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## ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW'S “GREEN MESSAGE” TO THE WORLD

The World has been rapidly changing on many levels nowadays. Some of these changes have been very dangerous not only for our present generation, but for future generations as well. Year by year we can notice more and more alarming environmental degradation. We are witnesses to the worldwide ecological and social crisis.<sup>1</sup> We can enumerate such substantial features of this crisis like: the pollution of natural resources, climate change,<sup>2</sup> and the loss of biodiversity combined with the widening gap between rich and poor, as well as increasing failure to implement efficient environmental policies.<sup>3</sup> More and more deteriorating conditions of our world awake common interest and various initiatives among people in order to point out reasons and look for possible solutions. The question of responsibility for progressive environmental degradation is important not only for governments, politicians, NGO activists and all people wanting to live in a healthy environment but also for prominent Church leaders. The contribution of Christian hierarchs in the environment protection seems to be very important because they make the faithful aware of connection existing between the spiritual condition of human being and the condition of the created world. One of them, namely His All Holiness Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome

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<sup>1</sup> See *What is the Ecological Crisis?* In: A. Belopopsky and D. Oikonomou (eds.). *Orthodoxy and Ecology. Resource Book*. Białystok 1996 pp. 8-9.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. L. Vischer (ed.). *Churches on Climate Change: A Collection of Statements and Resolutions on Global Warming and Climate Change*. Geneva 1992 passim.

<sup>3</sup> See J. Chryssavgis. *Introduction*. In: J. Chryssavgis (ed.). *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer. The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew*. Grand Rapids, Mich. 2009 p. 1.

and Ecumenical Patriarch (270<sup>th</sup> successor the Apostle Andrew) has gained in the whole world a very special position by his persistent proclamation of the primacy of spiritual values in determining environmental ethics and action<sup>4</sup>.

This paper describes Patriarch Bartholomew's work for the protection of the natural environment in the very short way. This work has been done first in his own Church, and subsequently in the wider society through international, inter-religious, and interdisciplinary gatherings that have gained the attention of policymakers and the mass media. I am also going to point out various insights that direct the vision and activities of the Patriarch.

### 1. THE "GREEN VOCATION" OF PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

Patriarch Bartholomew, following the steps of His great predecessor Patriarch Demetrios, has developed many very fruitful relations with politicians, governors, people of science and industry based on ecological interest and responsibility for the world. Patriarch Bartholomew has inspired for common pro-environmental work various international organizations and multinational federations as well as people of diverse cultures, religions and national interests.<sup>5</sup> Therefore John Chryssavgis is right, asserting that "No other Church leader has been recognized throughout the world for his dynamic leadership and initiatives in addressing the theological, ethical, and practical imperative in relation to the critical environmental issues of our time as has His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew."<sup>6</sup> "Certainly, no other church leader in history has brought environmental issues to the foreground, indeed to the very center of personal and ecclesiastical attention."<sup>7</sup> Patriarch Bartholomew received the epithet "the Green Patriarch."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. J. Chryssavgis, *Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew: insights into an Orthodox Christian worldview*. "International Journal of Environmental Studies" 64:2007 No. 1 pp. 9-18.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. *In the World, Yet Not of the World. Social and Global Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew* New York, NY 2010 p. 46.

<sup>6</sup> Chryssavgis. *Introduction*. In: *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer* p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem* p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Archbishop Prof. Jeremiasz Jan Anchimiuk in his *Review of the Honorary Doctorate awarded to His All-Holiness Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch at the Catholic University of Lublin*, expressed his conviction that "This, maybe a bit strange-sounding title, was assigned as an expression of gratitude and reverence for the enormous work done by the Patriarch to remind present-day humanity of its responsibility for God's creation. In this respect, the Patriarch became a prophet, reminding people that this responsibility was bestowed upon them by the Creator of Heaven and Earth." (*Jego Świątobliwość Bartłomiej I Patriarcha Ekumeniczny Doktor Honoris Causa*. Lublin 2010 p. 58).

