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NATIONALIST AND TRINITARIAN VISIONS OF THE CHURCH IN THE THEOLOGY OF DUMITRU STĂNILOAE

Keywords: *Stăniloae, ecclesiology, ecumenicism, Romanian Orthodox Church, nationalism.*

Abstract

This article examines ideas about human personhood, the Church, and ecumenicism in the thought of the Romanian theologian Dumitru Stăniloae (1903-1993). It argues that Stăniloae developed his thinking on these issues during two different periods of his life. His interwar writings discuss the debates in nationalist terms, while those works written in the 1970s and 1980s describe Christian unity through a Trinitarian framework. Despite the extremely different logic behind them, Stăniloae's two ecclesial models are remarkably similar. In order to emphasize how profoundly historical context has shaped Orthodox thinking about the Church, the article briefly compares Stăniloae's work to that of Nikolai Afanasiev, Vladimir Lossky, and John Zizioulas, three Orthodox theologians who wrote extensively about ecclesiology and ecumenicism.

During the Cold War, Father Dumitru Stăniloae (1903-1993) guided Romanian Orthodoxy's relationship with global Christianity through ecumenical movements such as the World Council of Churches¹. His notion of Christian unity that resembles relationships within the Trinity and his emphasis on unity that is both Eucharistic and doctrinal have greatly enriched Orthodox ecclesiology². Inside Romania his influence has been profound, and his writings are still a major point of reference for priests and educated lay Christians alike³. Despite his influence, Stăniloae's corpus has received far too little critical scrutiny, and the purpose of this article is to highlight several trends in Stăniloae's thought which are obscured when one looks only at his post-war writings. Like everyone else, theologians are shaped by their environment and by the resources of the intellectual climate in which they write. Stăniloae developed his thinking about

¹ Ion BRIA, *Teologia ortodoxă în România contemporană*, Ed. Trinitas, Iași, 2003, pp. 82-90.

² Some of Stăniloae's most profound thinking about ecclesiology can be found in Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Theology and the Church*, trans. Robert Barringer, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 1980.

³ Radu Bordeianu notes that „In Romania Stăniloae is treated as a myth, being less quoted in context than misquoted or simply misrepresented. Ideas that seem to the speaker to sound Orthodox are attributed to Stăniloae without any references”. Radu BORDEIANU, *Dumitru Stăniloae: An Ecumenical Ecclesiology*, T&T Clark, London, 2011, pp. 4-5.

human personhood, the Church, and ecumenicism during two different periods of his life. Prior to 1945, Stăniloae used the vocabulary of xenophobic nationalism and cultural chauvinism which dominated interwar Orthodox theology when writing about ecclesiology and ecumenicism. The model of the Church which he developed during the 1970s and 1980s was remarkably similar to Stăniloae's earlier ideas, but this time it was couched in Trinitarian language.

Nationalism and Theology in Interwar Romania

Ever since the Romanian state gained independence in 1877, the goal of the Romanian national movement was to unify all of those territories in which Romanian-speakers lived. Above all, this meant uniting Transylvania and Bessarabia with Old Kingdom Romania, a dream which was realized in 1918⁴. Once unity was achieved, nationalists of both liberal and radical persuasions turned their attention to creating an ethnically homogeneous nation-state which only Romanians controlled⁵. The Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC) had played a leading role in the national movement during the nineteenth century, and it fought to maintain this influence in the secular state of the 1920s and 1930s⁶. This was not always easy. Greater Romania was largely the creation of the Western powers, whose Minorities Treaties demanded freedom of religion and equal rights for minority populations. The jurisdictional rights of Uniate, Catholic and German Evangelical churches had to be renegotiated after 1918; a process culminating in part in the concordat with the Vatican in 1927⁷. The membership of neo-Protestant groups also grew exponentially during the 1920s, sparking panic among many Orthodox clergy about sectarianism and foreign influences⁸.

⁴ Keith HITCHINS, *A Nation Affirmed: The Romanian National Movement in Transylvania, 1860-1914*, Encyclopaedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1999.

⁵ Irina LIVEZEANU, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation-Building and Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1995; Vladimir SOLONARI, *Purifying the Nation: Population Exchange and Ethnic Cleansing in Nazi-Allied Romania*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2009.

⁶ Hans-Christian MANER, *Multikonfessionalität und neue Staatlichkeit: orthodoxe, griechisch-katholische und römisch-katholische Kirche in Siebenbürgen und Altruromanien zwischen den Weltkriegen (1918-1940)*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, 2007, pp. 69-77, 102-165; Gheorghe URSUL, „From Political Freedom to Religious Independence: The Romanian Orthodox Church, 1877-1925”, in: Stephen FISCHER-GALAȚI, Gheorghe URSUL (eds.), *Romania Between East and West*, Boulder, CO, East European Monographs, 1982, pp. 217-244; Silviu HARITON, „Ortodoxie și naționalism în secolul al XIX-lea românesc: contribuții, teme, și potențial de cercetare”, in: *Analele Universității București*, LVI (2007), pp. 60-77.

⁷ R. Chris DAVIS, *Certifiably Romanian: National Belonging and Contested Identity of the Moldavian Csangos, 1923-1985*, PhD Thesis, St Antony's College, University of Oxford, 2012, pp. 46-52.

⁸ Following normal Romanian usage, I use the term „neo-protestant” to refer to Evangelical Protestant groups, especially Baptists, Brethren (*Creștini după Evanghelie*) and Pentecostals, who were also often known as Repenters (*Pocăiți*). The prefix serves to distinguish these

The ROC itself was in flux during this period, as Orthodox believers from the new territories had to be integrated into the church. These negotiations lasted six years, ending only when the church was officially declared a Patriarchate in 1925⁹. Priests complained about the „shortages, dissatisfaction, difficulties, rivalries, intrigues and hostilities” that attended the massive reorganization¹⁰. These changes were not necessarily all negative, as a new seminary was opened at Chişinău in 1926 and older seminaries were professionalized with updated textbooks and better trained staff¹¹. The young Stăniloae benefited greatly from these changes. Born in a small village in Transylvania under Austro-Hungarian rule, he attended high school in Braşov and then after Transylvania's incorporation into Greater Romania he moved first to Bucharest to study literature and then to Cernăuţi for theology. The Metropolitan of Sibiu, Nicolae Bălan, helped him win grants to travel to Athens, Munich, Berlin and Paris in 1928-30, and he completed his doctorate at Cernăuţi in 1929¹². Thanks to these studies, Stăniloae became part of a generation of well-travelled and highly educated young theologians who together revolutionized Romanian theology, bringing mystical theology back into the seminaries and developing what later came to be known as the neo-Patristic synthesis in Orthodox theology¹³.

Stăniloae's doctoral dissertation gives some clue as to what seminaries were teaching their students in the 1920s. Stăniloae wrote about the seventeenth century Metropolitan Dosoftei (1624-1693), who is one of the heroes of the ROC because of his patronage of the Romanian language and of Romanian monasteries. The published version is short and not very impressive, and is written in poetic language very similar to that of nationally-oriented historical fiction

groups from the older, more institutionalized Christian denominations such as the German Evangelical Church and the Hungarian Reformed churches in Transylvania. On the growth of neo-Protestantism, see Adrian STĂNCULESCU, *Romanian Evangelical Christianity: Historical Origins and Development Prior to the Communist Period*, MA Thesis, Trinity International University, 2002. A typical example of Orthodox hostility towards anyone perceived as sectarian is Nae IONESCU, „Preotul Tudor Popescu”, in: *Ideea europeană*, V (1924), 142 p. 4.

⁹ John MCGUCKIN, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to its History, Doctrine, and Spiritual Culture*, Blackwell, Malden MA, Oxford, 2008, p. 68.

¹⁰ Hans-Christian MANER, „Aspects of Modernisation and the Orthodox Church in Romania”, in: Bogdan MURGESCU (ed.), *Romania and Europe: Modernisation as Temptation, Modernisation as Threat*, German-Romanian Academy, Sibiu, 1999, p. 75.

