



Alexander Maros

The Ecological Theology of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I

Abstract

In this paper the author explores the eco-theological views of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and New Rome, Bartholomew I. He attempts to find out why the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I has demonstrated such care and interest for the environment, and how, from his perspective, the current ecological crisis could be overcome. The author surveys the contribution of the Patriarch Bartholomew I to the ecological debate within the World Council of Churches and the UN



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Environmental Program and examine his theological impact on the international arena.

Keywords

Patriarch Bartholomew I, Ecology, World Council of the Churches, Orthodoxy, Ascetics, Metanoia

1 Introduction

“Love all God’s creation, the whole of it and every grain of sand. Love every leaf, every ray of God’s Light! Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. And once you have perceived it, you will begin to comprehend it ceaselessly, more and more every day. And you will at last come to love the whole world with an abiding universal love. Love the animals: God has given them the rudiments of thought and untroubled joy. Do not, therefore, trouble it, do not torture them, do not deprive them of their joy, do not go against God’s intent. But repentance—words—without action are meaningless. As Christ says, “Many will call me ‘Lord, Lord’, but only those who do the will of my Father shall enter heaven”

Fyodor Michail Dostoevsky¹

It is common knowledge that our ecosystem is under pressure from human activities. Technological development and achievements have brought about a plethora of damages to the environment, leading our planet to a serious ecological crisis, and making its future rather uncertain and obscure. According

¹ F. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazof* (Vol 1, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), pp. 375-376.

to Stern Review², the NASA research³, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change⁴ and the Yale Forestry and Environmental Studies Project⁵ - among others it is maintained that one of the most dangerous threats to our ecosystem is climate change. Some of the consequences of this anthropogenic impact on our environment are the rise of the global temperature of up to 4.5° C⁶, a depletion of freshwater resources, deforestation, desertification, rising sea level and reduction of biodiversity⁷. Due to this obvious threat to the

² N. Stern, "Stern Review: The Economics of Climate Change", accessed in 30/5/2014, http://mudancasclimaticas.cptec.inpe.br/~rmclima/pdfs/destaques/sternreview_report_complete.pdf. This report is written by Prof. Nicholas Stern, Chairman of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics (LSE), and of the Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy at Leeds University and LSE, for the government of the United Kingdom, and according to Francis Cairncross, this is the most well-known report of its kind. The First Post, "Time to get Stern on climate change", accessed in 30/5/2014, <http://www.theweek.co.uk/index.php?menuID=2&subID=1055>.

³ NASA, "Global Climate Change", accessed in 30/5/2014, <http://climate.nasa.gov/causes>.

⁴ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, accessed in 30/5/2014, <http://www.ipcc.ch>.

⁵ Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, "Yale Forestry and Environmental Studies Project", accessed in 30/5/2014, <http://environment.yale.edu/climatecommunication/projects/research/>.

⁶ S. McFague, *A New Climate For Theology*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), p. 10.

⁷ Ecocrete, «Αντιμετώπιση Παγκόσμιων Περιβαλλοντικών Ζητημάτων» ("Confronting Global Environmental Issues"), accessed in 19/5/2014, http://www.ecocrete.gr/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4477. For further information concerning the human impact on nature, vide: A. Goudie, *The Human Impact on the Natural Environment* (Fourth Edition, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993). This book was written twenty-one years ago, but it can provide scientifically-based extensive analysis on a plethora of problems that humans can trigger to nature; this data shan't consider out-dated,

environment, there are several arguments of diverse perspectives aimed at protecting the environment. For instance, economists articulate positive statements of nature maintaining that it shall be protected, because there may be species of fauna and flora which could be used for financial reasons in the future, when and if scientists would know more about them⁸. Some scientists state that we need to ensure the welfare of the environment, because our knowledge about it is quite limited, and therefore it should be protected for future scientific study (e.g. insects living in tropical rain forests)⁹. For aesthetic reasons, it is deemed that ecosystem should be protected, because it beautifies human life, and promotes quality¹⁰.

This paper will highlight the arguments of Orthodox theology for the preservation of *κτίσις* (i.e. creation), focusing in particular on the contribution of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and New Rome, Bartholomew I, to the ecological debate. To be more specific, this article aspires to answer some important questions on the theological perspective of Bartholomew I on ecology. With this discussion in mind, this paper primarily explores how Bartholomew interprets Orthodox theology to justify his active role in the protection of the environment, to examine the “roots of evil” of the ecological crisis and to suggest solutions which would help overcome this problem. Furthermore, it details his contribution to ecological debates within the World Council of Churches (WCC). The ways that Bartholomew has influenced the WCC are highlighted, in particular by the way in which he has used theology in statements addressed to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

because these problems still remain despite the technological advance since then.

⁸ A. Goudie, *The Human Impact on the Natural Environment*, p. 382.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Conferences¹¹, where representatives of all countries of the United Nations take decisions on environmental issues. Regarding the originality of this thesis, the author, based on primary sources, and in particular, on a selective number of statements made by Bartholomew (patriarchal encyclicals, texts from official lectures, etc.) and the WCC, the valuable books of John Chryssavgis – the advisor of Bartholomew in environmental issues – *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer: An Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I* (2003) and *On Earth as in Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew* (2012), as well as on secondary sources (selective number of bibliography related to the Orthodox position on environmental issues), will focus exclusively on the relation of the Orthodox theology with ecology through the eyes of Bartholomew I, and, secondarily, if and how his theological understanding of the creation has influenced the World Council of Churches to consider it for its discussion with the United Nations Environmental Program.

In the end, with respect to the structure of this article, the first chapter will survey the history of the ecological activities of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (before Bartholomew), as well as the major initiatives and activities of Bartholomew, while the second chapter – on which the author has given more emphasis – will be dedicated to the theology of Bartholomew I on ecology, answering the following two questions: why is the protection of the environment an important issue for the Orthodoxy, and what measures can be taken in order to heal most of the

¹¹ The UNFCCC is a part of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), which, as officially states, strives “to be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimensions of sustainable development within the United Nations system and that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment”. Vide the official website of the UNEP: United Nations Environment Program, accessed in 19/5/2014, <http://www.unep.org/About>.

environmental problems? The third and last part will focus specifically on the contribution of the current Ecumenical Patriarch to the environmental debate within the World Council of Churches (WCC).

