-Crowned, the King of Serbia, St. Sava, and others became the inspiration for freedom.<sup>[2]</sup> As this will be analyzed in this presentation, the subject of the hagiological identity plays an important and integral role in the life of national identities of the people of the many Local Orthodox Churches.

One of the most recent events that inclines us to analyse this aspect of the relationship between national identity and the particularity of sainthood is the document presented by Patriarch Kirill of Moscow known as the "Concept of

Ruskiy Mir, or Russian World". This ideological concept of the Moscow Patriarchate, based on the foundation of the independent states of Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus, presents Russian civilization as a vehicle for strong global political superpower that will become a centre of global civilization. The analysis of the document presents us with multi-dimensional questions, as the content of the document touches on very sensitive theological foundations. Based on this document, discussion abounds among philosophers, politicians, and theologians, as the document was presented only one month after another document known as "Economy and Ethics" that was issued in Kyiv. This last particular Kyivan document established the parameters of a particular economical ideology that is strategic for the cooperation among the Republics of the former Soviet Union. The correlation of these two documents is not accidental. The direct official engagement of the Moscow Patriarchate in the sphere of political life has to be analyzed very carefully as both documents pose a real threat for the stability of the Orthodox Church in the world and the strategic influence of the Moscow Patriarchate among the members of the Local Churches in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.[\[3\]](#)

For our purpose we will not discuss the political ideology of the documents or the stability of the Orthodox Church in Russia, as this subject is being discussed world-wide. We will also avoid polemics with the Moscow Patriarchate as this is being done by others.[\[4\]](#) For our discussion, we will mainly focus on several elements of the theological content of the document: national identity, culture and language, as this is being discussed in contemporary Orthodox theological circles in a holistic context.

The Local Orthodox Church in Ukraine and abroad is confronted with these issues presented by Patriarch Kirill's concept. Facing the difficulties of contemporary life, the Orthodox Church in Ukraine and abroad finds itself in a position to defend and articulate its own identity. Specifically, it is in hagiology that the members of the Local Orthodox Church in Ukraine find a way to express and articulate their national identity without crossing the line between politics and spirituality, or the subjugation of ecclesiology to that of phyletism. The difficulties of the identification of the Local Church with its particular saints are complex as politics and the interest of the state are taken into account. But this identification of saints with the local particularity is extremely important when the subject of a Local Church and individual identification is closely intertwined.

One of the most important stimuli for the theological foundation of a saint in a Local Orthodox Church presupposes a matrix of the contextual local character. All the saints of the Orthodox Church belong to a Local Orthodox Church with all her human characteristics. Sainthood is developed locally and contextually. Although some of the local saints have universal recognition (St. John Chrysostom, St. Gregory the Theologian, Basil the Great...), all of them were immersed in the contextual life in a particular Church. The previously mentioned saints of the Serbian and Greek Orthodox Churches are authenticated and

identified as members of the particular Local Church in Serbia and Greece. Although, the contextual reality of the saints is always placed in a prism of transfiguration, nevertheless this transfiguration presupposes suffering, pains, struggles, and images of the particular local situation. This is one of the main reasons for Orthodox theological thought to consider the contextual theology as integral for the proper development of Orthodox hagiology.

As the Church is the *“living icon of the Holy Trinity”* in the world, the entire world, with all of its difficulties and complexities, is the domain of the Church. According to St. Maximos the Confessor: *“The Church is the print and image of the whole world, which consists of visible and invisible substances”*.<sup>[5]</sup> The problems of man are the Church’s problems.<sup>[6]</sup> They are also the problems and struggles of the lives of the local saints. All the daily dilemmas of each human individual, including the political, economic, cultural, and social problems are continually transferred to the Church, where they are sanctified and overcome in its sacramental life. The problems of every human being are the problems of the living saints who struggle with the entire Local Church towards the final transfiguration. The relationship of a particular saint of the Local Church with God is also extended to a relationship with the world, particularly the world of the Local Church.<sup>[7]</sup> The sainthood of a particular saint becomes a catalyst for a Christian’s involvement in the world. This is one of the main reasons for some contemporary theologians to consider sainthood as a *“measure of the entire civilizations”*.<sup>[8]</sup> As the Orthodox Church is the life of the world, which participates in the struggle for man’s theosis (as imitating Christ), the Church transforms the world. Although the Church has a distinctive identity and a specific mission in the world, actions for justice, peace, and stability of the world are constitutive dimensions of the Church’s mission.<sup>[9]</sup> The Church should never be associated with indifference or excessive detachments that are integral parts of the horror of the world.<sup>[10]</sup> The detachment of the particular saint from the horrors of the world is not recognized in hagiology. Indifference and apathy bring life to death, while participation and action change and transform the world. If the Local Church with all her saints associates herself with indifference, she is not considered a Church in communion with the saints.<sup>[11]</sup> The disassociation of the saints from the daily life of people of the Local Church could be understood as a negation of the transformative power of God in the saints to bring them to Divine reality.

The Church incarnates people refusing to accept any human ideas or beliefs.<sup>[12]</sup> Orthodoxy is not to be identified with any historical limitations or ideological concepts.<sup>[13]</sup> Although the Church is not identified with any of these concepts, she is incarnated into various cultures in order to anticipate the Kingdom of God.<sup>[14]</sup> From another perspective, all the negative aspects of the experience of the saints are being internally transfigured in sainthood to the point of elation and “unutterable joy of the soul”.<sup>[15]</sup> At the celebration of the local Eucharist, the transfiguration of creation is already actualized.<sup>[16]</sup> In the Holy Eucharist, there is a strong solidarity between the members (sharers) of the visible (pilgrim) and

invisible (heavenly) Church. Communion is inspired by the constant presence of the Holy Spirit. This experience is incarnated in the particular life of the nation, which is shared between the saints and the local community. They are the incarnational gleams of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the people which is fundamental for the spiritual renewal of a particular nation. The liturgical worship of Orthodox people, developed through the centuries, is undoubtedly an expression of spiritual beauty longing for the unity with God.<sup>[17]</sup> Orthodox theology emphasizes the magnificence of the original beauty of the entire creation before the fall of Adam, as this is accentuated in the liturgical context. Additionally, it is in the cultural expression that we are transported to the new transcended realm of the Divine presence.<sup>[18]</sup> The expressions of the longing for God in the life of the saints of a particular nation are expressed in the same way: through their participation in the holiness of God.<sup>[19]</sup>

We have to affirm that the Church is the communion of saints and as such the Church has eschatological dimensions. The eschatological unity of faith in the saints is primary, but the spiritual shapes of their development are not uniform.<sup>[20]</sup> The saints of the Serbian or Greek Orthodox Church reached beyond their transfigured life in order to help their own people's liberation from oppression, hardship, and calamity. Their life in Christ Jesus was transformative for those who were searching for help. We may recognize this as a response to the call of St. Paul: *"bear one another's burdens"* (Gal. 6:2).

