

The Calendar Issue in the Orthodox Church

Introduction

The calendar issue of the Orthodox Church is one of great complexity, as it concerns astronomy, mathematics, Church and world history, canon law, ecclesiology, ecumenism, modernism, traditionalism, and conservatism. Consequently, the goal of this paper is not to examine all the details of this issue, which have engaged the Church for over almost 2,000 years, but rather to provide an introduction to its complications and need for resolution.

Foundation of Calendars

The Christian calendars have as their basis rhythmical cycles established by God Himself. Genesis recounts how God established time, separating the light, which he called Day, from the darkness, which he called Night. Then on the fourth day, God created lights in the firmament, the sun, the moon, and the stars to be “for signs and seasons, and for days and years.”¹ In this manner an intimate bond came to exist between time and astronomy.

The cyclically ordered movement of the universe led to the definition of units of time such as days, months, and years. One day came to be known as the twenty-four hour period during which the earth completes one rotation on its axis. One month was defined as the unit of time corresponding approximately to one cycle of the moon’s phases, or about thirty days or four weeks. And the time during which the earth completes a single revolution around the sun became known as one year.²

However, the period of time lasting seven days, one week, is founded solely on the Biblical narrative of the creation of the cosmos, since there are no astronomical occurrences from which to determine its existence. Thus, the God-established week was especially revered by Judeo-Christian peoples and has continued uninterrupted up to the present time.³

Orthodox Christian Festal Calendar

The Festal Calendars in the Orthodox Church owe their existence to the Feast of Pascha, the foremost and also earliest feast of the Church. So in order to understand the development of the Church’s calendar, one must look first at the Feast of Pascha. The Church stipulates that Pascha is to be held on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox. Soon we will look at what events led the Church to arrive at this formula, but for now let us note the cosmic significance of this day.

¹ Genesis 1:14.

² “year.” American Heritage College Dictionary.

³ Ossorguine.

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The vernal equinox not only marks the beginning of spring for us in the northern hemisphere, but it is also the time when the sun's direct rays hit the equator, and every place on earth has nearly twelve hours of daylight and twelve hours of night.

The significance of this phenomenon is that at this time of the year there is no place on Earth that is not touched by the light of the sun during the day. With the coming of the full moon during this time, the moon, being in the dark half of the Earth's sphere, reflects the sun's light, and thus the whole world is surrounded at that moment by the light of the sun.⁴

This astronomical phenomenon is a cosmic image of how Christ unites both the spiritual and physical worlds in the most resplendent day of His Resurrection. Throughout the hymnology of the Feast, this reality is proclaimed. In the first ode of the Paschal Canon, we sing, "Now all is filled with light: heaven and earth and the lower regions. Let all creation celebrate the rising of Christ in Whom we are established!" Then in the seventh ode we sing, "This is the bright and saving night, sacred and supremely festal. It heralds the radiant day of the Resurrection on which the timeless light shone forth from the tomb for all!"

Historical Outline

Pentecost to Nicaea

As mentioned above, Pascha was the first feast to be celebrated by the Church, most likely in either Palestine or Antioch during the Apostolic era.⁵

The way that Easter [Pascha] came into existence is probably as follows: the church had from the beginning observed Sundays, as festivals commemorating Christ's resurrection on a Sunday, and in course of time special emphasis was given to the Sunday following the Jewish Passover, that being the one nearest to the actual date of Christ's resurrection.⁶

Therefore in the early Church, the celebration of the feast of the Resurrection was dependent upon the Jewish reckoning of Passover. This created two problems which would only be resolved at the first Ecumenical Council in Nicaea.

The first problem concerned the Christians' reliance upon the Jewish calculations for Pascha. In cities where the Jewish population was small and the date of Passover was not published for the public awareness, Christians found themselves in the embarrassing predicament of having to inquire of the Jews the day of Passover, so that they could determine when the Resurrection was to be celebrated.⁷ In order to avoid making this embarrassing inquiry, which oftentimes brought not only mockery but also

⁴ Ossorguine.

⁵ Beckwith, 60-70.

⁶ Ibid., 61.

⁷ Ibid., 63.

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inaccurate results⁸ [at times the Jews celebrated Passover before the vernal equinox, allowing for two celebrations occurring in one year], a number of churches began to make their own astronomical calculations to determine the day of celebration.