¹¹ M. PĂCURARIU, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, ..., pp. 438-440.

¹² Charles MILLER, *The Gift of the World: An Introduction to the Theology of Dumitru Stăniloae*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 2000, pp. 13-15.

¹³ Among those who received Bălan's scholarships and then went on to prestigious academic careers in Romania were Nicolae Colan, Nicolae Terchilă, Grigorie Marcu, Spiridon Cădea, Liviu Stan, Teodor Bodogae, Corneliu Sărbu, Gheorghe Şoima, Nicolae Mladin and Dumitru Călugar. Mircea PĂCURARIU, „Preotul Profesor şi Academician Dumitru Stăniloae”, in: Ioan I. ICĂ JR., Mircea PĂCURARIU (eds.), *Persoană şi comuniune: Prinos de cinstire Părintelui Profesor Academician Dumitru Stăniloae la împlinirea vârstei de 90 de ani*, Ed. Diecezană, Sibiu, 1993, p. 4.

being produced in the early 1930s¹⁴. Theological seminaries in interwar Romania were known hotbeds of nationalist activity, and were popular recruiting grounds for fascist activists¹⁵. Stăniloae himself always kept his distance from fascism, but was far from hostile to it¹⁶. His early writings show a desire to enter as an Orthodox voice into debates in the secular public sphere. In *Telegraful român*, an ROC newspaper which he edited, Stăniloae commented on issues as varied as education and international relations, but always with the qualification that secular problems were relative and unimportant in comparison with the ultimate questions posed by theology¹⁷. Discussing problems of secular politics was nothing new for *Telegraful român*, which had provided partisan commentaries on such issues as the establishment of Cultural Hearths, Bolshevism, and the Romanian state's concordat with the Vatican in the year before Stăniloae became editor of the newspaper¹⁸. Nor was Stăniloae's willingness to provide theological justifications for partisan political platforms new – as early as 1926 he had used Biblical exegesis to condemn communist attitudes towards private property¹⁹. But the virulence and frequency of his involvement in political issues did change, as did the interaction of specifically church journals such as *Telegraful român* with mainstream secular journals such as *Gândirea*²⁰.

¹⁴ D. STĂNILOAE, *Viața și activitatea patriarhului Dosoftei al Ierusalimului și legăturile lui cu țările românești*, Ed. Autorului, Cernăuți, 1929. Compare, for example, Mihail SADOVEANU, *Viața lui Ștefan Cel Mare*, Ed. Pentru Literatură, Bucharest, 1965. Neither writer borrowed from the other, but the stylistic similarities between the two are remarkable given that Stăniloae was writing a dissertation in theology.

¹⁵ Mirel BĂNICĂ, *Biserica ortodoxă română: stat și societate în anii '30*, Ed. Polirom, Bucharest, 2007, p. 206; National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives, Fond Cristescu Grigore, I.258626, f. 86.

¹⁶ On Stăniloae's politics prior to 1945, see Costion NICOLESCU, *Teologul în cetate: Părintele Stăniloae și aria politică*, Ed. Christiana, Bucharest, 2003.

¹⁷ D. STĂNILOAE, „Aristocrație sufletească”, in: *Telegraful român*, LXXVIII (1931), 85–86, pp. 1–2. Reprinted in: Constantin SCHIFIRNEȚ (ed.), *Națiune și creștinism*, Ed. Elion, Bucharest, 2004, pp. 23–25.

¹⁸ I.U. SORIEU, „Preoțimea în viața politică”, in: *Telegraful român*, LXXVII (1929), 5; E.C. „Inaugurarea unui «Cămin Cultural»”, in: *Telegraful român*, LXXVII (1929), 7; I. MATEIU, „Valoarea concordatului cu Vaticanul”, in: *Telegraful român*, LXXVII (1929), 68.

¹⁹ D. STĂNILOAE, „Munca și proprietatea în Testamentul Nou”, in: *Revista teologică*, XVI (1926), 8–10.

²⁰ This is especially obvious when one takes a *long durée* view of *Telegraful român*. Elena DUNĂREANU, *Literatura în „Telegraful român”: 1853–1973*, Biblioteca „Astra” Sibiu, Sibiu, 1973, pp. 173–190. On the virulence of Stăniloae's articles, cf. Teodor BACONSKY, „Dumitru Stăniloae și capcana clasicizării”, in: Teodor BACONSKY, Bogdan TĂTARU-CAZABAN (eds.), *Dumitru Stăniloae sau paradoxul teologiei*, Ed. Anastasia, Bucharest, 2003, p. 14.

Stăniloae on Ecumenicism during the 1930s

In the decade leading up to the Second World War, Stăniloae used „pragmatism” to argue for the strengthening of the nation-state, all the while insisting that the state must be subordinated to the needs of the Church. „The state is in the service of order and from this point of view is a necessary instrument of God against evil”, he said, but the Church is greater because the law of the kingdom of God is that of grace and love, not of compulsion, and combining them into one institution that carries out secular and sacred tasks, as he argued that the Roman-Catholic church does, undermines the fundamental distinction between law and grace. God’s grace is powerful because it comes through sacrifice; as a gift, not through compulsion. It brings about a far greater good than the state ever could because through love it frees us from the need for law itself²¹. Given humanity’s sinful state, however, Stăniloae argued that only a strong, hierarchical state modeled on Mussolini’s Italy could protect Romanians from the dangers of individualism, Communism and Freemasonry²².

Stăniloae’s approach to church-state relations differed subtly but clearly from those of Nichifor Crainic (1889-1972), a professor of theology, journalist, and extreme nationalist who Stăniloae looked upon as a mentor²³. Throughout the 1930s, Stăniloae wrote frequent articles praising Crainic for his nationalism as well as for his theology²⁴. Crainic used his daily newspaper *Calendarul* (1932-1934) to promote fascism and to attack Freemasonry and the League of Nations²⁵. The „ethnocratic state” which he agitated for was a corporatist dictatorship in which all ethnic minorities would be banished and the ROC would be the only legal church. In stark contrast to Stăniloae’s reliance on grace, not compulsion, Crainic dreamed that „the ethnocratic state will help the church through all

²¹ D. STĂNILOAE, „Cele două împărății”, in: *Gândirea*, XVI (1937), 1, pp. 26-35. Reprinted in: Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Ortodoxie și românism*, Tiparul Tipografiei Arhidiecezane, Sibiu, 1939, pp. 236-269.

²² D. STĂNILOAE, „Necesitatea ierarhiei în viața socială”, in: *Telegraful Român*, LXXXIV (1936), 39, pp. 1-2. Reprinted in: C. SCHIFIRNEȚ, *Națiune și creștinism*, pp. 45-48.

²³ On Crainic’s politics and theology, see Roland CLARK, „Orthodoxy and Nation-Building: Nichifor Crainic and Religious Nationalism in 1920s Romania”, in: *Nationalities Papers*, XL (2012), 4, pp. 525-543; and Roland CLARK, „Nationalism and Orthodoxy: Nichifor Crainic and the Political Culture of the Extreme Right in 1930s Romania”, in: *Nationalities Papers*, XL (2012), 1, pp. 107-126. A more sympathetic account of his theology can be found in Christine HALL, „Pancosmic” Church, *Specific Românesc: Ecclesiological Themes in Nichifor Crainic’s Writings Between 1922 and 1944*, Uppsala Universit  t, Uppsala, 2008.

²⁴ D. STĂNILOAE, „Un atlet al naționalismului creștin”, in: *Telegraful Român*, LXXXII (1934), 14, p. 1; D. STĂNILOAE, „Nichifor Crainic”, in: *Telegraful Român*, LXXXV (1937), 25, pp. 1-2; D. STĂNILOAE, „Ortodoxie și etnocrație”, in: *Telegraful Român*, LXXXVI (1938), 24, p. 1; D. STĂNILOAE, „Pentru un cotidian creștin”, in: *Telegraful Român*, LXXXV (1937), 5, p. 1; D. STĂNILOAE, „Opera teologică a lui Nichifor Crainic”, in: *Gândirea*, XIV (1940), 4, pp. 264-276.

