

Two Great Schisms

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Archbishop Anthony of Geneva: Splinter groups in Orthodoxy

An excerpt from Archbishop Anthony of Geneva taken from <http://internetsobor.org/rptcz/tcerkovnye-novosti/rptcz/arkhiepiskop-antonii-zhenevskii-raskolniceskiia-gruppy-v-pravoslavii>.

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Yes, they do exist. Some call them divisive, others - confessors. Why is this so?

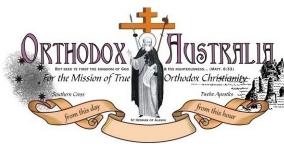
Let us first establish the facts of what is sure and certain in the Church of Christ. No one doubts that until the unhappy year 1917, the Church was UNITED. The "dissident" groups, as they are called now, were born from the Russian Revolution. The oneness of the Orthodox world was shaken at the crashing of Bolshevik guns. The largest and most prosperous of the Orthodox Churches – the Russian Church - suffered a terrible blow – through the destruction of the hierarchy, priesthood, believers, men, women and children. The Russian land was covered with the blood of martyrdom. She shone by the feat of Her martyrs.

Yet, at this great moment, when it seemed that every mouth must fall silent in the completeness and unity of the church, when everyone should have stood in fear and trembling, when the Church of Christ was to contemplate the greatness and incomprehensibility of the awe-ful, sacrificial love that the children of the Russian Church were bringing to the Heavenly Father, the first split occurred in the depths of Her.

It is sad to say, but it is necessary to mention, that in 1923, the Ecumenical Patriarch Meletios IV convened a meeting of all the local Churches on the Holy Mount Athos. He obviously knew in advance that the representatives of the confessing Russian Church could not come to the meeting from the Soviet concentration camps and prisons. They were not needed for the proposed business of the meeting!

To the honor of Orthodox world only five Churches responded to the invitation of Patriarch Meletios. Despite this, decisions were made at the proposals of the patriarch, such as regarding a married episcopate, a second marriage for widowed priests, for shortening of services and the reduction of fasting, simplification of priestly dress and the new calendar, etc.

This meeting, penetrated by the unexpected spirit of modernism, inaugurated the first and heaviest



division in Orthodoxy. This division has not been healed. To this day, it creates "schismatic" groups that protest against the modern Patriarch of Constantinople. However, the Patriarch of Constantinople has apparently forgotten about who gave birth to the existence of these groups, or thinks that others have forgotten?

Again we say that, thanks to the honor of the Orthodox Churches, not all the soul-destroying modernist reforms were put into effect. But the new calendar was. It now divides the Church into two parts: the Jerusalem, Russian, Serbian, and I think also Sinai Churches, remained with the old calendar. So most of the world did not accept the reforms of Orthodox Patriarch Meletios, but stayed true to the traditions. The remaining local Churches, by moving to the new calendar, create and produce internal divisions between new and old calendarists.

The second split in the Church has divided Her for a protracted time. This split was created by Metropolitan Sergius of Nizhny Novgorod. By "saving" the Church, as he thought blasphemously, through collusion and cooperation, and later complete submission to militant atheism in the face of Soviet power, the Metropolitan created what we now call "sergianism." He acted arbitrarily without the consent of the hierarchs of the Russian Church, who were then, almost without exception, in the Soviet camps and were willing to die for Christ and His Church!

This is how Metropolitan Sergius split the Russian Church – creating on the one hand his followers - the Moscow Patriarchate, and on the other, what the "Sergianists" now call "splinter groups", both within and outside of Russia.

Who is to blame and who will be responsible?

+ Archbishop Anthony

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