The first Christian calculations, made by St. Hippolytus of Rome in 200 A.D., were erroneously based on a doubled eight-year cycle for reconciling the lunar and solar year. In fact, a Paschal Letter, based upon St. Hippolytus' inaccurate eight-year cycle, was sent out to the churches, in 251 A.D., by Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria.⁹

But after only a decade or two, the Church in Alexandria adopted the more accurate nineteen-year cycle, developed by the ancient Greek astronomer Meton, in 433 B.C. This cycle was of "great value for the Paschalia, inasmuch as the phases of the moon throughout each nineteen-year cycle fall upon the self-same days of the solar Julian Calendar."¹⁰ This means that if a full moon fell on Friday, April 1, in the year 300, then it would fall again on Friday, April 1, nineteen years later, in the year 319. For this reason, the Church chose to adopt the then contemporary civil Julian calendar, which had been first introduced by and named in honor of Julius Caesar, in the year 46 B.C.¹¹

The second problem concerned the question of which particular day of the week Pascha should be celebrated on. The churches of Asia Minor and Syria celebrated Pascha on the same day as Jewish Passover, 14 Nisan¹², whatever the day of the week even if it was not Sunday.¹³ This small group became known as the Quarto-decimans. The rest of the churches, led by Rome and Alexandria, developed the tradition of celebrating the feast only on Sunday. This was due in large part to the fact that the Gentile Christians measured the seasons by the solar Julian calendar rather than the lunar Jewish calendar.¹⁴

First Ecumenical Council – Nicaea, 325

In 325, when the Fathers of the Church convened in Nicaea, the reckoning of the date of Pascha was on the agenda. The only verifiable documents coming from the council are the list of participants, the creed of faith, the twenty canons, and a synodal letter addressed to the Alexandrian Church which stated the following:

All our eastern brothers who up till now have not been in agreement with the Romans or you or with all those who from the beginning have done as you do, will henceforth celebrate Pascha at the same time as you.¹⁵

⁸ Archbp. Peter, 20; Beckwith, 68.

⁹ Beckwith, 64.

¹⁰ Perepiolkina, 38.

¹¹ The Church would later make slight modifications to the Julian Calendar, which resulted in the addition of the appellation "Ecclesiastical".

¹² The Jews celebrated Passover on the 14th day of the month of Nisan, the first lunar month of the Jewish year, in which the Vernal Equinox fell.

¹³ A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, 500.

¹⁴ Encyclopedia of Early Christianity, 696.

¹⁵ Archbp. Peter, 23 (from Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* I, 9, Parmentier edition, 41).

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Therefore it is clear that the Council ruled in favor of the celebration of Pascha on Sunday as opposed to any day of the week. Although the Quarto-decimans were ordered to renounce their custom, some did not, forming a sectarian church which survived down to the 5th century.

The seventh canon of the Nicean Council states the following: “If any bishop, or presbyter, or deacon, celebrates the holy day of Easter before the vernal equinox with the Jews, let him be deposed.”¹⁶

The first canon of the Council of Antioch, held in 341, not only reiterated what was said about celebrating “with the Jews” but also sanctioned severe consequences for those who would disobey.

Thus an important question arises as to what is meant by “with the Jews”. In Greek as in English, the words “with the Jews” (meta ton Ioudaioun) can be understood in two ways. This phrase could mean not to celebrate the feast either “on the same day as the Jews” or “with regard to when the Jews calculate Passover”.

D. Ogitsky, Professor of Canon Law at the Moscow Theological Academy writes, “The Council of Nicaea prohibited not coincidental concurrences, but the principle of the dependence of the date of the Christian Pascha on the date of the Jewish Passover.”¹⁷ Evidence of this, as Ogitsky records and Archbishop Peter points out, is that “during the fourth century after [the Council of] Nicaea, Christian and Jewish Paschas coincided several times.”¹⁸

The Emperor, St. Constantine the Great, who as we shall see had the same conception, sent a letter to the churches explaining what the Fathers had decided with regard to the Paschal issue. Here is a portion of the letter:

Christian Pascha must be celebrated on the same day by everyone; and for the calculation of the date, no reference should be made to the Jews. Such would be humiliating and moreover it is possible for them to have two Passovers in one single year. Consequently, the churches must conform to the practice followed by Rome, Africa, Italy, Egypt, Spain, Gaul, Britain, Libya, Greece, Asia, Pontus, and Cilicia.¹⁹

After considering the astronomical and mathematical complexities of the reckoning of the date of Pascha (and possibly also being aware of the flaw in the Julian calendar, which we shall soon examine), the Fathers of the Nicean Council opted to hand the assignment over to the Church in Alexandria, the city most noted for its expertise in this field.