²⁵ Nichifor CRAINIC, *Lupte pentru spiritul nou: Germania și Italia în scrisul meu de la 1932 încoace*, Ed. Cugetarea, Bucharest, 1941.

means available. Its laws will conform with the church's moral teaching, such that the law of Christ will be the law of the state"²⁶. According to Crainic, inter-war Romania was far from God because of the negative influence of secular French culture, Freemasons and Jews²⁷.

In the same way that Stăniloae saw state power as God's good but limited instrument for bringing salvation to mankind, he also understood national communities as collectivities through which humans came to God. „This world is modeled according to its eternal content”, he argued, and „all things in it are eternally imagined by God”, including nations. Stăniloae maintained that „behind every national type an eternal divine model acts, through which that nation realizes itself most fully”²⁸. He believed that nations were important because „the heavenly model of each man is the model of a concrete, historical human being”, and „national characteristics themselves constitute humanity in a certain form”²⁹. Prefiguring his later ideas about personhood as relational, Stăniloae asserted in 1935 that an individual person can only be understood in terms of their relationship to others, and through membership of a larger collectivity³⁰. Every human – even Adam and Eve – has had a nation, and „a pure human, without national colorings, is an abstraction”³¹. A nation is „an ontological category” for Stăniloae, and while salvation does not come *through* the nation, it does occur *in* the nation:

„We are not saved by fleeing from what is natural, floating in an air of passivity, or of theoretical, ecumenical faith and love. Instead, we are saved by fulfilling what is required of us by our time and place in the cycle of life which God has placed us in. ... We are not saved by fleeing from the people (*neam*) into which we were born, for otherwise Jesus would have left the Jews at the earliest opportunity”³².

The ecclesiological and ecumenical implications of Stăniloae's nationalism become clear in his writings on the Uniate Church in Transylvania. Stăniloae claimed that Uniate believers had been brainwashed by Jesuits and that the rupture between the ROC and the Unites was and remained illegitimate³³. In early

²⁶ Nichifor CRAINIC, *Programul Statului etnocratic*, Tipografia Ziarului „Universul”, Bucharest, 1938, p. 24. cf. Nichifor CRAINIC, *Ortodoxie și etnografie*, Ed. Cugetarea, Bucharest, 1937.

²⁷ Nichifor CRAINIC, „Tradiție și internaționalism”, in: *Gândirea*, VIII (1928), 2, pp. 76-77.

²⁸ D. STĂNILOAE, *Ortodoxie și românism*, pp. 35-44.

²⁹ D. STĂNILOAE, „Ortodoxie și națiune”, in: *Gândirea*, XIV (1935), 2, p. 78. Reprinted in: D. STĂNILOAE, *Ortodoxie și românism*, pp. 5-34.

³⁰ D. STĂNILOAE, „Ortodoxie și națiune”, pp. 76-78.

³¹ D. STĂNILOAE, *Ortodoxie și românism*, p. 42.

³² D. STĂNILOAE, *Ortodoxie și românism*, p. 173.

³³ D. STĂNILOAE, „Iezuiții, dascălii uniției”, in: *Telegraful Român*, LXXXIII (Feb 3, 1935), 6, pp. 1-2; D. STĂNILOAE, „Papagalii iezuiților”, in: *Telegraful Român*, LXXXIII (Mar 10, 1935), 11, pp. 1-2. Stăniloae's attitude towards the Uniates never softened, and an excellent discussion of his post-war writings on the Uniate Church can be found in Ronald G. ROBERSON, „Dumitru Stăniloae on Christian Unity”, in: Lucian TURCESCU (ed.), *Dumitru Stăni-*

1931, he piggy-backed on a well-publicized debate over whether one could be both Catholic and Romanian³⁴. Declaring himself in support of the ultra-nationalist philosopher Nae Ionescu (1890-1940), Stăniloae argued that Orthodoxy was so different from Catholicism that a „Catholic Romanian” was literally unthinkable. Attacking Ionescu’s opponent, the Catholic theologian Iosif Frollo (1886-1966), he asserted that Frollo was exhibiting „the Catholic tendency of simplifying reality”, and that his logic was simply „Aristotelian-Scholastic imperialism grafted onto a plan separated from the reality of general concepts”³⁵. Sweeping generalizations such as this were typical of the way that Stăniloae referred to Western theology during the interwar period. He did not begin to seriously engage with Western theologians until his 1943 study on Christology, and even then he quoted selectively while often making derogatory criticisms of the scholars he was drawing upon³⁶.

Stăniloae’s dislike of Uniates and Catholics did not mean that he was unable to appreciate some aspects of Western Christianity. Also in 1931, he produced a book-length study on post-war Catholicism which portrayed the Vatican as an international organization comparable to the League of Nations³⁷. Amongst nationalist Romanians at this time, the words „international organization” evoked images of Jews, freemasons, and communists³⁸. Given this environment, Stăniloae’s treatment of Catholicism was remarkably balanced. Catholic tolerance of Freemasonry was not something to be imitated, he said, but the Catholic offices at the League of Nations were doing important work *even if* the latter was a Masonic creation³⁹. Similarly, although the church newspaper which he edited completely ignored the visits of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner to Romania in March 1935, it did carry several articles about the Anglican-Orthodox confer-

loae: *Tradition and Modernity in Theology*, The Center for Romanian Studies, Iași, 2002, pp. 113-117.

³⁴ Nae IONESCU, „A fi bun român”, in: *Cuvântul*, VI (Nov 1, 1930), 1987, p. 1; Nae IONESCU, „Noi și catolicismul”, in: *Cuvântul*, VI (Nov 2, 1930), 1988, p. 1; Nae IONESCU, „Sortii de izbândă ai noiei offensive catolice”, in: *Gândul* VI (Nov 5, 1930), 1991, p. 1. On this debate, see R.Ch. DAVIS, *Certifiably Romanian*, pp. 60-65; Zigu ORNEA, *Anii treizeci: extrema dreaptă românească*, Ed. Fundației Culturale Române, Bucharest, 1995, pp. 91-94.

³⁵ D. STĂNILOAE, „Între românism și catolicism”, in: *Telegraful roman*, LXXVIII (1930), 86, pp. 1-2; D. STĂNILOAE, „Între ortodoxie și catolicism”, in: *Telegraful roman*, LXXVIII (1930), 88, pp. 1-2. Both reprinted in: C. SCHIFIRNEȚ, *Națiune și creștinism*, pp. 14-23.

³⁶ D. STĂNILOAE, *Iisus Hristos sau restaurarea omului*, Ed. Omniscop, Craiova, 1993.

³⁷ D. STĂNILOAE, *Catholicismul de după război*, Sibiu, 1931.

³⁸ Roger LAMBELIN, *Protocoalele înțelepților sionului*, trans. Ion Moța, Ed. „Libertatea”, Orăștie, 1923; Romulus DAMIAN, „O operă păcătoasă”, in: *Apărarea națională* (Arad), II (Feb 2, 1930), 5, p. 1; Nicolae ANDRIEȘ, „Liga Națiunilor, sau Liga Masonilor?”, in: *Calendarul*, I (Nov 1, 1932), 206, p. 3.

³⁹ D. STĂNILOAE, „Dl. I.G. Savin și ... occidentalul”, in: *Telegraful Român*, LXXXII (1934), 17, p. 3. Reprinted in: C. SCHIFIRNEȚ, *Națiune și creștinism*, pp. 36-38.

ence in Bucharest a couple of months later⁴⁰. The paper expressed concern that the Anglicans had only come to Romania to show off their importance and reminded its readers that Protestantism was an attack on the Church, but was also appreciative of Anglican ecumenical efforts and hoped that they would bring much needed unity⁴¹. The ROC had sent representatives to earlier ecumenical congresses in Stockholm (1925) and Lausanne (1927), and was open – albeit cautiously – to further discussions⁴².

