

“Let all creation rejoice...”

Orthodoxy and Creation: Between Liturgical
Expression and Contemporary Reality

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This Master's Thesis is carried out as a part of the education at the University of Agder and is therefore approved as a part of this education. However, this does not imply that the University answers for the methods that are used or the conclusions that are drawn.

Κύριε, ἐλέησον!

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Prologue

The title of this thesis is taken from a phrase expressed many times over, expressing the participation of the created world in the worship of God. As an Orthodox believer and priest, this transcends symbolism, but reflects the Creator's relationship with mankind and all of creation. It is through proper relationship that the Love of God is revealed in both the highest mountain, in the eyes of a stranger, the song of a bird or the smallest a drop of water. This is the beginning and end of Eco-Theology.

I would like to thank Dr. Rev. Paul Leer-Salvesen who has been a patient and encouraging guide, coming with questions and comments which have no doubt made this thesis better. All mistakes and omissions are in no wise his, and I accept full responsibility for that which is lacking.

I would like to thank my dear friend Dr. Apóstolos Spanós, for his friendship, encouragement and helpful comments and assistance. Σε φιλω̄!

In addition I would like to thank God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the endless beauties of Creation. And I thank, from uttermost depths of my heart, my beloved wife Hildegunn Maria --- wife of my youth, mother of my children --- you are the light of my life. Έμμα Σοφία, ἀγάπη μου...Σε ἀγαπω̄! Sunny, your sweet voice is like honey to my ears. Naomi Maria, who can express the love of a father when his child comes running into his arms?

Fr. Christofóros Schuff, ἀμαρτωλός

15^η τοῡ Μαΐου, 2011

Έν τῷ Μετοχίῳ τῶν Ἁγίων Ἀναργύρων

I have provided a “Glossary of Significant Terms” which may be of help for clarifying technical terms used in Orthodox liturgical studies. All significant liturgical and paleographic terms written in *italics* are included in this list.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1. Defining Area of Research

I propose in this thesis to research sources for an Orthodox Theology of Creation and establish its significance to a sustainable and practical relationship to the natural world. My starting hypothesis is that such an investigation will serve to further define the contributions of the Orthodox Church in the modern discourse on Eco-Theology. My primary research question is:

"In what way can or does the Orthodox Theology of Creation contribute to the modern discourse on eco-theology?"

While there are many sources to choose from in investigating this area, I have chosen to focus on two main sources --- one ancient, one modern. They are:

1) the *hymnography* of the Feasts of the a) Nativity and b) Theophany and c) Great Saturday/Paschal Vigil, all of which are Despotic Feasts¹ (Δεσποτικά ἑορταί)²;

2) relevant statements or homilies given or published in more recent decades by Orthodox Hierarchy, Clergy or Theologians, for example on the occasion of the above-mentioned feasts and/or other statements relevant to the area of an Orthodox Theology of Creation. In addition to looking at some modern Orthodox authors on the subject, I will focus

¹ I have chosen to call these the Despotic Feasts, that is the "Feasts of the Master", i.e. "of Our Lord". In English these have also been called the Great Feasts, but this term also includes those called literally (in Greek) "Feasts of the God-Mother" (θεομητρικὰ ἑορταί).

² I have chosen these three feasts are due to significant indication of inter-dependency in my preliminary research.

particularly on the involvement of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

An important nuance to note here, especially for the reader unfamiliar with theological studies from a liturgical perspective, is that my main focus is on the *hymnography* of the aforementioned feasts as a source. As such, I am looking specifically at the context of *these* hymns and associated texts (i.e. of Christmas, Theophany and in part Pascha), and *not* the entire body of the hymns or the general hymnography of the Orthodox Church. Recognizing that the system of the liturgical cycle is generally quite complicated to the un-initiated, I believe it proper to offer an introduction in order to both define and further establish context. In the course of looking at the hymnography of the feasts we will also come across some texts from the Daily Cycle, i.e. Vespers, Matins, and the Divine Liturgy (contained in the *Horológion* and *Euchológion* books). Any relevant source-text will be dealt with at the appropriate time. While my main focus is on the liturgical texts, I will also refer periodically to Patristic sources of relevance to the subject. This may be either to show similarities or point out contrasts in thought or expression.

In addition to homilies and modern Orthodox treatises on the subject, I will look at what could be deemed “Official Statements” by an authoritative voice in an Orthodox context. The definition of what is an authoritative source is dealt with below in Section 2.1.2. Also other more popular Orthodox voices are not to be entirely neglected since exploring *how* Orthodox faithful (be they clergy, theologians or laity) communicate belief systems is an important indicator of how well the Church, Her Hierarchy and Pastors are effectively (or not) teaching the Faith.

Following the main body of my research, which is based on purely Orthodox sources, I will briefly compare said theology with that of three sources relevant to the modern discourse on Eco-Theology. This will consist of three areas: 1) “Western”

Eco-Theology, 2) Modern Eco-Philosophy and 3) Indigenous (in this case Native American) Theologies of Creation. I will attempt to concisely define the essence of each of these areas while showing either similarities to or diversions from Orthodox arguments and voices for a responsible relationship to creation.

It may be noted that I have chosen to define my analysis of ancient sources as representing a *“Theology of Creation”* and not *“Eco-Theology”*. While this use may be unfamiliar to some, I believe it to be a significant nuance. This view opines that Creation Theology is only one of the areas of Systematic Theology, which focuses on “biblical” and “traditional” understandings of creation and nature from the aspect of terms and phenomena. Strictly speaking, eco-theology is the product of the modern discourse related to real or perceived environmental challenges. As Prof. Paul Leer-Salvesen writes:

“In American and European Eco-Theology, one tries to build bridges between traditional Christian Creation Theology and the modern ecological movement.”³

It is when these two perspectives meet, the strictly theological with the modern ecological, that Eco-Theology occurs. For this reason, my analysis of and eventual contribution to the discourse on modern Eco-Theology will have to be postponed until the final chapters of this thesis. I hope there to be able to formulate the strengths and possible weaknesses of the proposed models and forward a personal view of a viable Theology of Creation and its practical implications in fulfilling the interdependent relationship between mankind and the remainder of God’s creation.

³ In: Hanssen 1996: 240. Translation from Norwegian by the candidate.

1.2. Structure of Thesis

This thesis contains seven chapters, the characteristics of each being:

Chapter 1: Defining the primary research question, the main area of research and the general structure of the thesis;

Chapter 2: Defining and discussing methodologies to be employed, the candidates pre-history, introducing preliminary definitions of key-terms and presenting a brief commentary on the context of the source-material and addressing relevant themes and comparisons;

Chapter 3: A presentation of the historical and present discourse on Creation and Eco-Theology;

Chapter 4: Presentation of the feasts, authorship and analysis of relevant ancient source-texts, further and thorough definition and cross-reference of terms and themes employed in these;

Chapter 5: Presenting briefly themes from modern Orthodox sources, focusing primarily in the final part of the chapter on Patriarch Bartholomew;

Chapter 6: A brief look at non-Orthodox sources for ecological thinking as viewed from an Orthodox perspective;

Chapter 7: Concluding comments on the results or potential results of the research and expressing a more subjective and personal view of the value and practical implications of this otherwise theoretical undertaking.

CHAPTER 2

Method and Theory

2.1. Approach and Method

In this thesis I am working with texts and their interpretation, making this work hermeneutic in nature⁴. The source-texts I have chosen are theological texts which many Orthodox Christians would either deem sacred, “canonical” or both (a fuller definition of these terms is addressed in Section 2.1.2). While the hymns are sung in the liturgical setting today, it goes beyond the scope of this thesis to analyze the individual believer’s subjective experience of these hymns *in* their intended context. Homilies were/are also generally given in connection with some liturgical setting, that is, in the course of one of the daily services connected to a specific feast. Also here I will have to focus primarily on the texts themselves rather than the listeners’ experience of them. Other speeches, like some of those given by Patriarch Bartholomew are given in extra-liturgical venues (i.e. outside of the traditional Church setting) thus giving us a different context and audience. Similar themes may be both addressed and received differently depending on this varying context. Thus, the discussion of context is of significant importance, both in an analysis of content and usage. There is little doubt in my mind as to the difficulty presented in attempting to formulate a “proper” understanding of a given argument due to the above mentioned variations. As with those watching the same play, each theatergoer may depart the theater with categorically opposing interpretations of the same characters, scenes and sets; all of this based upon the life-history and experience of each individual. This may be seen by many to be both the greatest strength and

⁴ See: Gadamer 1998: 389. The “textual” characteristic of modern hermeneutics.

weakness of human communication and before proceeding to the source-texts it would behoove us to discuss a method for further addressing this challenge of human experience.

2.1.1. "Situated Knowledge"⁵

All knowledge, according to many modern theorists, is *always* contextual:

*"...the grounds for knowledge are fully saturated with history and social life rather than abstracted from it."*⁶

Arguably, this is no less applicable in any work such as the present one and must be taken into account. Even my own interpretations or choices are likely to be influenced in some way by my context as an Orthodox priest. Am I, for example, willing to critically analyze the idiosyncrasies of Orthodox Theology within an academic setting?

In the religious context one often asks for "the Truth" and such is also the case in the Orthodox Church. A prerequisite for truth in the question of faith is however not without its critics. According to Michel Foucault in his work "The Discourse on Language", the necessity to demand "Truth" can be used as a tactic of control in a given dialogue⁷ and in turn this creates an imbalance between the parties participating in said dialogue. On the other hand one can also use the conjecture that something is "false" to dismiss the opponents position or argument altogether. One more positive view on the idea of truth in Foucaults view is the "will to truth" or "knowledge"⁸. This "will" works to fuel the search for knowledge. This is perhaps what influences people to write a thesis, for example. However, according to this

⁵ Haraway, 1991. pgs. 183 >.

⁶ Harding, 1993. In "Feminist Epistemologies", pg. 57.

⁷ In Norwegian: *Diskursens Orden*: Foucault, 1999. pg. 11.

⁸ Foucault, 1999. pgs. 12 – 13.

model, even if a person has obtained knowledge it is not necessarily so that he or she can “*express properly*” or “*sufficiently*” what he or she thinks they know (O’hear 1990: 52). If one holds to this theory, even if I am capable of understanding the essence of the source material I am working with, I may very likely be unable to pass this knowledge on to others satisfactorily; it will merely be an interpretation of an interpretation.

And what of the source material? Is, for example, my choice of research material merely a prejudiced selection? Have I simply misunderstood interpretations of others and jumped upon the bandwagon of previous hypotheses? I would have to answer positively, in part. My personal context, experience and theoretical knowledge has indeed led me to embrace an hypothesis; I will then be relying partially on hypothetic-deductive method. Accordingly, any hypothesis is also likely to influence my use of hermeneutic method. Is there a significant difference between hermeneutic (interpretive) and exegetic (explanative) work, for example in my approach to homilies? My previous studies have placed much value on the hermeneutic theories of Schleiermacher and in turn Heidegger and Dilthey, the general conclusion being that there is an hermeneutic circle. Here, mankind is both active and passive; we both interpret and are interpreted. However, in this so-called postmodern generation, of which I myself am indeed a part, the criteria of the hermeneutic circle are impossible to satisfy since the link between an interpretation and a previous interpretation, etc. is only defined by a definition of a definition. This takes us back to the question of “*Which came first, the chicken or the egg?*”. Some would call this understanding of the hermeneutic process the “*hermeneutic spiral*”⁹ or a more harshly a “*vicious circle*”.

While not entirely abandoning the contributions of Schleiermacher, I do believe Gadamer offers a solution to the at times pessimistic view that would lead the post-

⁹ José Angel García Landa in: BELL (Belgian English Language and Literature) ns 2 (2004): 155-66.* (Special issue, "The Language/Literature Interface). pg. 157.

modern thinker to want to give up on interpretation all together. That is to say, instead of becoming lost and/or confused at the prospect of interpreting any given person, event or text, one can use the understanding of a more or less constant intersubjectivity as a tool. It is in fact, according to Gadamer, self-understanding, i.e. through recognizing prejudices and pre-conceived ideas, especially within one's own understanding, that one can overcome the obstacles these place in the path of successful interpretation. The point becomes to not fool oneself into believing that he or she is above their prejudices or context, but to rather properly deduce which prejudices are legitimate and which are in fact peripheral (Gadamer 1998: 277 – 278). This also entails understanding that "I" do not interpret alone, but am also subject to interpretation (by others) and in turn there is an "I" seen through the eyes of others (Gadamer 1998: 247 – 248). In a contrast to, let's say Schleiermachers "romantic" view, Gadamer says that it is close to impossible to fully understand the "others" life-view, intention, etc. (Gadamer 1998: 333). Gadamer explicitly criticizes the criteria of absolute objectivity in the Human Sciences, i.e. the Human Sciences cannot be subject the same criteria as other Sciences because context and phenomenon are constantly subject to the element of humanity.

2.1.1.1. Interpretation and Language

As stated above, I will not delve into the "subjective" experience of the believer in meeting these texts, but rather focus on the texts and statements themselves, written objects which are entirely subject to "*language as determination of the hermeneutic object*" (Gadamer 1998: 389). On the one hand, my interpretations will be, if one holds exclusively to the view of Gadamer, *my* subjective interpretation. On the other hand, I do place more weight and value on the historical-linguistic factors in interpretation than Gadamer would. One of the relevant factors in an understanding of interpretation in this thesis is the presence of a foreign language. This can be a challenge but also a resource in creating, according to Gadamer (1998: 390, 394), a

flexible interpretive realm for the interpreter. For example, most of my source texts are in Greek, which is not my Mother-tongue. While I would venture to say that I am proficient in Greek (Ancient and Modern), I might still misinterpret words or phrases, either reading metaphor into a word that a native-speaker might interpret literally or taking literally something intended as a metaphor. Also references (phrases or concepts) which would be readily understood by the audience in a certain time and place, i.e. at the time of authorship, may have passed out of our field of knowledge today. This additional handicap must in the least be mentioned if not dealt with in some way. Thus, this study also becomes a question of linguistics.

In many ways the Orthodox Church retains much of what both Schleiermacher and Gadamer believed to be the archetype of “tradition”, i.e. the passing on of tradition and language, specifically verbally (Gadamer 1998: 389, 395 – 396). While Gadamer recognizes the source of text (i.e. ἀρχὴ in its proper sense) as essentially verbal, he criticizes Schleiermacher for “...downplay[ing] the importance of writing in the hermeneutic problem...” (Gadamer 1998: 392). I interpret Gadamer to mean here that, had these oral traditions *not* been written down, we would not have been discussing them now! With this in mind, my introduction to the majority of these texts has been over years of 1) hearing them chanted, then 2) reading and hearing them chanted, 3) reading and chanting them and 4) in some cases having internalized the text by memorizing it (either as repetition or through melody). This is a tradition which continues to this day. The average Orthodox believer, especially in native Orthodox countries does not use a “hymnal” in Church, but rather hears the hymns and in training chanters and clergy, these are often encouraged to memorize the text and/or melody, using the books as a mere help. Establishing such contexts will (hopefully) make one more aware of his or her own interpretation apparatus.

2.1.1.2. Allegorical Interpretation and Text

Gadamer has an understanding of theological hermeneutics which has similarities with a more “Orthodox” approach. This is expressed by him as a criticism of reformation/Lutheran hermeneutics of Holy Scripture (Gadamer 1998: 174 – 175). Simply put, according to Gadamer’s interpretation of Luther, Scripture was always to be interpreted literally unless if Scripture itself explicitly pointed out an allegorical interpretation. Both Gadamer and I would agree that this is indeed an inferior hermeneutic model, similar to demanding the same criterion for Human Sciences as, for example, for Mathematics. Whitman expresses what I consider to be a relevant definition of the allegory and the formation of texts:

“Acts of interpretive allegories are transactions between fluctuating critical communities and formative texts. While these transactions regularly draw upon shared interpretive methods, they are situated in times and places, marked by tensions and polemics that are specific to each historical community and its developing canon.” (Whitman 2000: 6).

Generally, in my earlier education concerning hermeneutics and the exegesis of Sacred Scripture, I have found that the so-called four interpretive modes are sometimes mistakenly attributed to Western European thinkers of the Middle Ages and a rhyme in Latin is often quoted¹⁰. However, I believe it important to point out here that we find identical or similar thoughts expressed in ancient times in, for example, interpretations of Greek mythology or of Homer (Jeanrond 1994[1991]: 14; Whitman 2000: 4). Also, within Judaism, Philo promoted an allegorical approach to interpretation of sacred texts (Rae 2005: 18). This does not diminish the significance of the use of allegory in the West, especially its renaissance during the Middle Ages, but rather points to a theological tradition which both preceded and paralleled its development. St. Gregory the Great, a late sixth century patriarch of Rome, identifies

¹⁰ See for example: Kleinhenz, Christopher. *Medieval Italy: an encyclopedia*, Volume 1, “Biblical Exegesis”, pg. 122. Also in the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church (see Section 3, §115 – 119) the poem “*Littera gesta docet; quid credas allegoria; Moralia quid agas; Quo tendas anagogia*” is attributed to Augustine of Dacia (Denmark) of the 13th century (*Rotulus pugillaris*, 1).

three modes of interpretation in a prologue to his work *Moralia*. However, we find the four modes of interpretation specifically expounded upon almost three centuries earlier by a saint of both the Western and the Eastern Church, namely St. John Cassian¹¹ of the fourth century. In order to further underline the character of this hermeneutic model I quote the following:

*"...[P]ractical knowledge is distributed among many subjects and interests, but theoretical is divided into two parts, i.e., the **historical interpretation** and the **spiritual** sense (...) ...of spiritual knowledge there are three kinds, tropological, allegorical, anagogical... (...) ... [1] **history** embraces the knowledge of things past and visible... [2]... **allegory** belongs what follows, for what actually happened is said to have prefigured the form of some mystery... [3] ... the **anagogical** sense rises from spiritual mysteries even to still more sublime and sacred secrets of heaven... [4] ...The **tropological** sense is the moral explanation which has to do with improvement of life and practical teaching..." (St. John Cassian, Conferences 14:8)¹²*

Such a view is found in various forms throughout the Orthodox Patristic corpus, not disregarding literal interpretation, but underlining that this is only one of the forms of interpretation. An interesting example of this understanding within the context of homily is when St. Hippolytus¹³ of Rome of the second to third century says to his audience in his sermon on the Theophany: *"When you hear these things, beloved, take them not as if spoken literally, but accept them as presented in a figure."*¹⁴ The saint goes on to explain how Christ Himself also acted figuratively, *"in secret"*¹⁵, for the sake of mankind. I thus place my own interpretive apparatus in this context, i.e. an understanding that finds Orthodox theology (within the basic framework described in section 1.2.2.) open to a variety of interpretations and applications of sacred texts. Another good piece of Orthodox advice on the interpretation of Scripture is:

¹¹ The writings of St. John Cassian were subject of several of Foucault's writings.

¹² **Bold-type** and numbering added by the Candidate.

¹³ St. Hippolytus' memory is celebrated on August 13th.

¹⁴ PG 10, De Theophania 851 - 862: *"Ταῦτα ἀκούων, ἀγαπητέ, μὴ φυσικῶς ἐκλάμβανε τὰ λεγόμενα, ἀλλ' οἰκονομικῶς δέχου τὰ παρατιθέμενα"*

¹⁵ PG 10, De Theophania 851 - 862: *"ὅπερ ἐποίησεν ἐν κρυφῇ"*.

*“Do not grow conceited about your interpretations of Scripture...”*¹⁶

2.1.2. Truth and Legitimacy

Within the Orthodox Church, the texts of the *Menaia* (providing the main source-texts in this thesis) are generally considered to be sacred and thus “legitimate” sources in expressing Orthodox Theology. However, these texts have never been canonized in the proper sense, i.e. through an ecumenical council for example; nevertheless, their particular legitimacy is due to chronological perpetuity, i.e. because of long, documented usage. The issue of legitimacy is also important in this study. Legitimacy as defined by Hurd is:

*“...the normative belief by an actor that a rule or an institution ought to be obeyed”*¹⁷

Due to the traditional position of the Orthodox Church in Her native context, I believe that this definition (taken from the realm of social science) also applies in this case (see Section 2.4.). Who has the right to define what “Orthodox Theology” is? For example, the Sacred Canons of the Seven Ecumenical Councils are viewed by many Orthodox as unalterable, dogmatic statements relative in both questions of proper faith (ὀρθοδοξία) and proper practice (ὀρθοπραξία). These are in the more proper sense deemed “canonical”. In turn, the Holy Scriptures are deemed canonical due to the approval of them by the Church in the Sacred Canons (see also Section 2.2.5.). As a contrast to this, statements by a Patriarch or Clergyman arguably may or may not be in agreement with other theological sources generally considered to be legitimate. Nevertheless, due to the social position of a Patriarch, *at first glance* his words may be seen as being authoritative. However, as Church History shows, both Patriarchs and Emperors have been ousted periodically due to their real or perceived heresies. The

¹⁶ St. Mark the Ascetic: *On the Spiritual Law: Two Hundred Texts* §11

¹⁷ Hurd, 1999: pg. 381.

authority of the Hierarchy is *only* intact as long as he or they are “rightly keeping the word of Your [i.e. the Lord’s] truth...”.¹⁸ Within the realm of Orthodoxy in the Byzantine period, there appears to be a very fine line between 1) “renovation” (ἀνακαίνησις), i.e. renewal built on previously laid foundations and 2) “innovation” (καινοτομία), seen at times in the realm of theology as heresy, or alternatively, in reference to the Incarnation as a positive, dynamic and miraculous “innovation” (Spanos 2010: 54). The specifically negative definition is found in the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*, referring to “innovation” as the introduction of new and in turn heretical dogmas¹⁹. This does not altogether exclude “new” thoughts, but limits *how* these can be expressed, i.e. the model or apparatus through which these thoughts or concepts may be communicated (and in turn accepted as “Orthodox”).

Due to the above-mentioned concerns, I venture to show through my analysis of contemporary homilies and statements how Orthodox Theologians use (either poorly or well) the texts of prayers, hymns along with Biblical passages, Church Fathers and Canons as “legitimate” (arguably, of course) sources for proposing a given conclusion. These hymns and prayers are used in various contexts and thus may bring about different understandings to the hearer/reader. It will be shown that the adage *lex orandi, lex credendi* is very much alive and well in an Orthodox World-View. The same principle generally applies in the Orthodox Church today, that works of generally recognized Saints can be quoted in making theological statements, even when these periodically conflict with other well-known and recognized theological sources.

¹⁸ From the Ordination of a Bishop (in the *Euchológion*) and from a prayer of the Divine Liturgy said for all the Hierarchy “τῶν ὀρθοτομούντων τὸν λόγον τῆς σῆς ἀληθείας”.

¹⁹ “Ἀπαντα τὰ παρὰ τὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴν παράδοσιν καὶ τὴν διδασκαλίαν καὶ ὑποτύπωσιν τῶν ἁγίων καὶ ἀοιδίμων πατέρων καινοτομηθέντα καὶ πραχθέντα μετὰ τοῦτο πραχθησόμενα, ἀνάθεμα” as quoted in: Gouillard, 1967: 53 and Spanos 2010: 58.

2.1.3. Historical Interpretation vs. Contemporary Use

I am working with words and texts and I will be focusing on what is being expressed therein. This is often times clouded in subjectivity, and while recognizing this difficulty, I will attempt to define as nearly as possible:

- 1) the context of the composition (period, authorship), meaning and
- 2) show how the text is used today.

The question of how and in which context a specific text is used today reveals in part an interpretation of the text; it shows the texts relevance to the modern discourse. In looking at terms and phrases of relevance I intend to periodically point out how certain key-words may be used differently, either in time or context. This may show an interesting development in how words change leading to new understandings. As Orthodox Theologian Elizabeth Theokritoff points out:

*“...what really counts is the ways such texts have been understood and used. An idea may be found in Scripture, but actually have played little part in shaping the Christian world view”.*²⁰

In mapping out a contemporary Orthodox Theology of Creation, it is not enough that a texts exists, it is rather *use* which essentially defines its' relevance. In working with the modern sources, it is my intention to attempt to answer the following secondary research question: *“Are contemporary Orthodox voices drawing on ancient (patristic) sources in engaging the modern discourse of Eco-Theology or are they simply giving contemporary answers to contemporary issues?”*

²⁰ Theokritoff 2009, pg. 33.

2.1.4. Candidates Pre-History

Having defined various views on the process of interpretation, I believe it is necessary to give a brief introduction to the reader of my pre-history, in order to bring to light any possible contextual understandings, misunderstandings and prejudices I may have.

I was born and raised in what is today known as the United States of America, more precisely near present-day Sacramento in the former Mexican State of Alta California, in a family of Evangelical-Protestant persuasion. Politically my family would be considered Conservative (Republican) in an American setting. These values were instilled in me from my childhood and while I would now personally define myself as tending towards more Social-Democratic values (i.e. generally considered Liberal in an American setting), I no doubt retain what I consider to be common, core-values including a desire for uprightness, honesty and common-sense behavior (i.e. referred to vernacularly as “no nonsense”). A love for history and eventually historicity was either instilled in and/or acquired by me at a young age. This (in my present opinion) is one of the aspects which influenced me to convert to the Orthodox Church; that is to say, the aspect of continuity and historicity which exists (either in actuality or ideologically) in what I consider to be important aspects of Faith --- worship, practice and dogma. My search to find these elements in the Christian Tradition can no doubt be defined as a result of the belief that these aspects were lacking in the environment of Faith of my childhood.

Among the elements I have valued in the Orthodox Church (and which I consider/-ed to be inferior in my earlier Christian experience) are/were: 1) the co-operative aspect of Salvation (also being communal vs. strictly individual) 2) the simultaneous/parallel relationship of spiritual and physical (material) realities (vs. an actual or considered “dualism” of these elements) and 3) mankind’s participatory relationship to/with Creation (not as worshipping Creation, but worshipping the

Creator ever the more by seeing all Creation infused with God, i.e. “entheism” (God in everything) vs. “pantheism” (everything is god/a god)²¹. These elements, which I value (thus, having made a value-judgment), have been present parallel to my conversion to Orthodoxy and have influenced my decision to research the present subject. Also, considering that I am an ordained Priest in the Orthodox Church, I wish to retain and communicate properly what is considered to be true, Orthodox theology. The desire to do this as a clergyman is a phenomenon also addressed by Gadamer (Gadamer 1998: 330 – 331).

In defining my hermeneutic context, it would be negligent to fail to mention that the fact that I have: 1) lived outside the United States for more than twelve years (in México, Norway and Greece) and 2) have never studied social sciences or theology in the North America, i.e. I have *only* studied social sciences and theology in a European and/or Orthodox environment, has likely influenced my choices in issues of faith, politics and academics. This final aspect has also (empirically) influenced the way I use language, seeing that a great majority of what I have read has been in languages other than English and for Orthodox theology, often in Greek. I have found that many of the same academic terms are in fact used differently from language to language and since many of these terms originate from Greek/Latin, my understanding of such terms tends to lean towards Greek usage²².

As a final note on my theoretical approach to hermeneutics, I will have to honestly place my own understanding and practice as falling somewhere between Schleiermacher and Gadamer. As an individual with a specific pre-history and present context, my interpretations will indeed in some way reflect this (Gadamer); yet, an historical knowledge of culture, language and context will simultaneously bring me in the least closer to the original meaning and intent of the speaker

²¹ Cf. Chryssavgis 2007: 49.

²² Where conflicting usage may be found, I will attempt to define more closely my intended usage vs. variant use.

(Schleiermacher). I see this duality not as a disadvantage, but rather as a strength --- a hermeneutical method which takes into account both the *historical* and *spiritual* aspects of textual interpretation as expounded upon by St. John Cassian (see above, Section 2.1.1.2).