The placement of sainthood in the contextual local environment also presupposes the absorption of language, culture, and national identity. Contextual theology is a composition of a variety of those elements that, although not transformative, are integral for the development of the theology of sainthood.<sup>[21]</sup> Sainthood is not a vacuum where the contextual elements have no impact. Christian charisma does not work in emptiness. Holiness, which is actualized in communion with God, is a goal and essence of the particular life of the Local Church<sup>[22]</sup> that is being actualized in a personal history of every human person.<sup>[23]</sup> Actualization is not only the perpendicular unity with God, but it also has the horizontal dimensions extended to the members of the Local Church.<sup>[24]</sup> Love for God is extended to love for the other fellow human being.<sup>[25]</sup> The language of the Local Church, as a medium, absorbs and brings the message of God through the saints to the members of the Local Church. Language becomes a medium in order to present the mystical experience.<sup>[26]</sup> As this is presented in Orthodox theological thought, a language is a communicative power<sup>[27]</sup> that serves as a medium of communion between Divine and the human. Language is the expression of a particular historical local Church experience.<sup>[28]</sup> For the Ukrainian nation, the language of St. Volodymyr, St. Olha, and St. Anthony of the Caves became the vehicle of the transformative power of God for Kyivan Rus'. As we observe this in the history of humankind, all the languages are absorbed by Divine providence in order to bring the Divine message.

One of the characteristics of any language is a progression or development over time. As a language develops itself in the context of a Local Church-community, it absorbs new linguistic elements. In effect, all the changes create a new lexicon that is appropriate and effective to identify and express the feelings and the new reality of a particular community. In other words, language develops in order to profess the creativity of a particular people. The development of language is not only an integral part of the development of a particular nation, but the development is being encouraged in order to attain new levels of its own national identification.<sup>[29]</sup> Therefore, it is not the eschatological reality in itself that changes, but a medium or language that adapts itself in order to adequately portray and identify God's reality in a particular period of time and local particularity. Transformative power doesn't belong to a language but to the message that uses a particular language in order to bring the Divine reality. It is the duty of theology to absorb and penetrate the particular language in order to enter into a dialogue with the Divine.<sup>[30]</sup> Therefore, it is false to assume that one language is superior to another. It is a delusion to consider the possibility of the existence of a universal language.<sup>[31]</sup> The exclusive and prestigious use of Church Slavonic or Russian languages has to be considered as unfaithful and foreign to Orthodox theological tradition. The sources of this ideology, where there is supremacy of Russian and Church-Slavonic language, both lead us to the Russian theory of the Muscovite messianism and the theory of the Third Rome, strongly condemned by Orthodox theologians.<sup>[32]</sup> Historically, it is also an extension of the "pan-Slavism" theory of the end of the nineteenth century whose aim was to create a concrete philosophical idealism and an absolute divine society. We have to remember that this movement was close to the identification of the Church with social community.<sup>[33]</sup> The development of the Slavophil religious philosophy and ideology of imperialism is continued even now in the concept of "Russian civilization".<sup>[34]</sup> We have to underline very strongly that in Orthodox theology, no person or nation can be subject to a political and ideological stereotype as is presented by the "Russian World Doctrine". The uniqueness of every person, and in extension of every nation, is absolute.<sup>[35]</sup> The imperialistic notion of this ideology goes against the spirit of the Church. This theory, as presented by the Moscow Patriarchate, is a clear form of "rootless cosmopolitanism" and extremism<sup>[36]</sup> that is in contradiction to Orthodox theological thought. The exclusive privilege of one culture represents a deeper human ideology that unfortunately is incarnated in this particular Russian imperialistic thought. It is also unfaithful within theological discussions in the Orthodox Church to criticize any of the languages as unsuited for the liturgical, national, or theological life within that Church. The continual development of a language is indicative of a living reality of God that searches for the best way to express the heavenly reality of the Kingdom of God. With the development of a language, there is also a development of a specific vocabulary and theological lexicon that would be as close as possible to the original message in the original language.

A member of a local ecclesial community is born as a member of a particular people, culture, or nation that create his identity.<sup>[37]</sup> Culture is always situation-conditioned.<sup>[38]</sup> The personal identity of every member of the Church is continually shaped by those factors. From this perspective, the national identity and culture<sup>[39]</sup> belong to the personal identity of a specific people. The cosmopolitan idea of culture, or a “universal Christian civilization”, is not acceptable and contradictory to the ethos of the Orthodox Church. According to contemporary Orthodox thought, “no culture is final and definitive” since a culture is a continual process of spiritual effort.<sup>[40]</sup> It is theologically wrong to profess that there is a superior Russian culture that eliminates all the characteristic distinctions of other national particularities. This kind of ideology that uses the ecclesiological foundations, in order to subjugate the identity of the others, is called “phyletism” and this can be considered as a pseudo-religious invention.<sup>[41]</sup> The imperialistic ideology of the “Russian World Doctrine” identifies religion as the object of fundamental loyalty to the Russian state. This is one of the reasons, why, according to the document, the members of Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, and other ideologies also take an active role in the creation of the “Russian World Doctrine”. The Orthodox Church is used as one of many links for the creation of a greater cause. It is dangerous for the Orthodox Church to be considered as one of many ideological elements subjected to the cause of a greater imperial state. More devastating is the fact that the source does not belong to the political hierarchy, but to the hierarchy of the Moscow Patriarchate.

From another perspective, we may be surprised that Patriarch Kirill, with his recent theory of the “Russian World Doctrine”, contradicts himself and his earlier conclusion on the subject of Church and society. While discussing the relation of the Church with society, Patriarch Kirill strongly objected to any identification of the Church with a political party: “...*Secondly, the Church is called to be apolitical in the sense that she should carry neither her own political agenda nor any designs on political leadership*”.<sup>[42]</sup> As a consequence, the document is definitely not a sacramental community as this is presented by Orthodox ecclesiology. In effect, the reality of the “Russian World Doctrine” is the identity of the Russian state, projected in the idea of the Orthodox Church, where the ecclesiology of the Church is sacrificed and determined by the needs of the Russian state. Subsequently, eschatology, as a primary source of the directives of the Church, became subservient to the imperialism of the Kremlin. We have to state clearly, that the dominance of one particular culture and its distinct privilege cannot replace the authenticity of the Christian message. The political ideology of the Russian state is incompatible with the theological foundation of the Church. The Orthodox Church is not to be identified by a political and mystical union. Where the eschatological reality of the Church is identified with the political and cultural ideology of the state, the Church fails in its mission to portray the Kingdom of God. The articulation of the superiority of one of the cultures above the others and supported by the utopian political agenda of the state can lead the privileged nation to tyranny and oppression of others. The history of the Slavic nations, particularly of the Ukrainian nation, is quite expressive. In the perspective of the “Russian World” ideology, there is no room

for the creativity and authenticity of the other human beings and cultures. In effect, it is a contradiction to the basic ecclesiological principles of the Orthodox Church.