Stăniloae's concern with Romanian national identity, the League of Nations, and Freemasonry makes sense when one realizes that these were issues that preoccupied many of his peers and elders. Nae Ionescu was deeply suspicious of the ecumenical meetings at Stockholm and Geneva that took place during the 1920s. He was convinced that what had been presented as „an attempt to bring the Christian churches closer together”, was actually a Protestant offensive aimed at Eastern Orthodoxy, which was perceived as „weaker, and hence easier to conquer”⁴³. For this reason, Nichifor Crainic was very hostile to existing Balkan treaties even while he wanted to create regional alliances along fascist lines⁴⁴. Likewise, the theologian Ioan Gh. Savin (1885-1973) attacked Freemasonry, Communism and secularism, arguing the Romanian politicians had surrendered to their influence and were leading the country towards disaster through the international treaties that they signed with the Western powers⁴⁵.

Stăniloae was much more open towards internationalism than many of his elders and colleagues, but was still not ready to support it wholeheartedly. „It is well-known that the important men of the peace treaties at Versailles [1918] and Trianon [1920] were Masons”, he said, but „does this mean that the peace treaty is a purely Masonic work?”⁴⁶. These treaties had expanded Romanian territory significantly, so obviously not every international agreement settled by Masons was bad. International organization could even be very useful if one had enough power. By establishing offices at the League of Nations, for example, the

⁴⁰ On these meetings, see Gálfy ZOLTÁN, „O vizită a lui Karl Barth în România”, in: ICĂ JR., Mircea PĂCURARIU (eds.), *Persoană și comuniune*, pp. 285-289; M. PĂCURARIU *Istoria bisericii ortodoxe române*, p. 442.

⁴¹ Tr. SCOROBET, „Apropierea anglo-ortodoxă”, in: *Telegraful Român*, LXXXIII (1935), 22, p. 1.

⁴² M. PĂCURARIU *Istoria bisericii ortodoxe române*, p. 442.

⁴³ Nae IONESCU, „Duminică”, in: *Cuvântul*, III, (May 2, 1926), 446. Reprinted in: Nae IONESCU, *Roza Vânturilor*, Ed. Roza Vânturilor, Bucharest, 1990, pp. 3-5.

⁴⁴ Nichifor CRAINIC, „Confederația statelor dunărene”, in: *Calendarul*, I (Mar 12, 1932), 98, p. 1; Nichifor CRAINIC, „Problematica politice externe”, in: *Sfarmă Piatră*, II (Nov 26, 1936), 53, pp. 1-2. Cf. Roland CLARK, „Regional Cooperation according to Interwar Romanian Nationalists”, in: Ivan BILIARSKY, Ovidiu CRISTEA, Anca OROVEANU (eds.), *The Balkans and Caucasus: Parallel Processes on the Opposite Sides of the Black Sea*, Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge 2012, pp. 84-95.

⁴⁵ Ioan Gh. SAVIN, *Creștinism și comunism*, Tipografia „Fântâna darurilor”, Bucharest, 1938; Ioan Gh. SAVIN, *Iconoclaști și apostafi contemporani*, Ed. Anastasia, Bucharest, 1995.

⁴⁶ D. STĂNILOAE, „Dl. I. G. Savin și ... occidentul”, p. 3.

Vatican was able to exert a „considerable influence” there⁴⁷. He admitted that Christianity cannot prevent wars, but he believed that their horrors could be minimized by a strong Christian presence in international politics⁴⁸. The problem with Catholic internationalism, according to Stăniloae, was that it suppressed the differences between peoples. „Catholic ecumenicism is not understood”, he said, „except as uniformity”⁴⁹. He had a similarly skeptical attitude towards the various projects to create a United States of Europe⁵⁰. The notion of collective unity was beautiful but too utopian, Stăniloae believed, because it ignored the national sentiments that were keeping Europe divided. „Preaching must be idealistic, organization realistic”, he argued, and „a profound Christianization of souls” was necessary before European integration would be successful⁵¹.

Stăniloae feared that ecumenicism and internationalism as it was imagined by the West threatened the primacy of the nation in public life. Nonetheless, he was willing to entertain regional cooperation insofar as it emphasized the national, ethnic and religious characteristics of the participating states. For this reason he supported the Balkan Pact, which was signed by Romania, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey in February 1934. Stăniloae argued that because of their common Orthodox history and culture, the Pact „has a common spiritual base as its lasting foundation”, and therefore was the political expression of „a unity which will continually deepen”⁵². Moreover, he suggested using the treaty as the first step towards creating a pan-Orthodox block centered in the Balkans, the unspoken consequence of which would be a shift in Orthodoxy’s centre of gravity away from Russia and towards the Balkans. Stăniloae imagined a central office in Constantinople, an annual conference, and a seminary to which each country sent 10-15 students each year. The seminary was to be based in Constantinople, where students from all four countries „would come to know all three Orthodox languages, being able to stay in contact their whole lives ... and would create an ambiance of practical Orthodox solidarity [by] feeling closer to Orthodox Christians from other peoples”⁵³. Such a project was much more palatable than either the League of Nations or Western ecumenicism because it embraced cultural and ethnic differences rather than minimizing them.

⁴⁷ D. STĂNILOAE, *Catholicismul de după război*, pp. 13, 17.

⁴⁸ D. STĂNILOAE, „Pentru apărarea țării”, in: *Telegraful Român*, LXXXVI (1938), 43, p. 1-2. Reprinted in: C. SCHIFIRNEȚ, *Națiune și creștinism*, p. 70.

⁴⁹ D. STĂNILOAE, „Ortodoxie și națiune”, pp. 76-84.

⁵⁰ On the Romanian reception of European projects during the interwar period, see Ovidiu PECICAN (ed.), *Europa în gândirea românească interbelică*, Institutul European, Iași, 2008.

⁵¹ D. STĂNILOAE, „Statele Unite ale Europei?”, in: *Telegraful Român*, LXXXVII (1939), 47, pp. 1-2. Reprinted in C. SCHIFIRNEȚ, *Națiune și creștinism*, pp. 98-101.

⁵² D. STĂNILOAE, „Pactul balcanic și perspectiva ortodoxă”, in: *Telegraful Român*, LXXXII (1934), 10, pp. 1-2. Reprinted in: C. SCHIFIRNEȚ, *Națiune și creștinism*, p. 30.

⁵³ D. STĂNILOAE, „Pactul balcanic și perspectiva ortodoxă”, pp. 1-2. Reprinted in: C. SCHIFIRNEȚ, *Națiune și creștinism*, p. 30.

As Lucian Turcescu notes, Stăniloae's nationalism should be situated within the intellectual milieu of interwar Romania, where it was mild to say the least. In Turcescu's words, „in the 1930s and 1940s when he reflected on the topic, Stăniloae did not have the conceptual instruments necessary to explain the existence of a diversity of languages and of ethnic groups”⁵⁴. One might say the same about many more recent Orthodox theologians, who far too often sloppily misuse the notion of autocephaly to equate religious and national or ethnic communities⁵⁵. Stăniloae wrote much less about nationalism after the Second World War, although he did return to these same themes after the fall of Communism in 1989⁵⁶. Given the consistency with which these elements dominated both Stăniloae's interwar theology and his 1993 book on Romanian spirituality, Sandu Frunză's assertion that these ideas „are not representative for Father Stăniloae's opus” seems very difficult to sustain⁵⁷.