2.2. Definition of Key Terms ²³

2.2.1. Creation and the Creator

In this work I employ the term “Creation” as both a reference to 1) the physical object, i.e. the Universe and Earth itself including all objects, creatures, etc. and 2) as the *act* of creating. Some of the words in Greek which refer to this “creation” or the “act of creating” are: δημιουργία (the act of creating artistically); κτίσις (the founding i.e. of creation, thus “creation”); κτίσμα (a created object); πλαστοουργία (the act of forming creation); ποίησις (the creation, act of creation); ποιεῖν (to make or to create). Also the various terms used of God as Creator are: Δημιουργός (Maker, Creator) --- it is fairly clear by now that Orthodox usage of this term distances itself from Platons earlier use of the same term. God is also termed “*God the Former and Creator*” (ὁ πλαστοουργός καί κτίστης Θεός²⁴) and of course as used in the Nicene Creed, God is “...*the Maker of Heaven and Earth, all things visible and invisible...*” (ὁ Ποιητής Οὐρανοῦ καί Γῆς, ὁρατῶν τε πάντων καί ἀορατῶν...).

These brief definitions are only some of the ways these words are employed and in my textual analysis, I will comment more thoroughly upon the nuances of use contextually. One important criterion to make note of, and which will always be present according to Orthodox theology (and some might say similar to Aristotelian philosophy), is that there will always be a *difference* between the Creator and the

²³ A Glossary of significant (technical) terms is included at the end of this document.

²⁴ Λόγοι - Αγίου Συμεών του νέου Θεολόγου / Βίβλος των ηθικών / Λόγος α' / γ'. Περί τῆς τοῦ Λόγου σαρκώσεως καί κατά τίνα τρόπον δι' ἡμᾶς ἐσαρκώθη.

Created (Orthodox)²⁵, the first Mover and the Moved (Aristotelian). One essential difference however is of utmost importance to point out here: the Orthodox view maintains that God created “*out of nothing*” (ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος²⁶ / ἐκ τοῦ μηουδενός²⁷)! We also find a similar view expressed in the Second Book of Maccabees 7, 28: “*for out of that which was not God made these*” [i.e. the heavens and the earth]²⁸. The Platonic view on the other hand, espoused by the posthumously condemned Christian philosopher Orígenes, proposed that the matter of creation was rather pre-existent and was simply ordered by this Principle²⁹. Common to the views of both Platon and Aristotle, following the act of creation, this Higher Power, Principle or Mover remains essentially passive. In contrast, according to the Orthodox Faith, God was and is continuously active and interested in the well-being of His creation. Thus, as touched upon earlier, in “*entheism*” God gives of Himself to Creation and permits participation in His attributes while retaining the distinction between Created vs. Creator.

2.2.2. Nature

The Greek term for nature is generally φύσις. This word though has several uses, for example, referring to the natural world or to a law of nature but also ones character or mindset. The term could at times refer to the way things are or the way things should be. In the first centuries of Christendom the weight of theological discussion about the term “*nature*” concerned the nature of God and especially the dual-nature of Christ. According to the modern Greek Theologian Anestis G. Keselópoulos, in the theology of St. Symeon the New Theologian, nature and creation are synonymous terms (Keselópoulos 2001: 173).

²⁵ Cf. Keselópoulos 2001: 15.

²⁶ Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, Prayer of the Anaphora. In Latin this is termed *ex nihilo*, an expression now also employed by various voices in the modern discourse on the Theology of Creation. These phrases are used numerous times in the prayers and hymns of the Church.

²⁷ ΧΡΗΣΤΟΥ, Ελληνική Πατρολογία.

²⁸ 2 Macc. 7, 28: “...ὅτι οὐκ ἐξ ὄντων ἐποίησεν αὐτὰ ὁ θεός...”

²⁹ Fifth Ecumenical Council: Anathema Against Origenes, § 6 presupposes the use by Origenes of the term νοῦς δημιουργός of the “*creator being*”, employing pre-existing matter (same §).

In looking at terminology concerning the created world, it is necessary to comment upon the Orthodox concept concerning the attributions of “natural” and “unnatural”. The manner in which these terms are used as both adjectives and/or adverbs by the Fathers of the Church are a significant factor in the forthcoming analysis. For example, on the question of inherit sin (a concept especially expounded upon by some “Latin” fathers such as Augustine and later Thomas Aquinas³⁰), we see a significant divide between the East and the West. As St. Dorótheos of Gaza writes:

“When he broke the command and ate of the tree that God commanded him not to eat of, he was thrown out of paradise and fell from a state in accordance with his nature (κατὰ φύσιν) to a state contrary to nature (παρὰ φύσιν)...”³¹

St. Nikitas Stithatos also expresses this view in *On the Practice of the Virtues*, § 16, where he speaks of things “according to nature” and that which is “against nature”, i.e. natural is good, unnatural behavior is bad.³²

2.2.3. Matter and the Elements

From Aristotle to Greek-speaking Christians, one of the common terms for “matter” was ὕλη³³. We also find the term ἄπειρος, referred to often in English as “prime matter” periodically used. Each of these terms were employed by Christian authors in addition to terms such as ἡ μορφή (form or likeness) and references to the four

³⁰ Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, IaIIae, 83.2 : “...the soul is the subject of original sin chiefly in respect to essence...”.

³¹ St. Dorotheus of Gaza, “On Renunciation” in *Dorothee de Gaza. Oeuvres spirituelles* [Sources chrétiennes 92. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1963]: Ὅτε δὲ παρέβη τὴν ἐντολὴν καὶ ἔφαγεν ἐκ τοῦ ξύλου οὗ ἐνετείλατο αὐτῷ ὁ Θεὸς μὴ φαγεῖν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, τότε ἐξεβλήθη τοῦ παραδείσου· ἐξέπεσε γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν καὶ ἦν ἐν τῷ παρὰ φύσιν, τοῦτ’ ἔστιν ἐν τῇ ἀμαρτία, ἐν τῇ φιλοδοξίᾳ καὶ φιληδονίᾳ τοῦ βίου τούτου καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πάθεσι, κατακυριενόμενος ὑπ’ αὐτῶν· κατεδούλωσε γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἑαυτὸν διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως.

³² Augustine expresses what appears to be the diametrically opposite view in his Anti-Manichean writing, *De Moribus Manichaerorum*, Chapter 2. NB!: The writings of Augustine (including the Anti-Manichean writings) have often been met with suspicion in the Orthodox Church and his “rehabilitation” in more recent times in the East has often been met with skepticism.

³³ According to Liddel & Scott this word was first employed in this manner by Aristotle in the work *Timaeus*.

elements (τὰ τέσσαρα στοιχεῖα), that is ὕλη (or later γῆ), ἀήρ, πῦρ and ὕδωρ³⁴. The Orthodox Church generally confirms the inherent goodness of matter and of the elements, seeing any filthiness or pollution as being a secondary occurrence caused by an outside source such as demons or sin³⁵. This is of course a contrast to Gnostic understandings which generally viewed material elements, the body, etc. as inherently filthy or evil. It is important here to point out a common misunderstood use of the word “world” (κόσμος), which in Biblical and Patristic writings refers most often to the “world” of humanity, not to be confused with the material “world” or “earth” (γῆ). Today the term “Cosmos” is almost exclusively used of the Universe, often with mystical connotations foreign to its original use³⁶. So when the Fathers or Mothers of the Church criticize the world, they are not generally referring to material or to creation, but rather to human elements which are separated from Christ and the Church in belief and practice.

2.2.4. Kataphatic vs. Apophatic Theologies

In the Orthodox Church there are two main ways of doing Theology: 1) by what *is* expressed in word or deed and 2) by what is *not* expressed or omitted. The first is often referred to as kataphatic (καταφατική θεολογία) and describes something positively, for example “God is Love”. The latter is called apophatic (ἀποφατική θεολογία) and refers to the way of defining something by saying what it is not, for example, “God is not bad” or at times omitting some aspect for which the experience of Tradition has no expression. Apophaticism is the result of “*the limits of experience*” (Yannaras 1991: 16), i.e. a recognition of the limits of either fully comprehending God or “Truth” or the ability to exhaustively describe the essentially indescribable. “Knowledge” of God is termed “*knowledge in ignorance* (ἐν ἀγνώσει γινώσις)” by

³⁴ The four elements being “matter” (or later “earth”), “air”, “fire” and “water”.

³⁵ See for example the prayers for the sanctification of the water at Holy Baptism. Also the exorcisms prior to Baptism expel not *inherent* evil elements (of which there are none), but rather *foreign* evil elements (demons, evil spirits, etc.).

³⁶ This would even include the use by modern Orthodox theologians when using English. See for example the use of “cosmos” in the quote by Bishop Kallistos Ware in Section 3.3.

Fathers such as St. Dionysios the Areopagite, St. Maximus the Confessor and St. Symeon the New Theologian. Another challenge is found in the realization that Orthodox ethics are often *contextual* and may be expressed in form of proverb or parable rather than in dogmatic statements. As Yannarás again words it:

“The apophatic attitude leads Christian theology to use the language of poetry and images for the interpretation of dogmas...”³⁷

2.2.5. Canonical vs. Spiritual Ethics

In dealing with the subject of ethics and with the foregoing in mind, I purpose then to differentiate between:

- 1) Canonical Ethics and
- 2) Spiritual Ethics.

As I would define it, Canonical Ethics are those expressed explicitly in canonized texts, i.e. “You shall not kill” vs. Spiritual Ethics, which are statements made in prose, as hymns, proverbs or parables.

“Legitimate” sources for *Canonical Ethics* are generally the Sacred Scriptures, the Sacred Canons (found in the Pedalion), in some cases the Typikon and in the various treatises of the Fathers and Mothers of the Church where specific questions of right and wrong are addressed. As described in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*:

“The text of Holy Scripture, the decisions of the ecumenical councils, and the writings of the Fathers are definitive truth that the Church as a whole recognizes. They thus constitute a boundary that must not be crossed.”³⁸

³⁷ Yannarás 1991: 17.

³⁸ *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*. Volume 1, “Apophatic Theology”, pg. 105 – 106.

However, one must keep in mind that even though many themes are very specifically dealt with in such texts, some themes receive varying answers within the context of the entire corpus. This is true of both Sacred Scripture as well as the Sacred Canons and in the texts of the Fathers. Yannarás sees these ambivalences as a strength:

*“In the texts of the theologians and the Fathers of the Church concepts often contradict one another conceptually in order that the transcendence of every representation of their content may become possible, and that the possibility of the empirical participation of the whole man (and not only the mind) in the truth expressed therein may show through the logical antitheses.”*³⁹

It is in such instances of ambiguity where the knowledge and experience of a Spiritual Father (Πνευματικός) or Elder (Γέρον) weighs the sum of the canonical answers in addressing the given problem of one seeking his advice. Both the Canons themselves and the Tradition of the Orthodox allow for what is deemed “Economy”, applying the Canons with leniency or strictness according to specific circumstances for the salvation of the soul⁴⁰. Here the Elder acts as a doctor applying one type of medicine for one type of illness, another for another and so on⁴¹. As the twelfth century Byzantine Canonist and Patriarch of Antioch Theodore Balsamon (Θεόδωρος Βαλσαμῶν) states:

*The Sacred Canons do not constitute the expression of some spirit of law which strives to make all things unlawful and to restrict the life of the spirit through methods of law, but is the expression of the spiritual care of the Church for the salvation of its members.*⁴²

³⁹ Yannarás 1991: 17 - 18.

⁴⁰ Cf. Chryssavgis 2007: 158. *“The relationship with one’s spiritual elder serves as a bridge between Creator and creation...”*

⁴¹ See also: Interpretation of Canon 85 of the Apostles; Canon 102 of the Sixth Ecumenical Council and Canon 27 & 29 of St. Nikifóros.

⁴² “Οι ι. Κανόνες δεν αποτελούν την έκφρασιν νομικού τινος πνεύματος, όπερ τείνει να εκνομικεύση τα πάντα και να περιορίση την ζωήν του πνεύματος εις νομικούς τύπους, αλλά την έκφρασιν της ποιμαντικής μερίμνης της Εκκλησίας προς σωτηρίαν των μελών αυτής”. Quoted in: Αρχιμ. Γεωργ. Καψάνη, Η Ποιμαντική Διακονία κατά τους ιερούς Κανόνες [The Pastoral Work according to the Sacred Canons], Πειραιεύς, 1976, σ.

Sources for what I would deem *Spiritual Ethics* are 1) Hymns, 2) Vitæ of the Saints 3) Writings of the Saints and 4) Apophthegmata. Most hymns are to be found in the liturgical books mentioned in Section 2.3.1. and in the Glossary (see Appendices). The hymnography of the Orthodox Church is quite varied and addresses a plethora of themes such as the nature of God, of Christ, lives of Saints, categories of virtues as well as sins, etc. It is a well known practice that some hymns were composed to guard the Church against heresy, confirming the established truth of the Church. One great example of this is the hymn “*The Only Begotten Son and Immortal Word of God...*” sung during the Divine Liturgy, attributed often to St. Justinian the Great (†565) and composed during the controversy over the dual nature of Christ. The second source comes from the Vitæ (Lives/Βίαι τῶν Ἁγίων, alternatively “Hagiography”), which may either appear in the form of biography or in brief in the Synaxarion (Συναξαῖριον) or the Menologion (Μηνολόγιον) of the *Menaia*. In the case of the saint being a Martyr this Vita may be in the form of a Martýrion (Μαρτύριον or τὰ Πάθη τοῦ Ἁγίου Μάρτυρος τάδε...) (Papadóπουλος 1991: 15 - 18)⁴³. The third source comes from the theological treatises of established saints. Often these were written addressing certain practices, beliefs or questions of faith. At times they are general letters or apologies for some specific dogma (at times refuting what was considered heresy). The fourth and final source I wish to address is Apophthegmata (τὸ ἀπόφθεγμα = saying, quote, proverb, aphorism)⁴⁴, i.e. collections of the sayings of holy men and women which either act as an independent entity or as a part of a Vita⁴⁵. At times they have the structure of questions and answers, the disciple or seeker asking the opinion of the Holy Father or Mother. To

59. Translation from Modern Greek by Candidate. See P.G. 137 – 138 for source text. [reference to pg. 441 is uncertain].

⁴³ Παπαδόπουλος, Αντώνιος. *Αγιολογία α': Θέματα, είδικα καὶ έορτολογίου ΠΟΥΝΑΡΑΣ* 1991

⁴⁴ Known in Greek as: ΑΠΟΦΘΕΓΜΑΤΑ ΤΩΝ ΑΓΙΩΝ ΓΕΡΟΝΤΩΝ or alternatively: “Apophthegmata Patrum”; see *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Cross 1974: 74).

⁴⁵ See also: Chrestou 2005: 13 – 14. Of the monastic leaders of the early Church Chrestou says: “*Multitudes of lay people turned to them to receive oral or written answers to their questions...The Desert Fathers were Fathers of the entire Church, and their words called Sayings of the Fathers (ἀποφθέγματα πατέρων) were read with zeal by all.*”

the given question the saint may either give a more or less direct answer, but it is not uncommon for the saint to answer by telling a brief story. One must also keep in mind that the Wisdom Literature of Sacred Scripture often times has a similar function and structure. For the Orthodox believer, each of these above-mentioned sources is a valid source of spiritual nourishment as well as serving to fulfill a didactic function. Theokritoff makes a valid point in addressing an understanding of what I have termed here “spiritual” theological sources:

*“Precisely because these examples come to us in the form of stories, they are not always taken as seriously as they deserve. (...) Instead of dismissing such accounts on the grounds that ‘things like that don’t happen in the real world’, it might be more prudent to suppose that our experience of reality could be incomplete.”*⁴⁶

This nuance between these two methods of doing ethics is important to make note of, for example in the question of legitimacy (see also Section 2.1.2.), where proverbial expression is perhaps more open to subjective interpretation. At the same time, even Canonical Ethics, which most often are very specific on questions of right and wrong, are periodically subject to the interpretation of Spiritual Ethics. I hope that my analysis in this thesis will properly reflect the compatibility and complimentary aspects of these two methods and help cast light upon how this is satisfactorily accomplished within the Orthodox Church. In closing, I believe this division to be no less than a continuation of the hermeneutic model presented above⁴⁷, i.e. a recognition of the presence of both historical (a parallel to the “canonical”) and spiritual senses. At the same time, the Orthodox Church teaches that even a proper theoretical understanding is deemed unworthy if not accompanied by practice (this being the “tropological” sense of interpretation), i.e. the commands will only be understood inasmuch as one fulfills them (St. Mark the Ascetic *On the Spiritual Law*: § 85 – 86).

⁴⁶ Theokritoff 2009: 117 – 118.

⁴⁷ See above: St. John Cassian in Section 2.1.1.2.

2.3. Defining Context and Identifying Themes

2.3.1. Ancient Source-Material

The Hymnography of the Despotic Feasts⁴⁸ is found in 3 sources: 1) the *Menaía* ("Book of the Month"), which contain series of hymns for each day of the liturgical year; 2) the *Triódion* (liturgical book for the Lenten period) and 3) the *Pentecostárion* (liturgical book for the period between Pascha and Pentecost). There are 7 Despotic Feasts, 4 of which are deemed Immovable Feasts and 3 deemed Movable Feasts, inasmuch as these last 3 feasts are calculated according to the liturgical cycle of Pascha. The Immovable Feasts are:

- 1) the Exaltation of the Cross (September 14th);
- 2) Christmas (December 25th);
- 3) Theophany (January 6th);
- 4) the Transfiguration (August 6th)

The hymns of these feasts are contained in the corresponding *Menaíon*. The Movable Feasts are:

- 1) Palm Sunday (1 week prior to Easter – contained in the *Triódion*)
- 2) the Ascension (forty days after Easter – contained in the *Pentecostárion*)
- 3) Pentecost (fifty days after Easter – contained in the *Pentecostárion*)

The *Menaía* (sg. *Menaíon*) are a series of liturgical books which in their present form comprise twelve books, one for each month of the modern year. Their use in this form was established by the ninth – tenth century (Hastings 1914: Vol. 7, pg. 11) and they replaced over a period of several centuries another book called the

⁴⁸ Ware 1969, s. 41.

Tropologion⁴⁹, the first book of its kind exclusively dedicated to hymnography and the first one organized according to the eight tone system⁵⁰, that is, the *Octóechos*. The organization of the hymnography of the Church into the eight tone system is often attributed primarily to St. John Damascene who also plays an important part in this present thesis.

In choosing what would become the specific source-material in the present thesis, I found that during, for example, the Despotie feasts of Christmas and Theophany, both in the *lections* and in the hymns, the theme of renewal of Creation is underlined. For example the first reading for the cycle of each of these two feasts is from Genesis 1, the Creation Narrative. The same text is read at the beginning of Great Lent as well as on Great Saturday, i.e. as a part of the Paschal celebration leading up to the Resurrection. Also, as in the aforementioned feasts, in the feast of the Transfiguration we see mention of the Incarnation's positive, renewing affect on Creation. Out of a need to limit the range of this thesis and because I believe this particular area to be of relevance, I have narrowed down my main ancient source-texts to those mentioned in Section 1.1., i.e. the Nativity, the Theophany and the Paschal Vigil.

2.3.2. Modern Source-Material

I have purposed to look at texts by modern Orthodox authors and speakers. One perspective is that of the modern Orthodox theologian, whose work is generally validated on the basis of academic achievement. Again we have the Orthodox priest, the pastor of a congregation, whose communication must be seen in the light of his pastoral service. Finally, we have the case of the Orthodox Hierarchy, looking primarily in this thesis at the characteristics of the eco-theology of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, whose views are looked to due to his position on the Ecclesiastical as well as on the global level. Each of these contexts is important to

⁴⁹ See also: Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics [ERE] (Ed. Hastings), Vol. 7, pg. 8.

⁵⁰ Cf. Fenlon 1992: 158

make note of. The work of the priest is of course also theological and the Patriarch often invokes both spiritual as well as more academically grounded sources. The content of the modern texts is likely influenced by contexts such as 1) the location of the author, 2) the social position of the author, 3) the intended audience and 4) historical events/contexts which may have influenced the text. One example is the case of the Patriarch, a member of a Greek, Christian minority in a predominantly Muslim country. Some would claim that the Patriarchate of Constantinople is attempting to reassert its significance as a voice for the global Orthodox Church following its decline following the fall of the Ottoman Empire⁵¹ and the emergence of the modern state of Turkey. I would however not fail to know the mind of the Patriarch on that particular subject. Of course, any interpretation I make of context or supposed context is bound to some degree to be clouded in subjectivity⁵².

2.3.3. Ancient Sources and Modern Expression

I aim to see *how* ancient texts are used today (see Section 2.1.3.). One thing is quoting ancient sources as an expression of general Theology, another is using and applying them to contemporary life. The *use* of Scripture, hymns and patristic parables in the modern discourse is a true test of the claimed universality and relevance of the Orthodox Church in modern, often secular, society. The question is not whether or not a non-Orthodox society believes or accepts the proclamations of the Church, but rather whether or not the Church Herself finds relevant and valid sources within Her own Theology and invokes them in addressing current events.

2.3.4 . Salvation and Creation

Salvation in Orthodox Theology is co-operation (*συνέργεια*) with God; God operates, man co-operates, literally “works together with”. Salvation requires the willingness

⁵¹ See: Bideleux, R. *A history of Eastern Europe: crisis and change.*, pg. 79

⁵² See above: Sections 2.1.1.1. & 2.1.3.

of individuals, yet its potential effect is communal, encompassing even other aspects of creation. The theme of salvation and restoration is expressed a considerable amount of times in for example the services of the Nativity.

“He makes His own the world that was estranged...”⁵³ and “Heaven and Earth are united today, for Christ is born...”⁵⁴

According to St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain⁵⁵, mans relationship to God can affect creations relationship to God; essentially man is meant to be the example of proper glorification of God:

“...man glorifies God first and then moves the rest of the creatures through a fine personification to glorify Him also...”⁵⁶

Does however glorifying God entail preserving His creation? This is a question which I hope to be able to come with a more thorough answer to in the process of this work.

2.4. Orthodoxy and Society - Theocracy?

The role of theology in politics should not be neglected here. Up until the final two centuries the Orthodox Church traditionally has had a potentially large amount of influence on political policy in Her host countries. This was true of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium) and later, following the introit of the Ottomans, the Patriarchate became the sole representative of the entire Christian population in the new empire. History has shown how this combination of theology and politics has been used both positively and negatively. There remains

⁵³ Ware 1969: 216.

⁵⁴ Ware 1968: 263.

⁵⁵ The monastic community of Mount Athos is more often referred to as “The Holy Mountain”.

⁵⁶ Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain: a handbook of spiritual counsel (pgs. 200 – 201). Chapter 11, Section 4 and 5: Proper Delights of the Mind

now only a few countries where the Orthodox Church is a state church, these being Greece, Finland and in practice in Georgia. In addition we find a number of countries in which the majority of the population is officially Orthodox these are: Russia, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria. At the current time and in the present global context, no one of the aforementioned states claims officially to be receiving instructions directly from God or to base their system of Law and Order on Divine mandates (the Bible, etc.). Thus to call any of these countries a “Theocracy” would be a misnomer. However, this does not necessarily diminish the enormous influence the Church has had in influencing people politically, for example, when Archbishop of Greece (of blessed memory) Christódoulos in June 2000 rallied masses of Greeks to protest against new identification cards which did *not* include religious affiliation. In a speech given at that time he spoke out strongly and openly against both the government and against Europe stating: “*We are first and foremost Greek and Orthodox, and only secondarily Europeans*” (Catherwood 2002: 121). Through many years of personal relationships with Orthodox Christians and familiarity with Orthodox cultures, I have heard many such expressions of self-identity in “otherness”⁵⁷, that is an identity in “Orthodox culture” vs. “European” or “Western” culture. Within such homogenous contexts as Greece, Russia or Serbia for example, the Orthodox Church realizes⁵⁸ its well-standing position, but what is also of particular interest in the present study is *if* and *how* the Orthodox Church uses Her voice in such a society, specifically in the area of Creation Theology and Ecology.

2.5. Comparing Theologies/Life-Views

There are several issues of comparison which I believe are profitable to address, both briefly here and in the course of this thesis. One issue is the now prolific use of the

⁵⁷ The concept of “otherness” is explored by Miroslav Volf in *Exclusion & Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (1996). Cf. Bernd Simon in *Identity in Modern Society. A Social Psychological Perspective*. (2004).

⁵⁸ Here the word “realizes” infers both the sense of “understanding” as well as “fulfillment”.

East vs. West/North vs. South argument. Both from a cultural and historical point of view there are indeed both differences and nuances between mentalities and general life-views in the East and West, North and South. However, it would be profitable to deconstruct possible myths concerning which has preserved “theology” or “philosophy” in its most pure form. Rhetorical argument does not always reflect essential facts or actual dogmas; often adherence to one life-view or the other becomes a matter of faith, thus eliminating the need for scientific confirmation. In the case of North vs. South whole nations are often classed more by actual or perceived levels of prosperity or poverty instead of actual historical or cultural affinity. This said, I question some of the stereotypes used, recognizing both the diversity to be found within small areas or societies as well as similarities in varying cultures in spite of great geographic separation. And when things are in fact identical, it is important not to underplay this for ideological reasons. The point being that a “mindset” is extremely difficult if not impossible to ascertain. Some of the aspects which do appear to be different by comparison and relevant to this thesis may be: Orthodox Simultaneousness vs. Classic Dualism⁵⁹; Communal vs. Individual.

⁵⁹ Savage 2008, pg. 18

CHAPTER 3

Creation Theology: Then to Now

I have chosen in this study to focus on the concept of *creation* (using the term as defined previously) and *nature* and their place within an Orthodox life-view. I see this as a *source* for eco-theology rather than eco-theology in itself. Again, it first becomes an “eco-theology” when it is applied to modern issues concerning the natural environment. As Elizabeth Theokritoff points out, modern Orthodox Eco-Theology is often a response to the apparent environmental challenges of today, however:

“...interestingly, many of the most valuable insights into our place in God’s creation date from a time when there was little or no awareness of these consequences.” (Theokritoff 2009: 211).

Again, I have attempted to choose likely sources, going *ad fontes* so to speak.

3.1. Then: From Judaic thought to Christian dogma

From Judaism to Christianity the Theology of Creation changed focus from the Creation Narrative in Genesis and relevant passages of the Old Testament to be redefined Christologically. In the earliest period of Christendom it appears often to have been enough to refer to OT theology and a brilliant example of this is the Hexameron by St. Basil the Great, compiled around the latter part of the fourth century. Here St. Basil shows himself to be knowledgeable of contemporary sciences while using the Creation Narrative as a framework for applying this knowledge. There are in fact several similar works called Hexameron (i.e. on the “six days” of Creation), but St. Basil’s was one of the most recognizable. St. John Damascene

apparently relied heavily on this work by St. Basil and St. Gregory Nazianzus writes of it:

*“Whenever I take his Hexæmeron in hand and quote its words, I am brought face to face with my Creator: I begin to understand the method of creation: I feel more awe than ever I did before, when I only looked at God’s work with my eyes.”*⁶⁰

The earliest source for Christian thinking on creation were treatises and exegesis of Sacred Scripture. Nevertheless, these works themselves are in their own right seen as legitimate sources for a Patristic Theology of Creation, inasmuch as they are the work of God-inspired individuals as recognized within the Orthodox context. As often is the case within Orthodox theology, this legitimacy is based on perpetuity. We will see below how this argument of *“longstanding tradition”* is used by the opposing parties in arguing their respective belief-systems.

In the course of time we see the question of *“nature”* brought up in various synods and this has obvious implications in the theology of creation, but appears originally to have been intended to define the *“nature”* of the Godhead and in turn Christ. It is when the focus turns to the Incarnation, Salvation and its relationship to the created world that we see a paradigm-shift occur. Looking back, the Fifth through the Seventh Ecumenical Councils were key in shaping the expression of creation’s or matter’s place in the religious sphere. On the surface the issue of the Iconoclasm was Sacred Icons, yet a closer look shows that an understanding of created matter, nature, etc. in itself was being verbalized. Such topics as the *“Transubstantiation”* in the Eucharist are debated, but essentially what it being discussed in the Holy Trinity’s relationship to created matter. In the course of my present research I have been surprised by the amount of the hymnography I am analyzing which apparently is a product of the iconoclastic era. A number of questions began to arise as to the significance of this on the present subject.