The roots of the doctrine of a national superior calling are found in writings of the eleventh century that identify Orthodox faith with the nation of Rus'.<sup>[43]</sup> The intrinsic correlation between the nation and the Church in the fourteenth century was cemented by Basil I, Prince of Moscow who proclaimed this unity in the words: *"We have the Church only, but not a king. Kingdom and Church have many elements in common and are expressed in unity, and the two cannot be separated..."*.<sup>[44]</sup> This ideology was a crucial catalyst for the promotion of the Moscow Empire and the theory of "Moscow as the Third Rome". The effects of this thought are being felt until this day. The Noble Prize winner Alexander Solzhenitsyn strongly criticized the imperialistic notion of the superiority of one nation above the others in the following way: *"Nations are the wealth of humankind, its collective personalities; the very last of them wears its own special colours and bears within itself a special facet of divine intention"*.<sup>[45]</sup> Other contemporary Russian writers see in the nation of the particular people a "part of God's immutable purpose".<sup>[46]</sup> At the very end, Patriarch Kirill who defined the national exclusiveness and superiority as the one which: "gives birth to arrogant pride and entails animosity and hatred towards one's neighbour".<sup>[47]</sup>

As the Orthodox Church embraces otherness, it is also regardful and respectful of the tremendous riches of human diversity of culture.<sup>[48]</sup> Christianity does not suppress cultures of national identities, but absorbs them into the unified diversity of catholic tradition.<sup>[49]</sup> The foundation of the importance of national culture and identity was essential for Patriarch Kirill who eloquently said: *"... The annihilation of national culture and tradition is not only a sure path to the depravation of people's historical remembrance and self-understanding; it also tears man away from the milieu from which he derives spiritual nourishment"*.<sup>[50]</sup> There is no "pure Orthodoxy" that is not untainted by a specific - ingenious culture.<sup>[51]</sup> From the Orthodox perspective, the personal development of its own identity and integrity is a constant process and this can be preserved and continued only by a constant spiritual effort.<sup>[52]</sup> The culture and national identity of human beings are being constantly transfigured by the mystical life in the Church. Orthodoxy sees a particular culture as a source of redemptive revelation of God.<sup>[53]</sup> The presence of the Holy Spirit in the world at any time and within any culture transforms any language in order to redeem humankind. Every culture and language, as they developed in the period of history, becomes a vehicle of God's presence in the world. Rejection of this development in a life of a particular nation is a rejection of the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit in the contemporary Church.

People of a specific territory of a particular saint inherit the legacy of their forefathers. It is contemporary Ukraine that also has exclusive privilege to its own heritage of Kyivan Rus'. The distinctive heritage and treasures<sup>[54]</sup> of the

past are the spiritual blessing of the Ukrainian nation that makes it so unique. The heritage of St. Volodymyr and the saints of Kyivan Rus' has a lasting spiritual value that is being felt until this age.<sup>[55]</sup> They greatly influenced the shape of the nation.<sup>[56]</sup> The spiritual legacy that is incarnated in the life of the Ukrainian nation makes it also humble to the point of identifying it as the "greatest power".<sup>[57]</sup> It is a sort of "self-consecration" to God and reply for God's commandment to become holy as He is Holy (Leviticus 11, 44, 19:2, and 20:7; Peter 1:16). We cannot forget that sainthood is a gift from God to humanity and those who respond to this call in self-sacrifice are the "vessels" of immense God's grace.<sup>[58]</sup> Theologically, this sanctification is an act of the Holy Trinity through the power of Jesus Christ in His incarnation, suffering, crucifixion, and glorious raising from the dead.<sup>[59]</sup> Paradoxically, the centuries of oppression and persecution of the Ukrainian nation can also be understood in the context of "voiceless kenosis"<sup>[60]</sup> for the re-creation of humanity. Holiness of the Church should lead us to a sense of deep metanoia.<sup>[61]</sup> Only in the context of the greatness of silence can we measure the glory of witness of so many generations of Ukrainians of the past centuries. It is a great force that is expressed in a myriad of martyrs.<sup>[62]</sup> The silence of martyrs of Ukrainians of so many generations might be more profound than any measure of human word. This concept can be only authenticated in the aspect of a "new creation" of mystery that is lived without explanation. We have to identify the aspect of humility as liberation from the sin of pride that causes the nation to fall into a delusion of universal centralism.<sup>[63]</sup> The aspect of Theodicy does not allow going any deeper than that. But from another theological perspective, we have to emphasize, that the tears of sorrow, repentance, suffering and oppression, directed to our merciful God, are the ways of members of the Church to sanctify the world.<sup>[64]</sup> Every member of the Church is called to be a saint.<sup>[65]</sup> The presence of so many miraculous icons of the saints in Ukraine is not an accident. The Pochayiv icon of the Mother of God and the relics of St. Volodymyr are one of many examples in the life of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine that does not need to be exemplified. From the Orthodox perspective, iconography in the Orthodox Church identifies the most perfect source of the particular culture.<sup>[66]</sup> This is one of the reasons, why it is imperative for us to emphasize the heritage of St. Volodymyr and all the saints of Kyivan Rus' who made Ukrainians who they are today. In the presence of the specific icon and relics, there is a suspension of time and we participate with our own integrity in this eschatological dimension. With the identification of St. Volodymyr, Ukrainians identify themselves with the eternal as death does not separate all those who are called to holiness. The uniqueness of the heritage does not allow us to be identified as Russians, but uniquely as Ukrainians. The distinction and uniqueness of identification of Ukrainians with the land of Kyivan Rus' prevents them also from an inclusion into an geo-political ideology of Moscow that can lead to a total annihilation of the nation in the future. The identification with the heritage of the past does not allow us to dismiss this argument. The uniqueness of the identification also prevents anybody else from abusing it according to their own purposes.