2 The Ecumenical Patriarchate and Bartholomew. A historical overview of the activities of the Ecumenical Patriarchate

Before focusing on the initiatives and activities of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew on ecology, it would be interesting to survey what the Ecumenical Patriarchate had done for environmental issues before Bartholomew.

According to John Chryssavgis, the Ecumenical Patriarchate started demonstrating an interest in the environment since 1986, when it organized a Pre-Synodal Pan-Orthodox Conference in Chambésy under the initiatives of the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrius I (he was an Ecumenical Patriarch from 1972 to 1991 and the predecessor of Bartholomew)¹². At that Conference, the Primates of the Eastern Orthodox Church discussed issues related to the abuse of the ecosystem, mainly in Western industrialized societies, the significance of respecting humans, and the detrimental consequences of war, racism, and inequality¹³. Moreover, inspired by the results of the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver in 1983, the Ecumenical Patriarchate also organized several inter-Orthodox meetings, whereby the representatives of all local Orthodox Churches concentrated on the issue of “Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation”. Perhaps most significant conference addressing this topic was held in Patmos

¹² J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), p. 5.

¹³ *Ibid.*

(Greece) in 1988 when Dimitrius suggested that the Ecumenical Patriarchate should decide to dedicate one day of the year for prayers for the environment¹⁴. His thought was implemented the following year, when he published an encyclical letter “to the *pleroma* of the Church”, in which he informed all the primates of the Eastern Orthodox Church that the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate decided to “declare the first day of September of each year a day, on which, on the Feast of the Indiction, namely the first day of the ecclesiastical year, prayers and supplications are to be offered in this holy center of orthodoxy for all creation, declaring this day to be the day of the protection of the environment”¹⁵, assigning (in 1990) to a monk of Holy Mount, called Gerasimos Mikrayiannanites, the composition of a series of prayers for the environment focusing on the call to repentance¹⁶. This is the first major contribution of the Ecumenical Patriarchate through Demetrius I to ecology; this Synodic decision was also adopted by the World Council of Churches, which demonstrates its acceptance at an international level¹⁷.

A brief biography and the initiatives of Bartholomew

Bartholomew I was born in Imvros, an island of Turkey, on 29 February 1940. His secular name was Demetrios Archontonis¹⁸. In 1961, he graduated at the Theological Patriarchal School of Halki (Turkey), and in the same year, he was ordained deacon,

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 6.

¹⁵ Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrius I, “Encyclical Letter, September 1 1989”, in *ibid*, p. 38.

¹⁶ J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I*, p. 7.

¹⁷ World Council of Churches, “Time to Pray for God’s Creation”, accessed in 23/5/2014, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/time-to-pray-for-god2019s-creation>.

¹⁸ J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I*, p. 3

receiving at that time the name Bartholomew¹⁹. During the years 1973-1968, he studied at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Gregorian University in Rome, the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey, and the University of Munich, where he earned his Ph.D. in Canon Law²⁰. After his completing his studies, he returned to Constantinople, and in 1969, he was ordained priest. From 1972, he was the director of the Patriarchal Office, and the next year, he was elected Metropolitan of Philadelphia²¹. From 1968 to 1991, he played an active role in the World Council of Churches; he attended General Assemblies, he worked as a Vice-Chairman of the "Faith and Order" Commission, and he also was a member of its Central and Executive Committees²². His collaboration and connection with the WCC contributed to cultivate his ecological consciousness²³, since the WCC began "develop[ing] the concept of sustainable communities"²⁴ in the mid-1970, connecting justice and peace and environmental sustainability²⁵. In 1990, Bartholomew was elected Metropolitan of Chalcedon, the second highest rank among the bishops in Constantinople, and in 1991, after the death of Demetrius I, he was elected Ecumenical Patriarch²⁶.

The ecological activities and initiatives of Bartholomew started in November, a month after his election to the Ecumenical Patriarchal position, when he organized a meeting in Crete with

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ World Council of Churches, "Care for Creation and Climate Justice", accessed in 1/6/2014, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/climate-change>.

²⁵ Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale, "World Council of Churches: Justice, Peace and Creation", accessed in 1/6/2014, http://fore.research.yale.edu/religion/christianity/projects/wcc_jpc/

²⁶ J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I*, p. 3.

the title “Living in the Creation of the Lord” under the joint auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh and Chairman of International Organization “Word Wide Fund for Nature”²⁷.

In 1992, he convened a Pan-Orthodox meeting, inviting all Orthodox ecclesial leaders at Phanar/Fener (a district of Constantinople where the Ecumenical Patriarchate is located) to discuss issues related to unity and pastoral care; there he reaffirmed the decision of the last Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrius I to declare the first day of September as a day for prayers for the environment, calling all the Primates to apprise their local churches about the high importance of the environmental issues²⁸. In the same year, the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip II, the Chairman of World Wide Fund for Nature International, was invited to give an environmental seminar at the Theological School of Halki, and the next year Bartholomew met him at Buckingham Palace and decided in common to further collaborate for this purpose²⁹. In 1993, Bartholomew accepted an invitation by the European Commission to give a lecture addressing—among others—the issue of ecology. There, he maintained that “the ecological problem of our times demands a radical reevaluation of how we see the entire world; it demands a different interpretation of matter and the world, a new attitude of humankind toward nature, and a new understanding of how we acquire and make use of our material goods”³⁰. It should be noted that it was the

²⁷ Ibid, p. 7.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 89, “Message of the Primates”..

²⁹ J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, (NewYork: Fordham University Press, 2012), pp. 7-8.