⁶⁰ St. Gregory Nazianzus, Oration 43 (The Panegyric on St. Basil the Great), §67.

- 1) Did this conflict/era influence the further understanding of creation, nature and matter?
- 2) Is the present Orthodox stance (i.e. Iconophile) an antithesis to the Iconoclastic viewpoint or vice versus?

3.2. The Theologies of the Iconoclasm

As mentioned in the introduction there is a fine line in the history of Christian Dogma between variant forms of expression and heresy. When one wishes to analyze a particular conflict academically today, it is important that neither side falls victim to being merely caricaturized. However, one of the difficulties in approaching the subject of an "Iconoclastic" theology is that nearly all sources available are those quoted in *Iconodule* documents. Thus the possibility exists that our understanding of the arguments of the Iconoclasts may be colored by how and in what amount their thoughts are reiterated by their opponents, the *Iconophiles*. In a paper written by John Haldon of Princeton the dilemma of what is true or not of the Iconoclasm is expressed:

"Byzantine iconoclasm has been wrapped in an almost impenetrable membrane of attitudes and assumptions, many of them conflicting. [...] ...very little of what has been assumed about the iconoclast debate is in fact reliable."

As touched on previously, both Iconodules and Iconoclasts claimed to be relying on tradition and each party claimed to have "*a multitude of authorities*" (Pelikan 1974: 100) which proved their claims. Often we see that dogmas were first canonized following a debate concerning one or another aspect of faith. The use of Icons in depicting religious scenes, saints and Christ Himself are known to have existed at least from the second century; traditionally icons were common from the time of the Apostles and some claim Christ Himself made the first Holy Icon. In *Church History*

Eusebius relates the story of how Christ sent King Abgar of Edessa a kerchief bearing the imprint of His face; this is the origin of the Holy Image “Painted-Without-Hands”⁶¹. On the use of icons Kitzinger states:

*“The original Christian defense of the visual arts was based on their usefulness as educational tools...a means of instruction or edification...”*⁶²

However, there was no *explicate*, dogmatic tradition for the *how* and the *why* of the veneration of Sacred Icons. It is this very absence of a precise and verbalized dogma which opened the doors for the conflict. Each party then attempted to fill the gap with meaning, each in its own way. St. John Damascene, a fervent Iconodule and one of the authors of the hymns in the present study, turned numerous times to pictures from nature, creation and the Incarnation to find meaning in the veneration of Icons. Iconoclasts were, as an antithesis to this, accused of being adherers of Eutychianism or that they were Nestorians, both schools of which were condemned at the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451. At the same time, Iconoclasts apparently accused Iconodules of the same thing (Pelikan 1974: 92)! Alain Besançon notes in *The Forbidden Image* that of the four Church Fathers he specifically studied, there was no apparent clear-cut consensus on images in the first four centuries following Christ (Besançon 1994: 3). The theme of icon was often used however, that of being “*made in the image* (εἰκῶν) *of God*” (cf. Gen. 1, 27), but this (in the early Church) was applied Christologically, less anthropologically and definitively not to nature as a whole (Pelikan 1974: 96).

One thing is ascertained from this: certain persons *were* in fact venerating icons. Iconoclasts deemed this practice a heresy (or more kindly a misunderstanding among the “ignorant”) while the very perpetuity of this veneration was seen as the

⁶¹ Cf. the story of King Abgar of Edessa in Eusebius’ *Church History*. This is the origin of the Holy Image “Painted-Without-Hands”.

⁶² Kitzinger 1954: 136.

basis for its validity for Iconodules. It is important to note here the fine line mentioned in the minutes of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, the difference between λατρεία (“worship” due God alone) and προσκύνησις (“adoration” of which Icons were worthy). The most significant point of interest for us at the present time is *how* they verbalize an apparently previously assumed theology of Creation.

Paul Alexander, speaking generally on the veneration of images, stated:

“...at the root of image worship lay the concept that material objects can be the seat of divine power and that this power can be secured through physical contact with a sacred object”. (Alexander 1958: 5)

Matter can be and in fact is sacred according to such a theology. It is clear that the Orthodox Church today stands for Iconophile theology; this could be called one of Her trademarks. How does this wittingly or unwittingly influence Her understanding of creation and in turn the environment?

3.3. Now: Theology of Creation and Ecology

The move from systematic theology to what is today known as constructive theology also applies to the subject of the theology of creation. There is of course the danger with such methodology in that some areas may receive too much focus and result in duplicated conclusions to the detriment of other less accessible fields of study. The plethora of texts available to be analyzed make a concise and thorough theology nearly impossible to ascertain. Both the word and the science known as “ecology” are of more recent origin, in fact the word does not appear at all in ancient sources. This does not however imply a total lack of “ecological” thinking in the past. Francis Ramalay identifies Theophrastos of Mytelene as one of the early philosophers of ecology inasmuch as he also studied the interrelationship of various cultures and

sub-cultures in their natural environment⁶³. The development of “Eco-theology” is a fairly modern concept brought about as a result of ideological social movements of the mid-twentieth century. Lynn White Jr. is often credited with sparking the debate with his article *“The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis”*. Eco-theology is the product of this debate and a *reaction* to the apparent pollution and degradation of our natural environment. As was the case in the development of a theology of creation within the early Church, the focus or point of departure for an eco-theology has also experienced a development. The ongoing dialogues between various faiths have shown how different each group represented thinks or makes conclusions, including what each group views as a valid basis for coming to a conclusion. At times the various entities involved in such work or dialogue may come to a common conclusion, but for very different reasons; i.e. one because of the Creation narrative, another through the Golden Rule and perhaps a third based upon other religious, moral or ethical grounds.

In various articles reviewed in the course of my research a term often used to describe an Orthodox view concerning ecological issues has been “Eucharistic” or “Sacramental”. An example of this is Prof. Paul Murray’s use of the thinking of the Orthodox theologian Fr. Alexander Schmemmann in relating the idea that: *“...the Eucharist in Orthodox theology is also intrinsically linked to the salvation of creation”* (Murray 2008: pg. 171). Fr. Alexander himself writes: *“The Church is not a religious cult but a liturgy, embracing the entire creation”* (Schmemmann 1988: pgs. 216 – 217). Bishop Kallistos Ware also underlines the aspect of sacrament:

*“The world is a sacrament of the divine presence, a means of communion with God. The environment consists not in dead matter but in living relationship. The entire cosmos is one vast burning bush, permeated by the fire of divine power and glory.”*⁶⁴

⁶³ Ramalay, Francis. 1940. The growth of a science. Univ. Colorado Stud., 26: 3-14.

⁶⁴ Ware, Kallistos. “Through Creation to the Creator” *Ecotheology 2* (1997) pgs. 18 – 26

I believe that the basis for this “sacramental” description of Orthodox Theology is the fact that within an Orthodox context (thus in contrast to for example a Protestant context) liturgical texts are very frequently used, the most revered of them being those associated with the Divine Eucharist. Thus the connection between the Liturgy and Creation is made more easily apparent. However, it is of utmost importance that this description does not lead to an understanding of such a manner of doing theology as a mere conglomeration of symbolism; in Orthodox Theology these are not merely symbols but are realities directly connected to what they represent.

A Gentle Word of Caution

Up to the present time, most of the modern texts on Orthodoxy and Ecology which I have read have been apparently written by highly educated persons within an academic (some might say “Western” framework). I am in fact doing the same thing! Without passing judgment on the results of such works, the language used at times can give the impression of academic exoticism rather than serious theological thinking, i.e. using superfluously terms such as mystical, holistic, Eucharistic, sacramental, etc. As Chryssavgis puts it in the *Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology*:

*“It has become fashionable, for Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike, to be infatuated with characteristic, even exotic, technical terms that define essential dimensions of Orthodox theology and spirituality.”*⁶⁵

In addition many terms are both used differently by different authors, perhaps due to a misunderstanding, perhaps due to the desire to be a “philologist” (in the original meaning of the word). Concerning Roman-Catholics, Murray states that when they hear the term “sacrament” they “*still tend to think of the seven sacraments, rather than of the church, or more primordially Christ Himself*” (Murray 2008: 170). In my opinion, one must be cautious in employing terms which 1) may be used otherwise in other

⁶⁵ Cunningham (Ed.) 2008: 150.

academic circles or 2) be generally unknown or unused in Modern English. On the same note, one must also keep in mind the dangers of Orientalism, especially when approaching unfamiliar, so-called “Eastern” texts. Such a mindset when approaching Orthodox Theology can end up leading to *well-intended* but none the less false generalizations. This results in being patronizing and does as little justice to Orthodox Theology as does not taking the time to read for ones final exams. Otherwise what might be a fairly simple concept to someone comfortable with Greek Patristics, will become a “mystical phenomenon” to one unfamiliar with an Orthodox life-view.

CHAPTER 4

Ancient Sources

Historical Developments of the Feasts

Within the early Christian church and up until the beginning of the fourth century the Feast of the “Epiphany” (from the Greek word ἐπιφάνεια) referred generally to the Nativity of Christ, that is to say Christ’s “appearance”, the Incarnation. This appears to be the understanding of the term used by St. Paul the Apostle in 2nd Timothy 1, 10 ⁶⁶ and St. Epifáneios of Cyprus (fourth century) says of the celebration “Well it is called the ‘Appearance’, the incarnate birth of the Savior which occurred in Bethlehem”⁶⁷. In ancient times the term ἐπιφάνεια was often used of the actual appearance of an object, i.e. how it looked, appeared to the eye. Parallel to this usage we also find a more philosophic and religious use, where ἐπιφάνεια within Christian theology eventually became synonymous with the term θεοφάνεια. The celebration of the Baptism of the Christ on the sixth of January (or alternatively the tenth) is mentioned by St. Klement of Alexandria (early third century), referring to the followers of Basilides who celebrated the Baptism on this day. Eventually, by the fifth or sixth century in the Byzantine rite the two feasts were definitely separated, the Nativity being celebrated on the twenty-fifth of December and the “Epifaneia” or “Theofaneia” on the sixth of January. Since the Feast of the Nativity precedes the Feast of the Theophany in the ecclesiastical calendar, I will also address them in this order.

⁶⁶ See 2 Tim. 1, 10: φανερωθεῖσαν δὲ νῦν διὰ τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, καταργήσαντος μὲν τὸν θάνατον φωτίσαντος δὲ ζωὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

⁶⁷ Haer 2.287.5 – 6: “τὰ Ἐπιφάνεια καλῶς εἴρηται ἢ ἔνσαρκος γέννησις τοῦ σωτῆρος ἢ ἐν Βηθλεὲμ γενομένη”

4.1. The Forefeast and Feast of the Nativity of Christ

4.1.1. The Authors

Keeping in mind my methodology as defined in Chapter 2, it is necessary at this point to properly set the stage for an analysis of the text by looking briefly at the author and his or her Umwelt as well as the texts placement within the liturgical context. Portions of the *akolouthía* contain texts from the Bible (*lections*), but I will mainly be presenting the texts of the hymns, i.e. those texts which are specific to these feasts. As for the authors of the hymns, we can establish fairly easily what appears to be at least seven distinct persona. The most well known of these are St. John Damascene (mid-seventh to mid-eighth century), St. Kosmos the Melodist (same period as St. John Damascene), the renowned St. Joseph, the Hymnographer⁶⁸ (ninth century) and Theofanes Graptos⁶⁹ (late eighth to ninth century). They are these names given explicitly in the *rubrics* of the *Menaía* for this feast. This however does not exclude the possibility that other less known or less renowned author could have used the name of one of these recognized Hymnographers in order to increase the chances of his or her texts being included in the body of ecclesiastical hymnography. This is not an uncommon suggestion and again touches upon the subject of legitimacy, either proper or assumed. There are also a number of texts which are written anonymously or for which the authors' name has not come down to us. Often a hymnographer would include a name as an *acrostic*, often as the initial of the *Theotókion*. Also the use of certain *acrostics* could point to an author without specifically giving the name.

As mentioned previously, the *Menaía* contain the "What" to sing while the *Typicón* contain the "How" and at times the "Why". We see, for example, in the *Typicón* of

⁶⁸ Άγ. Ιωσήφ ὁ ὕμνογράφος

⁶⁹ Άγ. Θεοφάνης ὁ Γραπτός

George the Hiero-Deacon (Venice 1641, pg. 15), a *rubric* ranking the Hymnographers to be preferred, among them St. Theophanes and St. Joseph and the text ends with “οἱ τοῦ κυ̅ρ Ἰωσήφ, τῶν λοιπῶν ἀπάντων προκρίνονται”⁷⁰. This text arguably may originally have been composed in the eleventh century according to Papadopoulos-Keramou⁷¹, i.e. well prior to the publication of the printed *Menaía*. During the twelfth century⁷² the corpus of liturgical books underwent an immense process of editing, an event which also occurred at the time of first printed publication, the oldest printed *Menaíon* is for September printed in 1526⁷³. From that point onward (sixteenth – nineteenth century), the printed versions have been the general source used in the republication of liturgical books, rather than the manuscripts themselves. While many studies have been undertaken on the manuscript tradition of the *Menaía*, no full and comprehensive critical edition of the *Menaía* is currently available. In order to limit the scope of this thesis, I will thus be focusing on the text of printed editions.

Before moving on however, I will briefly present the lives of the relevant and otherwise significant Hymnographers who composed the hymns of these selected feasts.

St. Theophanes

The first of our hymn-writers (based on year of presumed birth) is St. Theophanes Graptos. We find several *Vitae*, one combining the lives of Theórdoros and Theophanes by the nun Theodora from the 13th century⁷⁴ and another written by St. Simeon the Metaphraste (i.e. Translator)⁷⁵. It is believed that he was born sometime between the years 775 – 778 A.D. in Palestine and in his 22nd year he was tonsured a

⁷⁰ That is: “...those [kanons] by Mr. Joseph [the Hymnographer] shall be preferred to the rest”.

⁷¹ Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Σχεδίασμα*, pg. 379.

⁷² During the reign of Manuel I Comnenus (1143 – 1180 A.D.).

⁷³ by Damiano di Santa Maria | See: Layton, E. *The Sixteenth Century Greek Book in Italy, Printers and Publishers for the Greek World*, Venice 1994, pgs. 150–153, for a full list of extant *Menaía* published during this period in Italy.

⁷⁴ Ζερβουδάκη, Αλεξάνδρα (2002) σ. 16 – 26.

⁷⁵ Ζερβουδάκη, Αλεξάνδρα (2002) σ. 26 – 27.

monk along with his brother Theodore at the Lavra⁷⁶ of St. Sava in the Palestinian desert.

Together with Michael Synkellos (ca. 760 – 846), both Theophanes and his brother Theodore were sent as a part of a special envoy in 813 by the Patriarch of Jerusalem Thomas⁷⁷ to Rome to dispute the introduction of the *filioque* into the Creed. However, after arriving in Constantinople, the group chose to remain in the City and stayed at the monastery of Chora (Χῶρα τῶν Ζώντων). Leo V the Armenian (775 – 820) reintroduced Iconoclasm in 815 and due to the brothers prominent defense of Iconophilia, they were both exiled until Leo V's death in 820. After an eight year period of official Iconophilia under Michael II (821 – 829), Theophilos renewed iconoclastic rule and the brothers were again exiled, imprisoned and tortured. Theodore died in 833. It was during this period (in 836) that Theophanes was punished by having iambic verses tattooed on his forehead and for this was called "Graptós", literally *written [upon]* or *marked with writing*. Following his release from prison and the end of Iconoclasm in 842, Theophanes was appointed Bishop of Nicea. He died merely three years later in Constantinople in 845.

St. Joseph the Hymnographer

St. Joseph, later receiving the honorific title "the hymnographer", was born around the year 816 (some sources say between 812 and 818)⁷⁸, in Palermo, Sicily to a Christian family. There are two extant Vitae, the first by St. Theophanes⁷⁹, St. Josephs contemporary, and the second from the late tenth to early eleventh century by one John the Deacon (of Hagia Sophia Church in Constantinople)⁸⁰, from which we can get a picture of circumstances surrounding Josephs life and compositions.

⁷⁶ A "lavra" was a village and in this case a village-like monastic community.

⁷⁷ Patriarch from ca. 807 – 821.

⁷⁸ In 816 according to W. Hörander in *LThK* 5, pg. 1007; see also ca. 816 according to Paterson-Ševčenko, *Canon and Calendar*, pg. 104, and Detorakis, *Φιλολογία*, pg. 486.

⁷⁹ Τωμαδάκη 1971, 29 – 32; see also: *BHG* 944

⁸⁰ Τωμαδάκη 1971, 30 – 31; found in: *BHG* 945; see also *PG* 105, 939–976.

Due to the invasion of Sicily by the Arab Saracens his family was forced to move to Peloponnesus around 830 and in 831 the sources report that he was tonsured a monk in Thessaloniki (likely at the monastery of *Christ the Savior*). It is believed that Joseph worked as a scribe during his time at the monastery. The next important notice to be noted here is that he was ordained a priest in ca. 840, around which time he became acquainted with St. Gregory, the Dekapolites. He subsequently accompanied St. Gregory, now his spiritual father, to Constantinople. He was assigned service in the Church of St. Antipa. In 841 he was sent as an envoy to Rome to defend the Iconodule position, but ended up being captured on the way by pirates and imprisoned on Crete. Within a few years, according to tradition, he was released miraculously, an event which led to him first writing hymns. As in the case of St. Romanós the Melodist, according to tradition he is supposed to have eaten (or merely read) a scroll (given to him by some renowned saint whose name is not explicitly given) and began thereafter to sing. Again, as in the case of other Hymnographers, writing hymns was seen as a divine gift accompanied by the aforementioned apparition. This is an example of what has been termed *tópos* or *tópoi*, i.e. prototypes of characteristics or experiences which several or many saints are reported as having. To the believer this may be the proof of their divine origin, to the non-believer these are pointed out to show that they are merely myths based upon previous myths. Some years following his return to Constantinople, Joseph founded the monastery of St. Bartholomew (around 850). He fell asleep in the Lord in the year 886 in Constantinople, on April the 3rd (the day of his current celebration in the Greek Orthodox calendar; the Slavic calendar celebrates his memory on April 4th).

St. Germanós

St. Germanós I⁸¹ (celebrated May 12th) was born around the year 634. He served as Patriarch at Constantinople between 715 and 730 and it is possible he abdicated the throne due to the introduction of official Iconoclasm, though this is uncertain. His life appears to have been plagued otherwise by both theological and political friction and his attempts to re-unite the Armenians to the Church of Constantinople apparently failed. He has composed hymns at the Vespers of December 25th and at the Lauds of Theophany. Three letters are attributed to him where he defends reverence for Sacred Icons. He is believed to have passed away ca. 740 A.D. and is celebrated on May 12th in the Orthodox Church.

St. Anatólios

St. Anatólios [Anatolius], was born in the second half of the fourth century in Alexandria, Egypt. He ascended to the throne as Patriarch of Constantinople in 449 and due to his connection to Egypt, records show that he wrote a letter against one Timothy who was usurping the then Patriarch of Alexandria, Proterius. He is believed to have died in the year 458, possibly being killed by the followers of one Dioscorus on July the 3rd. His feast is celebrated in the Orthodox Church on this day. He has composed hymns for the Vespers of December 25th and the Lauds of Theophany.

St. Kassiani (Cassia)

St. Cassia⁸² is one of the few female writers explicitly mentioned in the voluminous corpus of Orthodox hymnography. She can be placed in the ninth century, being born into a wealthy family sometime between 805 and 810 in Constantinople. According to tradition the then Emperor Theófilos wanted to marry her, but an embarrassing episode of wit caused the emperor to choose another. She founded a

⁸¹ Ο ύμνογράφος Γερμανός ὁ Ὁμολογητής

⁸² Ἁγ. Κασσιανή ἡ ύμνωδός

nunnery in Constantinople in 843 and corresponded with St. Theódoros the Studite and some have suggested that this may be why her hymns have been included in the *Menaía*, since redactions of these occurred around that time. These dates place her in the second Iconoclast period and she is also commonly painted as one of the few women in the Icon of the Triumph of Orthodoxy. She is believed to have died around the year 865 and her memory is celebrated on September 7th. Among her numerous compositions, she has composed the Doxastikon and hymns for the Vespers of December 25th.

St. John the Monk / St. John Damascene (JD)

St. John the Monk is generally identified as St. John Damascene. There are however several “John the Monk”-s, among them the St. John the Monk associated (as is the case with St. Joseph above) with St. Gregory the Dekapolites (celebrated April 11th or alternatively April 18th). For our purposes however, we will accept the authorship attributed to St. John Damascene. St. John Damascene was born ca. A.D. 676 and was raised together with the future St. Kosmás the Melodist. He was born into an affluent political family which served positions both within the Eastern Roman Empire as well as under the Muslim Caliphate. He was bi-lingual (Arabic and Greek), received a good education in math, philosophy, law and music as well as both Muslim and Christian teachings. He became well known an orator, being called in Greek “flow of gold”, i.e. a golden speaker. His influence among the Christian population under Muslim rule led to accusations of him attempting to undermine the Muslim ruler and he was removed or resigned from a civil post in ca. 706 (Cf. Louth 2000: 6). He became a monk sometime after this and was a ordained a Hieromonk (monastic priest) in 735. He was a prolific writer, authoring apologies both against Islam as well as against the Iconoclasts and he composed numerous hymns and *kanons*. His writings were relayed heavily upon even within his own lifetime and he reposed in the Lord in peace ca. 749. He is celebrated on December 4th. His compositions and theological texts are numerous and well known, but for our intents and purposes he

composed full *kanons* for both of the first feasts as well as various hymns intermingled among the hymnography of these feasts.

St. Kosmás, the Melodist

St. Kosmás was born in Jerusalem around the same period as St. John Damascene and was raised by the parents of the future St. John (celebrated December 4th). He is said to have received a fine education together with St. John and under the guidance of a monk named Kosmás from Calabria, Italy. Upon coming of age, St. Kosmás was tonsured a monk in one of the monasteries of Palestine; there he became well-known for his ascetic feats. During one of the periods of Iconoclasm, Sts. Kosmás and John spoke out boldly in defense of the Iconodule theology. In 743 St. Kosmás was made bishop of Maiuma. He is believed to have passed on as an old man in ca. 787⁸³. His feast is on October 12th. His compositions include many *kanons*, including a triode for four days of Holy Week. His major composition for the feast of the Nativity is for Matins. His *kánon* for Christmas Eve bears the acrostic: Χριστὸς βροτωθεὶς ἦν ὅπερ Θεὸς μένη. He also wrote a *kánon* for Theophany.

One important factor to make note of, having now briefly looked at the context of these specifically relevant Hymnographers, is that the majority of these authors (or the presumed authors) were active during or in the period immediately following the Iconoclastic period (Cf. Section 3.2.). While the conflict was meant to be settled at the Seventh Ecumenical Council (the Second at Nicea), there was a resurgence of iconoclasm again in the beginning of the ninth century. This places our Hymnographers in the role of *Iconodules*, defending the decrees and beliefs expressed at the 7th Ecumenical Council, namely that:

“...these images (icons) are to be revered (προσκυνεῖν)... for that which one loves he also reverences (προσκυνεῖ) and what he reverences that he greatly

⁸³ Alternatively in ca. 773 or 794 A.D.

loves, as the everyday custom, which we observe towards those we love, bears witness, and in which both ideas are practically illustrated when two friends meet together...⁸⁴

Keselópoulos points out the significance the theology of the Incarnation had on the Church in the Iconoclastic period “...when the Church had to confront the iconoclastic view which disparaged matter...” (Keselópoulos 2001: 150). In my understanding, Iconodule theology defined more precisely the significance of the Incarnation, both Christologically as well as its’ implications in the Theology of Creation. Among others, St. John Damascene expresses this well in stating:

“I do not venerate matter, but rather the creator of matter, who was made matter for me and who deigned live in matter and bring about my salvation through matter. I will not cease to venerate the matter through which salvation came to me.”⁸⁵

I believe that an understanding of this context will help shed light on an interpretation of the present texts.

4.1.2. Structure of the *Akolouthíai*

The structure of the liturgical order of the Feast (and Forefeast) of the Nativity is quite complex. The Forefeast of the Nativity actually begins on December 20th but for the sake of space I am only looking at relevant texts used specifically on the 24th and 25th of December.

As is common in the *akolouthíai*, a complete service will many times contain many unrelated elements, put together in a concise yet complex manner. The most simple

⁸⁴ “The Letter of the Synod to the Emperor and Empress” in: Labbe and Cossart, *Concilia*, Tom. VII., col. 577.

⁸⁵ St. John Damascene, *Orationes de imaginibus* tres.1,16: Lines 4 – 9: “Ὁὐ προσκυνῶ τῆ ὕλην, προσκυνῶ δὲ τὸν τῆς ὕλης Δημιουργόν, τὸν ὕλην δι’ ἐμὲ γενόμενον καὶ ἐν ὕλη κατοικῆσαι καταδεξάμενον καὶ δι’ ὕλης τὴν σωτηρίαν μου ἐργασάμενον, καὶ σέβων οὐ παύσομαι τὴν ὕλην, δι’ ἧς ἡ σωτηρία μου εἴργασται.” Also quoted in: Besançon, Alain. *The forbidden image: an intellectual history of iconoclasm*, pg. 127.

(i.e. everyday) service will usually contain only one *kanon*, that is to say a series of hymns composed for that day or event. Yet often one finds that several *kanons* are in fact being performed, for example: one for the Saint(s) of the Day, one for the Feast of the Day and perhaps a second or third *kanon* for the same Feast. These are then braided together in a manner laid down by the *Typikón* (local or universal). This is no less the case for the present text.

The Forefeast of the Nativity

For the Evening of December 23rd (indicated as December 24th, since the liturgical day starts at Vespers the evening before), we find 1 *kanón* at Compline, while for Matins we find no less than 3 *kanons*:

- 1) the *Kanon* of the Forefeast (no author given) with the *acrostic* “καὶ σήμερον δὲ Σάββατον μέλπω μέγα”⁸⁶
- 2) an additional (indicated as ἔτερος) *kanón* by St. Joseph, the *initials* following the Greek alphabet and
- 3) one for St. Evgénia by St. Theophanes and with the *acrostic* “Εὐγενίης μέγα κῦδος ἐν ἄσμασιν ἔξοχα μέλπω”.

It is mainly the hymns of the *kanons* which are of interest in the present study. Additionally, I will be focusing mainly on themes on Creation, Nature, Renewal, etc. Each of these *akolouthíai* was composed separately and in the case of the texts of Sts. Theophanes and Joseph, it is most likely (chronologically speaking) that the *kanon* by St. Theophanes preceded the *kanon* by St. Joseph. It is difficult to determine whether or not St. Joseph had access to the *kanon* by St. Theophanes. One factor which may indicate in the least knowledge of the *kanon* is that both saints' *kanons* for

⁸⁶ This same *acrostic* is also found in the Compline of the Forefeast of the Theophany as well as in the Matins of Great Saturday. On Great Saturday the Triodion indicates the authors of this *kanon* as Ποίημα Κασσιανῆς μοναχῆς (for the *hermoi*), Μάρκου ἐπισκόπου Ἰδρουῦντος (for *odes* one and three – five) and Κοσμᾶ μοναχοῦ (for *odes* six – nine).

this day are composed in the Second Tone while the first *kanon* of the Forefeast is written in the Second Plagial Tone.

The St. Martyr Evgenía's († ca. 262) connection to this feast may also have a didactic purpose. Her name (εὐγενία) means literally *nobility of birth* and it seems almost too coincidental for both the Nativity and this saint to be celebrated on the same day --- this said, we do not disregard that her hagiography indicates that she was martyred on December 24th in Alexandria, according to tradition having been informed of her coming death by Christ Himself.