¹⁶ Dresko.

¹⁷ Ogitsky.

¹⁸ Archbp. Peter, 25.

¹⁹ Ibid., 25 (from Eusebius, Vita Constant., III, 18-19, PG 20, col. 1073-1077).

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Therefore, with the help of the Alexandrian Church, the Fathers came to the following resolution concerning the celebration of the Pascha: The feast must be held on the first Sunday after the full moon after the vernal equinox, without regard to the Jewish celebration of Passover. According to this formula, the Feast of Pascha falls between the 22nd of March and the 25th of April, inclusive.

Post-Nicaea through the 16th century

After the Nicean Council another issue arose, this time with regard to the astronomical calculation of the vernal equinox. In 730 A.D., the Venerable Bede, the first to begin numbering the years from the birth of Christ,²⁰ called attention to the deviation of the calculation of the date of Pascha from the date of the actual vernal equinox.²¹ Due to a miscalculation, the Julian calendar had fallen behind the actual solar time by approximately one day every 128 years.

The authors of the Julian calendar determined incorrectly the time it takes the earth to make one complete revolution around the sun. They calculated a year to be 365 and 1/4 days, while in actuality a year is 365.242119 days long. This small discrepancy causes the Julian calendar to account for more time than has actually passed, at a rate of 11 minutes and 14 seconds per year, or 1 day every 128 years, or 7.8 days every 1000 years.

Therefore, the vernal equinox which occurred correctly according to the Julian calendar, on March 21st at the time of Julius Caesar, occurred incorrectly on March 18th at the time of Nicean Council, on March 11th in the 16th century, and even more incorrectly on March 8th at the present time. In 4000 years, the Julian calendar will mark the vernal equinox, the beginning of Spring, in the middle of February. For Pascha to return to the actual day of celebration, we would have to wait for a whole year's worth of extra time to be added to the Julian calendar; this would take more than 46 millennia ($128 \times 365 = 46,720$).²²

Presently, March 8th through March 21st on the Julian calendar, are actually March 21st through April 3rd on the Gregorian calendar, in use in most of the world. Consequently, if a full moon were to fall between March 8th and March 21st on the Julian calendar, it would be overlooked as falling before the vernal equinox and the next full moon would be taken for the determination of Pascha. The problem is that the full moon overlooked would actually have been the first full moon after the vernal equinox. Hence, the error in the Julian calendar could at times lead to an erroneous and uncanonical determination of the Feast of Pascha.²³

In order to remedy the situation, two necessary steps had to be taken. First, either the Julian calendar had to be revised or a new more adequate calendar had to be developed,

²⁰ Although Venerable Bede was the first to actually number the years from the birth of Christ, Abbot Dionysius Exiguus had already posed this system in 524 (from Weisstein's biography of Venerable Bede).

²¹ Seabury, 109.

²² Denis-Boulet, 98.

²³ Patsavos.

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to ensure that the error would not continue in the future. And second, the extra days that the Julian calendar had inserted had to be removed.

There were a few in the East who attempted this difficult task. In 1371, Monk Isaacius and Matthew Blastaris approved Nicephoros Gregoras' alternative calendar, but the calendar was never adopted by the Church. The final attempts at reforming the calendar took place during the last days of the Byzantine Empire. Shortly before the fall of Constantinople, George Gemistus Plethon, a neo-pagan platonic philosopher, also proposed new calendar reforms. However, the Church promptly rejected his work, undoubtedly because Plethon's thought continually conflicted with the Church's teaching, and anyway, the Church was in no position to implement such a change considering the turmoil surrounding the collapse of the Empire.²⁴

Emergence of the Gregorian Calendar

In the 16th century, a German astronomer, Christoph Clavius, proposed a reform to the Julian calendar which would correct the time discrepancy and bring the calendar back in synchronization with the seasons. According to Clavius' calendar, only those centuries divisible by 400 would be leap years. Therefore, the years 1600 and 2000 would be leap years, while 1700, 1800, and 1900 would not. These adjustments were enough to almost precisely match the actual length of the solar year.

On October 4, 1582, the Pope of Rome, Gregory XII, issued a papal bull adopting Clavius' calendar and decreed that the following day would be October 15, 1582, thereby eliminating the ten day discrepancy between the Julian calendar and the actual solar calendar. This calendar then became known as the Gregorian calendar, after the pope who had instituted it.²⁵

The Gregorian calendar was accepted almost immediately by the Catholic countries of France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, Hungary and the Netherlands. However, opposition to the calendar reformation was encountered from many of the other countries of Europe and throughout the world.