According to the Eucharistic ecclesiology, each Local Church is equal, and each one of them is unique in its ecclesial expressions.<sup>[67]</sup> Difference of expression is not a negation of unity and as such, difference must be maintained.<sup>[68]</sup> Difference among people with all its conditions is essential even for Patriarch Kirill in his earlier writings.<sup>[69]</sup> The opposition to the diversity of cultures and placement of the superiority of the utopian Russian civilization above the others is the opposition to life itself.<sup>[70]</sup> The culture of every man is sustained by the energies of God.<sup>[71]</sup> The question of the existence of an universal Christian culture in the Orthodox theology is always negative. Orthodoxy rejects a universal Christian culture and as such the promotion of the Christian utopian and universal culture, as this is presented by Patriarch Kirill, is impossible to accept.<sup>[72]</sup> How quickly it is forgotten, that it was Patriarch Kirill who said: “... On the other hand, there is a danger in domination of a unified (so-called) “mass culture”, a danger of becoming oblivious to specific national cultures which reflect the spiritual richness and multi-faceted nature of the human family”.<sup>[73]</sup> A spiritual creativity of a nation is constantly nourished by its spiritual life. Culture is a synthesis<sup>[74]</sup> of the human ascension of creativity and Divine acceptance of grace. For Ukrainians, it is integral to preserve their own identity as this preservation is not only transitory, but it is a part of the age to come. It is the nations with all their distinctive identities and varieties that will enter the Kingdom of God (Rev. 21:24).<sup>[75]</sup> As all the Local Churches are equal and unique, all the nations are equal in honour and value.<sup>[76]</sup> The uniqueness and equality of the Local Churches, as essential for Orthodox ecclesiology, is based on the territorial principle that is safeguarded by the Church Canons.<sup>[77]</sup> Unfortunately, the Moscow Patriarchate does not want to recognize this ecclesiological principle of the territoriality of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine as this would mean recognition of the locality and independence of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine from Moscow control. As a consequence, there was a need to create a missing ecclesiological link: “Russian Christian civilization” that in effect became its own ecclesiological trap of phyletism. The creativity of the Russian thinkers should not surprise us, as this line of thinking never liberated itself from the imperialistic Russian past.<sup>[78]</sup> A continual promotion of this ideology by the office of the Moscow Patriarchate presents the Russian Orthodox thought as outdated and unrelated to the development of the modern world. The nostalgic dream for the imperial Russian past detaches the Orthodox Church in Russia from the life of their people as can be seen in the daily life of the Russian nation. We should not be surprised when people leave the Church for other Christian denominations, as the Church in her creativity presents the cemented past and is unable to identify herself with the contemporary world.

Ukrainian patriotic loyalty to her nationhood has to be also understood in terms of a transformative reality that brings life into the presence of God. For Ukrainians, it is their choice, as free living images of God, to choose to be identified as Ukrainians. As Ukrainians make this choice, they are “acquiring fullness of humanity”<sup>[79]</sup> in order to become the icons of God. Nationhood becomes for Ukrainians the authentic indigenization of the Gospel of Christ in order to sanctify

the society and bring God's presence to the people.<sup>[80]</sup> For Orthodox conciliarity, it is one of the essential principles that allow each culture to give its "own expression to the faith of the Church".<sup>[81]</sup> Orthodox theology emphatically emphasizes the importance of the theological enculturation in all the forms of human life.<sup>[82]</sup> Although, the culture of every nation is different, the message they express in its approach to the Divine is identical.<sup>[83]</sup> The variety of national identities is not obliterated as the harmony of the Church's doctrine is the same. For Orthodox theology, this is one of the fundamental theological notions for the expression of faith in the creativity of a nation. It was and it is one of the pivotal points in the spiritual life of Ukrainians to articulate faith in the context of the life of the specific time and human creativity.<sup>[84]</sup> Culture is an ultimate vocation for every person for the totality of human transformation.<sup>[85]</sup> Culture is a gift from God in order to authenticate people's own destiny. Even a careful study of Christian history regards monasticism itself as a phenomenon of culture.<sup>[86]</sup> It is tragic and unfaithful to the Orthodox tradition to condemn cultural relevance in the life of the Church.<sup>[87]</sup> Church communion presupposes a creation of culture that is unique to the expression of the specific Church locality.<sup>[88]</sup>

Continuing this line of thought, we may state that Church communion is at once a Divine manifestation and a human cultural creationism as a response to the divine call.<sup>[89]</sup> The identification of St. Volodymyr with the contemporary Ukrainian nation is not only a privilege, but also an obligation in order to stand in front of God with the whole being.<sup>[90]</sup> The Local Orthodox Church in Ukraine has a specific "historical flesh" that is being articulated in culture, ethnicity, language, and identity<sup>[91]</sup> of Ukrainians as the constitution of the "Body of Christ". Since saints are not "sterilized human entities", Ukrainians are not faceless human beings beheaded from their own history, ethnic background, culture, and language.<sup>[92]</sup> When we consider freedom as a constitutive element of the authentic life of a human being, we can only live in a free choice of our will to respond to God in our authenticity.<sup>[93]</sup> A healthy response to God is identical with a proper relationship with the Holy Trinity. It is based on this free relationship with the Triune God that a person creates a positive relationship with the other human beings and the entire creation.<sup>[94]</sup> This presupposes a communal experience of every member of the Local Church. As a result, the Church is not "an impersonal collection of followers of some international ideology", but a mode of being that authenticates the life in the Body of Christ.<sup>[95]</sup> As a common and identical experience of life, the authenticity of every human being brings the entire living entity to the new reality of the Divine.<sup>[96]</sup> Those characteristics are a mode of being of every nation, that are embraced by the incarnation of the Son of God in a particular national, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural background.<sup>[97]</sup> The existence of the nation of Ukraine and its own national identity, despite centuries of russification, forced integration into the Moscow Empire, constant persecution, and deportation, ethnic cleansing, is evidence that there is a distinction of identity between the Russian and uniquely Ukrainian. Because of this distinction and territorial principle, the Patriarchate of Constantinople never accepted and sanctioned the annexation of

the Kyiv Metropolis to the Moscow Patriarchate in 1686: “... *And this act of the Russian Orthodox Church was done by exceeding her jurisdictional rights, since after the end of World War II, the territories of Ukraine and Byelorussia, which previously belonged to the Church of Poland, were detached from this Church; and the areas included in these detached Churches reaching westward as far as the Baltic Sea, and being from times past outside the boundaries of the Patriarchate of Moscow, are under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchal Throne*”.[98] As a result, the Ecumenical Patriarchate considers the Orthodox Church in Ukraine as its own daughter Church until now.[99]

Because of the Greek and Serbian saints, contemporary Greece and Serbia profess God in their own unique way. For Ukrainians, the sainthood of St. Volodymyr, St. Olha, and all the saints of the Kyivan Rus' is the spiritual and unique inspiration for so many generations. The uniqueness of this identification of the Ukrainian people with St. Volodymyr and all the saints is not only unique, but also very costly. Because of this richness of the Ukrainian inheritance and its unique legacy among the Slavic nations, the Ukrainian nation suffered much oppression and persecution for many generations, particularly since the Treaty of Pereyaslav (1654).[100] For the reasons of the fundamental uniqueness of Ukraine, many millions of Ukrainians were sent to build St. Petersburg, cut forests of Siberia or subjugated to Tsarist Russia.[101] Consequently, because of this unique national identity given by God, so many millions of Ukrainians suffered death by starvation in the Great Famine-Holodomor of 1932-33. Finally, because of this uniqueness of this integral relationship between St. Volodymyr and the Ukrainian nation, the latest theory of the “Russian World Doctrine” is so dangerous for the stability of this region and for distinction among the nations of Eastern Europe. The distortion of this reality is a negation of the authenticity of the Orthodox ethos in the life of the Ukrainian nation. The promotion of the “Russian civilization” by the Moscow Patriarchate is an aberration of God’s providence in the world. The utopian and political enculturation of the pan-Slavic civilization, without the sensitivity and recognition of the ecclesiological particularities of the other nations has to be considered as a very perilous matter.