Alternative Orthodox Ecclesiologies: Afanasiev, Lossky, and Zizioulas

The extent to which nationalism shaped Stăniloae's second attempt at ecclesiology becomes abundantly clear through a comparison with the ecclesiologies of *Nikolai Afanasiev* (1893-1966), *Vladimir Lossky* (1903-1958), and *John Zizioulas* (1931-), three Orthodox theologians with whom Stăniloae is often contrasted. Coming of age intellectually in historical contexts that were very different to Stăniloae's, these men all formulated more flexible and less clearly bounded notions of the Church. Born in Odessa, Afanasiev fought Bolshevism in the Russian Civil War before enrolling to study theology in Serbia in 1921, and wrote his theology in exile. He and his colleagues at the Saint Sergei Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris, where he taught from 1930 until his death, supported Metropolitan Evlogii's Patriarchal Exarchate, which rejected the Moscow Patriarchate following Patriarch Sergei's „Declaration of Loyalty to the Soviet

⁵⁴ Lucian TURCESCU, „Dumitru Stăniloae, (1903-1993)”, in: John WITTE JR., Frank S. ALEXANDER (eds.), *The Teachings of Modern Christianity: On Law, Politics, and Human Nature*, vol. 1, Columbia University Press, New York, 2006, p. 705. For a similar reading of Stăniloae's nationalism, see Mihail NEAMȚU, „Between the Gospel and the Nation: Dumitru Stăniloae's Ethno-Theology”, in: *Archaeus*, X (2006), 3, pp. 9-46.

⁵⁵ This tendency has been roundly condemned by a number of theologians, including Jaroslav BUCIORA, „Ecclesiology and National Identity in Orthodox Christianity”, in: *Exchange*, XXX (2001), 4, pp. 328-343; and Pantelis KALAZIDIS, „Orthodoxy and Hellenism in Contemporary Greece”, in: *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 54 (2010), pp. 365-420. Orthodox, correcting formulations of autocephaly can be found in Philip WALTERS, „Notes on Autocephaly and Phyletism”, in: *Religion, State & Society*, XXX, (2002), 4, pp. 357-364; Mihail NEAMȚU, „Revisiting Orthodoxy and Nationalism”, in: *Pro Ecclesia*, XV (2006), 2, pp. 153-160.

⁵⁶ D. STĂNILOAE, *Reflecții despre spiritualitatea poporului Român*, Ed. Elion, Bucharest, 2004.

⁵⁷ Sandu FRUNZĂ, *O antropologie mistică: introducere în gândirea Părintelui Stăniloae*, Ed. Omniscope, Craiova, 1996, p. 91.

State" in 1927⁵⁸. The experience of having been exiled from a church experiencing state persecution inspired Afanasiev to look closely at how Byzantine emperors influenced the decisions of the pre-Nicene Ecumenical Councils. Discovering how extensively secular rulers had interfered in Church politics, he distinguished between the formal elements of the Church as an ecclesial institution and the mystical reality of the Church which becomes manifest in the Eucharist⁵⁹. Effectively, Afanasiev sidelined formal hierarchies in favor of what he called „Eucharistic ecclesiology”, which located the unity of the universal church in the celebration of the Eucharist by local congregations⁶⁰. According to Afanasiev, the church is established by the Holy Spirit making Christ manifest in the Eucharist: „In the Church the Spirit is the organizing principle, such that in and through the Spirit the community of the first Christians became ecclesial”⁶¹. Wherever the Spirit is present in the Eucharist, there is the Church. Afanasiev’s formulation effectively overcomes the problem of national identity because the local – not the national – Church contains everything necessary for ecclesial fullness. Stăniloae’s profound respect for the way that the soul penetrates and expresses itself through the body would have made such a „mystical” understanding of the Church that minimized the importance of visible institutions unacceptable to the Romanian theologian⁶². Moreover, Stăniloae argued that Afanasiev’s ecclesiology was incoherent and self-contradictory, because

„Afanasiev seems to be willing to vouchsafe a certain importance to the union among local Churches. Yet, when describing this union, on the one hand he minimizes its importance, by declaring that everything happening in a local Church happens in other local Churches as well. On the other hand, he invalidates the thesis about the plenitude of the local Church, by declaring that in each local Church things can happen that do not happen in other local Churches”⁶³.

⁵⁸ Aidan NICHOLS, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora: Church, Fathers, Eucharist in Nikolai Afanas'ev (1893-1966)*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 34-61.

⁵⁹ A. NICHOLS, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora: Church, Fathers, Eucharist in Nikolai Afanas'ev (1893-1966)*, pp. 62-93.

⁶⁰ Radu BRODEIANU, „Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue: Retrieving Eucharistic Ecclesiology”, in: *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, XL, (2009), 2, pp. 239-246.

⁶¹ Nikolai AFANASIEV, *The Lord's Supper* (1952), quoted in NICHOLS, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora...*, p. 116.

⁶² D. STĂNILOAE, *The Holy Trinity: In the Beginning there was Love*, trans. Roland Clark, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, MA, 2012, 49-54; Emil BARTOȘ, *Deification in Eastern Orthodox Theology: An Evaluation and Critique of the Theology of Dumitru Stăniloae*, Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 1999, p. 128.

⁶³ D. STĂNILOAE, „Biserica universală și sobornicească”, trans. and quoted apud: Lucian TURCESCU, „Eucharistic Ecclesiology or Open Sobornicity?”, in: L. TURCESCU (ed.), *Dumitru Stăniloae: Tradition and Modernity in Theology*, p. 97.

Stăniloae argued that unity had to be based on common doctrine, and so divergent beliefs made eucharistic communion between local Churches impossible⁶⁴. Though he was also an émigré, Vladimir Lossky refused to join the Russian community at the St. Sergei Institute in its rejection of the Moscow Patriarchate. A graduate of the University of Paris and shaped intellectually through dialogue with *Étienne Gilson* and *Meister Eckhart*, Lossky respected the importance of the Church as an institution and attempted to create a dialogue between the East and the West. Like Stăniloae, Lossky defended the importance of the institutional church as a human body that worked together with the Spirit to minister grace to the world⁶⁵. But he also emphasized diversity in unity and attacked those who tried to define the autocephalous Church along national lines. Lossky wrote in 1948 that „the Holy Spirit diversifies what Christ unifies”⁶⁶. The Church, for Lossky, is not a collection of individuals united in Christ as into „a *supra* Person”⁶⁷. Instead, Christians lose themselves as they are folded into Christ in an eschatological movement of deification. While comparing Lossky’s and Stăniloae’s anthropologies, Silviu Rogobete has argued that

„for Lossky the notion of person or *hypostasis* is raised to a metaontological level, as a super-natural, totally apophatic and non-conceptualizable category, while *ousia*, or nature is regarded as a mere necessary and inert givenness which needs to be ‘constantly exceeded’ by the existential freedom of the person”⁶⁸.

Believers renounce their national selves when they join the universal Church, such that „no differences of created nature – sex, race, social class, language, or culture – can affect the unity of the Church; ... there is only the one and total Christ, the celestial head of the new creation which is being realized here below, the Head to which the members of the one Body are intimately linked”⁶⁹. The conclusion which Lossky draws from this eschatological vision is that ethnic groups or nations have no place in the Church and he condemned

⁶⁴ R. BORDEIANU, *Dumitru Stăniloae: An Ecumenical Ecclesiology*, pp. 200-202.

⁶⁵ Vladimir LOSSKY, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, New York, 1976, pp. 187-188.

⁶⁶ Vladimir LOSSKY, In *the Image and Likeness of God*; quoted in Mikhail M. KULAKOV, „Vladimir Nikolaievich Lossky (1903-1958)”, in: John WITTE JR., Frank S. ALEXANDER (eds.), *The Teachings of Modern Christianity: On Law, Politics, and Human Nature*, vol. 1, Columbia University Press, New York, 2006, p. 625.

⁶⁷ Aristotle PAPANIKOLAOU, „Integrating the Ascetical and the Eucharistic: Current Challenges in Orthodox Ecclesiology”, in: *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, XI (2011) 2-3, p. 180.