The Orthodox Church's Reaction to the Gregorian Calendar

The Orthodox Church also placed Herself in firm opposition to the Gregorian calendar. Three local councils, held in Constantinople (1583, 1587, and 1593), condemned the Gregorian calendar as uncanonical, declaring:

Whosoever does not follow the customs of the Church which the Seven Holy Ecumenical Councils have decreed, and the Holy Pascha and calendar which they have enacted well for us to follow, but wants to follow the newly invented Paschalia and the new calendar of the atheist astronomers of the Pope; and, opposing the Councils, wishes to overthrow and destroy the doctrines and customs of the Church, which we have inherited from our Fathers – let such have

²⁴ Constantelos.

²⁵ Weisstein.

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the anathema and let him be outside the Church and the Assembly of the Faithful.²⁶

There are three fundamental reasons why the Orthodox Church rejected the calendar which seemed to provide the solution to the problems caused by the inaccuracy of the Julian calendar.

First, on the Gregorian calendar, Pascha would at times coincide with the Jewish Passover. Officially, the coincidental celebration “with the Jews” (which, as we have stated above, occurred even after the Nicean Council) is not uncanonical. However, because the error in the Julian calendar made it no longer possible, after the 5th century, to celebrate Pascha either before or on the same day as the Jews, the faithful began to believe that Pascha must necessarily fall after the Jewish Passover. In time this conviction, based on a literal but erroneous understanding of the expression “with the Jews”, came to be not only commonly accepted but even revered by scholars such as John Zonaras and Matthew Blastaris.²⁷

Second, the papacy, in addition to suggesting that the Orthodox accept the Gregorian calendar, also advocated a change in the Paschalia. This change was recommended to the East as a way to correct a deviation which occurred in the lunar cycle. At the time, the Church used the 19-year lunar cycle, which was inaccurate by about one day every 307 years. This 19-year cycle, even though not sanctioned by the Council of Nicaea, had gained the authority of the council by the 6th century.

Third, the Orthodox Church, while bearing the Ottoman yoke, was trying to stave off the growing influence of the Latin-West in theology, philosophy, and education. During the late 16th century, Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries promoted union with Rome, in the Orthodox lands throughout the Mediterranean and Ukraine.²⁸ Therefore, the Church, was in no position or disposition to accept a reformation, especially one originating from the Pope of Rome.

With the passing of time, many of the Protestant countries which had at first rejected the Gregorian calendar, changed their minds and adopted it for civil use. Even traditionally Orthodox countries finally accepted this new system for the reckoning of the civil year – such as Russia in 1918 and Greece in 1923.

In 1919, the Church of Greece issued the following statement:

The change of the Julian calendar, which change does not offend dogmatic and social considerations, could be accomplished with the agreement of all the other autocephalous Orthodox Churches, and especially with the agreement of the Ecumenical Patriarch, to whom it would be necessary to entrust the initiative in such an undertaking – under the condition that the Gregorian calendar not be adopted, but that a new calendar be redacted, which would be even more exact

²⁶ Bond (from the Council of Constantinople, 1583).

²⁷ Archbp. Peter, 25 (from Syntagma alphabetique, letter P, chapter 7, VI, 420).

²⁸ Ware, 93.

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scientifically and free from the deficiencies of the two present calendars, the Julian and the Gregorian.²⁹

In 1920, Metropolitan Dorotheos, Locum Tenens for the Ecumenical Patriarchate, published an encyclical calling the Orthodox Church and the western churches to have “amenity and beneficent disposition towards one another”.³⁰ The encyclical stated that this could be accomplished through a number of steps, the first being “the adoption by all the Churches of one single calendar so that the great Christian feasts may be everywhere celebrated simultaneously.”³¹

Subsequently, the Ecumenical Patriarch Meletios IV called an Inter-Orthodox Congress to decide whether or not the Orthodox Church should remain on the Old Calendar or adopt the New Calendar. However, due to the Patriarchal encyclical, the adoption of a new calendar was no longer seen as a solely astronomical issue, rather it became also a method of furthering ecumenical relations with the West.

Inter-Orthodox Congress – Constantinople, 1923

The Congress, which met at Constantinople in 1923, was attended by representatives from the Churches of Serbia, Romania, Greece, and Cyprus. The following Churches were not in attendance: Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem – who refused to take part; Bulgaria – who was not invited due to a schism with Constantinople; and Russia – who was unable to attend due to the turbulence brought by the Communist regime.