4.1.3. The Texts

Due to the difficulties presented by infinite ability to cross-reference, I have chosen to organize my text-work at times chronologically, at times thematically. The corpus of hymns is so large that I will only be able to quote a smaller, yet hopefully representative, selection of the texts. The first texts which I have come upon are composed by presently unknown authors and since the specific date of these compositions are not currently known I will be looking at these based primarily on the text itself.

“Let creation now cast off all old things, seeing You the Creator created and becoming an infant, renewing all things and leading them to their former beauty.”⁸⁷

In the hymn above we see the theme of restoration or renewal of “*all things*”. We might ask ourselves what is the source of this need for renewal. As will be addressed below we must draw a line between *preservation* and *restoration*. In turn the question must be posed as to whether restoration is a piece of the grand plan for preservation,

⁸⁷ Matins of December 24th, Ode 4, Stanza 1 (Ἐτερος): *Ἡ κτίσις νῦν, τὴν παλαιώσιν πᾶσαν ἀπόρριψον, τὸν Κτίστην κτιζόμενον, καὶ καινουργοῦντά σε βλέπουσα, νήπιον γενόμενον, καὶ πρὸς τὸ πρῶην σε, κάλλος ἐπανάγοντα.* See also Ware 1969: 212.

i.e. that continual renewal is in itself an aspect of preservation. Again, we look for the reason behind a need for renewal or restoration; is it the physical decay of matter since the days of the Creation or sin or both? In this hymn this renewal is connected to the abandonment of “*old things*”, which can be interpreted within the context of matter, spiritually or culturally. Based on the assumption that this hymn is in general agreement with Orthodox tradition, we can also glean some answers from the patristic tradition.

One of the first things which comes to mind is the doctrine presented by Origenes (185 – 254 A.D.) of the “ἀποκατάστασις τῶν πάντων” (the restoration of all things). This view of Origenes was anathemized by the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553 A.D. I cannot say that I know the minute details of Origenes on this subject, however from what I do know of his theology in general I would venture to propose a nuance in the chronology of this theme of apokatastasis. This theme does in fact appear to be present in various forms in a number of the hymns analyzed in this thesis, but in the case of the present hymn we see this renewal connected specifically to the Incarnation itself, i.e. not an eschatological theology of apokatastasis. In general the role of Salvation for mankind is seen as a “restoration” on various levels. One aspect is the restoration or healing of “*soul and body*” having been made sick by sin --- this restoration is a return to that which is “*according to nature*” (see Section 2.2.2.). The ultimate restoration for mankind is the restoration of its relationship to God through *théosis* which is expounded upon elsewhere. The Salvation of mankind is in turn the prototype of the Salvation, i.e. restoration and renewal of creation, since it was man who perpetrated the “*fall*” and not Nature. (See below Section 5.3.)

“The whole of creation (κτίσις) is made rich, let it rejoice and dance...⁸⁸”

⁸⁸ This “Oikos” is used according to Slav practice on the morning of Christmas Eve, but in the Greek practice in found following the third Ode of Matins on the twentieth of December: “ἡ κτίσις πᾶσα καταπλουτίσθητι, ἀγάλλου καὶ χόρευε...” Cf. Ware 1969: 214.

If creation was not rich enough as it was, according to this anonymous hymnographer it has been enriched by the arrival of God Incarnate. I believe this expression must be interpreted in light of a “fulfillment” of the act of Creation through the Incarnation. However, this can also be interpreted either as a wealth of material blessings (i.e. being provided for and in turn providing) or alternatively as creation being saturated by the Divine Presence and thus being “*en-riched*”.

*“How shall I give You milk, who gives food to all of nature (φύσις)? How will I hold You in my hands, You who hold all things (τὰ σύμπαντα)”*⁸⁹

This foregoing hymn by an unknown author is dedicated to the Mother of God, the



Virgin Mary. The hymnographer has Her All-Holiness pose the question to All-Mighty Christ in the Incarnate form of a newborn babe. We see a comparative to this in a hymn from the Royal Hours of Christmas Eve:

*“He who rained manna upon the people in the desert, is fed milk from breasts.”*⁹⁰

Here the service rendered is reciprocated, i.e. He provided manna, He is now given milk. But going further, Christ, as God, is

identified in this first hymn as being the Provider of food not only to humanity, but

⁸⁹ From the Stichoï of the Processional Hymns of Matins: “Πῶς σε γαλουχῶ, πάσης φύσεως τροφέα; πῶς σε χερσὶ κατέχω, τὸν κρατοῦντα τὰ σύμπαντα;”. Cf. Ware 1969: 217.

⁹⁰ Royal Hours of Christmas Eve, Ninth Hour (Stichera); “Ἐκ μαζῶν γάλα τρέφεται, ὁ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ Μάννα ὀμβρίσας τῷ Λαῷ”. Cf. Ware 1969: 246.

to “*all of nature*”. One may then ask the question “*What type of food or sustenance does He provide?*” This first hymn does not specifically give the answer but we can interpret metaphorically that He provides food to creation as a mother gives her tit to her child. Looking at the information that science has provided concerning the immense superiority of a mothers’ breast milk, especially in the first months of life, this milk provides the entire sustenance for the child, yes, above and beyond sustenance. Antibodies are also provided in the milk, protecting the child from sickness and disease. A mother also holds her child lovingly and protectively in her arms. In the New Testament Jesus is quoted as saying to Jerusalem “*How often would I gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings...*” (Matthew 23,37; cf. Luke 13,34). Christ is thus seen both as the caring Provider and the caring Protector, just as the Virgin Mary provided Him with milk and is the “*Protector of Christians*” (Προστασία τῶν Χριστιανῶν). In the Sacred Icon on the previous page called the “*Galaktotrófousa*” (Milk-feeder)⁹¹, we see an example of the humanity of Christ as the Virgin Mary nurses Him, an iconographic theme reflecting both worldly and Divine provision. Also Christ God understands the instincts of motherhood and cares for creation accordingly, even “*the birds of the air*” (St. Matt. 6,26). Again we see the contours of the non-anthropocentric provision of God, both for other creatures and, if we are to believe these texts we have been looking at, even caring for inanimate objects.

Another comparable hymn from the Forefeast of the Nativity states again: “*...let us see God in swaddling clothes; let us see a Virgin nursing, what an awesome sight! ...*”⁹². Immediately prior to this hymn we also find a very interesting phrase used which should not go unmentioned:

⁹¹ Such an Γαλακτοτρόφουσα Icon is also found on the Iconostasis of the Cell of St. Sabba (annex Chilandar monastery) at Karyes on the Holy Mountain. Many miracles are associated with this Sacred Icon.

⁹² Matins of December 20th, Stichera Prosomoia according to the Alphabet; by St. Romanos the Melodist: “*...ἴδωμεν Θεὸν ἐν τοῖς σπαργάνοις, ἴδωμεν Παρθένον γαλουχοῦσαν, φρικτὸν θέαμα!*” Cf. St. Luke 2, 7 & 2, 12 for references to “*swaddling clothes*”.

*"...for the Word is born; Wisdom comes forth. Church, receive a greeting; people, let us say for the joy of the Theotókos: 'Blessed is He who has come, our God, glory to You'."*⁹³

It was the poetic equilibrium between the Word (Λόγος) and Wisdom (σοφία) in the Greek text which caught my eye. This offers an opportunity to comment briefly on the school of thought known as "Sophiology". In Sophiology, this Sophia, Wisdom is personified in a type of female counterpart of God the Father or a form of His energy and is sometimes metaphorically in Christian Sophiologies associated with the Virgin Mary. However, in the earliest centuries, in spite of the feminine gender of the word σοφία, this term was generally theologically associated with Christ, the Λόγος (Pomazansky 1994: 357). St. Romanós' use of the word σοφία here seems however to lack these connotations and points rather towards the Incarnation of the Word, i.e. *"He who has come..."*. I do not believe however that this weakens the motherly aspects of God as expressed above, though within Orthodox Theology these are defined as *energies* or *attributes* rather than as the *essence* of God. (Cf. Chrysavgis 2007: 164).

In the following hymn from the Pre-Feast of the Nativity of Christ, I believe we see the *"innovation"* (καινοτομία) of the Incarnation expressed with the words:

*"He-Who-Is becomes that which He was not, and the Former of all of creation is formed completely..."*⁹⁴

⁹³ Matins of December 20th, Stichera Prosomoia according to the Alphabet; by St. Romanos the Melodist: *"ó λόγος γὰρ γεννᾶται ἢ σοφία προέρχεται, δέχον ἀσπασμὸν ἢ Ἐκκλησία, εἰς τὴν χαρὰν τῆς Θεοτόκου, λαοὶ εἴπωμεν· Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐλθὼν, Θεὸς ἡμῶν δόξα σοι."*

⁹⁴ *"ó Ὡν γίνεται ὁ οὐκ ἦν, καὶ ὁ Πλαστουργὸς πάσης κτίσεως διαπλάττεται..."* In the Stichon (at Vespers) for December 24th (i.e. on December 23rd) in the Slav tradition and in the Greek from *"Lord, I have cried..."* from the Vespers of December 20th. See also: Ware 1969: 202. We see this same thought expressed elsewhere in the Fathers. St. John Chrysostomos in his Homily on the Nativity says: *"Σήμερον ὁ ὦν τίκτεται, καὶ ὁ ὦν γίνεται ὅπερ οὐκ ἦν· ὦν γὰρ Θεός, γίνεται ἄνθρωπος, οὐκ ἐκστὰς τοῦ εἶναι Θεός."* St. Athanasios the Great writes in his sermon: *"Θεὸς σήμερον ὁ ὦν καὶ προὼν γίνεται ὅπερ οὐκ ἦν· ὦν γὰρ Θεός, γίνεται ἄνθρωπος, οὐκ ἐκστὰς τοῦ εἶναι Θεός"*.

This is a theological paradox; this is the source of theological twists and at the same time the solution. This is also an example of how the Hymnographers and Fathers and Mothers of the Church use both precise and yet poetic expresses, bordering at times on the oxymoronic. This reaches into the depths of Incarnation Theology, where the “He-Who-Is” timelessly, at some point “was not” something, that is to say what He was not was God Incarnate. And the “Former” being “formed” is like a house building a carpenter instead of vice versus. As the priest says while partitioning the Lamb prior to the Sacred Eucharist: *“The Lamb of God is broken and distributed; broken but not divided. He is forever eaten yet is never consumed...”*⁹⁵ It doesn’t make sense...and I think that’s the point --- precise apophaticism.

Christmas Eve

Immediately following a hymn by St. Kassiani, the Entrance with the Gospel and the ancient hymn Φῶς Ἰλαρόν we find the *lection* (reading) of the Creation Narrative [Gen. 1, 1 – 13], which as was mentioned earlier is also read at the Feast of Theophany, on the first Monday of Lent and on Great Saturday (the beginning of the Paschal Vigil). The significance of this should not be overlooked. Several of these feasts appear to have a co-relative which will be explored further below.

*“Christ is born, that He may raise up the image (εἰκόν) that had previously fallen.”*⁹⁶

Here we find a text which, though I have been unable to ascertain the author, appears to stem again from the Iconoclastic period. This is due to its placement between other hymns of that period as well as the theme of the restoration of the “fallen image”. This raising up appears to be a parallel to the now oft repeated theme of restoration. In the Iconoclasm, Sacred Images were removed, destroyed, taken

⁹⁵ “Μελίζεται καὶ διαμερίζεται ὁ Ἄμνος τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ μελιζόμενος καὶ μὴ διαιρούμενος· ὁ πάντοτε ἐσθιόμενος καὶ μηδέποτε δαπανώμενος...”.

⁹⁶ “Χριστὸς γεννᾶται, τὴν πρὶν πεσοῦσαν, ἀναστήσων εἰκόνα.” Apolytikion of the Pre-Feast of the Nativity, sung before the Dismissal of Vespers on December 23rd, i.e. in is a part of the liturgical day of December 24th. See also: Ware 1969: 224.

down --- the role of the Iconodules was to reestablish them. Here I believe, the Fall and restoration through the appearance of the Messiah parallels the fall and eventual restoration of Holy Icons. As we continue, I believe the significance of this will become more clear.

Continuity or Divide?: Heaven or Earth?

Something happened at the Incarnation, according to the hymns. For example: *"You have made the whole creation shine with joy."*⁹⁷ And why did creation shine? I believe the next hymn answers that question well; it was because:

*"Heaven and earth have been united today, for Christ is born. Today God has come down to earth and man gone up to the heaven..."*⁹⁸

Here we see a theme which I believe to be of utmost importance in the question of how theology can be applied in the case of environmental ethics. This division or lack thereof between the created and uncreated (Louth 2002: 114) is a key point of departure. It is here that the Christian Faith distinguishes itself from the traditional Platonic and later Augustinian divide. Through the Incarnation the uncreated, the Logos, participates in and permeates the created while retaining His distinction. Instead of being defiled by creation, the God-Man sanctifies creation, reestablishing the natural bond which had been broken by the Fall of Adam. St. John Damascene lauds the Nativity:

*"Therefore let all creation (πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις) sing and dance for joy, for Christ has come to restore (ἀνακαλέω) it and save our souls."*⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Vespers of December 25th, at "Lord I have cried..." (following the fifth stichera); by St. Anatólios: "...πᾶσαν κτίσιν ἐφαίδρυνας...". See also: Ware 1969: 253 – 254.

⁹⁸ Lity of the Great Compline of December 25th, following the Doxology; by St. John Damascene: "Ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ, σήμερον ἠνώθησαν, τεχθέντος τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Σήμερον Θεὸς ἐπὶ γῆς παραγέγονε, καὶ ἄνθρωπος εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀναβέβηκε." See also: Ware 1969: 263.

⁹⁹ Lity of the Great Compline of December 25th, from the Aposticha; by St. John Damascene: "Χορευέτω τοῖνυν πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις καὶ σκιρτάτω· ἀνακαλέσαι γὰρ αὐτήν, παραγέγονε Χριστός, καὶ σῶσαι τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν." See also: Ware 1969: 266.

There is no doubt, as mentioned otherwise, that at the Fall something ruptured, the Divine Artists canvas was torn. As in the Parable of the Potter from Jeremiah 18, the pot was broken, yet the potter could reshape this as he wished. I believe a similar idea exists here; it is not new matter which is created but rather a restoration of matters form...a return to the prototype, a return to nature. As St. John Damascene speaks of the Fall, the temptation was in fact the inclination from that which was “according to nature” or “natural” (κατὰ φύσιν) to that which was “against nature” or “unnatural” (παρὰ φύσιν) (Section 2.2.2.). The inclination to do good is natural, while the lack thereof, according to Damascene, is the root of evil. Thus, as I interpret this, restoration is a return to the natural order (see above and Section 5.2.). As in the previous hymn¹⁰⁰, mans natural habitat is Paradise; with the danger of sounding anti-climatic, utopia ain’t nothing new, it’s just the way it was meant to be all along. The dilemma here is that the restoral of Paradise (as in the beginning) does not eliminate free-will.

This hymn is composed again by St. John Damascene and underlines the theme of unification, which I would interpret as a re-unification, i.e. similar to the theme of restoration already mentioned.

*“Uniting the world to the immaterial essences,
You make the Begetter kind towards creation...”¹⁰¹*

For unification to occur we must have several parts or parties, in this case the world/creation and the Godhead. This text is also of particular interest to us due to its expression of this paradigm shift taking place. We see the outline of, if ever so slight, an adjustment in God the Begetter’s mentality due to the Incarnation itself, i.e. the Father has turned to kindness *in, through* and *because of* the Incarnation. Does this mean that the phenomenon of the Incarnation 1) caused God to change or 2) that God

¹⁰⁰ “Heaven and earth are united today...” See above and Section 5.3.

¹⁰¹ Matins of December 25th, Ode 5 (Iambic verse), by St. John Damascene: *Κόσμον συνάπτων, ταῖς ἀύλοις οὐσίαις, Τιθεὶς προσηνῆ, τὸν Τεκόντα τῆ κτίσει.* See also Ware 1969: 276.

merely changed His mind? This is without a doubt a very difficult subject to broach. For neither philosophy nor modern science can accurately define the mysteries of the mind or mentality, much less so that of an immaterial God. The biblical canon contains many witnesses to the belief that God is unchangeable. However we have seen biblical example of the *willingness* of God to change His mind due to the supplication of righteous intercessors. The author of the hymn also speaks elsewhere of the: "...the eternal and unchanging Counsel of God..."¹⁰² and casts further light upon his own understanding of both the immutability of God as well as creation's relationship to God. At the same time, we cannot deny the power of intercession as expressed in Abraham's negotiating with God or for that matter God the Son, Christ, praying to God the Father at the Garden of Gethsemane. Precision in expressing such a thought are of utmost importance; historically many theological feuds have ensued due to nuances or definitions of words.

This next set of hymns which I would like to address, speak of creation praising the creator. This concept is found numerous times in the biblical canon as well as in other hymns of the Orthodox Church. As such these hymns continue the theology of nature's or creation's admiration and gratefulness to its origin, that is, God. The unique context of these hymns is the Incarnation, the major point of departure between Judaism and Christianity. This is not to deny the significance of Judaic creation theology, but rather to see this, from a Christian point of view, as a *continuation* and *completion* of the Theology of Creation.

Let the whole creation bless the Lord... ¹⁰³

This hymn also alludes to the trial of the Three Holy Youth in the fiery furnace as expressed in the *Irmos* of this *Ode* 8 and merely rephrases the wording of the hymn

¹⁰² St. John Damascene, *On Images*, 1 §20. Cf. PG 94, 1240 - 1241.

¹⁰³ Matins of the Nativity, Ode 8; by St. Kosmās the Melodist: "Εὐλογεῖτω ἡ κτίσις πᾶσα τὸν Κύριον, καὶ ὑπερυψούτω, εἰς πάντα τοὺς αἰῶνας" See also: Ware 1969: 280.

(see Section 4.3.3.) to include creation (ἡ κτίσις) in the imperative. This phrasing is however too exclusive to the celebration of the Nativity and a number of other hymns following the same Irmos end with this phrase. We find similar language also in the apocryphic book of Tobith 8, 5 “*Let the heavens and all of your creations bless You*” and 8, 15 “*Let Your saints praise You with all Your creations...*”. This belief in the active role of *creation* in the adoration of God (in these texts κτίσις), is in a way the positive reflection of the active role of *creation* (κτίσις) in “*groaning and travailing in pain together until now*” from Romans 8, 22. This text is not only used various times by Patriarch Bartholomew, but also by his predecessor, Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrios (1972–1991), for example in a speech given in 1989 on the occasion of the declaration of September 1st as an annual Orthodox “Day of the Environment”.

Again in the following stanzas of another *Ode* by Damascene we find how creation participates in the celebration of the Incarnation. It is as though non-human elements are able to have *premonitions* of the impending significance of this event; humans on the other hand often need to be told, to understand logically. He also refers, like St. Kosmās above, to the “*the youth of old who walked in the fire*”¹⁰⁴ and then includes creation as a participant:

All creation, like the youth, hymns unceasingly the outpouring Word...¹⁰⁵

Translating iambic verse can be challenging, since the subject can come at almost any point in the hymn. Having identified “*all creation*” (ἅπαντα κτίσις) as the subject of these stanzas, I have placed this at the beginning in the text above. The result is thus a compilation of meaning vs. a reproduction of the poetic traits of the original. The following three excerpts show yet again how creation is both drastically effected by

¹⁰⁴ Matins of December 25th, Ode 8; by St. John Damascene: “Οἱ τῆς παλαιᾶς πυρπολούμενοι νέοι...”. Cf. Ware 1969: 280.

¹⁰⁵ Matins of December 25th, Ode 8; by St. John Damascene: “Ἄληκτον ὑμνεῖ τὸν κενούμενον Λόγον. Νεανικῶς ἅπαντα σὺν τρόμῳ κτίσις...”. Cf. Ware 1969: 281.

and in turn worships the Creator because of this “*Great and paradoxal miracle...*”¹⁰⁶ of Incarnation:

*“Today all creation rejoices greatly and makes glad for Christ is born...”*¹⁰⁷

*“Christ is born...Sing to the Lord all the earth...”*¹⁰⁸

And again in the words of St. Germanós:

*“The whole creation leaps for joy for the Savior Lord is born in Bethlehem...”*¹⁰⁹

Segues to Epiphany

The final hymns I have chosen to mention in this section on the Nativity are those which guide us towards the next Despotic Feast, Theophany. By the pen of St. John Damascene, Adam cries out to Christ:

*“Glory to Your Epiphany, my Deliverer and my God!”*¹¹⁰

And in this next hymn we see this explicately stated as “we” petition Christ to lead us forward, perhaps even to bring us closer to the Divine Passion and Resurrection, the timeless cycle.

*“We reverence Your birth, Christ; show us also Your Divine Theophany.”*¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Lity of the Great Compline of December 25th, following the Doxology; by St. Germanós: “*Μέγα και παράδοξον θαῦμα, τετέλεσται σήμερον! (...)*”. Cf. Ware 1969: 264.

¹⁰⁷ Matins of December 25th, Ode 9; by St. John Damascene: “*Σήμερον πᾶσα κτίσις, ἀγάλλεται και χαίρει, ὅτι Χριστός ἐτέχθη...*”. Cf. Ware 1969: 283.

¹⁰⁸ Matins of the Nativity, Ode 1; by St. Kosmás the Melodist: “*Χριστός γεννᾶται...Ἄισατε τῷ Κυρίῳ πᾶσα ἡ γῆ...*”

¹⁰⁹ Lity of the Great Compline of December 25th, following the Doxology; by St. Germanós: “*σκριπᾶ δὲ πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις, διὰ τὸν γεννηθέντα ἐν Βηθλεέμ, Σωτήρα Κύριον...*”. Cf. Ware 1969: 264.

¹¹⁰ Lity of the Great Compline of December 25th, following the Doxology; by St. John Damascene: “*...Δόξα τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ σου, ὁ λυτρωτῆς μου και Θεός.*”. Cf. Ware 1969: 264.

¹¹¹ Royal Hours of Christmas Eve, Ninth Hour (Stichera); “*Προσκυνοῦμέν σου τὴν Γένναν Χριστέ. Δείξον ἡμῖν και τὰ θεῖά σου Θεοφάνεια.*”. Cf. Ware 1969: 246. St. Sophrónios confirms the separation of the feasts by his time with the words at the Theophany “*In the preceding feast we saw You as a child...*” but links together theologically. Cf. Ware 1969: 354.

4.2. The Forefeast and Feast of Theophany

4.2.1. The Authors

For the Theophany we find hymns and kanons by several of the authors already described above. These include a *kanon* by St. Kosmás the Melodist and a second by St. John Damascene. In addition, an author of particular significance is St. Sofrónios.

St. Sophrónius, Patriarch of Jerusalem

St. Sophrónius, of Arab origin, was born in Damascus ca. 560. Prior to being elected the Patriarch of Jerusalem in 634, he took monastic vows at the monastery of St. Theodósios, near Bethlehem. He is said to have negotiated the Umari Treaty at the time of the fall of Jerusalem to the Muslim Caliph Umar I. He reposed in the Lord on March 11, 638 in Jerusalem and his feast is celebrated on that day. He composed both theological, poetic and hymnographic texts, including hymns for the First Hour of the Nativity, hymns for the Great Blessing of the Waters at Theophany and prayer for the same service of great theological significance to the Theology of Theophany.

4.2.2. The Texts

For this feast I have organized the hymns thematically.

Baptismal Themes

The texts which I have chosen to analyze for the Feast of the Theophany contain several conceptual sub-themes. I have chosen the texts based on the topics of creation, renewal etc. as mentioned in the introduction. However, their general context as a part of the celebration of the Baptism of Christ should not be dismissed, as the language used is similar to that employed when speaking of the Orthodox

Theology of Baptism. In texts related to Holy Baptism, including the texts of the Service of Holy Baptism some of the following themes are emphasized:

- 1) washing or cleansing,
- 2) being clothed
- 3) incorruption
- 4) enlightenment
- 5) sanctification
- 6) freedom from bondage
- 7) renewal and/or healing, etc.

These concepts are repeated throughout the Service and as is seen in one of the prayers for the blessing of the water itself, almost all of these concepts are mentioned together:

*“But do You, O Master of All, declare this water to be water of redemption, water of sanctification, a cleansing of flesh and spirit, a loosing of bonds, a forgiveness of sins, an illumination of soul, a laver of regeneration, a renewal of the spirit, a gift of sonship, a garment of incorruption, a fountain of life...”*¹¹²

Reference is also made repeatedly to Christ’s Baptism in the Jordan. We must keep in mind this inter-relatedness as well as thematic similarity. Furthermore we see how these prayers express awe for the act of Creation:

*“For by Your Will have You out of nothingness brought all things into being and by Your power sustain all creation and by Your Providence direct the world. From the four elements You have formed creation and have crowned the cycle of the year with the four seasons; all the spiritual powers tremble before You; the sun praises You; the moon glorifies You...”*¹¹³

¹¹² Service of Holy Baptism - Blessing of the Waters: “*Ἀλλὰ σύ, Δέσποτα τῶν ἀπάντων, ἀνάδειξον τὸ ὕδωρ τοῦτο, ὕδωρ ἀπολυτρώσεως, ὕδωρ ἀγιασμοῦ, καθαρισμόν σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος, ἄνεσιν δεσμῶν, ἄφεσιν παραπτωμάτων, φωτισμόν ψυχῆς, λουτρὸν παλλιγενεσίας, ἀνακαινισμόν πνεύματος, υἰοθεσίας χάρισμα, ἔνδυμα ἀφθαρσίας, πηγὴν ζωῆς*”.

¹¹³ Service of Holy Baptism – Blessing of the Waters: “*Σὺ γὰρ βουλήσει ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων εἰς τὸ εἶναι παραγαγὼν τὰ σύμπαντα, τῷ σῶ κράτει συνέχεις τὴν κτίσιν, καὶ τῇ σῇ προνοίᾳ διοικεῖς τὸν κόσμον. Σὺ ἐκ τεσσάρων στοιχείων τὴν κτίσιν συναρμόσας, τέτταρσι καιροῖς τὸν κύκλον τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ ἐστεφάνωσας. Σὲ τρέμουνσι αἱ νοεραὶ πᾶσαι Δυνάμεις· σὲ ὑμνεῖ ἥλιος· σὲ δοξάζει σελήνη...*”

In this prayer the essential theological factors for an understanding of Creation are all present. In fact this prayer by the Hymnographer Sofrónios, is also used at the Great Blessing of Waters at the feast of the Theophany¹¹⁴. Here we see how the four elements are “harmonized” (see Section 2.2.3.) and the four seasons (i.e. the ordering of natural phenomena) are tied into the creation narrative and not only humanity, but also creation, the sun, the moon, etc. worship God.

Cosmic Baptism

The question has often been asked “*Why was Christ baptized?*” St. Hippolytus of Rome says of it: “*Oh, what paradoxical thing!*”¹¹⁵. According to Orthodox theology, the descent of Christ into the waters of the Jordan was not for His own sake, but rather for the sake of the world itself. Theophany celebrates not only the Baptism itself, but the Divine Manifestation (θεοφάνεια), the Descent of the Holy Spirit and the Blessing of every drop of water in the entire world. St. Hippolytus says also of this event:

*“Christ, the Maker of all, came down as the rain, and was known as a spring, and diffused Himself as a river, and was baptized in the Jordan.”*¹¹⁶

The context of this figurative statement made by St. Hippolytus is of significant relevance in the present discussion on an Orthodox Theology of Creation. The title given Christ here, “*the Maker of all*” (ὁ πάντων Δημιουργός), is given within the context of a homiletic doxology of the created world where the saint, according to my interpretation, directly ties in the Creation Narrative. He opens this sermon with the

¹¹⁴ Cf. Ware 1969: 353 – 358.

¹¹⁵ Hippolytus, De Theophania, PG 10: “ὁ παραδόξων πραγμάτων”.