³⁰ Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I. “Unity and Commonality: Address to the Plenary of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, April 19, 1994”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I.*

first time that a non-political leader had been invited to give such a talk, and as Chryssavgis notices, “the influence and impact of the young Patriarch was broadening to secular and governmental levels”³¹. From 1994-1998, he took the initiative to convene five successive summer ecological seminars at the Theological School of Halki: the first one (June 1994) was related to the “Environmental and Religious Education”, the second one (June 1995) was dedicated to the “Environment and Ethics”, the third one (July 1996) was specialized in the “Environment and Communication”, the fourth one (June 1997) focused on the “Environment and Justice”, and the last one (June, 1998) explored the subject “Environment and Poverty”³². The goal of these seminars was to sensitize people around the world to care for the environment, and to achieve it; the Ecumenical Patriarch invited approximately eighty prominent specialists in theology, environmental sciences, political and religious leaders, artists and journalists³³.

In 1994, he also founded the *Religious and Scientific Committee* funded by Ms. Maria Becket, through which he convened eight international symposia related to the protection of rivers and seas. The first symposium “Revelation and the Environment” (September 1995) took place in Patmos under the aegis of Bartholomew and the Duke of Edinburg - it was the 1900th anniversary of St. John Book of Revelation (written on that island), and where the participants (around two hundred) journeyed across the Aegean Sea and Eastern Mediterranean Sea concluded that the contamination of the world’s waters (covering the two-thirds of the earth’s surface) is a major threat to all ecosystem³⁴. The second symposium “The Black Sea in Crisis” (September 1997) was organized under the auspices of

³¹ J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 8.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Bartholomew and the President of the European Commission Jacques Santer, and it concerned the future of countries surrounded by the Black Sea. During his official visits, Bartholomew was in contact with political leaders to discuss ways to overcome the ecological crisis³⁵. The third symposium (October 1999) “Down the Danube to the Black Sea” was organized under the auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarch and the President of the European Commission Romano Prodi, and its participants travelled from Passau to the delta of the Black Sea to examine the environmental ramifications of war, industrialization, urban growth, etc³⁶.

The fourth symposium (June 2002), “The Adriatic Sea: A Sea at Risk, a Unity of Purpose,” took place in Durrës (a city of Albania) and Venice and was organized by Bartholomew and Prodi. Its objective was to highlight the significance of values and principles for the environment for industrialized countries. It is worth noting that during this symposium Bartholomew and the Pope John Paul II signed a document emphasizing on environmental ethics, and, in particular, highlighting that all humanity [it is a pan-anthropocentric call] ought to: i. “think of the world’s children when we reflect on and evaluate our options for action”; ii. “be open to studying the true values based on the natural law that sustains every human culture”; iii. “use science and technology in a full and constructive way”; iv. “be humble regarding the idea of ownership and to be open to the demands of solidarity”; v. “acknowledge the diversity of situations and responsibilities in the work for a better world environment”; and vi. “promote a peaceful approach to disagreement about how to live on this earth, about how to share it, and use it, about what to change and what to leave unchanged”³⁷.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 11.

³⁶ Ibid.; cf. N. Ascherson & S. Hobson (eds.), *Danube: River of Life* (Athens:Religion, Science and the Environment, 2002).

³⁷ “Common Declaration of Environmental Ethics by Pope John Paul II and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I”, in Chryssavgis, *Cosmic Grace*

As for the fifth symposium (June, 2003) “The Baltic Sea: A Common Heritage, A Shared Responsibility”, was also organized by Bartholomew and Prodi, and it took place in various cities of North surrounded by the Baltic Sea, starting at Gdansk and ending in Stockholm; there it was decided to organize a North Sea Conference³⁸.

The sixth symposium (July 2006) “The Amazon, Source of Life” was launched in the Amazon River under the auspices of Bartholomew and the General Secretary of the United Nations Kofi Annan³⁹.

The seventh symposium (September 2007) “The Arctic, Mirror of Life” took place in Greenland under the patronage of Bartholomew, the President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso, and the Former General Secretary of the United Nations, Kofi Annan. In that symposium, the participants visited areas where rapid ice melting is prominent, and all the religious leaders participated in a joint prayer for the protection of the earth⁴⁰. T

he eighth and last Symposium (October 2009) “Restoring Balance: The Great Mississippi River” held in New Orleans after the catastrophe of Hurricane Katrina, focused on the contamination of the earth from the release of oil and other toxic materials⁴¹. Since the death of Ms. Becket in 2012, no international symposium has been organized due to lack of funding; Ms. Becket was the main sponsor of these international symposia.

and Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I, pp. 310-311.

³⁸ Ibid; cf. N. Ascherson, & S. Hobson (eds.), *A Common Heritage, A Shared Responsibility: Symposium V*. (Science and the Environment: Athens, 2010).

³⁹ J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 14.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 14-15.

3 The Theology of Bartholomew I

As outlined in the first chapter of this thesis, Bartholomew I was a religious leader who is esteemed for his environmental sensitivity and his work for the protection of the environment. However, several questions arise: what prompted Bartholomew to acquire such zeal and responsibility for the ecosystem? From his perspective, how could the Earth overcome ecological crises?

3.1 Why does Orthodoxy care for Ecology?

To Bartholomew, the reason why the Eastern Orthodox Church takes a particular interest in ecology is that creation is a sacred concept. He has based this belief on two arguments: the first one is his theological conviction that all creation belongs to God (who is holy), and humans are responsible for working and keeping the “garden” of God (*Gen.*, 2:15). His second argument is that God has regenerated creation through *New Adam*, and led it to its «ἀρχαῖον κάλλος» (i.e. “ancient beauty”).