Here, the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church constantly ask St. Volodymyr for intercession for all those who would pray to God in their own unique way, in their own tradition, in their own house.[102] The best example of this kind of approach can be found in the life of St. Gregory of Nyssa who asked St. Theodore the Martyr to pray for the country and the people.[103] Because sainthood is an eschatological reality and independent from human development, it articulates itself within any particular time, language, or culture. The articulation of the faith always points to the Kingdom of God, always embraced by the grace of God.[104] The theology of sainthood is a living reality incarnated in the efforts of the living Church. As a living reality, it is characterized by a constant dynamism of the members of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine towards sanctification. Sainthood, as it is understood in the life of Ukrainians, is always ready for acceptance[105] of the immediate presence of God. For the personal spiritual growth of every member of the Church, Orthodox spirituality expresses

itself through cultural means as a point of reference towards theosis. As a movement, the call for transfiguration cannot be limited by any utopian outdated imperialistic ideology that defends the dreams of a few. In other words, it is a living ecclesial consciousness that is expressed in hagiology.[\[106\]](#) As a movement towards theosis, hagiology presupposes a living ecclesial consciousness that leads people towards faith.[\[107\]](#)

## **CONCLUSION**

In our contemporary globalized world, Orthodox theological thought is integral for the peaceful and transformative coexistence of nations. The task is enormous as the challenges present themselves in a constantly changing political and ideological environment. From this perspective, as this was presented in our analysis, Orthodox ecclesiological stability, as it is constantly authenticated in hagiology, must be constitutive for the human creativity when human ideology fails to achieve its transformative task. The voice of authentic Orthodox thought has to be identified not only in the perspective of the globalized world, but especially in the context of the contemporary life of the Orthodox Church. The evidence of the importance of this call is shown in our analysis based on the improper ecclesial creativity of the Moscow Patriarchate thinkers. As the globalized world requires a new expression of thinking from the Orthodox perspective, we have to be in a position to answer those challenges in an original way. The task is colossal, but not impossible. A lack of sensitivity to the challenges of the political and ideological changes of the world on the part of the Orthodox Church creates impenetrable obstacles that have a negative effect on the life of people. One of those obstacles, incompatible with Orthodox theological thought, is the latest document discussed in our presentation of the Russian Patriarchate known as: "Russian World Doctrine". As the developments in the contemporary world require a new creative thinking on part of Orthodox theological thought, the document adapts the global requirement of thinking in order to accentuate and defend the nostalgic stereotypes of the Russian imperialistic past. The document does not only bring answers to the challenges of the globalized world, but it contradicts the fundamental principles of Orthodoxy and creates a dangerous environment impossible for peaceful coexistence of the people of Eastern Europe. This document, using the authenticity of life of the Orthodox Church in order to support the interest of the Russian state, is dangerous. The content of the document is also destructive for the creative theological development of Orthodox thought.

In order to present the risk of this ideology, we addressed some of the most important elements of the document in the context of Orthodox hagiology. As this was presented in our analysis, it is in the context of the eschatological dimensions of life of the Orthodox Church that any human ideology has to be analyzed. As we identified it in our presentation, the authenticity of the Orthodox Church is constantly referred to the Kingdom of God. The Church is never to be identified with any particular ideology and philosophical thought. As the authentic

life of the Orthodox Church is constantly reaching the eschaton, we have to be constantly critical of human ideology of any nation and any group of people. From another perspective, the aspect of hagiology brings us into a deep character of the transformative dimension of the Church where human endeavour is being transformed into higher heavenly matter. Although the Church is above any human ideology, her life, as presented in the life of the saints, is constantly enriched by the human creativity that embraces the elements of peoples personal and national identity, cultural creativity, and linguistic expressions. All these aspects have an immensely important role to play in the development of authentic human freedom. Based on Orthodox anthropology, all of them are constitutive for the development of the authentic human being. Any negations of these elements are in contradiction to Orthodox theological thought as this is expressed in hagiology. The depravation of the national identity of any particular group of people for the greater cause of Christian utopian civilization corresponds with the obliteration of the authentic ethos of an Orthodox life.

Based on these observations, we have to be critical of this document and the basic fundamental thoughts of its author. A thoughtful examination of Russian Orthodox theological thinking demonstrates a dangerous precedence for the stability of Eastern Europe and authenticity of the Orthodox Church. We cannot be theologically intimidated by the authority of the document's expression, as the authority of Orthodoxy is to be understood conciliarly. The document accentuates the ideological intent of the Moscow Patriarchate and as such it is not to be accepted positively. The theological foundations of culture, national identity, and language, as they are expressed in the document, often diminish or even are in contradiction with the ones expressed by Patriarch Kirill in his previous writings. Because, the message of the Church never changes, this document presents a significant change of perception in Patriarch Kirill's ideology on critical issues in the life of a Local Church. In light of contemporary theological thought, we have to be critical to the ideological trends of the document as its content contradicts the ethos and internal life of the Orthodox Church. Our hope directs us continually to the saints where we find the authentic foundations of human life that leads us to the final fulfilment in the Resurrected Christ.

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[1] Hieromonk Athanasios Jevtic, *The Mystery of Touch*, in: Synaxis. An Antology of the Most Significant Orthodox Theology in Greece Appearing in the Journal Synaxis from 1982 to 2002, vol. I, Montreal, Alexander Press,

2006, p. 2.

[2] Op. cit., p. 2

[3] From the other side, we are paradoxically overwhelmed by the disengagement of the Russian Orthodox Church from the life of the Russian society. The effect of the separation and lack of engagement of the Church in Russia in the life of Russian people is already catastrophic for the Moscow Patriarchate and people of the Russian state. According to the Interior Ministry of the Russian government, less than two percent (2, 5 million) of the country's population attended the services on Orthodox Christmas.[3] The situation is even more catastrophic in the northern parts of Russia, where there is an actual declining number of practising Orthodox. The official statistic of Moscow Patriarchate routinely overstated the number up to 85 percent of is indicative with "falsehood and demagogy of the Russian Orthodox Church about the traditional Orthodox essence of the Russian people", look in: Hieromonk Athanasios Jevtic, *The Mystery of Touch*, op. cit.