¹¹⁶ Hippolytus, De Theophania, PG 10: “ὁ πάντων δημιουργός Χριστός ὡς ὑετός κατήλθε καὶ ὡς πηγὴ ἐγνώσθη καὶ ὡς ποταμὸς διεδόθη καὶ ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ἐβαπτίσθη.” Cf. also: Psalm 71:6: “*He shall come down like rain upon a fleece, and like rain-drops that fall upon the earth*” This is also the Prokeimenon before the Gospel at the Liturgy of the Annunciation of the Theotokos (March 25th). See also: Justinus: *Dialogus cum Tryphono Judaeo* and Theodoretus Cyrrihi Episcopus; *Interpretatio in Psalmos* [Tomus 2].

words: “Good, yea, very good (καλὰ λίαν), are all the works of our God and Savior”¹¹⁷, a reference to both the context of creation and the words of the Self-Same God as quoted in Genesis 1,31 “And God saw all that He had made and behold, it was very good (καλὰ λίαν)”¹¹⁸. The saint again repeats this phrase before continuing on with an honorific description of the qualities of the element water. Here the effects and in fact dependence on the element water of all creation --- plants, animals, humanity --- is laid out specifically and again tied into the Creation Narrative.

*“This is the water in communion with the Spirit, by which paradise is watered, by which the earth is enriched, by which plants grow, by which animals multiply, and to sum up the whole in a single word, by which man is begotten again and endued with life, in which also Christ was baptized, and in which the Spirit descended in the form of a dove. This is the Spirit that at the beginning “moved upon the waters”; by whom the world moves; by whom creation consists, and all things have life; who also wrought mightily in the prophets, and descended in flight upon Christ.”*¹¹⁹

Here the saint refers to the water both upon and above the earth and goes on to explain both the action of and reaction of the water itself to the Baptism of Christ. Here nature, the creation is astounded by the humility of the Creator and the separation caused by the Fall is abolished:

*“A reconciliation (διαλλαγῆ) took place of the visible with the invisible; the celestial orders were filled with joy; the diseases of earth (ἐπίγεια νοσήματα) were healed; secret things were made known; those at enmity were restored to amity.”*¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Hippolytus, De Theophania, PG 10: “Πάντα μὲν καλὰ, καὶ καλὰ λίαν τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν δημιουργήματα”.

¹¹⁸ Genesis 1, 31: “καὶ εἶδεν ὁ Θεὸς τὰ πάντα, ὅσα ἐποίησεν, καὶ ἰδοὺ καλὰ λίαν.”

¹¹⁹ Hippolytus, De Theophania, PG 10: “τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶν τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ τῷ πνεύματι κοινωνοῦν, δι’ οὗ παράδεισος ποτίζεται, δι’ οὗ ἡ γῆ πιαίνεται, δι’ οὗ φυτόν αὖξει, δι’ οὗ ζῶα τεκνογονεῖ καὶ, ἵνα πάντα συνελὼν εἶπω, δι’ οὗ ἀναγεννώμενος ζωογονεῖται ἄνθρωπος, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἐβαπτίσαστο, ἐν ᾧ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα κατήρχετο ἐν εἴδει περιστερᾶς. τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς ἐπιφερόμενον ἐπάνω τῶν ὑδάτων, δι’ οὗ κόσμος κινεῖται, δι’ οὗ κτίσις ἴσταται καὶ τὰ σύμπαντα ζωογονεῖται, τὸ ἐν προφήταις ἐνεργήσαν, τὸ ἐπὶ Χριστὸν καταπτάν.”

¹²⁰ Hippolytus, De Theophania, PG 10: “Διαλλαγῆ γέγονε τῶν ὁρατῶν πρὸς τὰ ἀόρατα, ἐχαροποιήθησαν τὰ οὐράνια τάγματα, ἰάθη τὰ ἐπίγεια νοσήματα, ἐγνώσθη τὰ ἀπόρρητα πράγματα, ἐφιλιώθη τὰ ἐχθραίνοντα.”

Baptism is “enlightenment” and in Greek today the feast is also called the Feast of Light (τῶν Φωτῶν), indicating the Epiphany of Light which came to the world. Looking at this first hymn we see the theme of cleansing reiterated:

“...to cleanse the creation from all its filth...”¹²¹

In addressing the theme of cleansing we must also look briefly at the concept of filth, dirtiness, etc. I believe here a distinction should be made between “undefiled” and “clean”. Undefiled indicates a state in which a person or object has yet to become sullied. To be in need of cleansing indicates a state of filthiness. On the one hand we focus on the *preservation* while on the other we look towards a *restoration*. What has caused mankind and creation to become dirty? What parts of the same (if any) have remained “undefiled”? Here I believe an additional distinction must be made between 1) the participation of the human race in this defilement (through sin) and 2) physical misuse of creation by mankind. It is however clear in some of the Fathers that the local environment can be polluted by sin alone¹²². If on the one hand we have pollution (μόλυνσις) of body or soul, the obvious alternative is to find some clean source, to cleanse ourselves. In the iambic verse of St. John Damascene:

*In piety and eagerness let us run
To the **undefiled** (ἄχραντος) fountains of the stream of salvation,
And let us look upon the Word who gives us to drink
From **pure waters** (ἀκηράτος) that satisfy our holy thirst:
And gently He **heals the disease of the world**.¹²³*

Here we see the theme of healing “the disease of the world” by drinking from “the stream of salvation”. The performance of the Mysteries (i.e. Sacraments) are always

¹²¹ Matins of Theophany, Ode 1; by St. John Damascene: “Ρύπον τε παντός, ἐκκαθᾶραι τὴν κτίσιν...”. Cf. Ware 1969: 368.

¹²² Cf. *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* and other various *Vitæ*.

¹²³ Matins of January 6th, Ode 5; by St. John Damascene: “Μετ’ εὐσεβείας προσδράμωμεν εὐτόνως, Πηγαῖς ἀχράντοις ρεύσεως σωτηρίου, Λόγον κατοπτεύσοντες ἐξ ἀκηράτου, Ἄντλημα προσφέροντα δίψης ἐνθέου, Κόσμου προσηνώς ἐξακεύμενον νόσον...”. Cf. Ware 1969: 373.

linked in some way to use of matter, in this case water. This water is “undefiled” and “pure”. This brings us back to the second approach in Orthodox thinking on creation and sacrament. When we celebrate any sacrament we invoke the descent of the Holy Spirit. Various modern Orthodox Theologians have shown how this is expressed in the Divine Liturgy and underlined its implications for our conceptions of matter and our earthly offerings upon the Holy Alter: “Yours of that which is Yours we offer unto You”¹²⁴. Should we come to God with polluted water, bread and wine? No! In the Rite of Baptism we ask that the one to be Enlightened receives Divine help to keep his or her garment “spotless” until the final Judgement Day. Here again we see the concept of purity. Further on in the Feast of Theophany we find the following hymn:

*“ Let the whole earthly creation clothe itself in white, For this day it is raised up from its fall from heaven. ”*¹²⁵

All of creation is clothed in white, the garment of “incorruption” (ἀφθαρσία) of Baptism and renewal and again we see this theme:

*“...Christ is at hand, who delivers the world from **corruption**.”*¹²⁶

In Christ’s Manifestation the entirety of creation is “baptized”!

*“...Who now makes haste to bear the creation down into the stream, Bringing it to a better and changeless path.”*¹²⁷

When the term “better” (ἀμείνων) is employed, it must always be seen in the light of a worse state of being. As I interpret this, this is a reference to the change which

¹²⁴ Anaphora of the Divine Liturgy: “Τὰ σὰ ἐκ τῶν σῶν σοὶ προσφέρομεν κατὰ πάντα καὶ διὰ πάντα.”

¹²⁵ Matins of January 6th, Ode 8; by St. John Damascene: “Λευχειμονεῖτω πᾶσα γῆϊνος φύσις, Ἐκπτώσεως νῦν οὐρανῶν ἐπηρμένη...” Cf. Ware 1969: 378.

¹²⁶ Matins of January 6th, Ode 6; by St. Kosmās the Melodist: “... ἰδοὺ γὰρ πάρεστι Χριστός, ἐκ φθορᾶς τὸν κόσμον λυτρούμενος”. Cf. Ware 1969: 373.

¹²⁷ Matins of January 6th, Ode 7; by St. John Damascene: “...Σὲ τὸν κράτιστον ἐμφοροῦντα τὴν κτίσιν, Ἡπειγμένως νῦν ἐν ῥοαῖς διαγράφων, Πρὸς τὴν ἄρρευστον καὶ ἀμείνονα τρίβον.” Cf. Ware 1969: 377.

occurred at the time of the Fall, and now, the new change brought about through this New Testament with not only Mankind but also with all of Creation. Without this new pact, through the Incarnation, there would be no Sacraments. But the Conception (March 25th) and Birth (December 25th) of the God-Man (Θεάνθρωπος) was only the beginning. Significant events in the life of God Incarnate needed to occur in order to lead all creation into the sacramental life. Thus Christ not only was born, but was baptized, which according to these hymns had an immense, even unfathomable effect on the history of creation. Because of this event creation was furthermore set free: “ *The creation finds itself set free.*”¹²⁸

Through the Baptism of Christ creation is healed and set free; but healed of what, set free from what? Several times we have seen the concept of “*disease*” expressed, which according to the Fathers and Mothers of the Church is identified with the passions, i.e. the inclination to live out the various vices. These passions which lead us into the vices can in part be combated through practice of the commands or virtues. However, according to the teaching of the Church, emulation of the life of Christ alone is not enough, proper practice must always be accompanied by Divine Grace. According to St. Theódoros the Acetic, asceticism and free will are not enough to win over the disease of sin for this “...*is abolished only through the Grace of God*” (Philokalia [Tome 2] 1981: 28)¹²⁹. One receives this grace through 1) the petition of the mercy of God (*Κύριε, ἐλέησον*) and 2) through submitting one’s self through participation in the Divine Mysteries. The first of these are Holy Baptism and Holy Chrism (Unction). The next is the Mystery which follows the believer through all phrases and ages of life, the Divine Eucharist.

¹²⁸ Matins of January 6th, Ode 8; by St. John Damascene: “*Ἐλευθέρα μὲν ἢ κτίσις γνωρίζεται...*”. Cf. Ware 1969: 378.

¹²⁹ Cf. also St. John Chrysóstomos who says: “*A man’s readiness and commitment are not enough if he does not enjoy help from above as well.*” Quoted in Philokalia [Tome 2] 1981: 28.

When speaking of the Mystery of Baptism, one generally refers to actual living persons, that is, catechumens to be baptized. The significance of these texts is that essentially identical language is used concerning “*all of creation*” or nature, etc.¹³⁰ According to this theology, the *event* of the Baptism of Christ, not just that He went swimming as a child or performed miracles, had a dramatic, *nature-changing* effect on the created world. And every year the Church petitions in timeless remembrance (ἀνάμνησις) that this will both continue and be renewed.

God as Farmer

A final hymn of the Theophany which particularly sparked my interest is one which speaks of God as a farmer.

*“The Farmer and Creator stands in the midst as one of all [men]...”*¹³¹

Having both studied organic agricultural and running a small, organic farm part-time, I appreciated the designation of God as a farmer. A farmer has many tasks to perform --- he or she must ready the field, plant the seeds, pluck the weeds and finally harvest the crop. It is a never ending cycle, year in and year out. This brings to mind what God said of man in the second part of the Creation Narrative (Genesis 2, 4 – 19), read on the Thursday of the first week of Great Lent. God put man in the Garden), “...to cultivate and to protect it” (Gen. 2, 15 LXX)¹³². A farmer *cares* for the farm, the earth, the plants, the animals. He or she must water the fields and ensure the storage of hay for the animals in the winter. As a shepherd the farmer must

¹³⁰ There may be a “quantitative” thematic division in these texts. Some of the hymns focus mostly on the “Light” and the “Epiphany” aspect of this feast, i.e. the “classic” interpretation. This applies to some of the hymns by St. Romanós, the Lauds by St. Germanós I, some texts by St. Anatólios and the mystical hymnographer Byzas. On the other hand, quantitatively speaking, the “paradox” of the Incarnation and “creation”, “nature”, etc. is in the least more present in the hymns of St. John Damascene and St. Kosmás, for example. However, one finds that themes cross centuries and one should not be too quick in defining this considering the plethora of hymns and patristic texts.

¹³¹ Matins of January 6th, Ode 5; by St. Kosmás the Melodist: “Γεωργός ὁ καὶ Δημιουργός, μέσος ἐστηκώς ὡς εἰς ἀπάντων...”. Cf. Ware 1969: 372.

¹³² Gen. 2, 15 (LXX) “...ἐργάζεσθαι αὐτὸν καὶ φυλάσσειν”

protect the flocks from predators and keep the weeds away lest they hinder the good plants from becoming fruitful (cf. St. Matthew 13, 22). This is much like the mother hen mentioned above protecting her chicks and the Mother of God giving her milk to Christ. I would say that these concepts, that of a parent and a child or of a caring farmer and the earth, *goes beyond a task or obligation, but is defined rather in relationship.*

Other works by St. John Damascene

In the process of my present research I have found St. John Damascene to be of significant relevance. One significant work generally attributed to him is the *Októechos* which is believed to have been organized by St. John together with St. Kosmás the Melodist. In singing (in the context of the Sacred Offices) I happened upon significant texts in this book, which I quote below. Another significant work by St. John is *A Precise Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* where he extensively addresses creation, created matter, etc. balancing between a commentary of contemporary scientific knowledge, often Platonic, and Scriptural and Patristic teaching (leaning here heavily upon St. Basil the Great). He intricately describes the classic elements of creation, that is earth, air, fire and water; also he point to the role of “providence” as well. His general understanding of providence appears to be that of Greek philosophy, but seen with a Christian eye. Here, according to Louth, he appears to base his view of Divine Providence on that of St. Nemesios (fourth century).¹³³ Due to limitations of space I merely quote two hymns of interest below, which may be dealt with in a future publication.

*“In the Holy Spirit all creation is made new and hastens back to its original condition...”*¹³⁴ and *“To the Holy Spirit belongs sovereignty, sanctification and the quickening of creation...”*¹³⁵

¹³³ Cf. Louth 2002: 141.

¹³⁴ Octoechos, 1st Tone, 2nd Antiphon of the Songs of Ascent from Sunday Matins.

4.3. Pascha: Passion of Christ – Passion of Nature

The Passion of the Christ did not go unnoticed, at least not by nature.

*At Your passion creation was changed when it saw You humbled in appearance by the lawless...*¹³⁶

This hymn is reminiscent of another concept expressed in a hymn from the Vespers of Holy Friday: *“The whole creation (πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις) was changed by fear when it saw You, O Christ, hanging on the cross...All things suffered with the Creator of all”*¹³⁷. Here this concept is expounded upon by Theokritoff as representing more than a mere literary tactic used to underline the significance of the crucifixion, but rather an event showing the literal connection between the Creator and creation. The sun itself darkened not merely as a sign, but as an act of solidarity or sympathy, in the original meaning of the word. One example of the renewal (in fact sanctification) of a physical object is that of trees; Theokritoff quotes from the Exaltation of the Cross:

*“Let all the trees of the forest rejoice, for their nature is sanctified by Christ, who planted them in the beginning and was stretched out upon a tree.”*¹³⁸

In another hymn from the Matins of Holy Saturday we see language use indicating the effect of the Passion on creation, yet with another detail added concerning the cause of the suffering, i.e. creation knew *“...that You [Christ] hold all things in unity”*¹³⁹. To illustrate this concept further, it is perhaps akin to a General dying on the battle field, the one who holds the soldiers together through a master plan is gone

¹³⁵ Octoechos, 2nd Tone, 1st Antiphon of the Songs of Ascent from Sunday Matins.

¹³⁶ Octoechos, 2nd Tone, 3rd Ode from Sunday Matins: *“Ἡ κτίσις ἐν τῷ πάθει σου, ἡλλοιοῦτο βλέπουσα, ἐν εὐτελεῖ προσχήματι, ὑπ’ ἀνόμων, μυκτηριζόμενον...”*

¹³⁷ Vespers of Great Friday, 1st Stichera at *“Lord, I have cried...”*: *“Πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις, ἡλλοιοῦτο φόβῳ, θεωροῦσά σε, ἐν σταυρῷ κρεμάμενον Χριστέ, (...) τὰ πάντα συνέπασχον, τῷ τὰ πάντα κτίσαντι...”*. Cf. Theokritoff 2009: 165.

¹³⁸ Matins of September 14th and 21st, Ode 9: *“Ἀγαλλέσθω τὰ δρυμοῦ ξύλα σύμπαντα, ἀγιασθείσης τῆς φύσεως αὐτῶν, ὑφ’ οὗ περ ἐξ ἀρχῆς, ἐφντεύθη Χριστοῦ, ταυθεντος ἐν ξύλῳ δι’ οὗ νῦν ὑψουμένου, προσκυνοῦμεν αὐτὸν καὶ μεγαλύνομεν.”* Cf. Theokritoff 2009: 173. See also: Chryssavgis 2007: 60, who quotes a similar hymn which he indicates is from Great Friday; I have however not been able to find this specific hymn in the Triódion.

¹³⁹ Quoted in Theokritoff 2009: 166.

and the companies and officers experience fear and uncertainty. The same with creation at the sight of the crucifixion, fear and uncertainty are felt by not only the Disciples of Christ but also by the entire Universe; the alternative is Chaos. Likewise Christ, in His humanity, suffers with creation. This care though also applies to Her All-Holiness (Παναγία), the Mother of God, who submitted Herself to the Divine Will and brought forth the God in the flesh for the deliverance of the world:

*“...through your childbearing you have delivered from corruption all creation which had grown old...”*¹⁴⁰

The suffering of Christ, the suffering of nature, the suffering of the Theotókos all culminated in the Divine Passion. Christ wept in the Garden of Gethsemane, creation groaned at the self-abasement of Christ and a mother wept at the foot of the Cross. But according to the teaching of the Church, this movement was mysteriously necessary *“for the life and salvation of the world”*¹⁴¹. The drama of the salvation includes the joy of Birth, the sanctification of Baptism, but also the Passion, which places the role of the Resurrection in its proper perspective.

4.3.3. Great Saturday – The “First Resurrection”

One of the things which grabbed my attention in the services of Great Saturday was the “Prophecy”-lections from Vespers, which originally was a part of the Paschal Vigil, but is now celebrated a half a day before *“in anticipation”*. This series of lections begins in fact with the Creation Narrative from Genesis 1. The series of Prophecies for this service is concluded with the *“Hymn of the Three Youth”* taken from the Septuagint version of Daniel 3, followed immediately by the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil. If there is one biblical text which expresses the participatory capability of creation in worshipping God, it is this!¹⁴². St. John Damascene also alludes to the

¹⁴⁰ Octoechos, 4th Plagal Tone, Aposticha of Small Vespers of Saturday Evening.

¹⁴¹ From the Preparation of the Holy Gifts (Proskomidi): *“...ὕπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς καὶ σωτηρίας...”*.

¹⁴² Cf. the verses from Tobith quoted in Section 4.1.3.

“Hymn of the Three Youth” in his *kanon* of the Nativity¹⁴³. I interpret this as a continuation of the experience of the Passion; creation groans at the condescension (συνκατάβασις) and the self-emptying (κένωσις)¹⁴⁴ of the Saviour and in turn creation is the first to rejoice, the first to recognize the mystery of the Resurrection.

In the celebration on Great Saturday morning, we are already celebrating the Resurrection! This resurrection theme is underlined in these services (Vespers and the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil) by the following:

- 1) *“Arise o God...”*¹⁴⁵ following the Epistle; this event in the service, accompanied by the priest joyously dowsing the faithful with bay leaves (laurel leaves) is often termed the *“First Resurrection”*¹⁴⁶.
- 2) The Gospel periscope of St. Matthew 28, 1 – 20 (which includes the resurrection narrative)
- 3) The Communion Hymn (Koinonikón) *“The Lord was awakened as one out of sleep, and He arose saving us. Hallelujah!”*¹⁴⁷
- 4) The Dismissal is begun with the words *“The One who arose from the dead, Christ our God...”*, which is otherwise only used on Sundays (Sunday being the day of the resurrection).

¹⁴³ Cf. Section 4.1. Matins of the Nativity, Ode 8. Cf. Ware 1969: 280.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Matins of the Nativity, Ode 8; by St. John Damascene. Cf. Ware 1969: 281

¹⁴⁵ Ἀνάστα ὁ Θεός...

¹⁴⁶ This name is also employed in Greece for the Paschal Vigil, the Vespers of Love (celebrated midday on Pascha Sunday) being called the *“Second Resurrection”*.

¹⁴⁷ *“Ἐξηγήρηθη ὡς ὁ ὑπνῶν Κύριος, καὶ ἀνέστη σῶζων ἡμᾶς. Ἀλληλούια.”* Cf. Psalm 78, 65.

4.4. The interrelatedness of the feasts

There are 5 areas in which these particular feasts appear to be related:

- 1) *lection*, i.e. the Creation Narrative [Gen. 1, 1 – 13];
- 2) *structure*, i.e. identical *acrostic* “καὶ σήμερον δὲ Σάββατον μέλπω μέγα” and other structural similarities;
- 3) the *hymn* “Ὅσοι εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε...”;
- 4) the *themes*, i.e. regeneration/renewal and
- 5) *authorship/period* in some cases.

1) The *lection* Genesis 1, 1 – 13 is read four times a year: 1) the Nativity 2) Theophany 3) the first Monday of Lent and 4) at the Vespers of Pascha. The continuation of the Creation Narrative (Gen. 1, 14 – 23 and Gen. 1, 24 – 2, 3) is read in the Vespers of the first Tuesday and Wednesday of Lent respectively.

2) The *structure* of the Nativity and Theophany are both very similar, but there is reason to believe that it is the feast of Theophany which preceded the Nativity. The use of this identical *acrostic* could perhaps indicate a common editor, possibly from the Iconoclast period and not unlikely from Constantinople (and the Stoudite monastery – see “Conclusions” below). We see also that the main *kanons* for **both** the Nativity as well as the Theophany are composed respectively by St. Kosmás (the first *kanon* of each) and St. John Damascene (the second *kanon* of each). The *kanon* composed by St. John for **both** feasts are written in Iambic verse.

3) The *hymn* “Ὅσοι εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε is from the Mystery of Baptism and is otherwise sung only during the Divine Liturgy (replacing thus the *Trisagion* hymn) on days of comparatively speaking major religious significance. These are: 1) the Nativity 2) Theophany 3) the Saturday of Lazarus 4) Great Saturday 5) Pascha [and

all of the Week of Renewal] and 6) the Sunday of Pentecost¹⁴⁸. Often catechumens were baptized in connection with such important feasts. The theology of Sacred Baptism emphasizes the putting on a “*garment of incorruption* (ἔνδυμα ἀφθαρσίας)”¹⁴⁹ or “*of light*” and “*regeneration* (παλιγγεννησία)” and “*renewal* (ἀνακαίνησις)”. Also the celebration of the Saturday of Lazarus emphasizes this idea with expressions like: “*Lazarus became the saving first-fruits of regeneration* (παλιγγεννησία)” and “*he shook off corruption by the Spirit of incorruption* (τῆς ἀφθαρσίας τῷ πνεύματι)”, “*freed him from corruption* (τῆς φθορᾶς ἀπήλλαξας)”¹⁵⁰. The connection between this baptismal theology and the theme of renewal, the Incarnation and creation is not lost upon us.

4) The *theme* of the regeneration, renewal and restoration of the soul, the body and creation is of significant importance in exploring sources for an Orthodox Eco-Theology. As touched upon briefly above each of these feasts underscores in some way these themes: the Nativity and the Saturday of Lazarus the Incarnation and regeneration; Theophany the blessing of the whole world (through the Blessing of the Waters) and Pascha contains again this renewal, new life, regeneration, etc. Once again I point to significance of elements 1) *lections* and 3) *hymn* from above which reinforce this theme.

5) *Authorship* and *period* (of time). As shown above in the brief introduction to the authors of these hymns (for now those of the *kanons* of the Nativity) a majority of them are the product of the Iconoclasm, i.e. they are defending what they believe to be an already present theology, but expressing it a more explicit manner. Their theology is thus in many ways an *apologia* of what they believe to be Orthodox theology vs. what they consider to heretical, *iconoclast* theology. This is not to say that

¹⁴⁸ See the Typikon of ΠΗΓΑ, pg. 120.

¹⁴⁹ See for example: The Prayer of the Catechumens in the Divine Liturgy and the Ektenies of the Mystery of Baptism.

¹⁵⁰ These hymns are from the Vespers and Compline of the Saturday of Lazarus. An English version of these texts may be found in The Lenten Triodion, by Kallistos Ware, 464 – 488.

iconoclast theology is in its essence anti-creation, anti-material etc., but rather that in opposing the *iconoclasts* a number of the *iconophiles* employed arguments, expressions praising the role of creation, material matter, etc. in the History of Salvation and the Incarnations significance in this. Since history is often written by those who triumphed, much what we are left with in studying this particular era are descriptions left by *iconophiles*, and thus a fairly biased analysis of *iconoclast* theology. It is especially here (i.e. in studying this era and area) that I believed we may find something of value in establishing a basis for an Eco-Theology, at least inasmuch as it is an expression of ancient theology (at least twelve to thirteen centuries old). It remains to be seen more fully how this has affected modern theologians.

Theokritoff, calling the three feasts Pascha, Christmas and Theophany “*the three great feasts of our salvation*”, also drawing on the aforementioned lection of the Creation Narrative concludes that: “*God’s work of salvation begins with His work of creation; and the salvation accomplished in Christ brings His work of creation to its appointed goal*” (Theokritoff 2009: 161 – 162).

CHAPTER 5

Modern Expression

In this chapter I propose to highlight some of the ‘how’s and ‘why’s expressed by modern Orthodox voices on creation and on the dynamics of both God and man’s relationship to it. As defined in Chapter 1, it is here that Ancient Theology meets Modern Ecology. The first several sections are thematic categories. I will briefly comment on themes I believe to be of specific significance as emphasized by modern Orthodox authors (remembering that a number of these sources have already been pointed out and quoted in the proceeding chapters). I look in general at these concepts drawn from a variety of modern Orthodox sources and relative to the current discourse. Finally, before briefly summarizing my findings in this chapter, I will look specifically at the manner in which the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew addresses the issue of creation and in turn ecology.

5.1. The Sanctity of Creation

The general understanding of the created world within Orthodoxy, from interpretations of the Creation Narrative to the Fathers, is from the point of view of its essential goodness. Going even further, creation is sacred. This aspect is almost seen as a given in modern Orthodox expression. The sanctity of creation is seen in its source (ἀρχή), that is, God. Put apophatically, Jaroslav Pelikan points out that to say “*nature is evil*” would be blasphemous and for this reason God is called “*the one who is good beyond the good*” (Pelikan 1974: 295). Creation was not some happenstance according to St. John Damascene as quoted by Vladimir Lossky:

“ With creation (...) it is a work of the will [of God]...”¹⁵¹

God willed creation out of nothing, out of His “creativity” and goodness; “He spoke and it came to be...” (Psalm 33,9). And as Christos Yannarás states:

“The world in its entirety and in its every detail is an effected *word* (λόγος), a personal creative act (δημιουργική ενέργεια) of God.”¹⁵²

This understanding can be tied into a number of theological debates, for example, the question of the inherent good vs. evil of creation, original sin, etc. Early source-texts which modern Orthodox theologians refer to are often the treatises against the Manicheans¹⁵³, a group which survived between the third and seventh to eighth centuries (St. John Damascene could still write *Dialogus contra Manichæos* in the eighth century). In brief, from an Orthodox point of view, Manichaeism represented a view of the created world as inherently evil. It is outside the framework of this thesis to discuss the nuances of Manichaeism, rather I wish to point out that since Patristic writings are seen as normative, a view embracing a Manichean-type understanding of nature is unconceivable. Also various Gnostic groups in the first centuries of Christianity expressed views of matter, creation or flesh as being filthy or wicked. As Theokritoff points out using the words of Elder Poemen (ca. †450): “We have not been taught to be killers of our bodies (σωματοκτόνοι), but killers of our passions (παθοκτόνοι)” (Theokritoff 2009: 100)¹⁵⁴. It was thus meet and right in my opinion for the Church to combat such misleading conceptions of the Divine and essentially good act of Creation.