Such nickname was originally ascribed to His person publicly by *Time* magazine in May 1997. This appellation summarizes Patriarch's Bartholomew abiding concern for bringing about in the global community responsibility for our shared resources.<sup>9</sup>

It should be noted that from the moment of his enthronement in 1991, Patriarch Bartholomew is concerned in education of the Orthodox faithful in matters of theology, spirituality, and liturgy; the strengthening of Pan-Orthodox unity and cooperation together with the continuation of ecumenical engagements with other Christian churches and confessions. Apart from that he has been very active in the intensification of interreligious dialogue for peaceful coexistence, particularly with the Muslim world.<sup>10</sup>

The encyclical letters on the occasion of the beginning of the ecclesiastical year, which in the Orthodox Church is celebrated as the feast of the *Indictus* on September 1<sup>st</sup>, written and signed by Patriarch Bartholomew, have been very important testimonies of his environmental responsibility for the whole created world.<sup>11</sup> Patriarch Bartholomew like his "revered predecessor" Patriarch Demetrios, has been responsible for the call to prayer for the preservation and protection of the natural environment.<sup>12</sup> From everything that "the Green Patriarch" says and does it is evident that he is aware of the fundamental importance of the reality of communion, not only all Orthodox Christians, but all Christians in general as well, and more than that, namely the close cooperation of all religions, all sciences and disciplines, and all cultures.<sup>13</sup> He is convinced that the way of the Church is to help people to be in dialogue with nature. As the most important in commitment to and involvement in environmental issues Patriarch Bartholomew considers his prayer for the protection of the environment, because the environment is for him not a political or a technological issue, but a religious and spiritual one.<sup>14</sup> Therefore he uses "politically incorrect" language concerning the centrality of the human being within creation.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. *In the World, Yet Not of the World* p. 46.

<sup>10</sup> See Chryssavgis. *Introduction*. In: *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer* p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer* pp. 38-66.

<sup>12</sup> See Chryssavgis. *Introduction*. In: *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer* p. 12.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem* p. 14.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Introductory Address at the Opening Session of the Third International Symposium: The Danube: A River of Life*, Bulgaria, October 17, 1999. In: J. Chryssavgis (ed.). *In the World, Yet Not of the World* pp. 218-223.

<sup>15</sup> See Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. *Encyclicals for September 1st* (1993, 1995, 1997, 1998, 2001) and his *Address at the opening of the Black Sea symposium*, September 20, 1997 with reference to such important issues as: environment as home, humanity and nature, as-

On the basis of Christian anthropology the Patriarch indicates that nature is related to people and people to nature.<sup>16</sup> Being deeply immersed in the Orthodox Tradition, he refers very often to the wisdom of the Fathers of the Church, as well as liturgical, theological and spiritual treasures of Orthodoxy in order to help people in better understanding where the core of the environmental problem is. Using theological notions he explains their meanings in a way understandable for a modern human person. A good example of such a symbolic notion it is an icon. The Patriarch stresses that the icon is a very important notion, because every human being is created “in the image (or icon) and likeness of God” (Gen. 1:26).<sup>17</sup> Creation itself is likened to an icon.<sup>18</sup> We can contemplate God the Creator through the icon of the created world, but we should not to worship creation, because if it happens than the natural world is reduced from the level of icon to the level of idol.<sup>19</sup>

The appreciation for the natural environment of Patriarch Bartholomew is directly related to the sacramental dimension of life and the world. He underlines that the natural environment should be always regarded from the point of view of Orthodox spirituality and theology. Only through the spiritual lens the natural environment can be seen in whole of its beauty and of its deficiencies. It is a necessary perspective to see, correctly understand and solve such problems as the threat to ocean fisheries, disappearance of wetlands, the damage of coral reefs, or the destruction of animal and plant life in the world.<sup>20</sup> All harms of the natural environment clearly mirror the spiritual problems of the humankind. “The Green Patriarch” is right when he asserts that the way we relate to material things directly reflects the way we relate to God. It concerns us as individuals, as communities and as a society. Therefore the vision of the world and the natural environment depends on

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cessis and consumption and the role of religion. Cf. *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer*, pp. 174-178. In his *Address to the Summit on Religions and Conservation*, Atami, Japan, April 5, 1995 Patriarch Bartholomew presents concepts of creation in the Abrahamic Faiths, indicating the relation of humanity and the environment and principles of a Christian worldview. See Chryssavgis (ed.), *In the World, Yet Not of the World* pp. 272-280.

