

Toward an Orthodox Peace Theology in an Era of Conflict: A Brief Reflection

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Abstract

Living at the beginning of the new millenium, humanity all over the globe is confronted with a desperate and unpleasant situation, thanks to the great variety of conflicts dominating the world. Religious but also political, national, ideological and many other kinds of divisions occupy a central place in the daily news reports. To some degree, this reality stress the fact that human beings in our time do not, many times, tolerate the other, the variety and diversity of ideas and cultures, due to fear of the abolition of its (ethnic or religious, it doesn't matter) individual identity within the framework of increasing globalization. In this context, the world religions are often, even though paradoxically, the driving force that leads to the growth of fundamentalism and atrocities as well as of all kinds of brutal violence (see, for instance, the ISIS case). It is not an exaggeration to say that we are living in an age of turmoil and most of it is religious-based. Keeping a narrow connection with many "dark sides" of the world and its powers as well as with the often coercive state authorities, the world religions are led to cooptation for purposes totally alien to their mission. At the same time, one should not exclude from this mentality the Christian Churches, the Orthodox Church included, which very often took the risk to go along with the violence of the powers of this world (cf. for instance the Crusade period, or the blessing of various kinds of war in the USA during the President George W. Bush period, or the recent tragic situation of Ukraine).

In this context, it is true that the world religions consist frequently, even though paradoxically, the basic factor which leads to the growing of the atrocities and of any kind of violence. We are living in an age of turmoil and most of it is religious-based. Keeping a narrow connection with many "dark sides" of the state, e.g. the political power and covering, financial assistance etc., Churches and confessions are guided to cooptation for purposes alien to their mission. Therefore in this tragic reality is rendered necessary for Christian theology to articulate an appropriate program, if it desires to play a crucial role in the public area. Frequently, the positive role of theology is ignored in the midst of many political and diplomatic attempts to fight successfully against the conflicts. In spite of this unpleasant reality, theology has the means and the power for inspiring a dynamic "political" movement towards to the world peace and reconciliation in virtue of some fundamental theological

presuppositions, such as the *person of Christ* and the entire work of the divine economy, the *intratrinitarian* relations of mutual communion and otherness, the *Eucharistic* and *eschatological* nature of the *Church* which forms a dynamic context for the anticipated transformation of the world, insofar as Eucharist as the communion-event par excellence constitutes the appropriate framework where every kind of differences could be surpassed (national, religious, or racial, social, etc. cf. *Gal*, 3.28.), etc.