¹⁵¹ St. John Damascene in: *A Precise Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, §1, 8. See also: PG 94, 813a.

¹⁵² Γιανναράς 1985/2002: 67. Cf. Yannarás 1991: 41.

¹⁵³ The writings of Augustine (including the Anti-Manichean writings) have often been met with suspicion in the Orthodox Church and his “rehabilitation” in more recent times in the East has been met with skepticism.

¹⁵⁴ Abba Poimen, §184 in PG 65 368a: “ῥπδ’. Παρέβαλεν ὁ ἀββᾶς Ἰσαὰκ τῷ ἀββᾶ Ποιμένι· καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὸν βάλλοντα μικρὸν ὕδωρ εἰς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ὡς ἔχων πρὸς αὐτὸν παρῥήσιαν, εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Πῶς τινες ἐχρήσαντο τῇ ἀποτομίᾳ, σκληραγωγῆσαντες τὸ σῶμα αὐτῶν; Καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ ἀββᾶς Ποιμήν· Ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἐδίδαχθημεν σωματοκτόνοι, ἀλλὰ παθοκτόνοι.”

Another important aspect revealing the sanctity of creation is expressed in how creation is used, or rather how nature itself plays an active role in the plan of salvation, i.e as a source of Divine revelation. Elder Aimilianós states: “*Although God is the Creator of the universe, He does not hesitate to reveal Himself by means of His own creations. (...) In His infinite humility God condescends to be revealed even by an ass!*” (Aimilianós 2009: 301)¹⁵⁵. Elder Paísios of blessed memory says that a pious person can see God in everything even in a pig!¹⁵⁶ St. Theophan the Recluse (1802 – 1894) sums up well the role of nature in revealing God. He explains how God maintains two divine worlds among us which reveal the “*emptiness of worldly life*”¹⁵⁷ and lead to a revelation of the need for conversion:

*“The two divine worlds are **visible nature** and the divine Church. (...) ... a man standing at a window and looking at a tree in the winter came to his senses. (...) Visible nature and the temple of God have not only often brought sense and sobriety to indifferent and sinful Christians, but have converted even pagans to true worship of God and devotion to Him.”*¹⁵⁸

In revealing how certain persons were converted through “*contemplation of the visible beauties of the creation of God...*” (St. Theophan 2006: 115), the Orthodox understanding of creation as sacred is again made manifest. By way of comparison, we find similar thoughts concerning the role of nature in revealing the Divine in literature of Romanticism. For example, James Fenimore Cooper in his novel of 1840 entitled *The Pathfinder* states through the protagonist Hawkeye: “[in nature]...*one is every day called upon to worship God in such a temple*” (Cooper 1903 ed.: 20)¹⁵⁹. Such forms of expression concerning nature are a reflection of a type of general or natural revelation, which from an Orthodox perspective confirmed by St. Theophan will ideally lead towards the particular revelation of the Triune God, the Incarnate Christ

¹⁵⁵ This refers to the story of the Prophet Balaam in Numbers 22, 21 – 35.

¹⁵⁶ Paísios 2009: 301. *Spiritual Councils II: Spiritual Awakening*. Translation by Holy Monastery of the Evangelist John, the Theologian.

¹⁵⁷ Make note here of the theological distinction between “κόσμος” and “φύσις”, Section 2.2.3.

¹⁵⁸ St. Theophan 2006: 114 – 115. **Bold-type** by candidate.

¹⁵⁹ Hawkeye also expresses the thought that those will comprehend more thoroughly Gods mighty hand “...*who pass our time in His very presence...*[i.e. in nature]” (Cooper 1903 ed.: 21).

Jesus and the Church. We see both in patristic and biblical writings how God is otherwise revealed through His works (Psalm 18, 1 – 3 [LXX], etc.; Romans 1, 20). But as confirmed by a variety of liturgical and theological sources quoted previously, this transcends passivity; the role of nature is both receptive (as a vessel of the Divine grace of God) as well participatory (in worshipping and revealing God together with mankind).

Chryssavgis terms the paradoxical presence of God in the world as both *“Divine Immanence and Divine Transcendence”*. The element of Divine Immanence is such *“...whereby God is recognizable in the beauty of the world...”* (Chryssavgis 2007: 71). Simultaneously, while God remains transcendent in an exhaustible “knowability” so to speak, as in the Incarnation, the Uncreated and Created are intertwined by the unfathomable will of God. Chryssavgis ties this, as also appears to be the consensus of the Hymnographers as well, into the Incarnation saying: *“By the Incarnation, creation is filled with the presence of God: ‘Everything is sanctified through his presence’...”* (Chryssavgis 2007: 98 – 99; Elder Barsanouphios¹⁶⁰). Also, according to Keselópoulos, *“...the Incarnation...marks the entrance of the Holy Spirit into matter.”* (Keselópoulos 2001: 150).

5.2. The Renewal of Creation

In the book *“The life of the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos”* by the Nuns of Holy Apostle Convent we find a section in Chapter 9 on the Nativity entitled: *“Creation is renewed and led to its former beauty”*. Here we see how the theology of the Incarnation is interpreted in terms of its significance for the *whole* world. The hymnography of the Nativity is again underlined by the sisters:

¹⁶⁰ Elder Barsanouphius (see: *Letters* 569 & 575).

"Orthodox theology of the Incarnation is clear in the Church's hymnology..."¹⁶¹

and St. John Damascene is quoted by the nuns as chanting of the Nativity in this section:

"A most glorious mystery is accomplished today: nature is renewed and God becomes man..."¹⁶²

Again we find St. John who has contributed significantly to the theme of creation and Incarnation in the hymns of both the Nativity and the Epiphany. Rev. Dr. John Chryssavgis has also pointed out this aspect, in for example a speech given to Orthodox youth, where he calls the feast of the Epiphany: "...a feast of renewal and regeneration for the entire world"¹⁶³. But these themes do not stop there, they are in fact intricately tied into the culmination of the Love of God, the Salvation of Creation. As Elder Aimilianós says:

"Heaven and Earth have entered a process of transformation which will be completed at the end of time, when all things will be definitively transformed and renewed."¹⁶⁴

However, both the hymns and modern expressions of Orthodox Theology do not stop at renewal, be it spiritual or physical renewal of created matter --- renewal understood best in its role as a part of the Divine Plan for the Salvation of Creation.

¹⁶¹ The Life of the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos 1997: 161.

¹⁶² As quoted in *The Life of the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos* 1997: 161.

¹⁶³ An Address to the Second International Youth Conference, Constantinople 2007 "Church and Environment: Theology, Spirituality and Sacraments".

¹⁶⁴ Aimilianós 2009: 343.

5.3. The Salvation of Creation

In Fr. Gerásimos Zampeli's book entitled *Christmas: The Incarnate God on the Suffering Earth of Mankind*¹⁶⁵ the salvation of creation as a whole is emphasized in Chapter 8¹⁶⁶.

Here he explains:

*"The Incarnation of Jesus Christ does not solely constitute an attempt... to raise mankind 'from earth to heaven'...His presence...constitutes a unique and shocking invitation of salvation for the entire creation (δημιουργία όλόκληρη)."*¹⁶⁷

The theme of the Salvation of Creation is continually mentioned in the hymns analyzed above as well as in the writings of modern orthodox authors. What is this Salvation of Creation and why it is necessary? The answer to this question lies partially in our understanding of the Fall. The Fall caused separation, a void between man and God, by fault of man (Yannarás 1998: 84), not by fault of nature. Mankind must in turn co-operate in restoring the original relationship with and to God. The plan of God led to the Incarnation which has come through the New Pact (Testament):

"...salvation for the whole creation had only come through the new law of Christ"
(Pelikan 1974: 214).

Theokritoff has also pointed out the concept expressed by St. Irenaeus of the equity of the creation and salvation: *"they can in fact be understood as one continuous act"* (Theokritoff 2009: 161; Ibid.: 41). Rev. Fr. Martin Staté in explaining the role of the Holy Trinity touches upon some key concepts in the present thesis:

"...the Father conceives the plan of creation (and of restoration of Creation in His Christ); the Son of God makes the Father's plan of creation (and the salvation of

¹⁶⁵ Ζαμπέλη, Πρωτ. Γερασίμου. ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΑ Ο ΣΑΡΚΩΜΕΝΟΣ ΘΕΟΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΤΑΛΑΙΠΩΡΗ ΓΗ ΤΩΝ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΩΝ, Leykada (2008).

¹⁶⁶ This chapter is entitled: "Christmas: A Prologue to a Living Ecology".

¹⁶⁷ Ζαμπέλη 2008: 53 – 54. Translation by candidate.

creation) a reality; the Holy Spirit leads God's (the Father's) plan of creation (and restoration of creation in Christ, the incarnate Logos of God) to its perfection."¹⁶⁸

In the above text we see that three key terms are used regarding creation: 1) plan of... 2) restoration of... and 3) salvation of creation. This plan of creation becomes after the Fall a plan of Salvation. And here we see specifically how the role of the Incarnation is intricately linked to these concepts. Christos Yannarás explains further:

*"[the] fall does not have merely a legal content...it is a distortion of life in which the freedom of man brings down the whole creation"*¹⁶⁹

The new creation of the Incarnation leads man back to his former state as we also saw in the hymns of the Nativity and Theophany. According to another hymn from the Theophany, Christ God has *"made a prisoner of him who bruised the heel of the generation [mankind], and so He saves the creation."*¹⁷⁰ It was man who caused the rift at the Fall; nature had not sinned but had indeed been negatively affected by the Fall. Salvation is this new and continuing act of Creation, an act of Restoration, Renewal which encompasses not only mankind but all of creation, *inasmuch* as mankind takes its rightful place as a *"Priest of Creation"*¹⁷¹ in leading all of creation in worshipping God¹⁷². To drive the point home, saying that Creation needs Salvation is not a denial of its goodness; salvation is rather transformation, a movement towards a more perfect state of being.

¹⁶⁸ Accessed August 2010: <http://www.stdemetrios.ca/goarch.org/doctrine.asp>

¹⁶⁹ Γιανναράς 1985/2002: 129. Cf. Yannarás 1998: 84.

¹⁷⁰ Matins of January 6th, Ode 4; by St. John Damascene: "Πτέρνη τε τὸν πλήττοντα παμπήδην γένος, τοῦτον καθειργνύς, ἐκσαώζει τὴν κτίσιν." Cf. Ware 1969: 371.

¹⁷¹ This concept has been underlined prolifically by His Reverence John Zizioulas, Metropolitan of Pergamum. See for example: *Ἡ Κτίση ὡς Ἐὐχαριστία* (Athens 1998) and the address *"Proprietors or Priests of Creation?"*, presented at the 2002 of "Symposium of Religion, Science, and the Environment". Quoted also by Rev. Dr. Chrysóstomos Nasses in the journal "Orthodoxia, 2003" (cf. Bibliography).

¹⁷² See above: Section 2.3.4. and the quote by St. Nikódemos of the Holy Mountain.

5.4. The Involvement of the Ecumenical Patriarchate

His All-Holiness Bartholomew I is the current Ecumenical (i.e. Universal) Patriarch and Archbishop of Constantinople, the New Rome. He was enthroned in November 1991 and both prior to His enthronement and since that time has been prolific in speeches, homilies and texts which address the issue of environmental responsibility from an Orthodox perspective. In analyzing modern voices for an Orthodox Creation Theology, the corpus of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is significant. I will now dedicate a portion of this thesis to looking at how His All-holiness uses various liturgical sources in expressing an arguably Orthodox view on environmental issues and humanity's responsibility in engaging possible misuses and abuses. In analyzing the Patriarch's methods and arguments I will attempt to define precisely how these might be used in formulating a coherent and relevant Orthodox theology of creation. Due to the restraints of this thesis I have chosen five texts which will hopefully give a representative picture of the general method and message of the Patriarch. I will address chronologically.

5.4.1. 1994: Mortal Sin

In 1994 we find some of the strongest words I to date have seen used by the Patriarch on the subject. In his Christmas Proclamation he says:

“While the plenitude of theological vision in Jesus Christ allows the highest doxological offering of the universe to the almighty, the thoughtless and abusive treatment of even the smallest material and living creation of God must be considered a mortal sin. An insult toward the natural creation is seen as – and in fact actually is – an unforgivable insult to the uncreated God.”

In general I would agree that calling abuse of creation a sin is in line with Orthodox theology. At the same time, I believe that calling it a “mortal” sin and “an unforgivable insult to the uncreated God” is somewhat of an overstatement. This would make one ask the question “What is sin?” and “What is unforgivable?”. I have not gotten access

to the Greek version of this text, and at the time of publication I had still not found out exactly which Greek word he used regarding sin. In general I can say that often the word ἁμαρτία (missing of the mark) is used, alternatively παρόπτωμα (misstep, a slipping of the foot) or ὀφείλημα (debt). It is interesting to note the use of the overlapping use of these terms, for example, in the “Our Father” of St. Luke 11 the word ἁμαρτία is used, while in the version from St. Matthew 6 the term ὀφείλημα is employed. Yes, there is a nuance here, but all in all these terms for “sin” indicate on the one hand “mistakes” (ἁμαρτία/παρόπτωμα) or something that is “owed” or that “should” be done (ὀφείλημα). This understanding does not make the sin unretractable and absolute, but recognizes the presence of “human error” so to speak, an error or mistake which can be avoided in the future through practice of the virtues. The tendency to err is caused by passion (πάθος, pl. τὰ πάθη = a Patristic term for “sin”), i.e. the tendency to become distracted, unfocused and viable to follow every whim, like a small child given free reign at a grocery store. The unknowing child may run to find candy and indulge itself, but may also discover deadly household chemicals. Thus the child may make a “deadly mistake”, a parallel in my view to the “mortal sin” in the words of the Patriarch.

This brief statement, a part of a larger text by His-Allholiness, has both its strong points and weaknesses. The strongest point made is that abuse of the environment is without question *wrong* and a *mistake*, one which may indeed have deadly (*mortal*) consequences. Bravo! But I would venture to say that according to our theology the love of God which both created and upholds the world surpasses *all* sins, save blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, the definition of which is subject to a variety of interpretations. With all due respect, I do not personally believe that the Patriarch has argued the point well enough in the case of the use of “unforgiveable”. I would thus question whether the harshness of the statement, in spite of its strength, is the result of a slip of the pen or is an attempt to overstate what previously has generally

remained understated. At the same time, there is little doubt in my mind that the general message of the speech indeed was both valid and remains valid to this day.

5.4.2. 1998: Participatory Creation

In a speech in Canada in May 1998, we find that the Patriarch thrice uses quotes from texts of the Theophany. From what I can gather, this speech was given somewhere near Niagra Falls, as the Patriarch mentions this several times as a platform to discuss the environment. These are also texts which speak of the Divines effect upon nature:

- 1) *"The waters saw You, O God, and were afraid. The Jordan was turned back"*¹⁷³
- 2) *" The Jordan flowing down turned back and raised us toward heaven"*¹⁷⁴
- 3) *"...to raise man up to the heights"*¹⁷⁵

This first text is taken from the prayer by St. Sofrónios at the Great Blessing of the Waters (cf. Ware 1969: 355) and might be seen as a thematic compilation of the Greek text of Psalm 76, 17 (LXX) *"εἶδοσάν σε ὕδατα, ὁ θεός, καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν..."* and the addition of *"...ὁ Ἰορδάνης ἐστράφη εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω"* from Psalms 113, 3. This is strikingly similar to the Prokeimenon before the Gospel of Matins of the Holy Theophany. This Prokeimenon consists of Psalms 113, 3 *"The sea saw it and fled; the Jordan was turned back"*¹⁷⁶ and Psalms 113, 5 *"What was it to you, o sea, that you fled; and to you, o Jordan, that you departed, turning back?"*¹⁷⁷. The only other place I have found this combination, i.e. of Psalms 76, 17 and Psalms 113, 3, is in St. Hippolytus' *Discourse on the Holy Theophany*, which I have dealt with above in section

¹⁷³ Psalms 76, 17 (LXX) *"εἶδοσάν σε ὕδατα, ὁ θεός, καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν..."* and the addition of Psalms 113, 3 (LXX) *"...ὁ Ἰορδάνης ἐστράφη εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω"*.

¹⁷⁴ Feast of Theophany, Υπακοῆ of the 3rd Ode: *"ὁ Ἰορδάνης κάτω ῥέων ἐστράφη, πρὸς οὐρανὸν ἀνυψῶν ἡμᾶς"*.

¹⁷⁵ 2nd prayer of the Great Blessing of the Waters: *"ἵνα ἀναβιβάσῃ πρὸς ὕψος τὸ ἀνθρώπινον"*. Also this text is very similar to the phrase from the Υπακοῆ of the 3rd Ode of the Matins of the Theophany: *"...πρὸς οὐρανὸν ἀνυψῶν ἡμᾶς."* (*"...lifting us up to heaven."*).

¹⁷⁶ Psalms 113, 3: *"ἢ θάλασσα εἶδεν καὶ ἔφυγεν ὁ Ἰορδάνης ἐστράφη εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω"*.

¹⁷⁷ Psalms 113, 5: *"τί σοί ἐστιν θάλασσα ὅτι ἔφυγες καὶ σοί Ἰορδάνη ὅτι ἀνεχώρησας εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω"*

3.2.2., either of which may have been the basis for the prayer by St. Sofrónios. The second text comes from the so-called “Sessional Hymn” or Υπακῶε of the 3rd Ode of the Feast. Here we also see how in an adjacent text the terms Theophany and Epiphany are used synonymously: *“When by Your Epiphany You enlightened all things...”*¹⁷⁸. The third text quoted seems to sum up the theological purpose of the Baptism of Christ, to raise man up, to restore him to his place from before the Fall. I interpret this as a return to the theme of restoration.

Here His All-Holiness goes on to speak of *théosis*. As mentioned in my introduction, the aspect of Salvation as partaking in Divine nature (through “*théosis*”) is an important part of an Orthodox view of care for creation; at least inasmuch as this is expressed by modern Orthodox voices on the subject. Looking at this 1998 speech as a whole, I would go so far as to say I detect yet another similarity between the Patriarch’s address of May 1998 and St. Hippolytus’ sermon; both begin as a doxology of the created world and both underline in a similar manner the element of water. This may be a coincidence, since the Patriarch was given an address in the context of proximity to Niagra Falls. This platform does not however diminish the theology which he expresses, specifically how he uses themes of the Theophany as a means to both give glory to God for creation and express its’ inherent sanctity.

5.4.3. 2006: The Incarnate Creator

There are also various examples of apparent correlations between the two feasts in the speeches of the Patriarch. One example we have is from His proclamation on the occasion of Christmas 2006¹⁷⁹ where He apparently paraphrases in Modern Greek an idea he has dwelt upon earlier, namely: *“He [Christ Incarnate] is the Creator of the whole world, Who has descended in order to raise His creation back to the place from which it*

¹⁷⁸ Feast of Theophany, Υπακῶε of the 3rd Ode: *“Ὅτε τῇ Ἐπιφανείᾳ σου ἐφώτισας τὰ σύμπαντα...”*

¹⁷⁹ From: Patriarchal Proclamation Upon the Feast of Christmas 2006.

fell".¹⁸⁰ This also appears noticeably similar to one of the hymns we have looked at above from the feast of the Nativity, i.e. "*Christ is born, that He may raise up the image that had previously fallen.*"¹⁸¹ We also find this concept used again, as quoted from the Second Prayer of the Great Blessing of the Waters from the Feast of Theophany¹⁸², which he employed in the above-mentioned speech in Toronto in 1998, this speech specifically addressing environmental issues.

There are two important things to make note of here: 1) Christ, the *Lógos*, is the Creator and 2) again we revisit the theme of *restoration* or alternatively *renewal*. According to Orthodox Theology, the *Lógos* was both present and a protagonist in Creation; He was a part of the Will of God and thus a part of the Plan of Salvation which would lead humanity towards union with God. In his Christmas proclamation from 2006 he continues by addressing the subject of restoration as *théosis*, touching upon the anthropocentric characteristic of the Incarnation. However, he once again turns several times to the all-encompassing aspects of the Incarnation by calling it "*This world-changing thing which occurred...*"¹⁸³ and again "*This upheaval which occurred...brought about immense changes to the Universe...*"¹⁸⁴.

These last phrases are reminiscent of the "*Great and paradoxal miracle...*"¹⁸⁵ of the Incarnation in the words of the Hymnographer St. Germanós (Section 4.1.3.). Creation and the Creator are united, as we have seen time and again in the hymns above.

¹⁸⁰ "Εἶναι ὁ Δημιουργὸς τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου, ὁ ὁποῖος συγκαταβαίνει διὰ τὴν ἀναβιβάσῃ τὸ πλάσμα Του ἐκεῖ ἀπὸ ὅπου ἔπεσε."

¹⁸¹ Quoted also previously in Section 4.1.3.: "Χριστὸς γεννᾶται, τὴν πρὶν πεσοῦσαν, ἀναστήσων εἰκόνα." Apolytikion of the Pre-Feast of the Nativity, sung before the Dismissal of Vespers on December 23rd, i.e. in is a part of the liturgical day of December 24th. See also: Ware 1969: 224.

¹⁸² From: The Second Prayer of the Great Blessing of the Waters: "Σήμερον ὁ Δεσπότης πρὸς τὸ βάπτισμα ἐπείγεται, ἵνα ἀναβιβάσῃ πρὸς ὕψος τὸ ἀνθρώπινον".

¹⁸³ "Τὸ κοσμοϊστορικὸν αὐτὸ γεγονός..."

¹⁸⁴ "Τὸ συνταρακτικὸν γεγονός, ὅσον ἀφανῶς καὶ ταπεινῶς ἐτελέσθη, τόσον μεγάλην ἀλλοίωσιν ἔφεραν εἰς τὸ Σύμπαν..."

¹⁸⁵ Lity of the Great Compline of December 25th, following the Doxology; by St. Germanós: "Μέγα καὶ παράδοξον θαῦμα, τετέλεσται σήμερον! (...)". Cf. Ware 1969: 264.

5.4.4. 2008: Science, Politics and Faith

Among the contributions of the Ecumenical Patriarch to the discourse on the environment, two important texts stand out in my mind. The first is a speech or lecture given before the Committee on Economics and Society of Greece¹⁸⁶ in Athens in May, 2008. The second is the result of a Synod of all of the canonical Orthodox Primate (i.e. Patriarchates and Autocephalous Churches) hosted in Constantinople in October of the same year. This meeting composed the *“Message of the Primates of the Orthodox Churches”*, an especially important text considering the broad representation of the Orthodox jurisdictions from across the globe. Both of these texts go beyond mere “spiritual” language; they address the place of both science and politics in the dialogue.

Beginning with the *Message of the Primates*, we find that paragraphs 5, 6 & 8 – 10 specifically stand out as being applicable in some way in the present discourse on Orthodoxy and ecology. §5 speaks critically of the rampant individualism of modern society, where mankind’s *“...relationship toward the rest of sacred creation is subjected to his arbitrary use or abuse of it...”*. The consequences of this way of life are *“...still more abhorrent because they are inextricably linked with the destruction of the natural environment and the entire ecosystem.”* These are first and foremost stated as observations, there is as of yet no mandate. But I do not think the Hierarchy could be accused of “mincing words”! This goes straight to the heart. In §6, for those who hoped that Orthodox Christians might get off easy, Orthodox Christians are defined as sharing *“for the contemporary crisis of this planet”* inasmuch as they have *“tolerated and indiscriminately compromised on extreme human choices, without credibly challenging these choices with the word of faith.”* This is not just an example of *active* “ecological sins”, but in fact *passive* sin. This concept of sin is formulated well in St. James 4, 17: *“For the one who knows the good which should be done and does not do it, to him it is sin”*.

¹⁸⁶ ΚΑΤΑ ΤΗΝ ΚΕΝΤΡΙΚΗΝ ΕΚΔΗΛΩΣΙΝ ΤΗΣ ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΚΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΗΣ ΕΠΙΤΡΟΠΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ

This is sin by omission, and in this case, by omitting to prevent wicked being done --- whether it is pollution of the environment or injustice. Furthermore, a definition is given of the theological “why”: *“the ontological unity between the human race and sacred creation”* reflects *“the foundation for interpretation of man’s relationship with God and the world”*.

Though the term “creation” or “environment” is not mentioned in § 8, I interpret this paragraph as being applicable due to the Patriarch’s treatment elsewhere of the relationship between poverty and environmental abuse. *“The gap between rich and poor is growing dramatically due to the financial crisis, usually the result of manic profiteering...”* This is defined further as *“lacking an anthropological dimension and sensitivity”*; in other words, it’s *inhumane*.

Paragraphs 9 and 10 deal with the Church’s relationship to the Sciences and in turn how this might be applied in environmental issues. As expressed in §9, the Church is not pursuing “ownership” of science, but in recognizing that science and technology can potentially be both used and abused, the Church promotes the use of wisdom or “other knowledge” in defining the boundaries of science as well as in “utilizing the fruits of science” (i.e. technology) un-egoistically. In my interpretation this is “conservatism” in it’s original meaning, that is to say: “Stay on the safe side”. In §10 the Primates express now explicitly what they appear to have prepared the ground for in §9. The Hierarchs define here that *“technological and economic progress should not lead to the destruction of the environment and the exhaustion of natural resources.”* And “How might this happen?”, one might ask --- through “greed”. We will see how the Patriarch uses this further below. *“Greed to satisfy material desires leads to the impoverishment of the human soul and the environment.”* It is one thing to speak of the beauty of God’s creation, yet quite another to point to the source of destruction of it. This “greed” is indeed a vice, a sin, a disease. Again one might ask “Why is this necessary --- I’m not hurting anyone?”. It is not only for the here and now (which we

neither should neglect) that we have been given creation, but also for our children and our children's children. *"We ought to remember that not only today's generation, but also future generations are entitled to have a right to the resources of nature, which the Creator has granted us."* Creation is on loan and just like little children learn at school, humanity should return what is borrowed in good condition --- a fairly simple principal.

Next I'd like to point to a few elements of the Patriarch's speech in Athens. Here, as in his address of 1994 above, he does not hold any punches or speak "mystically" of the ethics of creation:

*"In accordance with the teaching of our Church, the physical environment constitutes a portion of the Creation, thus it is also sacred. For this reason the destruction and degradation is in fact sacrilege and a sin, a transgression in contempt of the work of God."*¹⁸⁷

The Patriarch then uses God's expressed intention from Genesis 2,15 for placing Adam in the Garden as it appears in the Septuagint (LXX), "...ἐργάζεσθαι αὐτὸν καὶ φυλάσσειν", that is "...to cultivate and to **protect** it". The verb used here, both in Greek (φυλάττω) and Hebrew (שמר) means to "guard" or "protect", "watch over". In the English-speaking world of the King James Version the phrase is translated "...to dress it and to keep it" and unfortunately the common reader would most likely not grasp the active sense. The NIV translates it as "to take care of", the Norwegian "å passa" (Bibelselskapet) and the Spanish versions use "guardar" (RV) or "cuidar" (LBLA), each of these closer in meaning to the original connotation. Through this text the Patriarch expresses both a 1) right, i.e. "to cultivate", to use natural resources for the good of mankind, and also a 2) responsibility, i.e. "preservation"

¹⁸⁷ Translation by candidate: "Συμφώνως πρὸς τὴν διδασκαλίαν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας, τὸ φυσικὸν περιβάλλον ἀποτελεῖ τμημα τῆς Δημιουργίας, ἄρα εἶναι καὶ αὐτὸ ἱερόν. Διὰ τὸν λόγον αὐτὸν ἡ καταστροφή καὶ ὑποβάθμισις του συνιστᾶ πρᾶξιν ἱερόσυλον καὶ ἀμάρτημα, ὀφειλόμενον εἰς τὴν περιφρόνησιν τοῦ ἔργου τοῦ Θεοῦ."

through responsible, long-term usage vs. short-term gain. As a specific example of abuse His All-Holiness mentions the historical deforestation of the Mediterranean, an area of conservation he has promoted in among other places, Greece, for a number of years. When residing periodically at the Sacred Monastery of Vlatádon, home to the Patriarchal Center of Patristic Studies in Thessaloniki, I would often pass by a poster with Patriarch Bartholomew superimposed on a background of a Greek pine-forest with his hand in the air and the words “*Save our Forests!*”. This is one of the *visible expressions* of *Orthodox* environmental activism *within* Greece which puts a broad smile on my face.