In particular, Bartholomew maintained in his lecture at the University of the Aegean on 27 October 1994 (when he was awarded his first Doctorate *causa honoris*) that God created the world, and in particular by the energy of God, as Gregory Palamas⁴² (1296-1359) underlined. In turn, it was gifted to humanity⁴³ διὰ τὰ ἐργάζηται αὐτὸν καὶ φυλάττη αὐτόν (*Gen.*

⁴² “Creation is not from God’s essence; it is not the uncreated energies of God, but the result of the uncreated energies (...). To ‘beget’ is the property of God’s nature, but to ‘create’ is the property of His energy and will. If there were no distinction between essence and energies, between nature and will, then all creatures would belong by nature to God”. Gregory Palamas, “Patrologia Greco”(Sermon 26. Vol. 151), in Frederick Krueger, *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Deep Ecological Legacy of Christianity* (Santa Rosa, 2005), p. 248.

⁴³ More accurately, Adam and Eve were gifted «παράδεισον» (Eden), where they used to dwell until their conscious fall. Eden can be also

2:15)⁴⁴. As for the concepts of “gift” and the “dominion” of the world (cf. *Gen.*, 1:28), he suggests that it does not mean that humans shall behave like tyrants, “as avaricious and greedy exploiters”, but “as rational and responsible partakers for the purpose of covering our real needs rather than amassing superfluous items”⁴⁵. Moreover, Bartholomew, analyzing the meaning of “dominion”, supports the anthropocentric Irenaean concept of creation, according to which “man was not made for the sake of creation, but creation for the good of man”⁴⁶. In

identified with the Greek work ‘κόσμος’ meaning ‘ornament’, because of the belief that our world was “created” (ἐκτίσθη) λίαν καλῶς. Here, the adverb ‘καλῶς’ is not equivalent to the English one ‘well’, but to ‘beautifully’. It was Hilary of Poitiers (315-367), who first commended the beauty of creation stating that: “From the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator (Wisdom 13:5). The sky and air are beautiful, the earth and the sea are beautiful. By divine grace, the universe was called by the Greeks ‘cosmos’, meaning ‘ornament’. (...) Surely the author of all created beauty must himself be the beauty of all beauty?” V. Hilary of Poitiers, “On the Holy Trinity”, 1:1-3, in Frederick Krueger, *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Deep Ecological Legacy of Christianity*, Santa Rosa, 2005), p.72. Cf. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I. “Article for Seminarium [a theological journal of Vatican] in Vatican, May 2010”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as in Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 130.

⁴⁴ Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I. “Address at the Conferral of the First Honorary Doctorate of the Department of Environmental Studies, University of the Aegean, Mytilene, Greece, October 27, 1994”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 73.

⁴⁵ Vide: Bartholomew I. “Official Ceremony of the Binding Foundation, Vaduz, December 6, 2002”. In J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, 77; Cf. Bartholomew I. “Opening Address at a Conference on the Natural Environment, Mt. Athos, September 29, 1997”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 197.

⁴⁶ Irenaeanus, “Against Heresies”, 5:29.1, in Frederick Krueger, *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Deep Ecological Legacy of Christianity*, p. 35.

particular, at a Conference on the Natural Environment in Mt. Athos (Greece) in 1997, he stated that “creation was made to serve man’s needs”, and three years earlier, he explicitly maintained that the *logos* (“meaning”/“purpose”) of creation was to invite humans to a “personal relationship and communion with God”, characterizing this relationship as “living and life-giving”, and making “contemporary ecology (...) [a] practical response of humanity to this divine invitation”, which is “a tangible participation in a relationship with God”⁴⁷. However, with this anthropocentric interpretation of creation, Bartholomew does not exclude the other creatures from involvement in the glory of God in the way *anthropomorphism* embraces⁴⁸. To Bartholomew, all creation “participates

⁴⁷ Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I. “Address at the Conferral of the First Honorary Doctorate of the Department of Environmental Studies, University of the Aegean, Mytilene, Greece, October 27, 1994”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 71.

⁴⁸ To J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I*, p. 24; J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 19: “anthropomonism” is the main cause of the ecological crisis, because people, disregarding the fact that they are a part of cosmos and not the whole cosmos, behave tyrannically against it and destroy it. Bartholomew, in an interview with the journal “Helsinki Orthodox Parish” in 1994, defended the anthropocentric perception of creation asserting characteristically, “Orthodox theology and spirituality have never deviated toward anthropomonism, which would risk leading to Monophysitism. On the contrary, it always regards the human person as the center the whole creation, the sacredness of which is manifested and cannot be undermined by the central position and privilege, which humanity has as the image of God in nature. The ecological problem should not simply be considered as an ‘environmental crisis’, because the source of the crisis and the primary cause of the one who ‘embraces the environment’, namely humanity and its darkened conscience”. Bartholomew I, “Interview with the journal ‘Helsinki Orthodox Parish’”, in Chryssavgis, *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 304.

[eternally] and [sacramentally] in a celebration of life”, which is called “cosmic liturgy” (by Maximus the Confessor)⁴⁹. It means that humans and the rest of the creation are interconnected and inter-dependent, reflecting the beauty and glory of the Creator⁵⁰.

The ancient Liturgy of St. James, which is celebrated twice per year, expresses this harmonic *symbiosis* of humans with all creation and their common endeavor to glorify God: “The

Examining deeper this text, one could assume that Bartholomew considers that the ecological crisis is a heresy, as comparing anthropomonism with Monophysitism, and a sin as considering that this crisis is the outcome of the interruption of the communion between God and humans (“darkened conscience”), by breaking His commandment “work and keep the garden”. The correlation of the environmental crisis with sin (Bartholomew is the first religious leader relating ecological crisis with sin) is explicitly expressed in his address at the Santa Barbara Symposium in California in 1997, where he stated among others: “to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin. For human beings to cause species to become extinct and to destroy the biological diversity of God’s creation; for human beings to degrade the integrity of the earth by causing changes in its climate, by stripping the earth of its natural forests, or destroying its wetlands; for human beings to injure other human beings with disease; for human beings to contaminate the earth’s waters, its land, its air, and its life, with poisonous substances—these are sins”. Bartholomew I, “Keynote Address at the Santa Barbara Symposium, California, November 8, 1997”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 99; Cf. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, “Guest Contribution to the International Journal of Heritage Studies”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 138.

