

**Orthodox Theological Society in America  
Annual Meeting  
June 4-6, 2009  
Hellenic College - Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology  
Brookline, MA**

**ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS**

**Thursday June 4**

2:00 – 2:40 p.m.      Toward a “Green” Liturgy: The Ecological Theology of  
Bartholomew I  
Christina M. Gschwandtner  
University of Scranton

In this paper I seek to present the potential of the Orthodox tradition to make an important contribution to the contemporary discussion about how to respond to the environmental crisis (and especially regarding the role religious life and theological reflection may play in such a response). I especially examine the prominent contribution to this discussion of the ecological vision of the “green” Patriarch, His Holiness Bartholomew I. In particular, I will focus on the role the liturgy plays in his addresses and proposals, suggesting that a reflection on liturgical practices and texts must be a central and crucial component of any Orthodox ecological theology. Much Western ecological theology has suggested that Eastern Orthodoxy is in a better position to respond to environmental concerns theologically, because it did not experience the Enlightenment or the Scientific Revolution (or at least did not undergo them in the same way as the West). I examine this claim critically (especially considering that this supposed advantage of the East has not usually led to better environmental practices). I suggest that Patriarch Bartholomew’s vision and especially his emphasis on the role of the liturgy may in fact also provide a way for Eastern and Western churches to come together in genuine dialogue. Furthermore, it may become an opportunity for Orthodox theology to engage critically with the contemporary world (since it has often been faulted for failing to engage the present), while not losing its grounding in the strongest aspect of its tradition: the liturgy.

2:40 – 3:20      The Antinomy of Feast and Fast: A Reassessment of Post-Communion  
Fasting in the Byzantine Liturgy  
Rev. Stelyios Muksuris  
Independent Scholar

Eucharistic celebration and fasting avowedly comprise two central actions of the Church, with roots dating back two thousand years. Certainly the value of fasting, aside from its ascetical significance and as the principal means, as St. Basil of Caesarea insists, of remedying Adam and Eve’s “violation of disobedience”, is all too frequently associated

with holy communion in a causal-relational sense, specifically, as a preparation for the reception of the Eucharist. While ample evidence from antiquity confirms that the first Christians did fast weekly and communed regularly, the relationship between fasting and the Eucharist was nowhere near as pronounced in the first century as it became after the fourth, with the emergence of monasticism and the subsequent formal establishment of ascetical fasting practices and a populated liturgical calendar. Such developments inevitably demanded a clarification of this complex relationship but also created an uneasy and oftentimes incompatible *symbiosis* of feast and fast. Post-Eucharistic abstinence, especially during Lent, conflicted with the Lord's "forbiddance" of the banquet guests to fast when their bridegroom is with them (cf. Mk 2.19-20), thus reworking the primitive Church's implicit acceptance of this delicate balance. In brief, how does one legitimize post-communion fasting and does this redefine its function and purpose, not to mention complicate or even restrict communion practices? This paper seeks to explore these critical questions by examining historical and liturgical sources that make reference to post-communion fasting and addressing how the Church assessed this antinomy in each case, providing guidelines for contemporary practice and furthering future discussion.

3:20 – 4:00 From the Liturgy of St. Basil to the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom –  
When and Why: A Preliminary Report

Rev. Alkiviadis Calivas

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology

Sometime between the 10<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> centuries the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, for some unknown reason, became the principal Eucharistic Liturgy of Constantinople replacing the formulary of St. Basil the Great, which until that time was listed first in the extant manuscripts of the Greek Euchologia. This change represents a dramatic shift in the liturgical practice of the Orthodox Church. The paper will present a possible timeline for the shift and rationales for it.

4:00 – 4:40 Towards a Liturgical Musicology for Greek Orthodoxy in America

Alexander Lingas

City Univeristy, London

Liturgical singing (*psalmodia*) is arguably an integral part of the *lex orandi* of the Orthodox Church, accompanying virtually every ritual action and providing the means by which nearly all texts are transmitted within common worship. Despite its centrality, liturgical music has lagged behind texts, icons, and rubrics as an object of systematic study and reflection, being taught mainly as a practical subject. For many years the only significant exception to this was a tradition of musical scholarship that began in pre-Revolutionary Russia and continued at a reduced level in such émigré foundations as the St Sergius Institute and St Vladimir's Seminary. Thanks, however, to recent changes including the fall of Communism and the liturgical renewal movement initiated in Greece

by the late Archbishop Christodoulos, one may now find significant efforts to reflect on the role of music in Orthodox worship also in the churches of Eastern Europe. The present paper outlines some of the ways in which a comparable 'liturgical musicology' or 'musically informed liturgiology' might contribute to ongoing discussions within the Greek Archdiocese of America regarding the limits of musical acculturation, proposals to revive the ancient practice of congregational singing, and the theological coherence of existing musico-liturgical practices. Furthermore, it will show how ignorance of patristic musical ontologies and the historical relationships observable between musical form and liturgical function have created conceptual voids that have been filled, by default, by ideas imported from such non-Orthodox sources as post-Kantian musical aesthetics.