Towards the end of his address, the Patriarch again appeals to the politicians and government to take practical measures to both study the natural phenomena and preserve the integrity of Creation. This is not just for today, but also for tomorrow --- as reiterated in the Patriarchs book of 2008 *Encountering the Mystery*:

“The natural environment -- the forest, the water, the land -- belongs not only to the present generation but also to future generations. (...) It is selfless and sacrificial love for our children that will show us the path that we must follow into the future.”¹⁸⁸

5.4.5. 2010: The Middle Road: Greed vs. Ascetism

In a more recent message given by His All-Holiness Bartholomew on the occasion of World Environment Day (June 6th, 2010), we find another and relevant example of an Orthodox manner of “doing” theology, i.e. theologizing. Orthodox theology draws on both canonized texts as well as other spiritual texts such as proverbs, hymns and anecdotes from the lives of the saints. This brief message by His All-Holiness does this very thing. Here we see how he uses Scripture quoting, at least three different passages. He also quotes St. John Chrysostom thrice, combining the passages into

¹⁸⁸ Patriarch Bartholomew 2008: 119.

one sentence saying: *“In all things, we should avoid greed and exceeding our need”*¹⁸⁹ for *‘this ultimately trains us to become crude and inhumane’*¹⁹⁰, *‘no longer allowing people to be people, but instead transforming them into beasts and demons.’*¹⁹¹. His All-Holiness then goes on to close his brief speech with an anecdote from the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers at Sinai*¹⁹². Of interest is also the fact that following the use of the story from the *Desert Fathers* the text ends and no further explanation is given. Instead of an exegesis of the meaning he introduces the story by saying that *“everyone can reasonably deduce”* its *“simple meaning”*. One could venture to say that this is one of the characteristics of Orthodox homiletics; hymns, hagiographies and anecdotes are often used as though their significance speaks for itself. This is similar in some ways to the manner in which Christ used parables; on very few occasions did He immediately follow up with an explanation. *“He who has ears, let him hear”*. For reasons of comparison in Section 6.3., I will give the story in its entirety as presented by the Patriarch:

*“Righteous George [the Ascelite] once received eight hungry Saracens¹⁹³...and he told one of them: ‘Take your bow and cross this mountain; there, you will find a herd of wild goats. Shoot one of them, whichever one you desire, but do not try to shoot another.’ The Saracen departed and, as the old man advised, shot and slaughtered one of the animals. But when he tried to shoot another, his bow immediately snapped. So he returned with the meat and related the story to his friends.”*¹⁹⁴

As reflected in the title of this section, I see this proclamation by the Patriarch as a call to follow the “Middle Road”. This middle road means taking no more than

¹⁸⁹ St. John Chrysostomos: Homily XXXVII on Genesis

¹⁹⁰ St. John Chrysostomos: Homily LXXXIII on Matthew

¹⁹¹ St. John Chrysostomos: Homily XXXIX on 1 Corinthians

¹⁹² Γεροντικὸν τοῦ Σινᾶ | *Sayings of the Desert Fathers at Sinai*

¹⁹³ “Saracen” was a term used for the nomadic people of Arabia and later became synonymous with the term “Muslim”. St. John Damascene referred to Muslims by this name, claiming that it was derived from the name “Sara” (Abrahams wife) and the word “κενός” (empty), since Sarah sent Ishmael away “empty-handed”. See: St. John Damascene, *Fountain of Knowledge, On Heresy*.

¹⁹⁴ See: Γεροντικὸν τοῦ Σινᾶ, Δημ. Τσάμη 2004: 156. This edition varies from the version translated by Benedicta Ward in *Cistercian Studies* 59, Revised Edition of 1984. The text begins: *“Τούτω τῷ δικαίῳ Γεωργίῳ παρέβαλόν ποτε ὀκτώ Σαρακηνοὶ πεινῶντες ...”*

necessary of the available resources, similar to the command to the Israelites in the desert to take no more manna than necessary for one day; the result for those who took more than needed was that the excess was destroyed by mildew, seen as a Divine punishment (cf. Exodus 16). St. John Damascene in another hymn of the Theophany defines the reason for the need for restoration because “*the nature made by God...had been overcome by the tyranny of gluttony*”.¹⁹⁵

As the Patriarch has pointed out on numerous occasions, environmental abuses are often tied into the control of natural resources, the interest in the benefit of the few vs. that of the common good and the question of wealth and poverty. In this text he goes so far as to place the load of the blame on “*greed*” (πλεονεξία) and “*unrestrained wealth*” (ἄκρατος πλουτισμός) of so-called “*developed*” nations (the word was placed in quotes in the original Greek text – thus the use of “so-called”). Greed indeed leads to excess i.e. taking more than necessary. Among the vices is found πλεονεξία, one of the passions (τὰ πάθη) of the eye of the soul (ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς τῆς ψυχῆς) according to St. John Damascene¹⁹⁶. As the Patriarch points out, this leads literally to “*inhumanity*” (ἀπανθρωπία), using the words of St. John Chrysóstomos. Thus one can conclude that inequality in use of resources is that which is “unnatural” (παρὰ φύσιν) and in turn is, as defined previously, sin. On the other hand, true humanity “*according to nature*” (κατὰ φύσιν), is that which is conscience of the need for moderation and equilibrium. If I understand the Patriarch correctly, this is in essence a question of virtue vs. vice.

Returning to the story used by the Patriarch, though not said explicitly, the general understanding is that the bow or Bowman was punished for his greed, his attempt to take more than necessary. Elder George the Ascelite was willing to direct the Saracens to a resource for food, i.e. he *shared* his knowledge for the common benefit

¹⁹⁵ Matins of January 6th, Ode 3; by St. John Damascene: “Ἐλκει πρὸς αὐτὸν τὴν θεόδητον φύσιν, γαστρὸς τυράννου, συγκεχλωμένην ὄροις.” Cf. Ware 1969: 369.

¹⁹⁶ St. John Damascene, *De virtutibus et vitiis*. Also found in: *Philokalia* (Volume 2), 1981: 335.

of the hungry Saracens, but he also gave a mandate. Here we see yet another aspect to explore, that is, the aspect of sharing. Of the virtues which include sharing are generosity and unselfishness¹⁹⁷ and one must not neglect the Early Church which “had all things in common (ἅπαντα κοινά)”¹⁹⁸.

In my interpretation here I cannot help but recall the words of St. John Chrysóstomos on the communal aspect of the natural elements.

*“For we have all things (πάντα) from Christ. Both existence itself we have through Him, and life, and breath, and light, and air, and earth. And if He were to exclude us from any one of these, we are lost and undone. (...) the very air, earth, matter (ὕλη), are the Creator’s (Δημιουργός) (...) they are common (κοινά) to you and to you fellow-servants; just as the sun is common (κοινός), the air, the earth, and all the rest. (...) But if it be made common (κοινή), both that part and all the rest have it as their own.”*¹⁹⁹

As a practical example, the saint says further that it would be unthinkable for the stomach to retain the food without distributing it to the other organs and limbs. The one is dependent on the other, yes, as also within society or in use of the elements of the created world, we are all interdependent. Here St. John uses the language of creation and nature to take a stance against what the Patriarch calls above “unrestrained wealth” and says rather that “...it belongs to the receiver to impart...”²⁰⁰. This is reminiscent of the hymn of the Un-Mercenaries and the instructions of Christ to the 70 disciples: “Freely have you received, freely give” (St. Matthew 10, 8). Creation, especially the elements necessary for survival on the Earth, is a gift from God, not

¹⁹⁷ St. John Damascene, *De virtutibus et vitiis*. Also found in: *Philokalia* (Volume 2), 1981: 334 - 335.

¹⁹⁸ Acts 2, 44.

¹⁹⁹ St. John Chrysóstomos, *Homily on 1 Corinthians 4, 1 – 5*: “Πάντα γὰρ παρὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἔχομεν· καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι δι’ αὐτοῦ ἔχομεν, καὶ τὸ ζῆν καὶ τὸ ἀναπνεῖν, καὶ τὸ φῶς καὶ τὸν ἀέρα καὶ τὴν γῆν· κὰν ἀποκλείσῃ τι τούτων, ἀπωλόμεθα καὶ διεφθάρημεν· πάροικοι γὰρ ἔσμεν καὶ παρεπίδημοι. Τὸ δὲ ἐμὸν καὶ τὸ σὸν τοῦτο ῥήματά ἐστι ψιλὰ μόνον· ἐπι δὲ πραγμάτων οὐχ ἔστηκε. Καὶ γὰρ εἰ τὴν οἰκίαν σὴν εἶναι φῆς, ῥῆμά ἐστι πρᾶγματος ἔρημον. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ ὁ ἀῆρ καὶ γῆ καὶ ὕλη τοῦ Δημιουργοῦ, καὶ σὺ δὲ αὐτὸς ὁ κατασκευάσας αὐτήν, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα δὲ πάντα. (...) Κοινὰ γὰρ ἐστὶ σὰ καὶ τοῦ συνδούλου, ὡσπερ ἥλιος κοινὸς καὶ ἀῆρ καὶ γῆ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα. (...) Ἄν δὲ κοινὴ γένηται, κακείνου καὶ πάντων ἐστὶν ἰδία.”

²⁰⁰ “τοῦ γὰρ δεχομένου, τὸ μεταδιδόναι!”

only to humanity, but to all created beings. The *common* necessity of access to each of the elements, both for mankind and non-human creatures, is emphasized above as well as in the following text:

*“God has given all things in abundance, which are much more necessary than money: the air, water, fire, the sun – all of these things. It should not be said that the ray [of sun] is enjoyed more by the rich man, less by the poor man; it should not be said that the rich man has the air in more abundance than the poor man, but all these things are equal and presented in common (κοινὰ).”*²⁰¹

I believe this theological context casts a proper light upon the words of the Patriarch, both here and elsewhere. All of humanity, rich or poor, North or South are equally entitled to enjoyment of God’s bounty.

5.5. Common Denominators

What is the essential message of the Orthodox Church to modern society? Within the speeches and texts of the Patriarch, I can identify several arguments which appear to be representative of the character of applied Orthodox Creation Theology.

- 1) A wonder of nature (and glorification of God)
 - Recognition of the Divine within nature
 - The Divines invisible effect upon natural elements

- 2) Moral approach
 - Love of neighbor
 - Justice
 - Greed vs. Self-Restraint
 - The role of Sacrifice

²⁰¹ Ad populum Antiochenum 49.43.15 “Πάντα μετὰ δαψιλείας δίδωσιν ὁ Θεὸς, τὰ πολλῶ τῶν χρημάτων ἀναγκαιότερα, οἷον τὸν ἀέρα, τὸ ὕδωρ, τὸ πῦρ, τὸν ἥλιον, ἅπαντα τὰ τοιαῦτα. Οὐκ ἔστιν εἰπεῖν ὅτι πλείονος ἀπολαύει τῆς ἀκτίνος ὁ πλούσιος, ἐλάττονος δὲ ὁ πέννης· οὐκ ἔστιν εἰπεῖν, ὅτι δαψιλέστερον ἀέρα ἀναπνέει τοῦ πένητος ὁ πλουτῶν· ἀλλὰ πάντα ἴσα καὶ κοινὰ πρόκειται.”

The first approach confirms the inherent sacred character of Creation. Within this the care or “sympathy” (συμπαθεία) of 1) God with Creation and 2) Creation with God is made clear. This word, “sympathy” means to “feel with”. As we have seen in the hymns God feels with Creation or biblically sees both needs of mankind as well the birds of the field, etc. In turn, both at the Conception, the Birth, the Baptism, the Passion and the Resurrection of the Incarnate God, Creation “sympathizes” with God. The Love of God is continuously aware of the state of “all things” (τὰ σύμπαντα), both spiritually as well as physically. And through the Incarnation and by the Holy Spirit God is within Creation, permeating “all things” with the Divine Energies. Theologically, this applies also to Divine Mysteries, the “sacramental” element which often characterizes Orthodoxy. This sense of wonder for nature and Creation is a recognition of the inexhaustible mystery of God.

The second approach is moral and includes the call to asceticism. Many misunderstand the term “asceticism”, identifying it solely with the practice of extreme fasting and at times the endurance of physical pain practiced by hermits and monastics of various religions. But the term “asceticism” (ἀσκησις) means only “practice, exercise” and is employed of almost any type of habitual practice one might perform. Thus to choose to fast twice a week is a form of asceticism, but the same might be said of the choice to not defend one’s self in a conflict. Asceticism is a choice to follow a set of rules. The nuance I would define between asceticism and moralism, is that in asceticism the rule or rhythm is often applied individually; one saint might sit on a pillar, another might live in a cave. “Morals” are on the other hand generally seen as having universal application and on some level asceticism has a moral aspect. Asceticism is the sum of practices which, at least within the theology of the Church, will lead us to embrace the virtues and the commands and avoid the vices. To love one’s neighbor is than a fulfillment of a command. The reason that one becomes aware of the necessity of fulfilling the command might have come through the asceticism of constant prayer or fasting. So the second course is choices we make,

sacrifices we might endure for the sake of our neighbor or Creation in general. One might choose to eat less or share more, to avoid gluttony or miserliness. Even though asceticism or the moral way is often a choice, according to the Theology expressed in these source-texts, the spiritual way of wonder and worship must never be ignored. They must go hand in hand, practicing virtue for the benefit of our surroundings and seeking Divine grace and revelation for the enlightenment of the mind's eye as is said in the prayer of the Gospel at the Divine Liturgy:

"...and open the eyes of our minds that we may comprehend the message of Your Gospel. Instill in us also reverence for Your blessed commandments, so that having conquered all sinful desires, we may pursue a spiritual life, thinking and doing all those things that are pleasing to You."

Wonder, contemplation and comprehension accompany the "ascetic" way of following the commands. The application of this theology to nature has unfortunately been lost on many. The Patriarch has often been met with suspicion and criticism by Orthodox laypeople and clergy, saying that he should address more "spiritual" issues:

"Unfortunately, it has been a consolidate opinion, even among the Orthodox, that the Church should deal with other issues supposed to be more 'spiritual'; as though the protection of God's creation from destruction, which is resulted by human greed, is not a spiritual issue! (...)It is characteristic that even today, the pollution and destruction of the environment is not understood as a sin, neither by the faithful nor by the clergymen."²⁰²

In spite of this, both the Patriarch and other Orthodox Theologians continue to attempt to properly communicate a relevant view-point on Creation and the natural

²⁰²From a speech given at the Academy of Athens on February 3rd, 2010. Published in Greek in the Journal Ekklesia (Church of Greece), April 2010. "Έχει ατυχώς εδραιωθεί η αντίληψις, ακόμη και μεταξύ των Ορθοδόξων, ότι η Εκκλησία δέον να ασχολήται περί άλλα θέματα, περισσότερο δηθεν πνευματικά, ως εάν η προστασία της Δημιουργίας του Θεού από την καταστροφήν, την οποίαν επιφέρει η απληστία του ανθρώπου, να μη ήτο θέμα «πνευματικόν». (...)Είναι χαρακτηριστικόν ότι ακόμη δεν θεωρείται, τόσον από τους πιστούς όσον και από τους ίδιους τους κληρικούς, η μόλυνσις και καταστροφή του περιβάλλοντος ως αμαρτία."

world, balanced between good and legitimate Orthodox Theology and practical application. This might be seen at a conference, presented at an organization or business, over a cup of coffee, in the collection of recyclables or in the organic agriculture on Mt. Athos or at the Sacred Monastery of Ormylia. The message is both to believe something and to do something! I close this chapter with the words of the Patriarch on the role of sacrifice and its wide-ranging application:

*“...we can only become aware of the impact of our attitudes and actions on other people and on the natural environment, when we are prepared sacrifice some of the things we have learned to hold most dear. Many of our efforts for peace are futile because we are unwilling to forgo established ways of wasting and wanting. We refuse to relinquish wasteful consumerism and prideful nationalism. In peacemaking, then, it is critical that we perceive the impact of our practices on other people (especially the poor) as well as on the environment. This is precisely why there cannot be peace without justice.”*²⁰³

²⁰³ From the Encyclital Letter to the WCC May 2011, on the occasion of the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation, hosted in Jamaica.



CHAPTER 6

Comparative Theologies of Creation

From the standpoint of faith within Orthodoxy, theoretical comparison of the theologies of other creeds is often seen as a superfluous undertaking. However, within the framework of this thesis, it would behoove us to demonstrate how this can be fruitfully accomplished. I have chosen three specific sources which have contributed in some way to the modern dialogue on issues relevant to nature: 1) Comments on “Western” vs. “Eastern” Eco-Theology, 2) Modern Eco-Philosophy and 3) Native American Theologies of Creation. I will attempt to tie into similarities or specific contrasts with some of the forms of expression or ways of theologizing within Orthodoxy.

6.1. Theologizing in East and West

Stated simply, up until modern times, the main difference between the East and the West in the realm of Theology has been 1) the “legitimate” sources as defined by each school respectively and 2) the inter-relatedness of these sources in applied Theology. In both traditions the Bible has a central role; likewise the traditional Churches applied the writings of the Fathers as legitimate. As time went on, both following the Schism of 1054 and the Reformation, the dynamics changed. The Byzantine Orthodox tradition has developed very little since 1054 and in the least slowly. The Roman Catholic developed both liturgically and theologically between that time and the Reformation. Following the Reformation the “West” was divided theologically into Catholics and Protestants, the Protestants now adhering primarily to the Sacred Scriptures (now without the Apocrypha) and to the writings of Luther

or Calvin, etc. Bringing these different traditions together to address both ecclesiastical and societal issues is no easy task --- everyone is speaking a different language, so to speak. There have been a number of ecumenical movements, some have succeeded more than others, for instance the World Council of Churches. The WCC has many committees and host conferences dealing with a variety of issues, among these the environment.

According to the WCC itself, their specific involvement on the environment began in 1974 through a consultation held in Bucharest in 1974 (Hallman 2006)²⁰⁴. Since then many articles have been published, meetings held resulting in a total corpus of significant size. As reiterated in the more recent publication "*Climate Change and the WCC*" (March 2010), the terminology has changed over the years but the core elements have remained the same (pg. 4). In the book "*Ecotheology: Voices from the North and South*", the WCC has collected a wide variety authors representing a number of religious and academic traditions, but many articles and papers have been published since then and to the present day. Most of the Orthodox Church is represented at the WCC, but some of the local churches have left.

One issue with the WCC from an Orthodox perspective has been the Ecclesiology of the WCC, a reason for which the Roman Catholic Church is not a member of the WCC. The second general Orthodox criticism of the WCC has been in its form of administration, and due to both this framework as well as certain specific issues of both social-political and theological nature, the Special Commission was formed in 1998 to address the issues. Some Orthodox question the legitimacy of participation in any sort of ecumenical movement and for those who participate in hearings and conferences will generally refrain from participation in non-Orthodox liturgical gatherings or services, especially when the Eucharist is celebrated (there is no

²⁰⁴ See article: "*The WCC Climate Change Programme – History, lessons and challenges*" in [Climate Change](#), Geneva, WCC (2006).

Eucharist-fellowship with non-Orthodox, as defined explicitly by the Sacred Canons of the Orthodox Church).

In a nutshell, one of the main concerns about participation in ecumenical dialogue, in this case concerning the environment, is that Orthodox Theology will be “watered down”. This concept is a parallel to the effects of globalization on cultures. By this one means, that the unique voice of Orthodoxy in any said discourse will eventually be reduced to definition through “Western” terms and concepts. Essentially, this is a question of preservation vs. acquisition. According to Orthodox Theology, the Church, Bible and Tradition as they now are, are the expression of the fullness of theology.

The major criticism of “Western” ways of doing theology, especially in the Reformed environment of the WCC, is that the end result is a “legitimate” (seen through Western eyes) conglomeration of Catholicism, Protestantism, Orthodoxy and worst of all, periodically other religions. The Orthodox Church does not mind *expressing* Her Theology, but She is hesitate to *share* theologies, both in the sense of using non-Orthodox sources as well as permitting that others employ Orthodox concepts in non-Orthodox settings. An instance of this is the often misunderstood use of exotic sounding concepts like “*théosis*”, etc (Cunningham [Ed.] 2008: 150).

On the one hand, perhaps the dialogue with the Orthodox Church has caused some theologians of the West to question the Augustinian divide. On the other hand, the individualistic, self-help aspect of some Protestant theologies taste of Pelagianism. Both of these, on the premise of Orthodox Tradition, must be avoided. According to Chryssavgis one must avoid “...the naïve optimism of which underlines the original perfection of creation (which we may label the Pelagian view), as well as the destructive pessimism which emphasizes the original corruption of creation (which we may label the Augustinian view)...” (Chryssavgis 2007: 158).

Finally, compared to Western Theology the Orthodox Church often expresses a “sacramental” Theology. As defined previously in this thesis, liturgical texts in the Orthodox Church are both generally ancient and legitimate sources of theology. At least within the WCC, liturgy is in continual flux, and thus difficult to pin down. The two concepts, Eastern vs. Western as things presently stand, are diametrically opposite. In the Orthodox understanding, theology already exists; liturgical renewal is a renewal of understanding and conceptualization, not of practice. The development of new liturgies or forms of liturgies, even thematic liturgies (for example “environmental” liturgies) is in principle a foreign concept within the Orthodox Church. That is not to say that new hymns are not written, etc. As a correction to my own context, themes can and should be used more prolifically; the Church and Tradition teaches us to use both the language of the mind and the heart. In my opinion, the additional difficulty for the West in producing its own “sacramental” Theology of Creation, is the result of the perceived divide (i.e. Augustinian, so to speak) of worship vs. theology, symbols vs. reality. I believe the main reasons the Orthodox Church, by comparison can readily accomplish this “sacramental” Theology are 1) because of the historical consistency of the liturgical sources and 2) because of the understanding that there is no difference between worship and theology, symbol and reality.

6.2. Eco-Philosophy

The development of modern deep eco-philosophy is often attributed to the Norwegian philosopher and author, Prof. Arne Næss. According to this model, its “platforms” are a-religious in nature, but the “Ultimate Premises” may have a diversity of sources for the individual supporter based on religion or personal philosophy, etc. The name Deep Ecological Movement (DEM) was according to Arne

Næss meant to show the nuance of its long-range, multifaceted ecological view vs. shallow ecology's short-range focus (Drengson 1999)²⁰⁵. According to Leer-Salvesen, "shallow" refers to a utilitarian, pragmatic understanding of ecology (such as an engineer might have); "deep" ecology on the other hand has a holistic approach including both new theory and thinking as well as practical application (Hanssen [Leer-Salvesen] 1996: 237). Næss expressed the desire to avoid either arrogantly proclaiming or negatively stamping others as either "deep" or "shallow ecologists", preferring the term "supporter" for those who supported the DEM.

In general the DEM is summarized through a series of eight tenants and a general philosophy

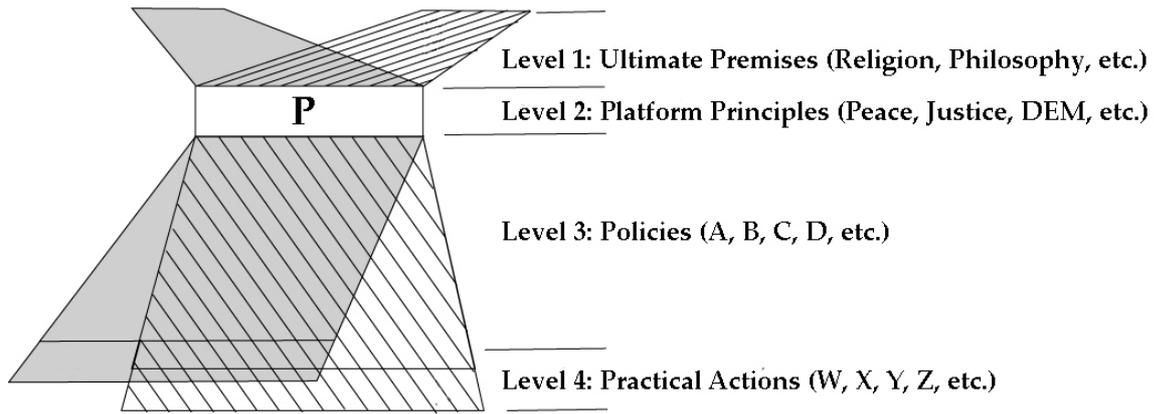
*"...of ecological harmony or equilibrium. A philosophy as a kind of sofia (or) wisdom, is openly normative, it contains both norms, rules, postulates, value priority announcements and hypotheses concerning the state of affairs in our universe."*²⁰⁶

Notice the use of the word "sofia" (σοφία); this life philosophy is for this reason also known as "ecosophy". Before looking at the tenants of eco-philosophy, I will present briefly what I see as its methodology, a system proposed by Arne Næss which may be applied to many ideological movements wishing to have both broad appeal as well as broad impact. The proposed method is mapped out in the diagram below called the "Apron Diagram":

Illustration 1: "Apron Diagram"

²⁰⁵ Accessed online April 2011: <http://www.ecospherics.net/pages/DrengEcophil.html>

²⁰⁶ Quoted in: Drengson & Inoue 1995: 8.



The platform (Level 2) is the area of consensus according to this model; for the DEM this means generally supporting its eight tenants. However, in Level 1, the theoretical and inspirational source for each individual or group supporting the platform of Peace, Justice, etc. will be diverse. The same applies to both policy (Level 3) and practical application (Level 4); these will reflect diversity since they will also be “place-specific” (Drengson 1999). Since the continued diversity of the earth on both human, cultural and biological levels is valued in itself, each action taken must be done in conjunction with the “eco-system” involved (human or non-human). This method can be seen as a criticism and an alternative to an industrial model of development, where acquisition of raw materials and production of goods supersedes the long-term and long-range interest of local humans, culture and nature. In order for this to function properly, at least according to theory, there must be a continual back and forth movement between all the levels, Level 2, the general platform, remaining constant. This movement becomes “ecological” as it considers each Level’s affect on the whole, etc. and is continually renewing its thinking and practice in pulse with a changing world.

The list below of principles of the DEM is taken from *Deep Ecology: Living as though Nature mattered* (Devall & Sessions 1985: 70):

Table 1: Platform Principals of the Deep Ecology Movement

<p>1. The well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman Life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent value). These values are independent of</p>
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the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes.
2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realizations of these values and are also values in themselves.
3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital human needs.
4. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of human population. The flourishing of nonhuman life requires such a decrease.
5. Present human interference with the nonhuman world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.
6. Policies must therefore be changed. These policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.
7. The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of inherent value) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.
8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation to directly or indirectly try to implement the necessary changes.

I will now comment on some of these DEM principles from what I believe to be an Orthodox perspective, a view which I believe could be defended using the Orthodox source material from previous chapters above.

Principle 1

The first sentence of this principle is without question in accordance with an Orthodox perspective. The Orthodox belief in the value and inherent sacredness of all of creation has been expressed time and again, as expressed above both in ancient and modern sources. The second sentence is slightly, though mostly technically, questionable. Believing in the theology of the Creation Narrative (allegorically or historically) means that God made this particular Earth to be inhabited and cared for by humanity, mankind. It is mostly a question of *purpose* of Creation and the Will of God. This does not deny the essential goodness of Creation, for God said it was “good” prior to the Creation of Adam.

Principles 2 & 3

Diversity is an expression of the creativity of the Creator, and seeing that all things the Creator made are good and were good at the beginning, it is our responsibility to in the least not diminish this diversity in any detrimental way.