[4] One of many good web-sides that presents this polemic is: [risu.org.ua](http://risu.org.ua)

[5] Look in: John Karmiris, *Catholicity of the Church and Nationalism*, in: *Proces-Verbaux de Deuxieme Congres de Theologie Orthodoxe a Athenes 19-29 Aout 1976*, Publies par les soins du Professeur Savas Chr. Agourides, Athens, 1978, p. 466; Alexander Schmemmann, *Problems of Orthodoxy in America*, in: *SVSQ* 9(1965)4, p. 177.

[6] J..D. Zizioulas, *Informal Groups in the Church: An Orthodox Viewpoint*, in: *Informal Groups in the Church. Papers of the Second Cerdic Colloquium Strasbourg, May 13-15, 1971*, Rene Metz and Jean Schlick (eds.), The Pickwick Press, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, 1975, p. 287.

[7] Rev. Dr. Stanley S. Harakas, *Holiness and Wholeness*, in: *The Orthodox Observer* April 1970, p. 13

[8] Metropolitan of Pergamon Fr. John (Zizioulas), *Misapprehended Sanctity*, in: *Piraiki Ecclesia* 187(November 2007).

[9] Emmanuel Clapsis, *Politics and Christian Faith*, op. cit., p. 100.

[10] Stanley S. Harakas, *The Orthodox Theological Approach to Modern Trends*, in: *St. Vladimir's Theological Approach to Modern Trends*, op. cit., p. 204; Thomas Hopko, *The Narrow Way of Orthodoxy*, in: *SVTQ* 40(1996)7; Emmanuel Clapsis, *Politics and Christian Faith*, op. cit., p. 101.

[11] John Zizioulas, *The Local Church in a Eucharistic Perspective – An Orthodox Contribution*, in: *In Each Place: Toward a Fellowship of Local Churches Truly United, World Council of Churches*, Geneva, 1977, p. 59; George Florovsky, *Christianity and Culture*, vol. II, Nordland Publishing Company, Belmont, 1974, p. 99.

[12] John Zizioulas, *The Local Church in a Eucharistic Perspective*, op. cit., p. 61; Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, *The Church as Communion*, op. cit., p. 8; Ioannes N. Karmiris, *Nationalism in the Orthodox Church*, op. cit., p. 178 & 182; John Meyendorff, *Who Holds the Church Together*, in: *The Ecumenical Review* XII(1960)3, p. 297; John Meyendorff, *Vision of Unity*, op. cit., p. 156.

[13] Petros Vassiliadis, *The Universal Claims of Orthodoxy and the Particularity of its Witness in a Pluralistic World*, in: www.goarch.org. This theological presupposition contradicts Dostoevskii's concept of Orthodoxy as Russian socialism as a unacceptable characteristics of the Orthodox theological tradition, look in: Paul Evdokimov, *The Principal Currents of Orthodox Ecclesiology in the Nineteenth Century*, in: *Eastern Churches Review* X(1978)1-2, p. 36. Almost identical thought is expressed by: Bishop Anastasios (Yannaoulatos) of Androussa, *Toward World Community. Resources and responsibilities for living together: A Christian view*, in: *Ecumenical Review* 26(1974), p. 620.

[14] John Karmiris, *Catholicity of the Church and Nationalism*, in: *Proces – Verbales du Deuxieme Congres de Theologie Orthodoxe a Athenes 19-29 Aout 1976*, Athenes, Publies par les soins du Professeur Savas Chr. Agourides, 1978, p. 47.

[15] Boris Bobrinskoy, *The Church in the Holy Spirit in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Russia*, in: *Ecumenical Review*, July, 2000.

[16] Thomas FitzGerald, *Orthodox Theology and Ecumenical Witness: An Introduction to Major Themes*, in: *SVTQ* 42(1998)3-4, p. 357. This expression is also found in the life of Saint Seraphim of Sarov, look in: Paul Evdokimov, *Saint Seraphim of Sarov*, in: *The Ecumenical Review* XV(1963)3, p. 264.

[17] Look in: Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev, "Ecclesiology in Russian Theology", Kiev, 1997, p. 259 in: Boris Bobrinskoy, *The Church in the Holy Spirit in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Russia*, op. cit..

[18] Archimandrite Chrysostomos, *Cultural Paradosis and Orthodox America*, in: *GOTR* 25(1980)3, p. 265.

[19] Fr. Joseph Frawley, *The Glorification of the Saints in the Orthodox Church*, in: *The Orthodox Church Newspaper* April-May 2000; George Bebis, *The Saints of the Orthodox Church*, in: www.goarch.org.

[20] Demetrios D. Triantaphyllopoulos, *The Icon: From Byzantium to Moscow*, in: *Synaxis. An Anthology of the Most Significant Orthodox Theology in Greece* Appearing in the *Journal Synaxis* from 1982 to 2002, vol. II, Montreal,

Alexander Press, 2006, p. 143

[21] There is one very important observation made by Boris Bobrinsky in regards to the experiential theology. According to him, the life in the Spirit is more intimate than the theological language about the Spirit, look in: Boris Bobrinsky, *The Church in the Holy Spirit in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Russia*, op. cit.

[22] Look in: Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, *Communion and otherness*, in: *Sobornost* 16(1994)1, p. 12; N. Zernov, "The Eastern Churches and the Ecumenical Movement in the Twentieth Century", in: R. Rouse and S.C. Neill, *A History of the Ecumenical Movement*, London, 1967, p. 656.

[23] Constantine Scouteris, *Christ and Culture*, in: [www.cc.uoa.gr](http://www.cc.uoa.gr)

[24] Rev. Dr. Stanley S. Harakas, *Holiness and Wholeness*, op. cit., p. 13

[25] Timothy Ware, *The Communion of Saints*, in: A.J. Phlippou, *The Orthodox Ethos*, Holywell Press, Oxford, 1964, 140.

[26] Constantine Scouteris, *Doxology, the Language of Orthodoxy*, in: *GOTR* 38(1993)1-4, p.157.

[27] Constantine Scouteris, *Christ and Culture*, op. cit.; Archbishop Anastasios (Yannoulatos) of Tirana and All Albania, *Rediscovering our Apostolic Identity in the 21th Century*, in: *SVTQ* 48(2004)1, p. 8.

[28] Emmanuel Clapsis, *Orthodoxy in Conversation. Orthodox Ecumenical Engagements*, Geneva, WCC Publications, 2000, p. 142

[29] Yiannis Zervos, *Orthodoxy. The Ark of the Balkan peoples*, op. cit., p. 162.