<sup>16</sup> See the Encyclical for September 1st (2001). In: *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer* pp. 55-57, and his *Address at a gathering of banking representatives in Athens*, Greece, May 24, 1999. In: *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer* pp. 207-212.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Chryssavgis. *Introduction*. In: *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer* p. 17.

<sup>18</sup> See *Address during the environmental symposium in Santa Barbara*, November 8, 1997. In: *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer* pp. 186-191.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Chryssavgis. *Introduction*, In: *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer* p. 17.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. *Encountering the Mystery. Understanding Orthodox Christianity Today*. New York, NY 2008 p. 89.

understanding of human person. Anthropological reflection is a necessary precondition for understanding of the created world. Nature is not only for our use but we should treat it as a book, opened wide for all to read and to learn. From that perspective "Each plant, each animal, and each microorganism tells a story, unfolds a mystery, and relates an extraordinary harmony and balance, which are interdependent and complementary."<sup>21</sup>

During the last four decades the Ecumenical Patriarchate has been deeply involved in various activities focused on the environment protection. The main stress in this tremendous work of the last two Ecumenical Patriarchs is laid on the uniting theology with ontology and indicating that there exists more continuity between natural and supernatural spheres than discontinuity. Such an attitude reflects the teaching of the Orthodox Church on nature (Gr. *physis*) as being full of the glory of God, even though it groans with the rest of creation, awaiting the revelation of our redemption (cf. Rom. 8.22-23).<sup>22</sup>

Patriarch Bartholomew's roles as the primary spiritual leader of the Orthodox Christian world and a transnational figure of global significance become more vital each day. His endeavors, together with his inspiring efforts on behalf of religious freedom and human rights have been world-widely recognized. This contemporary apostle of love, peace and reconciliation for humanity was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal by the U.S. Congress, and has been presented with environmental prizes including the 2002 Award of the Binding Institute of Liechtenstein, The 2002 Sophie Prize for 'his pioneering efforts linking faith and environment', and in April 2005 was one of the first seven to be presented with the UNEP Champion of the Earth Award. He was also rewarded by many universities the title of Doctor Honoris Causa. Last year (2010) the senate of John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin conferring of the title of Doctor Honoris Causa upon His All-Holiness Bartholomew I in occasional resolution expressed "appreciation for a remarkably active spiritual leader, the continuator of the ecumenical work of the great patriarchs of Constantinople: Joachim III, Athenagoras I and Dimitrios I. His All-Holiness Bartholomew I, as the ambassador of peace and reconciliation, religious freedom, human rights and dignity, and concern for the preservation of natural environment invariably sustains the testimony of joy and light of the Resurrection."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. *ibidem* p. 91.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. *In the World, Yet Not of the World* pp. 45-46.

<sup>23</sup> *Resolution of the Senate of John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin of 24 June 2010 on the conferral of the title of Doctor Honoris Causa of the of John Paul II Catholic University of*

## 2. THE GREEN SYMPOSIA ON WATER

It's worthy to mention that in 1994, Patriarch Bartholomew established the Religious and Scientific Committee as an organizational body focused on preparing and running the international, interdisciplinary, and interreligious symposia on environmental concerns. The main stream of various activities of the Religious and Scientific Committee is to study and reflect on the state of the rivers and seas, which cover two-third of the earth's surface. In order to provide a very high effectiveness of naming and solving environmental problems the Patriarch invites for these symposia the faithful of other Christian confessions, the representatives of the world's main religious faiths, and scientists, environmentalists, journalists, policy-makers. What makes these symposia very special is the very fact that every one of them takes place in the particular region of the world. Such an organization of these important environmental events draws global attention to the plight of the Aegean Sea (1995),<sup>24</sup> the Black Sea (1997),<sup>25</sup> the Danube River (1999),<sup>26</sup> the Adriatic Sea (2002),<sup>27</sup> the Baltic Sea (2003),<sup>28</sup> the Amazon River (2006),<sup>29</sup> or the Arctic (2007).<sup>30</sup>