## **Friday, June 5**

### **Session III**

#### **Reading Room, Archbishop Iakovos Library**

10:00- 10:40 Orthodoxy and Islam: An Uncommon Opportunity?

Antonios Kireopoulos

National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA

Orthodox communities have lived side-by-side with Muslim communities for centuries. Given this historical experience and today's imperatives vis-à-vis pluralism, it seems that the Orthodox would have much to contribute to Christian-Muslim dialogue, either separately or ecumenically. In the United States, this contribution has been minimal, even though, for example, Orthodox churches have had opportunity for immediate access to Christian-Muslim dialogue for some three decades through the National Council of Churches. Today there are renewed opportunities for meaningful Orthodox-Muslim engagement. The Muslim letter "A Common Word between Us and You," in essence a call to Christian-Muslim peacemaking, offers one such opportunity. Christian responses have been largely positive, and rightly so, though perhaps formulaic in their political correctness. US churches opted for more intentionality, by seeking through the NCC to respond ecumenically, ecclesially, and theologically to issues raised in the letter. The heart of the NCC response is this theological premise: we believe in a God who has been revealed as Trinity, and in whose image we were created to live in genuine relationship with one another. This response, which did have Orthodox input, resonates greatly with Orthodox sensibilities. Might the Orthodox fully embrace this work, and then build on the foundation it provides as we seek to craft our own response? What insights might we offer from historical experience that could, in a separate response, further Christian-Muslim relations overall, as well as prove constructive in situations where Orthodox-Muslim relations are especially tenuous? This paper seeks to answer such questions.

10:40-11:20 An Analysis of the Theologies Employed in the Christian Responses to *A Common Word Between Us and You*

Juliana Mecera

St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary

*A Common Word Between Us and You*, written by 138 Muslim scholars and addressed to Christian leaders throughout the world in October 2007, encourages Christian-Muslim dialogue and cooperation based upon the “common” commandments to love God and neighbor. *A Common Word* is significant for both its unprecedented unity among Muslim scholars and for its timeliness in encouraging the two largest religions to strengthen dialogue when their relations have been especially strained. Christian leaders and churches around the world have responded positively to this request for cooperation and dialogue, and 65 Christian responses have been posted online at [www.acommonword.com](http://www.acommonword.com). However, a survey of the major Christian responses reveals that many responses do not emphasize theological formulations. However, from both an Orthodox Christian and Faith & Order perspective, theology is precisely that which must be discussed as it lies at the heart of our beliefs. Those responses that do highlight theology focus on Christology, Pneumatology, Trinitarian theology, and Ecclesiology (to a lesser extent). These theologies have been identified by the responders as indispensable for Christianity and thus necessary to share in dialogue. This paper analyzes the purposes that the theological explications serve in the Christian responses. How does the author attempt to use theology to further Muslim-Christian dialogue with his/her response? What role does the author indicate that a particular theology could have in the dialogue? At the very least, the preliminary explanations of Christian theology in the responses to *A Common Word* further Muslim-Christian dialogue by beginning the process of communication.

11:20 – 12:00 A Common Vision: John Cassian and Al Ghazali’s Correlative  
Conceptions of the Spiritual Life  
Brock Bingamon  
Loyola University, Chicago

In 2007, Muslim and Christian scholars, clerics, leaders, and intellectuals signed and exchanged two momentous documents: “A Common Word Between Us and You” and “Loving God and Neighbor Together.”<sup>1</sup> These documents locate common ground between Christianity and Islam, as well as the most ancient Abrahamic faith, Judaism. In light of these significant documents, this paper explores common ground between fourth-century Desert Father John Cassian and eleventh-century Sufi mystic Al Ghazali’s visions of the spiritual life. I argue that by investigating the following parallel themes, without homogenizing these distinct faiths, Christian and Muslim scholars can engender constructive interreligious dialogue between their traditions. First, I consider Cassian and Ghazali’s visions of the spiritual life as a journey to God, as portrayed in Cassian’s *Conferences* and Ghazali’s *Revivification of the Religious Sciences*. Second, I discuss the purifying role of prayer in this spiritual pilgrimage by examining Cassian’s *Holy Fathers* and Ghazali’s *Jewels of the Qur’an*. Third, I highlight the primacy of praying scripturally-based phrases – something that, for both mystics, may result in spiritual ecstasy. I conclude that correlatively researching the spiritual practices of figures like

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<sup>1</sup> These documents can be viewed on the Common Word and Yale University websites: <http://www.acommonword.com>, and <http://www.yale.edu/faith/about-commonword.htm>.