In addition to the calendar issue the Congress also discussed proposals concerning the possibility of marriage after ordination, changes in clergy dress code, new age requirements for ordination and entrance into the monastic life, possible abbreviations to the divine services and the cycles of fasts and feasts. Many of these proposals were rejected by the conscience of the Church,³² but their discussion served to suggest a connection between the essentially unrelated issues of the calendar’s correction and the modernization of Church canons.

Even though the council did not come to a unanimous agreement on the calendar issue, later in that same year, the Churches of Constantinople and Greece went ahead on their own and adopted the New Calendar, also known as the Revised Julian Calendar. This calendar, although slightly more accurate than the Gregorian calendar, for all practical purposes corresponds directly to its Western counterpart until the year 2800. However, the Churches of Greece and Constantinople, chose to still adhere the Julian Calendar for the determination of the date of Pascha, so as to continue celebrating the Feast with the rest of Orthodox World. This combination of calendars has created a number of liturgical anomalies which will be discussed below.

²⁹ Sakkas, 27 (from Bp. Polycarp of Dialia).

³⁰ Ibid., 12 (from Prof. John Karmiris).

³¹ Ibid., 12 (from Prof. John Karmiris).

³² Perepiolkina, 50.

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The adoption of the Revised Julian Calendar by the Churches of Constantinople and Greece has led to further division within worldwide Orthodoxy. Since 1923, the Churches of Alexandria, Antioch, Cyprus, Romania, Poland, Bulgaria, Albania, and the OCA have accepted the New Calendar,³³ whereas the Churches of Russia in the homeland and in the Diaspora, Jerusalem, Serbia, Georgia, and Mount Athos have retained the Old Calendar. However, this division within Orthodoxy, although regrettable, is not dogmatic in nature, as the Churches listed above have not broken communion with one another due to their usage of different calendars.

Rise of the Old Calendarist Movement

The adoption of the New Calendar, by some of the Orthodox Churches, has not only created calendrical division within Orthodoxy, but it has even prompted some to boldly separate themselves from the Church, forming schismatic groups. St. John Chrysostom writes, “even if the Church made a mistake, exactness in the observance of times would not be as important as the offense caused by division and schism.”³⁴ However, unfortunate as it may be, a number of Old Calendarist groups, mostly in Greece and America, have separated themselves from the Orthodox Church, believing the New Calendar to be uncanonical and a compromise of the Faith.

At first, the number of schismatic Old Calendarist Greeks (TOC – True Orthodox Christians) was very small but their movement grew noticeably due to the influence of some Athonite monks, the growing fervor which arose from suffering unjust and horrible persecutions at the hands of the State, and the following extraordinary incidence. On the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, September 14, 1925, according to the Old Calendar, a shining cross was seen in the sky over Athens by about two thousand people and the policemen who had been summoned to prevent the celebration.³⁵

The Old Calendar movement in Greece remained without a hierarchy until 1935, when three bishops from the Church of Greece “issued a declaration that they were forthwith separating themselves from the State Church and were returning to the Old Calendar”.³⁶ However, two years later the resistance movement split into three factions, when the following incident occurred:

In 1937, Metropolitan Chrysostomos, when questioned as to whether the State Church still possessed the Grace of the Holy Spirit in its Mysteries, replied that, though the New Calendar Church was guilty before God for its actions, and for that reason the True Orthodox could have no communion whatsoever with it, nonetheless, insofar as its clergy did not depart in other ways from the traditions of the Church, it continued to possess the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and that as yet there existed a potential schism, rather than an actual schism, until such a time as the calendar innovation were condemned by a pan-Orthodox council.³⁷

³³ Parts of the OCA still retain the Old Calendar.

³⁴ Archbp. Peter, 27.

³⁵ Kitsikis, 20.

³⁶ Archimandrite Ambrosios, 10.

³⁷ Ibid., 12.

Two of the movement's bishops, Germanos of the Cyclades and Matthaïos of Vrestheni, became "incensed by this declaration, and accusing Metropolitan Chrysostomos of having in effect denied the whole basis of the movement, separated themselves from him."³⁸ These two bishops then disagreed amongst themselves and separated into their own factions. Bishop Matthaïos, who became the leader of the extremist Old Calendar group known as the Matthewites, even reached the state of believing that he was the only Orthodox bishop left in the world.³⁹

Since 1937, the history of the Old Calendarist movement in Greece has continued in much the same way – riddled with internal disagreement and factionalism due to opposing ecclesiological ideologies. However, these groups still maintain some degree of unity in that they all oppose the ecclesiastical use of the New Calendar.