Principles 4, 5 & 7

While the Orthodox Church has no universal teaching on non-abortive birth-control methods, save that of abstinence, it would be problematic to subscribe to the notion of promoting a decrease in population actively. All excesses and abuses of the natural world, the result of greed and self-interest, are to be avoided and when appropriate be combated by self-sacrifice.

Principle 6

As Rev. Dr. John Chryssavgis forwards the argument, if the root of the problem is religious, that it must be met with a religious solution:

*"The root of the problem, I feel, is religious. The response then must also be religious, even if the results will be evident in our economy and justice, in our policy and politics, in our technology and science."*²⁰⁷

Additional Comments

The changes to the above principles proposed by J. Stan Rowe²⁰⁸, exchanging the phrases "*human and inhuman*" with "*organic and inorganic*" in Principle 1 would be problematic, not in a general sense, but from the point of view within Orthodoxy that mankind is unique in being the only creature made "*in the image*" of God. The other revisions proposed are not essentially problematic, but include what I would call as an English speaker "*buzz-words*"; that is, the excessive use of ideologically loaded

²⁰⁷ Orthodoxy (April – June 1999), pg. 189.

²⁰⁸ Rowe, J. Stan. "From shallow to deep ecological philosophy." *The Trumpeter* 13 (1): 26-31, 1996.

words or phrases, such as switching out “...*flourishing of nonhuman life...*” with the superfluous “...*creative flourishing of the Earth and its multitudinous nonhuman parts, organic and inorganic...*”. The reduction of the human aspect in relation to the created world, in spite of an Orthodox understanding of the inherent value and in fact sacredness of all creation in God, can become a weakness in what Næss hoped would become a potentially universally acceptable platform. After all, these principles were composed for use by humans.

6.3. Amerindians and the Environment

According to the sources I have reviewed, both modern (including Amerindian authors) and early accounts (generally written by white men), the general understanding of religion among the nations of North America was non-dogmatic in nature. As relating to the earliest accounts this could be due to the fact that linguistic, historical, cultural and religious traditions were generally passed on verbally. From what information has been gathered up to the present time, there is no indication that Native Americans did *not* believe in one or more deities, i.e. they did in fact believe in a deity, the Great Spirit (Lakhota: “Wakan Tanka”), a Supreme Being, etc. Thus, since we are presented with expressed concepts of a divinity, we can truly call the sum of these understandings “theology”. One challenge in analyzing the Native American religious source-material, especially for tribes west of the Mississippi River, is that up until the mid- to late-1800’s the majority of these were merely Euro-American representations of Amerindian belief. Even when a source claims to be directly quoting a Native American, further research has unfortunately revealed a number of questionable if not dubious compositions by no doubt well-intended European or Euro-American scribes. We also find examples of how both the U.S. Military, the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs as well as the then immerging anthropologists used interpreters of entirely different tribe and tongue. At times they ended up recording the interpretation of mimics and sign language, the official

interpreter being ignorant of the “subjects” language. The second major challenge in analyzing this “early” material is both that there was a plethora of tribes and clans and often these were knowingly or unknowingly categorized by the government as one entity. This being the case, much of the diversity within these pre-contact and pre-reservation tribes was lost and religious concepts expressed by many post-reservation, institutionalized Indians of that time had become colored by Euro-American concepts of Christianity and religion. A prime example of this is how the prophetic movement of the “Ghost Dance”, a short-lived pacifistic religious movement outlawed by the U.S. government in 1890, had the Messiah as a part of its tenants of faith (Ohiyesa 1911: Chapter III). The followers were Amerindians, but the message was a mixture of Amerindian and Euro-American metaphor and is thus difficult to use as an example of “classic” Native American thought. The “Ghost Dance” was also one example of a Pan-Indian religious movement, movements which unwittingly normalized many otherwise diverse religious traditions in Native America.

One must not neglect modern Native American theologians on the subject. The Amerindian contribution to the dialogue on environmental ethics is important, both in its historical as well as in its modern form. The Native American voice *is* present and one must keep in mind that it is just as relevant whether the speaker is wearing a cowboy hat and boots or feathers and moccasins. In looking at an Amerindian theology of *creation*, for they were indeed Creationists on some level, I will attempt to approach this from the aspect of storytelling. Religion was traditionally taught most explicitly through narrative and when looking at pre-modern Amerindian sources I will approach the themes of creation and nature through the stories themselves.

In most anthropological records regarding Native American cultures one finds that oral storytelling was used prolifically, both to explain the origin of the world, of the

roots of the tribe as well as other natural phenomena. As the nineteenth century Lakota doctor Ohiyesa, also known by his English name Charles Eastman, wrote in his informative essay *The Soul of the Indian*:

*“Every religion has its Holy Book and ours was a mingling of history, poetry and prophecy, of precept and folklore... Upon its hoary wisdom of proverb and fable, its mystic and legendary lore thus sacredly preserved and transmitted from father to son, was based in large part our customs and philosophy.”*²⁰⁹

Ohiyesa furthermore describes this oral corpus as “*a living Book*” and “*the unwritten Scriptures*”. This is an interesting perspective, seen in the light of St. John Chrysóstomos introduction to his homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew:

*“It were indeed meet for us not at all to require the aid of the written Word, but to exhibit a life so pure, that the grace of the Spirit should be instead of books to our souls... But, since we have utterly put away from us this grace, come, let us at any rate embrace the second best course.”*²¹⁰

Ohiyesa’s expressed purpose in underlining these “*unwritten Scriptures*” was to present an apology for the validity of his own Lakota cultures oral religious and cultural traditions, as being more than mere paganism and superstition. George Tinker, a member of the Osage Nation actively involved in the theological debate, brings a valid criticism of the “*temporal advantage*”²¹¹ of historical thinking in the West (Hallman 1994: 221; Kidwell 2001: 44 – 46). As I’ve understood the argument, this would include the results of a perceived advantage of written forms of religious, philosophical and historic records, i.e. those who don’t have these are in turn underdeveloped and unable to represent themselves and their own thinking and history

²⁰⁹ In: Eastman, C. *The Soul of the Indian*: Chapter V.

²¹⁰ St. John Chrysostom: *First Homily on Matthew* §1.

²¹¹ This includes the preference given written sources based on chronological composition; even if oral tradition has ancient roots, it has often not been seen as equally valid in Western eyes until it has been written down and analyzed.

“properly”. The Cree Nation member, Stan McKay, comments on the Aboriginal preference for the spoken word:

*“Our elders say that when our thoughts and dreams are put into written form they lose life. We are a people of the oral tradition...”*²¹²

Gadamer defines tradition in its’ true sense as being “*essentially verbal in character*” (Gadamer 1998: 389, 395). The relevance at the present time is how this narrative tradition may be fruitfully compared to the narrative tradition of the Orthodox Church. The respect for the word of an “*elder*” is a point of convergence for these two traditions. In fact, I believe this is a significant point of departure between the so-called East and West; the verbal pronunciation of the phrase “*An elder once said...*” is generally met in my experience with credence and respect in both Amerindian and Eastern Christianity vs. an apparently inherent suspicion of such sources in the rational of modern Western society.

My choice to venture briefly into such an analysis has been based on a prior interest and general knowledge of Native American religions as well as the fact that the ideals of the Amerindians are often invoked by modern environmental activists. The debate surrounding the concept of the “*ecological*” Indian is still ongoing²¹³. What an Amerindian actually is or isn’t and what his or her view on the environment is or was has so many nuances on the cultural, linguistic and geographic level. It is of utmost importance not to fall into the trap of patronizing Native Americans by equating them with romanticized versions of themselves. Berket calls this tendency the “*exotic other*” (Berket 1999: 146). George Tinker expresses how the invocation of Amerindians in both religious and political circles has often reduced “*...Native American peoples to non-personhood...*” (Hallman [Tinker] 1994: 220). Unfortunately the

²¹² Hallman 1994: 213.

²¹³ See: Harkin. *Native Americans and the Environment: Perspectives on the Ecological Indian.*; also: Krech. *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History.*

“otherness” of both the past *and not least* present-day situation of the plethora of Amerindian Nations is often entirely ignored as political and theological protagonists propose theories and solutions ranging from Capitalism to “liberation theology” to Marxism. As Jensen and Rothstein point out in the Danish book *Gud – og grønne skove*²¹⁴:

*“It cannot be stated enough, that nature-peoples [i.e. Indigenous peoples] religious conceptions of nature, or rather the conceptions that we make of their conceptions, are used in a remarkably high degree by all of the movements which seek an alternative to western worlds perception of reality.”*²¹⁵

It is also my impression that this does in fact occur and that a similar phenomenon occurs when so-called eco-theologians invoke the “view” of the Orthodox Church. This is no doubt well intended, but in my view merely perpetuates misconceptions, whether in the name of Native Americans, Orthodox Christians or for that matter, Oriental Religions, etc. Even while giving an apparently balanced criticism of both the uses and misuses of indigenous sources in environmental rhetoric, Jensen and Rothstein show a striking ignorance of the Native American sources they reference. Among various misnomers, they refer the reader to the literature on “...*the religion of the prairie Indians...*” in order to find out more about Chief Seattle and his renowned, though now partially dubiously attributed speech of 1854. They have unfortunately committed a common error and reflected the general treatment of indigenous peoples by Amer-Europeans for centuries: they changed both the geographical context of Chief Seattle, who in no way could be identified as a “*plains Indian*”, and equated his religious view with that of the tribes most portrayed in Western films and literature²¹⁶. The equivalent of this would be like telling the student to read Finnish literature in order to understand more fully the mindset of the renowned

²¹⁴ “*God – and green forests*”. See Bibliography: Jensen and Rothstein 1991.

²¹⁵ Jensen and Rothstein 1991: 32 – 33.

²¹⁶ The minimum distance between these tribes is over 1,500 km. Likewise, in the same book *Gud – i grønne skove*, the authors identified Ed McGaa (Eagle Man), an Oglala Lakota from Pine Ridge, South Dakota, as a “real” Lummi Indian, which is an entirely different tribe from the Pudget Sound area.

Norwegian author and playwright Henrik Ibsen; Finnish is a language entirely unrelated to Norwegian, Danish or Swedish despite geographic proximity. An integrated understanding of *both geographical and cultural* context is in fact essential in my opinion if we are to hope to create meaning from Amerindian sources. In order to understand more fully the significance of the stories and statements of Native Americans we must be willing to envelope ourselves in the source of the linguistic apparatus used, i.e. a starting point surrounded by nature itself and expressed through reference to the created world, animals, plants and other natural phenomena. In other words, I believe that one will be significantly hindered in grasping the deeper significance of this religious world-view if one does not live close to nature.²¹⁷

This section is not a thorough analysis of a Native American world-view compared to the teachings of the Orthodox Church. I can however touch upon similar themes which I have made note of in the area previously defined as “Spiritual Ethics”, this being found in the proverbial truths expressed in the oral traditions of these two traditions. Within the monastic tradition of the Orthodox Church, many stories relate how the holy men and women (i.e. “*elders*”) interacted with the natural environment, as well as portraying acts of love toward the other creatures surrounding them and stewardship from a standpoint of faith in the Triune God.

²¹⁷ Real-life example: I once attended a post-graduate seminar on biblical exegesis. One of the themes discussed was the story of the ninety-nine sheep and the one lost sheep. An argument put forth by one of the participants was that one should focus on the perspective of the “99 sheep” and how if the Good Shepherd (Christ) left them behind they too might become lost or attacked, i.e. it was perhaps irresponsible of Christ to leave them alone for the sake of the one sheep. Both the leader of the seminar and many of the other participants found this to be a most interesting and fruitful perspective and discussed it for some time. The method of argument however, turning to discussions of predators and perceived understandings of sheep, showed complete ignorance of the nature of sheep and the role of the shepherd, concepts which would have been apparent to the contemporary listener of the parable of Christ. Sheep flock by nature, and thus the 99% will go wherever the flock goes. The 1% for various reasons gets stuck in the brush or fences, lost, etc. Predators will generally prey upon the ones that have been distanced from the flock or lag behind because of age or sickness, and thus it is the 1% which is in imminent danger and in need of immediate assistance. In my opinion, cultural and natural distance to the context of sheep-herding in the Mediterranean caused a superfluous discussion. Though well-intended and potentially fruitful, some had in my opinion “missed the point” so to speak.

Returning to theme of Amerindian storytelling, *“These stories all intend to teach human communities notions of respect for all of the created realm...”* (Kidwell 2001: 36) and it with an understanding of said stories as more than mere “myths” or “fables” that we approach them. They are rather essential elements in the philosophical and theological life-view of many Amerindians. And now we will look at one example in the lesson taught about hunting vs. over-hunting in Story of Caribou Man:

“He who obeys the requirements is given caribou, and he who disobeys is not given caribou. If he wastes much caribou he cannot be given them, because he wastes too much of his food--the good things. And now, as much as I have spoken, you will know forever how it is. For so now it is as I have said.”²¹⁸

The American anthropologist Frank Speck provides us with a valuable interpretation of one of the purposes of this particular story, i.e. that of *“...the obligations of frugality...”* (Speck 1935: 82). Also, as Calvin L. Martin proposes in his book *The Spirit of the Earth*, this story teaches that natural resources *“...will give themselves to me, as long as I avoid overexploitation...”*, the underlying ethic, according to him, being *“Nature conserves me, not I it...”* (Martin 1992: 20). The story itself, from a Native American perspective, carries with it a divine mandate.

This story is remarkably similar thematically to that related by Patriarch Bartholomew (cf. Section 5.4.5.). Though the storyline are different, the moral of both stories are the same: use moderation, follow the middle road, don't be greedy. The result of abuse gave one a broken bow and the Caribou hunter, no meat. And both stories are accepted at a word by their respective adherents. This, in a way, is where oral traditions of the “East” and the Indigenous meet; story and tales that relate truths in both simply and at times mystically.

²¹⁸ In: Speck 1935, pg. 81. This narrative was originally recorded in August, 1923, the informant being one Nabe'oco of the Naspaki of Montaganis. Also quoted in Martin 1992: 19 – 20; Ballantine 1993: 33) Variants of this story of ATIK'WAPE'O, the Caribou Man, are also found among other tribes both near and far.



CHAPTER 7

Conclusions

We come now to the end of a long road. This road started long before I began this thesis; it began with a wonder of Creation as young boy, a desire to explore, to learn. To watch the rippling of the water, feel my feet planted on God's beautiful Earth.

In this thesis I set out to explore Orthodox sources for a Theology of Creation. I asked the question: *"In what way can or does the Orthodox Theology of Creation contribute to the modern discourse on eco-theology?"* In the course of this thesis I have explored a variety of relevant sources in search of an answer to that question. The results are characterized by both consensus and diversity. In the hymnography of these three great feasts we see the contours of a Theology of Creation formulated by defenders of Sacred Icons and yet confirmed by their predecessors. As shown above, the majority of the ancient source-texts *are* the product of the Iconoclasm/Iconophilia. To these Hymnographers matter was then and is today, sacred, sanctified by the Incarnation, the Baptism, the Passion and the Resurrection of God Incarnate, Jesus Christ. There is no longer a divide between Heaven and Earth, only a perceived divide seen through the eyes of the *"the disease of the world"*. In the hymns we hear that this sickness has been healed and in the words of St. Hippolytus of the Theophany: *"those at enmity were restored to amity"*. The Incarnation and Its fullness is expressed ever more clearly in the Theophany, the Baptism of Christ, the Baptism of the World. It is the precedent for the very existence of the Church, the Mystery of Holy Baptism giving entrance to the Divine Drama of the Eucharist, Communion. All the elements of Creation have

been shown to gifts from God, to be shared; this is also the case of the Bread and Wine to be changed into the Sacred Body and Blood of Christ.

In the texts of modern Orthodox authors, I believe I have shown sufficiently how the Theology of Creation and in turn the Incarnation is applied to the modern discourse on Eco-Theology. Both Biblical and Liturgical Theology is amply applied, Hymns and Vitæ are cited prolifically. In these texts we see how themes identified in the course of analyzing the ancient sources --- Sanctity, Renewal and Salvation of Creation --- are used by and new examples revealed. Patriarch Bartholomew has been a significant example of how the Orthodox Church theologizes. I would like to believe I have defined and properly indentified the phenomenon of "Canonical" and "Spiritual" ethics; I have also expressed how these intertwine. In my interpretative method, I hope also that I have shown a balanced use of allegorical and spiritual modes together with that of the historical. In my view, the two aspects of Orthodox ethics which I have purposed in this thesis are not a division or hinder; this model is rather a reflection of the "simultaneous" of Orthodox theology. It is both flexible and compatible, while fulfilling the criteria of Truth within the framework of Orthodoxy and Orthopraxia. It is from the aspect of the life of Worship that proper practice is extracted.

In the course of this study I have formulated a summary of the sacramental aspect of an Orthodox Theology of Creation which I include here: "The Orthodox theology of creation is a part of a life-view which intricately includes the liturgical life of the Church, Her worship and practice. The concept of salvation and communion includes the entire cosmos and is not limited to a liturgical act, but envelopes and includes the entirety of creation in and through the sacramental life. The sacramental life is not replaced by spiritualism but is bound to the matter which is employed in its' celebration: the water of Holy Baptism, the Myrrh of Anointing, the Bread and

Wine for Holy Communion. These are in essence not symbols but are endowed with the very divine and active presence of the Triune God.”

Does Orthodox Theology have something to offer to a suffering world? My answer is a resounding “Yes”! For all of my appreciation of logical argument and historical studies, there is nothing that has so much caused me to believe in God as revelations of Divine Love in Creation. At the Incarnation it was in fact Creation itself that first recognized the incredible events, man had to be informed by God’s messengers, the angels. Perhaps this is the continual challenge of man, man needs to be informed logically, through persuasion; creation on the other comprehends the Divine mystery internally, inherently. Recognizing God and His hand in all and through all is the key to true “Eco-Theology”. We become fellow workers (συνεργοὶ - 1 Cor. 3, 9) with God. These ancient hymns have served as a confirmation of the All-Permeating Love of God, not only for mankind, but for all of Creation. The language of paradox is the only way to describe such mysteries. This is the language of Church. To the non-believer these expressions may be seen as interesting symbols and metaphors, to be categorized. To the believer however, they are ever present *signs* of the provision and care of God for Creation. These signs carry with them a divine command: Love God and love your neighbor.

It is thus we must worship God. As interpreted through the words of Christ, if believers are silent “*the rocks will cry out*” (Lk. 19, 40)²¹⁹. Everything worships the source of this Mysterious and Divine Economy. The Church teaches that God is revealed in His energies and through His works (τὰ ἔργα). Maintaining a way or pattern of life which includes moments to enjoy God’s physical Creation and endeavoring through the eyes of Faith to see God in all things --- our fellow man, a

²¹⁹ St. Athanasios the Great expresses also in his Homily on the Nativity: “Τίνα οὖν ἔτεκεν ἡ Παρθένος; Τὸν Δεσπότην τῆς φύσεως. Κἂν γὰρ σὺ σιωπᾷς, ἡ φύσις βοᾷ”. (“Who therefore has the Virgin brought forth? The Master of nature. And if you are quiet, nature will cry out”).

tree, the water --- will accordingly lead us into greater love of God and love of for all of Creation.

Proper relationship proffers proper relationship. Mankind must again learn to approach God and Creation in relationship, like a small child...with wonder, admiration. Let us be naïve. Let us embrace the beauties of God's Creation. Let us worship God both through the Liturgy and Divine Communion with God. And let us carry the Liturgy with us, and generously share the communion of fellowship with all of humanity and all of Creation.

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GLOSSARY of Significant Terms

Compiled from various sources including the work of Dr. Apóstolos Spanós and in part composed by the candidate for use in this thesis..

- acrostic*** A form of writing in which the first letter (i.e. the *initial*, see entry below) or (at times) word of each line, paragraph or other recurring feature spells out a word or a sentence. In Byzantine hymnography an acrostic will often indicate authorship (give the authors name), spell out a sentence (perhaps the opening line of a hymn) or merely follow the alphabet (A, B, Γ, Δ...etc.). An *acrostic* can be used in establishing the period of composition, for example: Originally a *kanon* had nine *odes*, but this was later reduced to eight (the second *ode* is now omitted). If the second letter of an *acrostic* is missing this can indicate that the relevant *kanon* at one point *did* have 9 *odes*, while alternatively, if the *acrostic* of a *kanon* with 8 *odes* is *not* missing any letters, the *kanon* was most likely composed with only 8 *odes*.
- akolouthía*** (pl. *akolouthíai*) An individual entity consisting of the sum of the hymnographic-poetic texts used by the Church in the proper part of the services to celebrate a saint on his or her feast day. This generally consists of *kathisma*, *kontakion* and *oikos*, *stichera*, *kanon* and *exaposteilarion*. In Latin use *akolouthía* is often termed "Ordo" or alternatively in English "Office".
- apolytíkion*** (pl. *apolytíkia*) Short hymn of dismissal (a *tropáron*) which is chanted at the end of *Hesperinós* (Vespers), following "God is Lord..." at *Órthros* (Matins), etc. The theme of this hymn is directly related to the feast of the day or saint being celebrated.
- Euchológion*** The Great Prayer Book containing *akolouthíai*, prayers and *rubrics* necessary to the Clergy and Hierarchy in performing the various services and offices of the Orthodox Church. This includes all the Mysteries (Sacraments), the daily offices as well as prayers for individual and specific events or objects, such as harvest time, blessings of houses, etc.

exaposteiláριon (pl. *exaposteilária*) Short hymn chanted at *Orthros* (Matins), after the *kanon* and before the *Ainoi* ("Praises"). Exaposteilaria are included in the books of *Októechos*, *Horológion* and *Menaíon*.

heirmós (pl. *heirmoí*): A model-hymn according to which an *odé* of a *kánon* is chanted. Sometimes it is placed as the first stanza of the *odé*; more often it is borrowed from another *kánon*.

Hesperinós Greek term used for the Evening Office (or alternatively Vespers), stemming from the word for "evening". This service consists of both chanted and read parts (prayers, *tropária*, hymns, psalms, stichera, and *lections*), as well as litanies.

Horológion "Book of the Hours", a liturgical book containing the *akolouthíai* and prayers for the various hours and services of the day.

Iconoclasm/

iconoclast Literally "*the breaking of Icons*" and one who defends this practice/belief in the abolishment of Sacred Images is an *iconoclast*. From the Greek term *eikonoklástes* (εἰκονοκλάστης) meaning "*one who breaks images [Icons]*"; also alternatively in Greek usage «*iconomáchos*» ("*one who makes war on Icons*"). These terms are the product of the *Iconoclasm* (Greek: Εἰκονομαχία), a theological and political conflict which lasted throughout much of the eighth and ninth centuries. May also be used as an adjective, i.e. "*iconoclast theology*" referring to the theological reflections produced by renowned *iconoclasts*.

iconodule From the Greek term *eikonódoulos* (εἰκονόδουλος) meaning "*one who serves Icons (Sacred Images)*". Used synonymously with *iconophile* and "*iconolátres*" and their antonym is *iconoclast*. These terms are the product of the *Iconoclasm* (Greek: Εἰκονομαχία).

Iconophilia/

iconophile Literally a "*love for Icons*" and one who loves icons is an *iconophile* (εἰκονοφίλης) and alternatively *iconodule* or "*iconolátres*" (sg.). These terms are the product of the *Iconoclasm* (Greek: Εἰκονομαχία) and *Iconophilia* is the antonym of *Iconoclasm*. May also be used as an

adjective, i.e. "*iconophile theology*" referring to the theological reflections produced by renowned *iconophiles*.

- initial*** First letter at the beginning of a line or paragraph, in our case hymn, prayer or other textual entity. Often this will be larger than the rest of the text and written in red ink or as in illumined manuscripts, be formed within a picture.
- kánon*** A hymn that consists of eight or nine *odes*, each one of which is patterned after a canticle from the Holy Scriptures. Each *odé* consists of several stanzas, often four, and follows a metrical and melismatic model, termed *heirmós*.
- káthisma*** (pl. *kathísmata*) Poetic text chanted at the end of a section of the Psalter in the continuous psalmody of *Órthros*. It is termed *káthisma* (literally meaning "seat") and it is generally understood to mean that the believers sit during its performance.
- kontákion*** (pl. *kontákia*) Originally *kontákion* was an entire hymn consisting of an opening stanza (the *prooímion* or *koukoúlion*), followed by a varying number of homiletic stanzas (*oikoí*) which were chanted according to the melody of the first one of them, i.e. their *heirmós*. In this thesis we will only refer to this *prooímion* as *kontákion*, followed by one *oíkos*, usually the *heirmós*.
- lection*** A reading taken from the "Prophecies" of the Holy Scriptures or the New Testament. The Prophecy-*lections* from the Old Testament do generally not include the Psalms since these are read in their entirety on a daily and/or weekly basis (though the Psalms are still considered theologically prophetic). *Lections* from the New Testament fall either into the category of Epistle or Gospel (while there are no established *lections* from the Revelation). On the eve of feasts or forefeasts (at Vespers) there is generally one or more readings from the Prophecies and a Proverb and at times a section from an Epistle and the Gospel. At the *Órthros* of Sunday one of the 12 Morning-Gospels is read and specific to the Divine Liturgy is the exclusive reading of the Epistle and the Gospel.

- Menaíon*** (pl. *menaía*) A liturgical book which contains the hymnographic-poetic texts used by the Church to celebrate the feasts and saints of the calendar year. There is one *menaíon* per month, thus making 12 tomes.
- odé*** One of the component parts of a *kánon*, consisting of its *heirmós* and the accompanying stanzas, generally four in number.
- oíkos*** (pl. *oíkoí*) Originally one of the (usually twenty-four) stanzas of a *kontákion*. After the replacement of the *kontákion* by the *kánon*, every *kontákion* was followed by one *oíkos* (in very few cases several *oíkoí*, but certainly not twenty-four).
- Októechos*** A liturgical book containing hymns organized according to the eight tones or modes of Byzantine music (thus the title). In the Byzantine rite the mode changes each week with the new mode beginning on Saturday evening at vespers. St. John Damascene and St. Kosmás the Melodist are given much of the honor for compiling and organizing the present content of the *Októechos*. The term *Októechos* is generally used today to indicate the cycle of hymns used according to the eight modes from Saturday evening to Sunday evening, i.e. an abridged version. In addition, the “Parakleteké” also contains hymns sung according to the modes for each day of the week, i.e. an unabridged edition. The hymns from these two books are usually combined in the Divine Offices with hymns from the *Menaía*, the *Triódion* or the *Pentekostárion*, according to the rules set down in the *Typikón*.
- Órthros*** Greek term for the Morning Office (or alternatively Matins) consisting of both chanted and read parts (prayers, *troparia*, hymns, psalms, *kanons*, stichera, and *lections*), as well as litanies.
- Pentekostárion*** A liturgical book containing the hymns used in the period from Easter Sunday to the first Sunday after Pentecost.
- rubric*** Instructions on the performance of a liturgical action or service. The word rubric stems from the Latin word *rubrica* meaning literally red

ochre, due to the fact that in manuscripts the great majority of all *initials*, titles, notes and instructions were written in red ochre ink.

Theotókion (pl. *theotókia*) A *tropáron* in honour of the Virgin Mary (Theotokos).

Triádikon (pl. *triádika*) A *tropáron* in honour of the Holy Trinity.

Triódion A liturgical book containing the hymns chanted in the period covering the ten weeks preceding Easter and concluding on Great Saturday.

tropáron (pl. *tropária*) A short hymn of one stanza or of a series of stanzas. Often this is written for the saint or feast of the day and the term *tropáron* and *apolytícion* are used synonymously.

Typikón A liturgical book containing instructions (*rubrics*) on content and the performance of the offices of the Byzantine Church throughout the entire year. The *typikón* is usually divided up into a general section containing *rubrics* for each of the services as well as a section containing specific instructions for specific days or periods of the ecclesiastical calendar. There are two main variants the *typikón*: 1) the *Typikón of St. Savva* (associated with Jerusalem) and 2) the *Typikón of the Great Church of Christ* (associated with Constantinople).