Cassian and Ghazali can engender constructive Christian-Muslim dialogue around the shared topic of “loving God and neighbor.” By juxtaposing significant thinkers from their traditions, Christians and Muslims can seek to better understand and respect one another, to love God and neighbor more fully, and to promote the common good of all humanity.

#### **Session IV**

##### **Reading Room, Archbishop Iakovos Library**

2:00 – 2:40 p.m.      St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory of Nyssa on the Trinity’s Activity in the Created World

Sr. Nonna Verna Harrison

St. Paul School of Theology

Lewis Ayres argues that like Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa believes in appropriation. However, Ayres defines appropriation as the inseparability, not the identity, of the three persons’ activities *ad extra*. Hence the crucial difference between Augustine and the Cappadocians. While Augustine regard’s God’s essence as identical to each of God’s attributes, Basil and Gregory of Nyssa distinguish between the unknowable essence and the *energeiai*, God’s “energies” or “attributes and activities.” Anticipating Gregory Palamas by a millennium, these Cappadocians affirm that what remains unknown in the essence is knowable in God’s activities in the created world.

How is the Trinity knowable as Trinity? Basil states that God’s activity emerges from the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit and thence into creation. Correspondingly, human knowledge of God is discovered in the Holy Spirit, through the Son, to the Father. Gregory of Nyssa’s understanding of the Trinity’s activities in our world and human knowledge of the Trinity follows the same pattern. God’s attributes and activities (“names”) are central to Gregory’s spiritual life. Because the divine essence is known in the energies (Palamas), for Gregory of Nyssa the immanent Trinity is known in the economic Trinity, and so human communion with the three divine persons becomes possible. Moreover, the emergence of divine energies from the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit precisely expresses in the created world the eternal relations of origin that unite the persons: the Father begets the Son, and through the Son breathes forth the Spirit (Gregory of Nyssa).

2:40 – 3:20      Palladius of Helenopolis on John Chrysostom’s Ordinations in Asia  
Demetri Katos  
Hellenic College

John Chrysostom ordained and deposed several bishops in the province of Asia. His opponents decried his extra-jurisdictional actions and cited them as justification for his removal from office. Palladius of Helenopolis, who was directly involved in the affair, discussed the matter extensively in his *Dialogue on the Life of St. John Chrysostom* (chapters 14-16), and argued that John had done nothing wrong. Although scholars have debated the historical merits of his treatment, they have ignored the fundamental rhetorical elements that reveal Palladius’ personal assessment of the strength of his case

in John's defense. This paper offers a rhetorical analysis of Palladius' treatment of the Asian depositions, by examining it for the first time through the lens of late-antique forensic rhetoric and *stasis* theory. It argues that forensic rhetoric makes clear that chapters 14-16 of the *Dialogue* must not be treated as a historical narrative, but as an argument made in defense of a client. It employs *stasis* theory to demonstrate that it conforms to the rules of *conjecture* (*stochasmos*), a form of argument that denies any illegal act occurred. It then argues that despite the use of this form, *stasis* theory also suggests that Palladius recognized the issue was rather one of *counterplea* (*antilepsis*), in which one admits that an act occurred that might reasonably be deemed illegal. In conclusion, although Palladius sincerely believed that John was innocent of wrong doing, beneath his rhetorical bluster he also recognized that his actions were not self-evidently legal.

