

“Ists” and “Isms”

A true Christian holds to no “Isms”, but only cleaves to the church and Jesus Christ.

What are some of the “ists” and “isms” that are dangerous to the Orthodoxy nowadays? We live in a world full of slogans and movements, using words that are largely meaningless but still extremely powerful because they incite an almost fanatical bigotry and blindness.

The greatest “isms” that affects Orthodox Christians and slays their souls is “**Secularism**”. If the Orthodox Christian is living in the heart, according to the purpose of his life, and obedience to the church, with humility and love, he will not be prone to believe or participate in any of the other “ists” and “isms”, below.

Certainly, “**Ecumenism**” and “**Syncretism**” must be the next highest on this list. Ecumenism is borne out of secularism and the severe dogmatic confusion about where the church is and where the church isn’t and how we are saved. It is also born out of political expediency and the boastful pride of life and indifference to truth. This is a very dangerous “ism”, and a father of many other heresies and “isms”, including some below.

There is also “**Phyletism**”. It’s no secret that there are Orthodox Christians who identify more with their ethnic origin or their political persuasion than they do with the church. This has caused wars, and persecution, and dogmatic errors. This is a great danger for the church, because often the expression of this “ism” is exactly opposite of the greatest commandments, to love God and neighbor.

In America it seems like some consider “**Feminism**” to be more their religion than the Orthodox faith. For them everything is a kind of cultural Marxism, where there are people who have privilege and people who do not, and their peers have taught them to think of the church as the privileged.

There is a made-up idea – from certain Orthodox Christians were influenced by the world - and this made up idea – “fundamentalism” - is caustic to their soul and anyone who would listen to their ideas. This “ism” is usually mentioned in a pejorative accusation against by those who disagree with the beliefs and practices of those that they should consider their brethren, in the almost semantically meaningless phrase: “**Orthodox Fundamentalism**”. No one can really define that word. For some that

word means those who love monasticism or fasting according to the typicon, or serve the services according to the typicon. For some that means some those who actually believe that the Orthodox laws and dogmas regarding sexual morality actually apply in this modern era. I have never seen the word used except in a pejorative sense from those who disagree with the beliefs and practices of those that they should consider their brethren.

There are also those who subscribe to **“homosexuality”**. Those with eyes to see if seeing what this heresy and blasphemy have done to the Roman Catholics, and there are incursions being made in the Orthodox Church. It remains to be seen if there will be those who are strong enough to fight off this plague.

They are too many Orthodox who allow their understanding of the world to influence their understanding of the church, when it must always be the other way around. Let us call this grave error **“modernism”**. If we understand the church (that is, if we not only understand her dogma and practices but we do them with purpose, that purpose being union with God and eternal life), we will then understand the world in the context of what is truly what is not true.

If we listen to the world with it “ists” and “isms”, we will be very lost.

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