⁶⁸ Silviu Eugen ROGOBETE, „Mystical Existentialism or Communitarian Participation?: Vladimir Lossky and Dumitru Stăniloae”, in: L. TURCESCU (ed.), *Dumitru Stăniloae: Tradition and Modernity in Theology*, p. 175.

⁶⁹ Vl. LOSSKY, In *the Image and Likeness of God*; quoted in KULAKOV, „Vladimir Nikolaievich Lossky”, pp. 631-632.

phyletism in the harshest terms. In contrast to Lossky's trust that Christian unity was a by-product of the *process* of deification, Stăniloae once again insisted that unity should be based on being of one mind⁷⁰. During the interwar period, Stăniloae never advocated union with Catholic or Protestant churches – though he certainly dialogued with them – and he was generally wary of the Russian Orthodox Church under the Soviet state.

Building on Afanasiev and Lossky, John Zizioulas has argued more recently that in the Church believers move beyond their created natures (*proso-pon*) to embrace the freedom of personhood (*hypostasis*)⁷¹. Transcending his or her biological limitations in the Church, the Christian gains the power to love freely and without exclusivity, for „his new birth from the womb of the Church has made him part of a network of relationships which transcends every exclusiveness”⁷². For Zizioulas, the Church as the body of Christ is incorporated into the Holy Trinity. Individuals achieve true personhood and communion through their identification with the resurrected Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Rather than focusing only on Christ incarnated in the Eucharist, as he claims that Afanasiev did, Zizioulas' ecclesiology is pneumatological insofar as he emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in „con-stituting” a Church which has been „in-stituted” by Christ⁷³. The implications of this distinction are many and practical. Zizioulas derives from his interpretation of the Trinity the importance of Baptism for integrating individuals into the body of Christ and the centrality of the Bishop as the head of the Eucharistic assembly⁷⁴. This ecclesiology is pregnant with ecumenical possibilities. As Aristotle Papanikolaou has argued, „what the Eucharist realizes is a mutual realization of the one and the many, of unity and particularity, of personhood and communion, which does not allow for an *episkopo*-centrism, even in an institutional form”⁷⁵.

A Metropolitan of the Greek Orthodox Church who has spent most of his professional life teaching in the United Kingdom, John Zizioulas has had ample opportunity to experience fruitful encounters with other traditions. Zizioulas grounds his understanding of personhood on an original reading of the Cappadocian Fathers and especially of Basil of Caesarea, who he says took the radical

⁷⁰ D. STĂNILOAE, *The Experience of God*, vol. II, trans. Ioan Ioniță and Robert Barringer, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, MA, 1994, p. 56; D. STĂNILOAE, *Theology and the Church*, p. 55.

⁷¹ John D. ZIZIOULAS, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 1985, pp. 49-54.

⁷² J.D. ZIZIOULAS, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*, p. 58.

⁷³ Calinic BERGER, „Does the Eucharist Make the Church? An Ecclesiological Comparison of Stăniloae and Zizioulas”, in: *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, LI (2007), 1, pp. 28-29.

⁷⁴ A. PAPANIKOLAOU, „Integrating the Ascetical and the Eucharistic: Current Challenges in Orthodox Ecclesiology”, pp. 174-179; R. BRODEIANU, „Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue: Retrieving Eucharistic Ecclesiology”, pp. 249-250.

⁷⁵ A. PAPANIKOLAOU, „Integrating the Ascetical and the Eucharistic: Current Challenges in Orthodox Ecclesiology”, p. 175.

step of reinterpreting the limited Greek notion of personhood to mean a free *hypostasis* in order to demonstrate that God is existentially free because He „exists» on account of a person, the Father, and not on account of a substance”⁷⁶. As Lucian Turcescu has demonstrated, Zizioulas’ notion of personhood presupposes post-Enlightenment understandings of individuality, and resolves modern dilemmas about individual freedom with which the Cappadocians were unconcerned. The conclusion which Turcescu draws is that Zizioulas owes more to twentieth century philosophers such as Martin Buber and John Macmurray than he does to any fourth-century bishop⁷⁷. To the extent to Turcescu’s critique is accurate, Zizioulas’ interactions with non-Orthodox traditions have thus been extremely fruitful, but his emphasis on the role of the bishop in constituting the Church leads him to insist on traditional ecclesial authority structures to an extent that he excludes confessions that are more hierarchical or more democratic than his own⁷⁸.

Stăniloae’s Trinitarian Ecclesiology and „Open Sobornicity”

Whereas Zizioulas refused to disentangle the Holy Trinity from the Church, Stăniloae’s writings on ecclesiology during the Cold War period thought about the Church as an icon of the Trinity. In the Church, Stăniloae writes, „Christ and the Spirit work together to make us sons of the Father”⁷⁹. The unity (*koinonia*) within the Trinity is a paradigm of Christian unity in the Church, and the Son’s work of renewing the world through the Spirit and offering it up to the Father as a gift of love is also the Church’s ministry and its act of worship⁸⁰. Throughout Stăniloae’s life, he emphasized personhood rather than Being as the basic characteristic of individual humans⁸¹. But Stăniloae’s notion of personhood differs in several important respects from those of the three theologians discussed above. Unlike Lossky, for whom individual personhood – and hence ethnic identity – is transcended in the Church, according to Stăniloae the person is,

⁷⁶ J.D. ZIZIOULAS, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*, p. 42.

⁷⁷ Lucian TURCESCU, „Person» versus «Individual», and other Modern Misreadings of Gregory of Nyssa”, in: *Modern Theology*, XVIII (2002), 4, pp. 527-539.

⁷⁸ Paul COLLINS, „Authority and Ecumenism”, in: Douglas H. KNIGHT (ed.), *The Theology of John Zizioulas: Personhood and the Church*, Ashgate, Hampshire, 2007, pp. 154-157.

⁷⁹ D. STĂNILOAE, *Theology and the Church*, p. 39.

⁸⁰ Dănuț MĂNĂSTIREANU, *A Perichoretic Model of the Church: The Trinitarian Ecclesiology of Dumitru Stăniloae*, PhD Thesis, Brunel University, Uxbridge, 2005, p. 116. Radu Bordeianu has clarified how Stăniloae relates the Trinity and the Church by suggesting that for Stăniloae, the Church is (1) a reflection of the Trinity; (2) an icon of the Trinity; (3) a sacrament of the Trinity; and (4) the locus of deification. R. BORDEIANU, *Dumitru Stăniloae: An Ecumenical Ecclesiology*, pp. 42-49.

⁸¹ D. STĂNILOAE, *Iisus Hristos sau restaurarea omului*, p. 119; Silviu ROGOBETE, *O ontologie a iubirii: Subiect și realitate personală supremă în gândirea părintelui Dumitru Stăniloae*, Ed. Polirom, Bucharest, 2006, pp. 50, 53.

in Ioan Ică Jr.'s phrase, simultaneously „an eschatological, historical, theological and political reality”⁸². Far from transcending the physical creation, the Church affirms it as the locus of salvation⁸³. Furthermore, whereas for Zizioulas true love can only exist within the Church, Stăniloae sees the love of the Trinity as the basis for all human communities⁸⁴. Jürgen Henkel explains,

„the Holy Trinity becomes not only the model of loving communion in the Church, but this audacious idea makes the Trinity the original model of human communion in general, even outside of the Church. Only on this basis is it possible to understand how Father Dumitru Stăniloae could later affirm a unique «spirituality» for «the Romanian people» and the theological transfiguration of the secular nation”⁸⁵.