⁴⁹ Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I. “Keynote Address at the Santa Barbara Symposium, California, November 8, 1997”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 97.

⁵⁰ Cf. Bartholomew I, “Homily on the 50th Anniversary, Santa Barbara Church, California, November 8, 1997”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 150.

heavens declare the glory of heaven; the earth proclaims the sovereignty of God; the sea heralds the authority of the Lord; and every material and spiritual creature preaches the magnificence of God at all times"⁵¹.

However, Elizabeth Theokritoff is one of the theologians opposing the anthropocentric concept of creation as Irenean and Bartholomew (among others) embrace. She argues that the Christian view of creation is less anthropocentric, since not only was the world created for humanity, but humanity was also set up for the sake of the world, but this concept of the interdependence between humans and creation seems to the author as being addressed by Bartholomew's afore-mentioned 'cosmic liturgy'.⁵² Regarding Bartholomew's second argument that this world is sacred via its restoration from the *New Adam*, he considers that the world also "fell" when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and were banished from Eden due to their lack of repentance. However, when the Logos was incarnated, sacrificed, risen, ascended to Heaven and sent the Paraclete to humans, all creation was regenerated.

More specifically, in his lectures to the Opening Ceremony of Symposium III in Passau on 17 October 1999, and especially to the International Journal of Heritage Studies in 2006, Bartholomew maintained that it was Adam and Eve who cursed the Earth due to their sin and the lack of repentance, instead of God⁵³. Concerning how their sin corrupt all creation, Father

⁵¹ Bartholomew I, "Article for Seminarium, Vatican, May 2010", in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 129; Cf. Bartholomew I, "Homily at the Blessing of the Amazon River, Symposium VI, July 16, 2006", in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 282.

⁵² J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I*, p. 25.

⁵³ There is a theological belief that when the Adam and Eve committed the original sin, God cursed the earth, and then He banished them from

Makarios (his surname is unknown) contends that it happened because of the position of a man on the creation. Mankind was both king and priest of creation, and because of that, his sin had cosmic consequences by leading the visible world to corruption and fall⁵⁴. However, through the coming of Jesus, who is

Eden. For instance, Irenaeus said: "Immediately after Adam had transgressed, as the Scripture relates, He pronounced no curse against Adam personally, but against the ground, in reference to his works, as a certain person among the ancients has observed: 'God did indeed transfer the curse to the earth, that it might not remain in man'. But Man received, as the punishment of his transgression, the toilsome task of tilling the earth, and to eat bread in the sweat of his face, and to return to the dust from whence he was taken (...). But the curse in all its fullness fell upon the serpent which had beguiled them", Irenaeus, "Against Heresies" (Book III. Ch. 23:3), in *Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers* (Edinburgh: n.p., 1865), p. 364. Luther also admitted that the earth was cursed by God: "Our body bears the traces of God's wrath, which our sin has deserved. God's wrath also appears on the earth in all creatures" (M. Luther, *Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, (Weimar: Metzler, 1911), Vol. 42, p. 155). However, Bartholomew does disagree with that interpretation of the biblical passage of *Genesis*, 3:17-18, opposing even the understanding of a Holy Father of His Church, Irenaeus. In particular, as he concedes, that passage does not describe a punishment given by God to humans, but instead "the God's communication to humanity about the new ontological interaction" occurred by the human fall (vide: Bartholomew I. "Address at the Opening Ceremony of Symposium III, Passau, October 17, 1999", in J. Chrystavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 88). It practically means that God told to Adam and Eve what they caused: it is they who cursed the earth, not God Himself. In the same vein, as he stated in Santa Barbara, even today, God does not punish people via ecological catastrophes, but people pay the price of their arrogant behavior against nature. Therefore, through his theology (or better his theological interpretation), Bartholomew "exculpates" God for any environmental issue, putting all blame into egoistic humans.

⁵⁴ Father Makarios (unknown surname), "The Monk and Nature in the Orthodox Tradition", in *Inter-Orthodox Conference on Environmental*

symbolically called *New Adam*, all of the creation is sanctified anew. This belief is expressed by the Feast of Baptism of Jesus Christ, the Theophany, on 6 January, which represents the perfect obedience of *New Adam* (Jesus) to God, and the restoration of cosmic order (which was ‘disturbed’ by the original sin of Adam and Eve, and their decision to abandon God)⁵⁵. To the hymnology of this Feast, all creation is sanctified: “The nature of waters is sanctified, the earth is blessed, and the heavens are enlightened (...) so that by the elements of creation, and by the angels, and by human beings, by things both visible and invisible, God’s most holy name may be glorified”⁵⁶.

Moreover, as Bartholomew maintained in his lecture for Seminarium [a theological Journal of Vatican] in Vatican in May 2010, the creation—through the Transfiguration of Jesus—has also been blessed and re-gifted its sacred hypostasis⁵⁷. This “re-acquisition” by grace of sacredness of *κτίσις* is called *cosmic transfiguration*, and is expressed in the Feast of Christ’s Transfiguration performed in the Eastern Orthodox Church, and as Bartholomew notes, according to the hymns of the day, the divine (uncreated) light and transformative power of Jesus is “extended” to the *ecumene*: “Today, on Mt. Tabor, in the manifestation of your light, O Lord, You were unaltered from the light of the unbegotten Father. We have seen the Father as light, and the Spirit as light, guiding light the entire creation”⁵⁸.

Protection “So that God’s Creation Might Live 2. Istanbul: Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and WFF,1992), p. 43.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Bartholomew I, “Article for Seminarium”, Vatican, May 2010”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, pp. 130-132.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 131.

3.2 Suggestions for overcoming the Ecological Crisis

An important question remains regarding the views of Bartholomew I: how could people overcome this ecological crisis and be in harmony with God and with of God (i.e. creation)? In other words, how could they be led from the state of *παρὰ φύσιν* (*contra naturam*)—where they have been driven by their free decision to banish the grace of God from their lives—to the state of *ὑπὲρ φύσιν* (*super naturam*), or *τελείωσις* (perfection), or *θέωσις* (*theosis*)—which is their mission, or better their *raison-d'être* (according to *Mat., 5:48; 1 Corint., 5:20; and Jacob, 1:4*)—so that, they would restore their relations with God and His *κτίσις*?

