

Elderism, Futurism, and Prophetism

By **Theodoros Kalmoukos** - January 31, 2017

Not a month or week goes by without a new prophecy emerging about things that will supposedly happen on a local or even national and international level. This phenomenon, which is widely spread in Greece but also has been transplanted here in the United States through the Ephraimite movement of extreme fundamentalism, can be described with three words: elderism, futurism, and prophetism. It has to do with “prophesies” and “statements” of various monks, who either died in distant past or even recently, or are still alive on Mount Athos and elsewhere. Such is the case of elder Ephraim here in the United States, who has filled the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese through the country with Monasteries.

These “contemporary prophets” prophesize just about anything, you name it. They prophesize about the economic crisis in Greece, for example, although it is already occurring. They prophesize about the political crisis or that the blessed Race of Greeks will reclaim the Queen City of Constantinople. These simplistic charlatans can do harm not only to innocent and uneducated people, but also to nations.

Understandably, the economic crisis in Greece has significantly changed the mindset of many who struggle to survive, and many of them have lost faith. Thus, they search for some ray of hope to hold on to, or some kind of “supernatural” explanation of what is happening in order to justify their fears. Thus, the prophesies of various elders and monks find their way into the hearts of many hope seekers. They are even willing to engage in extreme fanatical religiosity that absolutizes the elders’ “prophetic futurism.” Once an elder says it, that’s it. No questions asked.

A huge industry of futurism has been created, and in some cases an industry of miracles that urges hundreds if not thousands of faithful to form long lines over the graves of various elders. Many attach their ears to the grave, hoping to hear some sounds from within the grave supposedly coming from the dead elder in question. The books of such elders become bestsellers and, of course, many “smart” religious industrialists become rich in the name of a twisted Orthodoxy.

There is a dangerous trend today of creating a sick “Orthodox guruism” in the name of spirituality and elderism. Many elders today tend to replace even Christ and His Church. We have arrived to the point of a total cultish culture to “worship” people of little or no Theological Education at all, simply because they wear cassocks, and grow long beards and hair. This has become a “spirituality of the hair.” They speak and preach on a simplistic Sunday School level, yet appear to their followers to speak with authority and infallibility.

They use the sacrament of holy confession just to get control over the lives of their followers, demanding from them total and blind obedience. They take away the freedom of their “spiritual children” and dictate to them how to live their lives to the extent that the elder even decides their personal choices, including their sex lives. Of course, the elders demonize the human body and human

sexuality.

The elder makes all of their decisions. He has complete control over their lives because “he knows best” regarding their spiritual well-being. The spiritual children don’t really care about the teaching of the Church or the writings of the New Testament. They only care about what the elder thinks and says. They don’t read the Bible, but instead they read the elder’s fairy tells.

These uneducated smallminded fundamentalists have become the drama and the trauma of our Orthodox Church, and no one seems to have the boldness to confront them and teach them that Orthodoxy is not a fundamental ideology of some sadistic God who is ready to punish the people. The God of the Orthodox Church is the source of love. It is Christ who comes as “fierce lover,” as Bridegroom in the middle of the night because He loves us all as we are.

In our case here in America, we are confronted with similar sickening fundamentalist mentalities. Many of our clergy have been influenced by the simplistic teachings and pseudo-pietism of the certain monastics to the point that many parishes have been poisoned. It seems that “a parallel Church” has been created along with the canonical Church. Many clergy teach and even appear externally as some type of “Orthodox Isis,” with long beards and hair. They go out into the world, into stores wearing their cassocks and kalimavhion (clerical hat) causing our fellow American citizens to look at them strangely, not knowing who they are and what they represent – which is particularly significant in these times.

Similar situations at the Holy Cross Theological School are really alarming. And yet, no one seems to care – prompting the question: what kind of a Church are we going to be in twenty years from now?

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