

Eastern Orthodox Churches and Oriental Orthodox Churches in Dialogue: Reception, Disagreement and Convergence

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This paper presents details pertaining to the dialogue between Eastern Orthodox Churches and Oriental Orthodox Churches. A brief history of the official bilateral meetings between the representatives of these two Christian traditions is sketched in the first part of the paper. The texts which converge by way of doctrine are highlighted. In the second part I present some of the difficulties which still prevent Eucharistic intercommunion between Eastern Orthodoxy and Oriental Orthodoxy, in spite of the doctrinal agreement which has been reached. Finally, some possible solutions are drafted in the last part of the paper, with special reference to Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae's proposal of broadening the dogmatic expression from Chalcedon.

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Introduction

Orthodox Churches are considered by some western scholars as conservative and anti-ecumenical. What these scholars tend to do in fact is nothing else than to adopt certain critiques which were formulated at the end of the 19th century¹. Moreover, Christian Orthodox may seem forthrightly obsessed with their insistence on a complete agreement of faith with other Christian traditions, steps which should by all means precede Eucharistic intercommunion.² To a great extent, even some Orthodox theologians admit

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¹ Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma* vol. 4, trans. Neil Buchanan, Boston 1898, p. 25. And the more recent Christopher D.L. Johnson, „He Has Made the Dry Bones Live»: Orientalism's Attempted Resuscitation of Eastern Christianity”, in: *Journal of American Academy of Religion* 82 (3/2014), p. 811-840.

² It is a symptomatic fact, also asserted in the „Encyclical of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church”: Christian Orthodox Church „manifests sensitivity towards those who have severed themselves from communion with her and is concerned for those who do not understand her voice. Conscious that she constitutes the living presence of Christ in the world, the Church translates the divine economy into concrete actions using all means at her disposal to give a trustworthy witness to the truth, in the precision of the apostolic faith. In this spirit of