The Ecumenical Patriarch suggests two ways which could fulfill it: i. via the participation in the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church, and ii. via *ascesis* (asceticism). To him, this is the specific contribution of the Orthodoxy to the call for the environmental protection⁵⁹. As far as the first way is concerned, as Bartholomew I declared at the Official Presentation of the Sophie Prize in Oslo on 12 June 2002, through *anaphora*, a part of the Sacrament of Eucharist in the Eastern Orthodox liturgy (where the priest praying to the God “in offering to Thee, Thine own [gifts] from Thine own, in all and through all—we praise Thee, we bless Thee, and give thanks to Thee”) all creation is embraced and blessed. By extension, it demonstrates how the Church cares for the ecosystem⁶⁰. More characteristically, as the priest saying this prayer, he offers as Thanksgiving a piece of bread and a little wine to God representing all creation,

⁵⁹ Bartholomew I, “Address to the Scenic Hudson, New York, November 23, 2000”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 111.

⁶⁰ Bartholomew I, “Official Presentation of the Sophie Prize”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 75.

recognizing that this gift comes from Him because He is the *κτίστης* (creator) of the earth.

Moreover, when he completes this sacrament, God is believed to bless all creation, and to make Himself present through it⁶¹, transforming the bread into His Body and the wine into His Blood (transubstantiation). Afterwards, priests and laymen receive this *Holy Communion εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον* (“for the deliverance of sins and for eternal life”), uniting sacramentally (by grace) with Godman Jesus (and with His Father and Holy Spirit, because where the Logos is, there His Father and Holy Spirit are). This sacrament restores the relations between God and humans since humans repented (*μετανοημένοι*, i.e. having changed the way of their thinking and their lifestyle) and, filled with love for God, one another and all creation, return to Him, and live in harmony with him and with his blessed creation⁶².

As Bartholomew says characteristically for the relation between Eucharist and creation, “[via the Sacrament of Eucharist], we care for the plants, and for the animals, for the trees and for the rivers, for the mountains and for the seas, for all human beings and for the whole natural environment ... [Plus], creation on the one hand and humanity on the other hand, the one that encompasses and the one that is encompassed, cooperate and correspond ... As humanity offers creation in the act of priestly service and sacrifice to God, so also does creation offer itself in return as a gift to humanity.

⁶¹ Bartholomew I, “Keynote Address at the Santa Barbara Symposium, California, November 8, 1997”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 97.

⁶² Cf. *ibid*; Bartholomew I, “Address to the Scenic Hudson, New York, November 23, 2000”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, 112; Bartholomew I, “Guest Contribution to the International Journal of Heritage Studies”, in *ibid*, p. 126; Bartholomew I, “Article for Seminarium, Vatican, May 2010”, in *ibid*, pp. 132-134.

Then everything becomes the exchange, abundance and a fulfillment of love”⁶³.

With respect to *ascesis* (asceticism), it could help overcome environmental crisis - as Bartholomew maintains - by practicing what is called to the Orthodox Tradition as *ἐγκράτεια* (self-control) and sharing all resources with our fellow-humans as they are also a part of creation⁶⁴.

According to Chryssavgis, the characteristics of the Orthodox asceticism are: “i. travelling light; ii. relinquishing our desire to control; iii. reconciling and creating bonds with people; iv. making our communities less savage; stopping to hurt our environment; living simply (by not complicating our relationships with others and consuming less), and simply living (not competing against one another and against nature, in order to survive; the ethics of the risen Christ lie not in the ‘survival of the fittest’ but in His invitation: ‘Take, eat, this is my body, broken ... Drink of this all of you, this is my blood, shed ... for the life of the world’)”⁶⁵. As he characteristically mentioned

⁶³ Bartholomew I, “Official Presentation of the Sophie Prize”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 75.

⁶⁴ Clement of Alexandria, *Christ the Educator*, (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1954), p. 37. Clement of Alexandria, nineteen centuries ago, stated about it: “It is God Himself Who brought our race to possession of things in common, first by sharing Himself and by sending His Word to all men alike, and by making all things for all. Therefore, everything is in common, and the rich should not grasp a greater share. The expression, ‘I own something and have more than enough; why should I not enjoy it?’ is not worthy of man nor does it indicate any community feeling. The alternative expression however does: ‘I have something, why should I not share it with those in need?’ Such a one is the right path, and fulfills the command: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”.

⁶⁵ J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I*, p. 31.

in his lecture to the Scenic Hudson⁶⁶ in New York on 13 November 2000, in talking about the impact of an Orthodox monk, Bartholomew explained, “the Orthodox ascetic life is not an escape from society and the world, but a way of self-sufficient social life and behavior, which leads to a reasonable use and not an abuse of material goods”⁶⁷. Furthermore, asceticism is regarded a fruit of *metanoia*, that helps people realize their precise position and attitude to the creation, rediscovering the meaning of the Divine commandment “work and keep Eden”, which is by no means to dominate and to abuse creation, but to use it in a respectful way, by considering it their home—as he highlighted in his lecture at the Opening Ceremony of Symposium II in Trabzon on 20 September 1997, explaining the etymology of “ecology” (οἶκος + λόγος)⁶⁸.

⁶⁶ It is a non-profit organization which is responsible for the protection of the Hudson River and the Hudson River Valley of New York State. V. *Scenic Hudson* [official website] (<http://www.scenichudson.org/>, 1/6/2014, 6:53).

⁶⁷ Bartholomew I, “Address to the Scenic Hudson, New York, November 13, 2000”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 111.