[30] O Yiannis Zervos, *Orthodoxy. The Ark of the Balkan peoples*, op. cit.; Emilianos Timiadis, *The Physiognomy of a Local Church*, op. cit., p. 433.

[31] Emmanuel Clapsis, *Orthodoxy in Conversation. Orthodox Ecumenical Engagements*, p. 142

[32] Demetrios D. Triantaphyllopoulos, *The Icon: From Byzantium to Moscow*, op. cit., p. 141

[33] Paul Evdokimov, *The Principal Currents of Orthodox Ecclesiology in the Nineteenth Century*, op. cit., p.33.

[34] Fr. J. Buciora, *Canonical Territory of the Moscow Patriarchate. An Analysis of Contemporary Russian Orthodox Thought*, in: <http://www.orthodox-christian-comment.co.uk>; Michael Bourdeaux, *The Complex Face of Orthodoxy*, in: *The Christian Century*, April 4, 2001; Lawrence A Uzzell, *Russia: Religion on a Leash*, in: *Orthodoxy Today*. org

[35] Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, *Communion and otherness*, op. cit., p. 11

[36] Archimadrite Kallistos Ware, *Catholicity and Nationalism: A Recent Debate at Athens*, in: *Eastern Churches Review* X(1978)1-2, p.15.

[37] Alexander Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith, Sermons* vol. I, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, 1991, p. 121; Stanley Harakas, *Living the Orthodox Christian faith in America*, in: *Martyria/Mission*, Ion Bria (ed.), World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1980, p. 155.

[38] Georges Florovsky, *Christianity and Culture*, op. cit., p. 122.

[39] For the definition of culture look in: Georges Florovsky, *Christianity and Culture*, op. cit., p. 11.

[40] Georges Florovsky, *Christianity and Culture*, op. cit., p. 26; John Zizioulas, *The local church in a Eucharistic perspective*, op. cit., p. 60; A. Calivas, *Orthodox Worship in the American Context*, in: *GOTR* 38(1993)1-4, p. 68; Kallistos Ware, *Catholicity and Nationalism*, op. cit., p. 13.

[41] Olivier Clement, "Orthodox Ecclesiology as an Ecclesiology of Communion", in: *One in Christ* VI(1970)1, p. 110.

[42] Kirill, Archbishop of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, *The Church in Relation to Society Under "Perestroika"*, in: *SVTQ* 34(1990)2-3, , p. 142.

[43] Emilianos Timiadis, *The Physiognomy of a Local Church*, op. cit., p. 423

[44] Op. cit., p. 430.

[45] Kallistos Ware, *The Witness of the Orthodox Church*, in: *The Ecumenical Review* June 2000.

[46] Cited in: Kallistos Ware, *Ethnicity*, in: *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, op. cit. We hope that this voice is one of many in the contemporary Russian thought which can't be silenced.

[47] Kirill, Archbishop of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, *The Church in Relation to Society Under "Perestroika"*, p. 152.

[48] John Karmiris, *Catholicity of the Church and Nationalism*, op. cit., p. 474.

[49] John Meyendorff, *The Catholicity of the Church*, op. cit., p. 15; John D. Zizioulas, *Ecclesiological Issues Inherited in the Relations between eastern Chalcedonian and Oriental Non-Chalcedonian Churches*, in: *Does Chalcedon*

*Divide or Unite? Towards Convergence in Orthodox Christology*, Parlos Gregorios, H. Lazareth and Nikos A. Nissiotis (eds.), World Council of Churches, p. 149; [49] Stanley S. Harakas, *Must God Remain Greek? Orthodox Reflection on Christian Faith and Culture*, in: GOTR 36(1991)3-4, p. 358.

[50] Kirill, Archbishop of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, *The Church in Relation to Society Under "Perestroika"*, p. 151.

[51] Stanley S. Harakas, *The Orthodox Church: 455 Questions and Answers*, Light and Life Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1987, p. 24; Kallistos Ware, *Catholicity and Nationalism*, op. cit., p. 12.

[52] George Florovsky, *Christianity and Culture*, op. cit., p. 26; Ion Bria, *The Liturgy After the Liturgy, Mission and Witness from an Orthodox Perspective*, WCC Publications, Geneva, p. 44; John Zizioulas, *The local church in a Eucharistic perspective – an Orthodox contribution*, op. cit., p. 56.

[53] According to Goerges Florovsky, every culture is not an ultimate value of human being, look in: Georges Florovsky, *Christianity and Culture*, op. cit., p. 14.

[54] Archimadrite Kallistos Ware, *Catholicity and Nationalism: A Recent Debate at Athens*, op. cit., p.12.

[55] Kallistos Ware, *The Witness of the Orthodox Church*, op. cit.

[56] Emilianos Timiadis, *The Physiognomy of a Local Church*, op. cit., p. 425.

[57] Paul Evdokimov, *Saint Seraphim of Sarov*, op. cit., p. 269.

[58] In the Apostolic Constitutions (5:1) the martyrs are called "brothers of the Lord" and "vessels of the Holy Spirit", in: George Bebis, *The Saints of the Orthodox Church*, op. cit.

[59] George Bebis, *The Saints of the Orthodox Church*

[60] Kallistos Ware, *The Witness of the Orthodox Church*, op. cit. Very interesting point regarding kenosis is made by Constantine Scouteris, *Christ and Culture*, op. cit.

[61] Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, *Communion and otherness*, op. cit., p. 12.

[62] Nikos Nissiotis, *The Witness and the Service of Eastern Orthodoxy to the One Undivided Church*, in: Sobornost 4(1962)7, p.353.

[63] Kyriaki Karidoyanes FitzGerald, *A Person in Communion: The Witness of Mary, the Mother of God*, in: GOTR 46(2001(3-4), p. 244.

[64] The words of Fr. Constantine Strategopoulos are phenomenal: “The second reason is that in front of the icon many people become sanctified. Tears, sorrow, repentance and that icon become more sanctified.”, look in: Fr. Constantine Strategopoulos, *The Principle of Hagiography. The Icon of the Theotokos*, in: [www.floga.gr](http://www.floga.gr).

[65] George Dion Dragas, *Orthodox Ecclesiology in Outline*, in: [www.myriobiblos.org](http://www.myriobiblos.org)

[66] Paul Evdokimov, *The Principal Currents of Orthodox Ecclesiology in the Nineteenth Century*, op. cit., p. 34.

[67] John H. Erickson, *Common Comprehension of Christians Concerning Autonomy and Central Power in the Church in View of Orthodox Theology*, in: *Kanon IV: The Church and the Churches Autonomy and Autocephaly*, IV Yearbook of the Society for the Law of the Oriental Churches, Wien, 1980, p.102.

[68] Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, *Communion and otherness*, op. cit., p. 11.