Stăniloae insists that personhood must be relational, quoting Calistos of Alexandria to affirm that „I love, therefore I exist” («Amo, ergo sum»)⁸⁶. A person cut off from human relationships is not a person as far as Stăniloae is concerned, which is why communities such as families and nations are so important for him. Although Stăniloae and Zizioulas focus so heavily on relational personhood, both give ontological status to the Church. As Travis Ables has noted, this becomes extremely problematic when it comes to ecumenical dialogue. Ables explains,

„The ecclesial and thus ecumenical concern is one that is finally accounted for performatively, or not at all. Ontology is nothing but the discourse of conceptual mediation: to take recourse to ontology is to assume that, in order for the church to be church, it must fix a concept of itself in accordance with which it can establish its identity before entering into the question of its mission and discipleship. In fact, ontology functions as the evasion of the truly difficult task of being with the other, a way of talking about the difficult task of dialogue, respect and care, without actually enacting it”⁸⁷.

As far as Stăniloae is concerned, ecumenicism is not about being together with non-Orthodox Christians because this would require compromising on important doctrinal issues⁸⁸. Throughout his career, Stăniloae was very critical of

⁸² Ioan ICA JR., quoted in S. ROGOBETE, *O ontologie a iubirii: Subiect și realitate personală supremă în gândirea părintelui Dumitru Stăniloae*, p. 53.

⁸³ D. STĂNILOAE, *Iisus Hristos sau restaurarea omului*, p. 116; D. STĂNILOAE, *The Experience of God*, vol. I, trans. Ioan Ioniță and Robert Barringer, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, MA, 1994, pp. 117-122.

⁸⁴ D. STĂNILOAE, *The Experience of God*, vol. II, p. 199.

⁸⁵ Jürgen HENKEL, *Îndumnezeire și etică a iubirii în opera părintelui Dumitru Stăniloae*, trans. Ioan I. Ică Jr., Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 2006, p. 352.

⁸⁶ S. ROGOBETE, *O ontologie a iubirii: Subiect și realitate personală supremă în gândirea părintelui Dumitru Stăniloae*, p. 245.

⁸⁷ Travis E. ABLES, „Being Church: A Critique of Zizioulas' Communion Ecclesiology”, in: Gesa Elsbeth THIESSEN (ed.), *Ecumenical Ecclesiology: Unity, Diversity and Otherness in a Fragmented World*, T&T Clark, London, 2009, p. 124.

⁸⁸ R. BRODEIANU, „Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue: Retrieving Eucharistic Ecclesiology”, p. 258.

other Christian traditions, arguing that „the non-Orthodox confessions are separate groups that have been formed in a certain relationship with the full Church and exist in a certain relationship with it, but do not share in the full light and power of Christ the sun”⁸⁹. Instead of one Church, Stăniloae imagines several independent Churches entering into dialogue. This is what he called „open sobornicity”. Stăniloae explains that sobornicity

„has to be the gathering (*sobor*) of the whole world, where all Christians bring together their understanding of the whole revealed divine reality and of the whole human reality seen in the light of the integral revelation. By so doing, they share their understanding with all and each can participate in the understanding of all”⁹⁰.

According to the model of open sobornicity, each confession should develop its own understanding of God and the Christian life within its own tradition, and then share its conclusions with believers from other confessions to enrich their walk with God⁹¹. If this notion of separate but similar groups developing their individual characteristics for the good of the whole sounds familiar, it is because it derives directly from the Herderian idea that human history progresses through the growth of nations⁹². Europeans began to think of their communities in organic rather than mechanistic terms during the eighteenth century, and the organicist metaphor that lies at the basis of romantic nationalism informs a great deal of Stăniloae’s thinking about the ontology of the Church⁹³.

Radu Bordeianu, the leading advocate of Stăniloae’s model of „open sobornicity” as a possibility for ecumenical dialogue, bases his argument on Stăniloae’s belief in the power of love. Love, according to Stăniloae, does not involve „an absorption of you in me, but a going out from myself, of my living not around my own I, but around yours, as well as your living around me”⁹⁴. Insofar as the Church can live this vision out, it is indeed a very practical approach to ecumenicism, but one that because of its very efficiency casts doubt on whether strict doctrinal boundaries are necessary at all. Stăniloae explains,

⁸⁹ D. STĂNILOAE, *Teologia dogmată ortodoxă*, vol. 2, quoted in R.G. ROBERSON, „Dumitru Stăniloae on Christian Unity”, p. 105.

⁹⁰ D. STĂNILOAE, „Sobornicitate deschisă”, quoted in TURCESCU, „Eucharistic Ecclesiology or Open Sobornicity?”, p. 101.

⁹¹ R.G. ROBERSON, „Dumitru Stăniloae on Christian Unity”, p. 122.

⁹² Johann GOTTFRIED VON HERDER, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, trans. T. Churchill, Bergman Publishers, New York, 1966, p. 249.

⁹³ Pheng CHEAH, *Spectral Nationality: Passages of Freedom from Kant to Postcolonial Literatures of Liberation*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2003, pp. 1-178.

⁹⁴ D. STĂNILOAE, *Spiritualitatea ortodoxă*, quoted in Kevin M. BERGER, *Towards a Theological Gnosology: The Synthesis of Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae*, PhD Thesis, Catholic University of America, Washington D.C., 2003, p. 489.

„Sobornicity is more than embracing in common all the modes of revelation and expression of God into the world or in life. ... Sobornicity is also an increasingly comprehensive and embracing openness towards God who is above these [revelations]; it is a continuous advancement in God's infinitely spiritual richness. This sobornicity that is *open*, transparent, and continuously surpassed, also implies a certain *theological pluralism*”⁹⁵.

Bordeianu and others have shown that despite his often harsh and unfair criticisms of non-Orthodox thinkers, Stăniloae did in fact learn a great deal from Western theologians. Stăniloae's receptivity to the West increased significantly after he attended a meeting of the World Council of Churches in 1982, but he borrowed ideas and engaged with Western theologians consistently from 1943 onwards⁹⁶. Moreover, Bordeianu believes that it is possible to implement „open sobornicity” much more profoundly than Stăniloae himself ever did, building on the experience of the local Orthodox churches in America and their dialogue with Christians from non-Orthodox backgrounds⁹⁷. Whether this is possible only time will tell, but it will require a great deal more openness and commitment to loving dialogue than Stăniloae's own Romanian Orthodox Church has exhibited in the past two decades of post-Socialist transition, when its treatment of heterodox voices both within and without the church has been consistently intolerant and unyielding⁹⁸.

Stăniloae was always very faithful to his sources, which in his post-war writings were the Biblical texts and the Church Fathers. His conclusions about personhood, soteriology, ecclesiology and ecumenicism were logically rigorous and flowed from his overall theological system. But the fact that they also resonated with the chauvinistic nationalism of interwar Romania means that his presuppositions deserve to be re-examined before his ecclesiology is accepted wholesale. Moreover, understanding how Stăniloae's theology formed helps us appreciate that because ontology was so closely tied to ecclesiology and nationalism for him, when he came to the ecumenical table in later years, he came with fundamental premises that were very different both to those of his Catholic and Protestant counterparts and to those of other Orthodox theologians such as Afanasiev, Lossky, and Zizioulas. In his vision of „open sobornicity”, Stăniloae insisted that in this world the best we can hope for is to love one another as neighbors who are different yet (almost) equal.

⁹⁵ D. STĂNILOAE, „Sobornicitate deschisă”, quoted in: R. BORDEIANU, *Dumitru Stăniloae: An Ecumenical Ecclesiology*, p. 29.

⁹⁶ R. BORDEIANU, *Dumitru Stăniloae: An Ecumenical Ecclesiology*, pp. 20-27; J. HENKEL, *Îndumnezeire și etică a iubirii în opera părintelui Dumitru Stăniloae*, pp. 185-231; Andrew LOUTH, „The Orthodox Dogmatic Theology of Dumitru Stăniloae”, in: L. TURCESCU (ed.), *Dumitru Stăniloae: Tradition and Modernity in Theology*, pp. 53-70.

⁹⁷ R. BORDEIANU, *Dumitru Stăniloae: An Ecumenical Ecclesiology*, pp. 209-214.