⁶⁸ Idem, “Address at the Opening Ceremony of Symposium II, Trabzon, Turkey, September 20, 1997”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 80: “The first part of the word ‘ecology’ is derived from the Greek word *oikos* [οἶκος], meaning our ‘home’. There is more to our ‘home’ than people, land, water, plants and animals. That is the spirit of the term. Yet, people rarely take time to look at the beauty of this world or to feel the spiritual connection between our surroundings and us. In order to change our behavior toward the ‘home’ we all share, we must rediscover spiritual links that many have been lost, and reassert human values in our behavior”.

4 The Contribution of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to Ecology within the World Council of Churches

As demonstrated in the first chapter, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, through the initiatives of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the generous sponsorships of Ms. Maria Becket, organized eight international symposia to shed light on the current environmental issues related to the world's waters. These symposia were also under the patronage of political leaders of international esteem, such as the Presidents of the European Commission, as well as the General Secretary of the United Nations (Kofi Annan). The collaboration of these leaders, representing the European Union and the International nations, does demonstrate the international recognition and acknowledgment of the initiatives and activities of Bartholomew I on ecology, and his transparent influence on the United Nations.

The goal of this chapter is to examine if and how the current Ecumenical Patriarch has influenced the World Council of Churches to consider his theological views and initiatives on ecology, once it is addressed to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) annual Conferences of the Parties (COPS). The World Council of Churches (WCC) began working on the climate change issues in 1988⁶⁹, one year before having adopted the initiative of the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrius I to establish the 1st of September as an ecumenical day for prayers for the protection and the preservation of the environment, and it has participated in the UNFCCC Conferences since 1995.

⁶⁹ G. Kerber, "International Advocacy for climate justice", in Robin Veldman, Andrew Szasz and Randolph Haluza-DeLay, *How the World's Religions Are Responding to Climate Change: Social Scientific Investigations* (London, New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 279.

In October 2004, the WCC participants in a consultation on “Climate and Water: Common Gifts, Related Gifts” prepared a discussion paper, which presented to the Conference of Parties (COP 10) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, on *Moving Beyond Kyoto with Equity, Justice and Solidarity*. This included an analysis of environmental issues of that period, as well as their positions for the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. In their paper, among others, they highlighted the need to “develop policies related to the climate and water”⁷⁰, as they observed that there were “increased risks related to water resources due to a changing climate and of some undesirable feedbacks of the protection of water resources and the provision of fresh water”⁷¹. The Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew convened five international symposia (under the joint auspices of the President the European Commission, and Prince Phillip II of the UK) from 1995 to 2002 with participants from all over the world—including scientists, church, and political leaders. The WCC adopted this concern from some of the initiatives of the Ecumenical Patriarch in that field.

Also, the authors (of this paper), and of the WCC statement “Climate Justice For all” addressed to the COP12 of the UNFCCC held in Nairobi in 2006 consider that the “protection of the environment is both a moral responsibility and a spiritual answer to the Divine invitation to humanity”⁷². Such statement also demonstrates the influence of the WCC from the theological view of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I (and in this case of Pope John Paul II as well). As shown in the

⁷⁰ A discussion paper from the World Council of Churches: “Moving Beyond Kyoto with Equity, Justice and Solidarity”, Netherlands, 2004, p. 3.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., p. 5; cf. World Council of Churches, “Once More, a Plea for Immediate Action “Climate Justice for All” (Statement addressed to the High-Level Ministerial Segment of the 17th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, 2011) .

first chapter, it was John Paul II and Bartholomew I who, in their joint declaration on environmental ethics at the Palazzo Ducale in Venice and by John II (via satellite connection) at the Vatican on 10 June 2002, called anyone to respect the ecosystem, based on moral and spiritual values, since “the problem [i.e. the ecological crisis] is not simply economic and technological; it is moral and spiritual”⁷³.

The October 2002 WCC statement, addressed to the 8th session of the Conference of Parties (COP8) to the UNFCCC in New Delhi, calls the UN to help *de facto* the most affected victims of climate change, underlining that “the consequences of climate change further accentuate the deep injustices, which exist between industrialized and developing countries.” This statement is influenced by the initiative of the Ecumenical Patriarch to convene the fourth symposium of the Religious and Scientific Committee under the joint patronage of Romano Prodi in June 2002, emphasizing the need to make people of both developed and underdeveloped countries comprehend the need for ecological moral codes to protect the environment⁷⁴.

The 1997 WCC statement addressed to the High-Level Segment of the 3rd Session of the Conference of Parties (COP 3) to the UNFCCC in Kyoto, the 2001 WCC statement addressed to the COP 7 to the UNFCCC in Marrakech, and the 2007 WCC statement “This far and no further: Act fast and act now!” addressed to the COP 13) to the UNFCCC in Bali give an emphasis - among others - on the issue of over-consumption, which, as they concede, threatens the ecological balance and the

⁷³ “Common Declaration of Environmental Ethics by Pope John Paul II and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I*, p. 309.

⁷⁴ N. Ascherson, A. Marshall (eds.), *The Adriatic Sea: A Sea of Unity at Risk, A Unity of Purpose* (Athens: Science and Environment, 2003).

preservation of earth⁷⁵. Although all Christian denominations and religions oppose over-consumption, it is Bartholomew who has particularly highlighted the importance of asceticism as a solution to overcome this ecological crisis⁷⁶, considering it a specific contribution of the Orthodoxy to ecology, as seen in the second chapter.

In the end, the 2000 and 2007 and 2009 WCC statements addressed to the COP6, the COP13, and the COP15 to the UNFCCC respectively also revealed that the WCC has considered three other principles playing a primordial role from the theological perspective of Bartholomew: the

⁷⁵ World Council of Churches, "Statement to the High-Level Segment of the 3rd Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change", Kyoto, 1997; World Council of Churches, "Statement to the High-Level Segment of the 7th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change", Mararrach, 2001; World Council of Churches, "Statement to the High-Level Segment of the 13th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change", Bali, 2007.