[69] Kirill, Archbishop of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, *The Church in Relation to Society Under “Perestroika”*, op. cit., p. 147

[70] Vladimir Lossky, *Ecclesiology: some dangers and temptations*, in: *Sobornost* 4(1982)1, p.2.

[71] Stanley S. Harakas, *Must God Remain Greek? Orthodox Reflection on Christian Faith and Culture*, op. cit., p. 355.

[72] Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamos, *The Orthodox Church and the Third Millennium*, in: [www.balamand.edu](http://www.balamand.edu).

[73] Kirill, Archbishop of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, *The Church in Relation to Society Under “Perestroika”*, p. 149.

[74] Georges Florovsky, *Christianity and Culture*, op. cit., p. 126.

[75] Kallistos Ware, *Ethnicity*, in: *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, Geneva, WCC Publications, 1991, 373.

[76] John Karmiris, in: Archimadrite Kallistos Ware, *Catholicity and Nationalism*, op. cit., p. 11.

[77] The idea of the essential presence of the territorial basis for the Local Church is primary for the Orthodox Church and attested by the Canon Law and contemporary Orthodox theologians. One of them is Nicolas Koulomizin, in: Archimadrite Kallistos Ware, *Catholicity and Nationalism*, op. cit., p. 13.

[78] Fr. J. Buciora, *Canonical Territory of the Moscow Patriarchate. An Analysis of Contemporary Russian Orthodox Thought*, op, cit.

[79] Kyriaki Karidoyanes FitzGerald, *A Person in Communion: The Witness of Mary, the Mother of God*, op. cit., p. 241.

[80] This is the positive element of ethnicity. The negative one, according to Nicholas Apostola, can lead to extreme fragmentation and exclusive tribalism, in: Nicholas K. Apostola, *How Much Unity? How Much Diversity?* in: GOTR 50(2005)1-4, p. 130.

[81] Prof. J.D. Zizioulas, *Conciliarity and the Way to Unity. An Orthodox point of view*, in: *Churches in Conciliar Fellowship? – A discussion amongst European Churches on Unity and Cooperation, Occasional Pape No. 10*, Geneva, Conference of European Churches, 1978, p.25.

[82] Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamos, *The Orthodox Church and the Third Millennium*, op. cit.; Myroslaw Tataryn, *Orthodox ecclesiology and cultural pluralism*, in: *Sobornost* 19(1997)1, p. 64; Theodor Nikolaou, *The Term Eftnos (Nation) and Its Relevance for the Autocephalous Church*, in: GOTR 45(2000)1-4,p.458.

[83] Some of the contemporary Orthodox theologians go as far as to accept the assimilation of Christianity [83]with other cultures (enculturation), look in: Theodor Nikolaou, *The Term Eftnos (Nation) and Its Relevance for the Autocephalous Church*,op. cit., p. 458

[84] Constantine Scouteris, *Christ and Culture*, op. cit.,

[85] Constantine Scouteris, *Christ and Culture*, op. cit.

[86] Georges Florovsky, *Christianity and Culture*, op. cit., p. 127.

[87] Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, *Faith and Order Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, in:www.wcc-coe.org

[88] Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, *Communion and otherness*, op. cit., p. 18.

[89] Archimandrite Chrysostomos, *Cultural Paradosis and Orthodox America*, op. cit., p. 263.

[90] Very expressive are the words of Vasos Ptochopoulos who said: “... *All the particularities of our language and culture ought to be preserved like the apple of an eye, because it is precisely these peculiarities that give our race its cunning*”, in: Yiannis Zervos, *Orthodoxy. The Ark of the Balkan peoples*, in: *Synaxis. An Anthology of the Most Significant Orthodox Theology in Greece Appearing in the Journal Synaxis from 1982 to 2002*, vol. I, Montreal, Alexander Press, 2006, p. 162.

[91] Christos Yannaras, *Nation, People, Church*, in: *Synaxis. An Anthology of the Most Significant Orthodox Theology*

in Greece Appearing in the Journal *Synaxis* from 1982 to 2002, vol. III, Montreal, Alexander Press, 2006, p. 98.

[92] *Op. cit.*, p. 98.

[93] Paul Evdokimov, *The Principal Currents of Orthodox Ecclesiology in the Nineteenth Century*, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

[94] Metropolitan John Zizioulas, *On Being a Person: Towards an Ontology of Personhood*, in: *Persons-Divine and Human*, C. Schwobel and Colin Gunton (eds.), Edinburgh, 1991, pp. 33-46.

[95] Christos Yannaras, *Nation, People, Church*, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

[96] Constantine Scouteris, *Image, Symbol and Language in Relation to the Holy Trinity*, in: [www.cc.uoa.gr](http://www.cc.uoa.gr)

[97] Christos Yannaras, *Nation, People, Church* *Op. cit.*, p. 98.

[98] In: *Letter of Patriarch Athenagoras to Metropolitan Pimen*, Protocol Number 583, June 24, 1970

[99] Very significant are the words of the “Open Letter” of Metropolitan Yuriy where he says: “*Our historical memory of the relationship with the Tsarist and Soviet regimes and the Russian Orthodox Church includes political enslavement, russification, execution, deportation, ethnic cleansing, various famines, including the Great Famine, the Holodomor-Genocide of 1932-33, repression of Ukrainian ecclesiastical traditions, and numerous bans on Ukrainian-language religious and secular publications*”, in: [99] Metropolitan Yuriy, *To the Clergy and faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada on the Presence of the Holy Relics of Great Knyaz’ Volodymyr of Kyiv in Canada*, *op. cit.*,.

[100] Metropolitan Yuriy, *To the Clergy and faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada on the Presence of the Holy Relics of Great Knyaz’ Volodymyr of Kyiv in Canada*, in: *The Herald* LXXXVII No. 11, 2010, p.2.

[101] Rev. Archimandrite Nektarios Serfes, *In Memory of the 50 Million Victims of the Orthodox Christian Holocaust*, in: [www.orthodoxytoday.org](http://www.orthodoxytoday.org)

[102] According to George Bebis, intercession is one of the characteristics of being in the communion of saints, look in: George Bebis, *The Saints of the Orthodox Church*, op. cit.

[103] Op. cit.

[104] Paul Evdokimov, *Saint Seraphim of Sarov*, op. cit., p. 266.

[105] Acceptance of the spiritual is one of the characteristic elements of the other ethnic groups of the Orthodox Church, look in: Kevin Wigglesworth, *Matushka Olga Michael of Alaska*, in: *The Canadian Journal of Orthodox Christianity* III(Winter 2008)1, p, 3.

[106] Look in: Boris Bobrinskoy, *The Church in the Holy Spirit in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Russia*, op. cit..

[107] Kyriaki Karidoyanes FitzGerald, *A Person in Communion: The Witness of Mary, the Mother of God*, op. cit., p. 240.

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