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*Lublin upon His Holiness Bartholomew I Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch (698/V/1)*, In: *Katolicki Uniwersytet Jana Pawła II, Jego Świątobliwość Bartłomiej I Patriarch Ekumeniczny Doktor Honoris Causa*, p. 51.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Address during the official opening of the first international symposium "Revelation and the Environment, AD 95-1995"*, September 22, 1995, In: *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer*, pp. 144-149.

<sup>25</sup> *The Black Sea in Crisis*. "Environmental Health Perspectives" Vol. 105 No. 12 December 1997 pp. 1288-1289; S. Hobson, L.D. Mee (eds.). *The Black Sea in Crisis*. London 2000 600 pp. ????

<sup>26</sup> Cf. J. Chrysavgis. *Conference Report. A Symposium on the Danube: Religion and Science in Dialogue about the Environment*. "Worldviews" 4: 2000 pp. 82-86.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. J. Chrysavgis, *Symposium Report. Toward an Environmental Ethic. The Adriatic Sea – a sea at risk, a unity of purpose*. "Worldviews" 6: 2002 No. 3 pp. 328-332.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Declaration on the occasion of World Oceans Day*, Stockholm (June 2003), Symposium V. In: *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer* pp. 292-294.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *Address of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the Religion, Science and the Environment Symposium VI, "Amazon: Source of Life"*, Manaus, Brazil, July 14, 2006, "The Fragile Beauty of the World". "Greek Orthodox Theological Review" 51: 2006 No. 1-4 pp. 368-372; *Closing Address of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the Sixth Religion, Science and Environment Symposium*, Manaus, Brazil, July 2006, "Greek Orthodox Theological Review" 51: 2006 No. 1-4 pp. 372-375.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *Opening Address of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the Environmental Symposium "Arctic: The Mirror of Life"*, Nuuk, Greenland, September 7, 2007. "Greek Orthodox Theological Review" 52: 2007 No. 1-4 pp. 287-291; *Second Address of Ecumenical Patriarch*

The specially chosen participants meet in plenary, workshop, and briefing sessions, hearing many speakers on various environmental and ethical themes.<sup>31</sup> Patriarch Bartholomew in his address to the Plenary Assembly of the European Parliament in Brussels (September 24, 2008) explained the birth and the main purpose of this project in the following way: "In our service to the environment, we have to date sponsored seven scientific symposia that bring together a host of disciplines. The genesis of our initiative grew on the island that gave humanity the Apocalypse, the Book of Revelation – the sacred island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea. And it was in the Aegean that we commenced, in 1995, an ambitious program of integrating current knowledge about the oceans with the spiritual approach of the world's religions to water, particularly the world's oceans."<sup>32</sup> An open and fruitful dialog of scientists and theologians, politicians and philosophers, businessmen and educators creates a common ground for mutual understanding and finding solutions through this unique cyclical initiative of Patriarch Bartholomew. This dialog is directed not only towards finding answers to ecological concerns and crises, but also to bring participants to the wide scope of problems concerning their identity as human persons in relation to a greater whole of ecosystem as a part of the singular ecosphere together with the recognition of God the Creator of Heaven and Earth. Then we can grasp the interconnectedness, the powerful communion of all life, and our true interdependency of one another, what will protect us from the self-destruction of the one ecosphere that sustains all human existence.<sup>33</sup> Looking for the practical solutions, during the symposia organized by Patriarch Bartholomew's, to the corruption of the environment, corruption that threatens life on the Earth has given new opportunities for the change of mind for people belonging to the various scientific, social, and political groups, societies and nationalities.