⁹⁸ Lavinia STAN, Lucian TURCESCU, *Religion and Politics in Post-Communist Romania*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007.

Rezumat: Perspective nationaliste și trinitare asupra Bisericii în teologia Păr. Dumitru Stăniloae

Într-o perioadă dificilă, sub guvernare comunistă, Păr. Dumitru Stăniloae a reprezentat Ortodoxia românească, participând la o seamă de întruniri teologice și ecumenice în străinătate. În tot cazul, teologul român se bucură de mare autoritate în spațiul românesc, cu toate că opera sa nu a fost complet analizată și valorificată. Totodată este de notat faptul că el a scris teologie în două perioade diferite, înainte și după instalarea la putere a comuniștilor. Cea dintâi perioadă a activității sale este astfel mai pregnant marcată de *naționalism*, un curent care după 1877 a luat o dezvoltare specială la nivelul spațiului românesc, susținută de ideea de unitate națională. Și în această direcție Biserica a jucat un rol dintre rolurile cele mai importante. Părintele Stăniloae s-a bucurat de studii solide de teologie pe fundalul unor evoluții politice, economice și religioase. A urmat Facultatea de Teologie la Cernăuți, după care a făcut studii de specializare la Athena, München, Berlin și Paris. Acest parcurs i-a asigurat angrenarea în cele mai importante orientări teologice ale vremii și cunoașterea unui spectru larg de teologi și de gândire de profil. În mod clar a aderat la un curent mai larg de promovare a laturii mistice a teologiei și a contribuției fundamentale a Părinților Bisericii.

O etapă specială în activitatea sa o reprezintă, după întoarcerea din străinătate și stabilirea la Sibiu, perioada în care a condus periodicul *Telegrafului Român*, când a și publicat o serie întreagă de materiale, cu un profil extrem de vast, punând în discuție diversele aspecte ale vieții teologice, inclusiv prin raportare la teologia de profil vestică. Aici a luat atitudine și față de evoluțiile politice ale vremii. Colaborează în același timp și publică texte și în alte reviste ale vremii, între ele *Gândirea*, cu o nuanță accentuată naționalistă. Spre anii în care avea să izbucnească cel de-al doilea război mondial, teologul român se pronunță adeseori asupra relațiilor Biserica-stat, promovând, în stil răsăritean, armonia dintre ele dar și obligația statului de a proteja, prin ordine, societatea și Biserica de rău. Bineînțeles, Biserica este superioară statului, prin valorile morale pe care le promovează și prin puterea lui Dumnezeu care o locuiește.

Definitorie pentru activitatea Părintelui Stăniloae este și apropierea lui de Nichifor Crainic, ale cărui păreri naționaliste însă nu le-a preluat. Potrivit lui Crainic, România interbelică se afla departe de Dumnezeu datorită influenței puternice a culturii franceze secularizate, a francmasonilor și a evreilor. Viziunea Părintelui Stăniloae cu privire la lume este însă una mult mai amplă și mai profundă. El o vede, mai precis, ancorată în Dumnezeu, Care o și susține în existența pe care i-a dăruit-o. De aceea, în concepția teologului român, și fiecare popor își are caracteristicile sale pe care trebuie să le realizeze și care sunt rezultate ale modelării date și gândite de Dumnezeu. Fiecare națiune concretizează umanitatea într-un fel propriu. Persoana umană este unică, avându-și modelul său în Dumnezeu și nu se poate înțelege și împlini pe sine decât în relație cu semenii. Fiecare persoană aparține unui popor, naționalitatea fiind „o categorie ontologică”. Dacă mântuirea nu se realizează prin popor, atunci ea se realizează *într-un* popor, la nivelul lui.

O importanță majoră pentru eclesiologia ortodoxă a sec. al XX-lea au avut *Nikolai Afanasiev* (1893-1966), *Vladimir Lossky* (1903-1958) și *John Zizioulas* (1931-), față de pozițiile cărora însă Părintele Stăniloae s-a distanțat din nou. Pentru Afanasiev apare ca fundamentală în fața ierarhiei *Eucharistia*, ceea ce și propune teologic în așa-numita „eclesiologie eucharistică”, care și marchează unitatea întregii Biserici în Trupul și

Sângele Domnului. Sfântul Duh este fundamental pentru Biserică, El făcând ca o comunitate să fie eclesială. Și dacă Sfântul Duh este prezent în Euharistie, acolo este și Biserica. Părintele Stăniloae, punând un accent mai mare pe partea mistică a Bisericii decât pe structura ei ierarhică văzută, socotește teologia lui Afanasiev ca incoerentă și contradictorie. Acest lucru îl vede mai ales în afirmația lui Afanasiev că în bisericile locale se pot întâmpla lucruri care nu aparțin Bisericii în general. În acest fel, teza deplinătății bisericii locale este invalidată. Pentru teologul român, mărturisirea de credință este un argument forte al unității Bisericii, ceea ce și face ca eterodocșii să nu poată participa și să nu se poată împărtăși de lucrarea sfințitoare a Bisericii.

Lossky are și el o altă viziune a Bisericii, pornind la fel ca și Părintele Stăniloae de la înțelegerea ei ca trup uman care lucrează împreună cu Sfântul Duh. Susține însă *diversitatea în unitate* și afirmă că „Sfântul Duh diversifică ceea ce Hristos unește”. Pentru Lossky, Biserica nu este comunitate de indivizi uniți în Hristos. Uniți cu Biserica, nu mai apare pentru creștini drept importantă identitatea națională. Pentru Părintele Stăniloae, încă o dată, unitatea Bisericii este dată de unitatea de credință. Pentru Zizioulas, Biserica ca trup al lui Hristos este încorporată în Sfânta Treime. Individul atinge adevărata sa valoare ca persoană prin identificarea în virtutea Sfântului Duh cu Iisus Hristos înviat. Pentru Zizioulas Sfântul Duh constituie Biserica întemeiată de Hristos. Astfel Botezul devine fundamental pentru integrarea în Biserică, în care episcopul apare ca deținând un loc central, prin faptul că reprezintă adunarea euharistică, în fruntea căreia și stă.

Pentru Părintele Stăniloae, Biserica reprezintă locul în care Fiul lui Dumnezeu și Sfântul Duh lucrează ca să îl facă pe om fiu al lui Dumnezeu. Modelul Bisericii îl reprezintă comuniunea de Persoane din sânul Sfintei Treimi. Această structură implică un anumit *nivel de participare* a ortodoxului la nivelul discuțiilor ecumenice. Dialogul interpersonal este de aceea văzut ca fundamental. Împărtășirea, la nivel ecumenic, a experienței proprii de cunoaștere a lui Dumnezeu reprezintă esența dialogului interreligios. Acest aspect este însă legat direct de manifestarea și împărtășirea dragostei față de celălalt. În acest fel Părintele Stăniloae se rămâne strâns legat de sursele sale principale, Sfânta Scriptură și Sfinții Părinți, din care își alimentează întreaga sa teologie, soteriologia, eclesiologia, dialogul ecumenic. Participarea teologului român la aceste întâlniri interreligioase a făcut ca el să se folosească intrucâtva de rezultatele gândirii neortodoxe.

Părintele Stăniloae se naște și activează într-un timp care s-a bucura de multe schimbări. Participă totodată la un proces teologic divers, împărtășindu-se din experiența diversă și complexă a Răsăritului și a Apusului. Prin urmare, rezultat al unei pregătiri diverse și a unui orizont de cultură larg, deschis dialogului cu lumea și cu știința contemporană, teologia sa este strâns legată de aderența sa la neamul în care s-a născut și a trăit și de evenimentele istorice și politice prin care acesta a trecut la nivel general. Teologia este așadar ca și omul, o împletire de dospiri sufletești, mistice, însă într-o legătură a lor directă cu timpul și cu lumea materială pe care persoana umană le împărtășește și le trăiește.