Objections to the Ecclesiastical Use of the Revised Julian Calendar (Hybrid)

As mentioned above, New Calendar Churches have adopted the Revised Julian Calendar for their fixed feasts, but still retained the Julian Calendar's reckoning of Pascha. The use of this hybrid calendar⁴⁰ has created liturgical complexities that some Old Calendarists believe to be uncanonical, "a departure from patristic tradition, a violation of unity in prayer between Orthodox Churches, and in practical life signifies dissension and division among the people of the Church."⁴¹

The most striking of these problems is the shortening or at times complete disappearance of the Apostles' Fast. The Apostolic Constitutions set forth the time for the fast in this manner, "After Pentecost, celebrate one week, and then fast."⁴² Accordingly, the fast begins on the Monday, eight days after Pentecost (fasting is prohibited by the Typikon during the week following Pentecost), and ends on June 29th, the Feast of Ss. Peter & Paul. Thus the length of the fast depends both on the date of Pascha and the reckoning of June 29th, either on the Old or New Calendars. If one follows the Old Calendar, the duration of the fast can be from 8-35 days long. However, on the hybrid New Calendar, the fast will always be thirteen days shorter, lasting at most 22 days and on the occasion of a late Pascha, an alarming -5 days.

At times, other notable deviations from the Typikon include the dates of celebration of the following feasts: the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos, the first and second finding of the Precious Head of the Forerunner, the Holy Great-Martyr George, and the Forty Holy Martyrs of Sebaste.

³⁸ Archimandrite Ambrosios., 12.

³⁹ In 1948, he even proceeded, in an entirely uncanonical manner, to consecrate four other bishops single-handedly.

⁴⁰ These complexities are not a result of using the New Calendar, but they arise out of an artificial combining of the New Calendar's Menaion with the Old Calendar's Triodion and Pentecostarion.

⁴¹ Perepiolkina, 53.

⁴² Ibid., 52 (Book 5, Chapter 19).

Conclusion

As time passes, the Julian Calendar and the Revised Julian Calendar, will continue to deviate further and further from one another. Obviously, this is a problem that needs rectification. However, if we look into the calendar issue more closely, we might notice that there is an underlying and more divisive problem. Within the Orthodox world, there are struggles taking place between modernists and conservatives, and between ecumenists and separatists. It is the opinion of the author that these underlying ideologies have manifested themselves in the struggle over the ecclesiastical calendar and the divergent understandings of the Church's mission in the world.

The Orthodox Church not only preserves unchanged the Truth revealed in Jesus Christ, but She brings this Truth to the entire world. Thus, we see the Fathers of the Church fighting tirelessly to uphold the Orthodox Faith against the heresies which arose throughout the centuries, from within the Church and without. And thus, we also see the Holy Fathers insisting upon the use of the vernacular language and the civil calendar to bring the True Faith to those outside the Church. For the Holy Fathers, one was not at the expense of the other. They did not compromise the integrity of the Faith, nor its presentation to the world. In recent times, it appears we are no longer cognizant of this two-fold mission of the Church.

The purpose of the Church calendar is bring both believers and unbelievers to Christ through the sanctification of their time. For believers, the calendar provides good order and meaningful structure to their liturgical life, as they worship in Spirit and Truth. For unbelievers, the nature of the Church calendar is apostolic, bringing the preaching of the Gospel, the struggle of fasts, and the celebration of feasts into their secular world.⁴³ "Thus to create an artificial division between one's religious time and one's time in the rest of life defeats the whole purpose of the Church calendar."⁴⁴

In the author's opinion, the root of the problem is not an unwillingness of Old Calendarists to accept a more accurate calendar. Rather, the problem is caused by those, within the Church, who choose to compromise in matters of the Orthodox Faith for the sake of ecumenical unity. Perhaps, if the Church's ecumenical relations with the West did not appear to be capitulatory, then maybe the Old Calendarists would feel less threatened by adopting the civil calendar. On the contrary, they might even see the adoption of the civil calendar with its proper intent in mind: to bring the unchanging Truth of Jesus Christ to the entire world.

⁴³ This is shown clearly by the establishment of the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord to replace the pagan festival of the Winter solstice, and again, by establishment of the Feast of the Resurrection of Christ, celebrated with regard to the Spring equinox according to the civil calendar.

⁴⁴ Morris, 63.

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