The symposia have also reached out across different faiths and denominations, revealing the wisdom of diverse theological traditions, as well as

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*Bartholomew at the Environmental Symposium "Arctic: The Mirror of Life"*, Nuuk, Greenland, September 9, 2007. "Greek Orthodox Theological Review" 52: 2007 No. 1-4 pp. 291-294; *Concluding Address of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the Environmental Symposium "Arctic: The Mirror of Life"*, Nuuk, Greenland, September 12, 2007. "Greek Orthodox Theological Review" 52: 2007 No. 1-4 pp. 294-298.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Chrysavgi's Introduction. In: *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer* pp. 7-8.

<sup>32</sup> *Address to the Plenary Assembly of the European Parliament in Brussels*, September 24, 2008. In: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. *In the World, Yet Not of the World* p. 165.

<sup>33</sup> *Address to the Plenary Assembly of the European Parliament in Brussels*, September 24, 2008. In: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. *In the World, Yet Not of the World* p. 166.

a common imperative to protect the natural world. During the 2002 Adriatic Sea Symposium, Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Bartholomew signed a joint declaration underlining the spiritual duty of caring for God's creation in the interest of future generations.<sup>34</sup>

### 3. PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW: A WORLD KNOWN ENVIRONMENTAL SPOKESMAN

“The Green Patriarch” tries to turn attention of politicians, relevant authorities and high-level dignitaries to the fact that there is the relationship between international economy and global ecology. He makes people think of the meaning of such Greek words as *oiko-nomia*, *oiko-logia* and *oikou-mene*, which all have got the same root word *oikos*. The basic meaning of *oikos* is home. Therefore it is important to recognize that our world is our “home”, the home of every human being and of all creation. One should remember that *oiko-nomia* (economy) it is care and management of our household; *oiko-logia* (ecology) it is appreciation, or study of our household; and *oikou-mene* (from this word: ecumenism) it is a way of inhabiting the world as our home. The relation of economy and ecology is not accidental. Our worldview and our policy for the future of the Earth deepen on the way we treat natural resources. Practically, our generation should take seriously priorities and programs regarding to consumption and recycling in order to eradicate biological and chemical waste, to preserve oceans, rivers, and lakes and to take seriously the problem of global warming.<sup>35</sup>

During the Twelfth Eurasian Economic Summit in Istanbul (May 6, 2009) Patriarch Bartholomew powerfully stressed that “The truth is that no economic system – no matter how technologically or socially advanced – can survive the collapse of the environmental systems that support it.”<sup>36</sup> He explained that none of human beings can any longer pretend to live as if the rest of the world did not exist. We should be responsible for choosing the way that we inhabit the Earth. Decisions concerning lifestyles are closely

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. *The Venise Declaration*, signed on June 10, 2002, by His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and His Holiness Pope John Paul II. In: *In the World, Yet Not of the World* pp. 293-295.

<sup>35</sup> See *Message to the Twelfth Economic Summit*, Istanbul, May 6, 2009. In: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. *In the World, Yet Not of the World* p. 67.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*.

related to adopted anthropological presuppositions. Are we isolated individuals or social beings? If we are social beings, than we should live in community and share the world. Global competition for economic gain causes many dangers and threats associated with cheap labor and economic inequality. The process of outgrowing the capacity of our planet as a result of our global economy it has been intensified last years. Human attitudes and behavior toward creation, as the Patriarch explains, directly impact on and reflect human attitudes and behavior toward other people. Therefore, the Orthodox Church recognizes the natural creation as inseparable from the identity and destiny of humanity.<sup>37</sup> This conviction should be completed by Patriarch Bartholomew, who states that “the way we treat other people and the natural environment on this earth is the clearest sign of just how authentically we pray to God in heaven,”<sup>38</sup> and a touchstone of how we believe in a living God.