⁷⁶ Cf.: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, "Address during the Official Opening of the First International Symposium 'Revelation and the Environment AD 95-1995', September 22, 1995", in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I*, pp. 152-153; Message of the Orthodox Primates. "Message of the Primates of the Orthodox Church on the island of Patmos first international symposium, September 26, 1995", in *ibid*, p. 162; Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. "Creator and Creation", in *ibid*, 197; Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. "A Rich Heritage: Address during the environmental symposium, Santa Barbara, November 8, 1997", in *ibid*, pp. 219-220; Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. "The Danube: A River of Life", in *ibid*, pp. 252-254; Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, "An Award for the Past: Toast during the luncheon organized by Scenic Hudson in New York, November 12, 2000", in *ibid*, pp. 288-290; Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, "A Sea at Risk, A Unity of Purpose", in *ibid*, pp. 302, 304-305; Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, "The Sophie Prize", in *ibid*, p. 314.

understanding of the ecological calamity as a sin (WCC, 2000)⁷⁷, the need of “repentance” (WCC, 2000)⁷⁸ and the call of inner transformation (WCC, 2009)⁷⁹. As for the spiritual “criminalization” of ecological catastrophe, it was mentioned in the second chapter that Bartholomew characterized emphatically ecological crisis with sin in the Conference St. Barbara in 1997: “To commit a crime against the natural world is a sin”⁸⁰.

However, he has related sin with the environmental violation since 1994 (vide: “Encyclical Letter, September 1, 1994,⁸¹ and Christmas Encyclical Message⁸²; Address to the Conference on Peace and Tolerance in Turkey in 1994⁸³). With regards to the need of repentance, Bartholomew supported that in a plethora of conferences and lectures he organized, or to which he has invited, such as at i. a greeting during the symposium at Holy Trinity Monastery in Halki in 1992⁸⁴; ii. the closing remarks at

⁷⁷ World Council of Churches, “The Atmosphere as Global Commons Responsible Caring and Equitable Sharing” (WCC Statement addressed to the 6th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2000).

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ World Council of Churches, “A Sign of Hope for the Future for People of Good Will” (WCC Statement to the 15th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2009).

⁸⁰ Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. “Article for Seminarium, Vatican, May 2010”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 138.

⁸¹ Idem, “Encyclical Letter, September 1, 1994”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I*, p. 45.

⁸² Idem, “Christmas Encyclical Message, 1994”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer*, p. 130.

⁸³ Idem, “Peace and Tolerance: Address to the Conference on Peace and Tolerance organized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and held in Istanbul, February 8, 1994”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer*, p. 111.

⁸⁴ Idem, “The Power of Joint Prayer and Action”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer*, p. 81.

the Conference on Peace and Tolerance in Constantinople in 1994⁸⁵; iii. his address during the official opening of the first international symposium, “Revelation and the Environment AD 95-1995” in 1995⁸⁶; vi. his welcome address at the inauguration of the fourth summer seminar on Halki in 1997⁸⁷; v. the Opening Address of the Fourth Summer Seminar in Halki in 1997⁸⁸; and vi. Santa Barbara Symposium in California in 1997⁸⁹.

Finally, regarding with the call for inner transformation as expressed in the 2009 WCC statement to the COP9, it is another example showing how much the World Council of Churches has been influenced by the theology of the Eastern Orthodox Church as declared with an emphatic way by the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. As the current Primate of the Eastern Orthodox Church maintains, after asserting that the creation was made beautiful by God, “from this fundamental belief in the sacredness and beauty of all creation, the Orthodox Church articulates its crucial concept of cosmic transfiguration. This emphasis of Orthodox theology on personal and cosmic transfiguration is especially apparent in its liturgical feasts. The Feast of Christ’s Transfiguration highlights the sacredness of all creation, which receives and offers a foretaste of the final resurrection and restoration of all things in the age to come”⁹⁰.

⁸⁵ Idem, “Metanoia: A New Vision”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer*, pp. 115-116.

⁸⁶ Idem, “Relevation and the Environment”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer*, pp. 152-153.

⁸⁷ Idem, “Environment and Justice”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer*, pp. 192-193.

⁸⁸ Idem, “Opening Address, Fourth Summer Seminar, Halki, June 25, 1997”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer*, pp. 164-165.

⁸⁹ Idem, “Keynote Address at the Santa Barbara Symposium, California, November 8, 1997”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer*, pp. 98-99.

⁹⁰ Idem, “Reading the Book of Nature”, in J. Chryssavgis (ed.), *Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer*, p. 130. For further information about the

5 Conclusions

Through the efforts of the Ecumenical Patriarch, the Orthodox Church has been internationally identified in the struggle for the protection of the environment. From the year of his elevation to the Patriarchal Throne to 2009, he has organized a plethora of international conferences and eight symposia, and he has also attended numerous of other ones as a guest and a central lecturer. Bartholomew is the first religious leader who has collaborated with the European Commission and the United Nations, to promote the need of *metanoia* - the change of human lifestyle expressed by asceticism and participation in the Sacraments, especially Holy Communion - as a way to preserve nature.

As shown, what has prompted him to play an active role in ecology - to make him repeat on many occasions the phrase “we cannot remain idle”⁹¹ - in the international arena is his strong theological conviction that humans have to protect the creation of God according to the Divine Commandment, “work and keep” the earth’s garden (*Gen.*, 2:15), and the belief that all creation is sacred via the concept of “cosmic liturgy” as analyzed. According to this view, all those disturbing the ecological balance commit a sin, and they are even heretics, as they destroy a part of the sacred creation through *anthropomorphism*. His ideas were elucidated by the World Council of Churches and expressed to the 6th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Hague. Demonstrating his influential theological vision to the WCC, his perspectives on repentance, asceticism,

concept of Transfiguration from the Orthodox perspective, vide: Krueger, Frederick (ed), *Transfiguring the World*, (Santa Rosa: The Orthodox Fellowship of the Transfiguration, 2006).

⁹¹ J. Chryssavgis (ed), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, p. 18.

cosmic transformation and cosmic liturgy were largely adopted by this International Organization.

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