## **Session V**

### **Reading Room, Archbishop Iakovos Library**

3:45 – 4:20    The Political Influence of Prince Petru Rares on the  
Sixteenth Century Frescoes at Humor Monastery - Romania  
Adriana Bara  
Université de Montréal

In 1993 for the uniqueness of their exterior frescoes, five monasteries from northern Moldavia (Romania) have been classified as UNESCO patrimony. The monasteries have been erected during the reign of prince Petru Rares of Moldavia (1527-38 and 1541-46). The frescoes are a mixture of canonical and apocryphal early Christian literature and Rares' religious and political views. During Rares' reign there were two perceived threats to his country: a political one represented by the Ottoman attacks, and a religious one represented by Protestant Reformation. Rares' political message against the Ottoman Turks found its place in the Humor frescoes. Thus, on the exterior wall there is depicted the fall of Constantinople in a Moldavian style. The battle for Constantinople is part of a larger fresco which represents the Akathistos Hymn of Mother of God and the victors are not the Ottomans but the Byzantines. The iconographers adapted the theme of the siege and of the whole Akathistos Hymn to the contemporary events in their country and changed it into a national invocation: "in the same way as the Virgin helped the Byzantines to defy the enemies, she will help the Moldavians to resist the Ottoman attacks." Thus, the fresco is not only the image of the "victorious" Constantinople, but of the "victorious" Moldavia also. In my presentation I want to show the political influence of prince Rares on the Humor's Frescoes.

4:20 – 5:00    Some Remarks on Kontoglou  
John Yiannias  
University of Virginia

Fotis Kontoglou (1896-1965) was an artist, writer, and “agiographos” whose work and combative personality exerted unequalled influence on the evolution of Greek ecclesiastical art in the twentieth century. A native of the coastal city of Aivalí (Kydonías) in Asia Minor, he lived through, and resolved creatively, the cultural conflicts to which the Greek nation was subjected by the “Asia Minor catastrophe” of 1922 and the tide of refugees that it created, of whom he was one. Kontoglou single-handedly overcame daunting odds to restore the quasi-canonical status of the Byzantine aesthetic tradition in Greek Orthodoxy. The mere fact of his success is remarkable, but no less interesting is the genesis of the ideas informing his project. His early life in “Rum,” his displacement to “Hellas,” and his exposure to “Frankish” culture and ideologies during an early sojourn in Spain and France all contributed to the fashioning of his mature outlook and may also help to explain why he succeeded in creating a supra-individual religious imagery when his European counterparts did not. This talk will seek to answer this final question.

**Saturday, June 6**

**Session VI**

**Reading Room, Archbishop Iakovos Library**

10:00 – 10:40 a.m. Looking Toward Unity: How the Russian Church Abroad Viewed the Moscow Patriarchate, 1927-2007

Alexander Psarev

Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary

In 1920 the Russian refugee bishops established the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCORA), also known as the Russian Church Abroad. In 1927 this church renounced subordination to the Church in Russia (also known as the Moscow Patriarchate). On May 17, 2007, representatives of both churches concelebrated. Divine Liturgy in the Moscow Christ Savior Cathedral. The process of reconciliation between the Moscow Patriarchate and the ROCORA became a rare example of true ecumenical dialogue, helping the two estranged branches identify common ontological grounds. The author sketches the historical antecedents of the ROCORA's relations with the Moscow Patriarchate and analyzes the ROCORA's conciliar pronouncements and other representative documents from the period of estrangement. This paper demonstrates that the ROCORA ecclesiology of the studied period had been struggling to avoid the perils of isolationism. The history of the Orthodox Church teaches us that ecclesiastical divisions tend to be most persistent when one of the estranged factions believes that the separation is predicated on doctrine. Despite the ROCORA's occasional reference to doctrinal reasons underlying the estrangement, this division was in fact a result of political considerations and therefore was easier to overcome than, for instance, in the case of the Old Believers.

10:40- 11:20 The Matrix and Our Captivity

Daniel P. Buxhoeveden

University of South Carolina

It is modern Western science that tells us humans arose from and are immersed within the matrix of the universe; we are the stuff of the cosmos. This serves to define our limitations and set our boundaries. Senses and human reason represent filters and restrictions; not open ended conduits to *reality*. Transcendent knowledge gives meaning to the matrix and is the only way to see it from the outside. Knowledge obtained from within, no matter its sophistication, begins and ends there. The attempt to subsume all knowledge into the realm of the matrix is a knowledge imperialism that falsely equates information with understanding. The Orthodox emphasis on apothatic theology is a reminder that human knowing is limited within the discussion of ultimate things, and is a necessary balance with cataphatic theology. In order for there to be dialogue between religion and science, and in particular with Orthodoxy, science should derive a form of apothatic science to help restrain the penchant towards absolutism in the area of knowledge, what British philosopher Mary Midgley refers to as the myth that science is “Omnicompetent in all areas”. The abuse of science beyond its limitations transforms a powerful method of knowledge into a pseudo-religion. We cannot engage with a form of science that makes metaphysical assumptions so universal and dogmatic that they become a religion unto themselves, because then we have an interfaith conflict.