In his Address to the Plenary Assembly of Thirteenth International Anti-Corruption Conference held in Athens, Greece (October 30, 2008) “the Green Patriarch” expressed the truth very important, from the Christian point of view, that: “the transformation of societies and systems begins with each and every person taking responsibility for himself and for the other in his midst.”<sup>39</sup> This public declaration can be considered as the invitation to the vital dialogue on presuppositions, essential elements and various philosophical and theological conceptions and visions of anthropology. It implies Christian concept of person, as somebody who has been bestowed created freedom in order to use it in such a way that it would multiply love and responsibility on the spiritual level. We can notice that Patriarch Bartholomew in his various activities has been trying to wake up and to extend the anthropological awareness, stressing that anthropology is not only a science dealing with the study of human culture and society, but also an ontology, based on philosophical and theological presuppositions.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Message to the Twelfth Economic Summit*, Istanbul, May 6, 2009. In: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. *In the World, Yet Not of the World* pp. 67-68.

<sup>38</sup> *Message to the Eleventh Eurasian Economic Summit*, Istanbul, May 3, 2008. In: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. *In the World, Yet Not of the World* p. 65.

<sup>39</sup> *Address to the Plenary Assembly of Thirteenth International Anti-Corruption Conference* held in Athens, Greece, October 30, 2008. In: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. *In the World, Yet Not of the World* p. 194.

<sup>40</sup> Contemporary anthropologists basically tend to divide their subject into four subdisciplines: biological or physical anthropology, which is a subset that focuses on genetics and evolution, the fossil record, biodiversity and primatology. Apart from that one can distinguish cultural or sociocultural anthropology, which explores variation in customs across culture.

Patriarch Bartholomew has been deeply concerned on a spiritual level about all those people who had lost their lives in big ecological catastrophes. A good example of his compassionate attitude to victims of nuclear disasters exemplifies his *Message to an international conference, Twenty Years of Chernobyl Catastrophe: A Look to the Future*, in Minsk, Belarus (April 17, 2006). He assured then of his fervent prayers “for the blessed repose of the victims of the awful catastrophe as well as for the comfort and healing of those who suffer still”, interceding with Loving God on behalf of “all those who, whether in science, technology, politics, or in other fields, are involved with nuclear power.”<sup>41</sup> The Patriarch is also interested in introducing the theological perspective in the problem of the proper development and distribution of the energy resources of the Earth. He recommended specialists gathered in the Twentieth World Energy Congress (Rome, November 2007) that in a debate aimed on the “seeking ways for a sustainable use of energy resources to the benefit of the entire world” it would be very fruitful for them to review their ways of thinking in a manner of repentance (Gr. *metanoia*), which is taken from the Christian tradition. He indicated that the contemporary energy crisis is primarily a spiritual crisis related to the way we perceive our planet resources. If humankind fails to see the world as a gift received from above, than it is treating it in an inhumane, godless manner without or with the very limited responsibility for the poor living in developing countries.<sup>42</sup>

There is a big threat for the present generation, namely the priority of a need of constant productivity in order to satisfy a growing need of consumer goods. Modern models of economy based on constant productivity do not take into account the unique and primary value of the human person and the preservation of the natural environment. As a result the “developed” world that is less than ten percent of the world’s population consumes more than ninety percent of the earth’s natural resources. It is very costly for the “developing” countries that suffer of hunger, poverty, and unemployment. Having in mind common greedy lifestyles typical for the “developed” world Patriarch Bartholomew persistently calls for substantial changes in treating all people, including the poor, in a just manner and putting a human face on the concepts of employment and productivity. He tries to convince politicians,

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<sup>41</sup> *Message to an international conference, Twenty Years of Chernobyl Catastrophe: A Look to the Future*, Minsk, Belarus, April 17, 2006. In: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. *In the World, Yet Not of the World* p. 107.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. *Message to the Twentieth World Energy Congress*, Rome, November 2007. In: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. *In the World, Yet Not of the World* pp. 108-109.

high-levels dignitaries, and relevant authorities that a radical change in politics and economics is necessary today. This transformation ought to help in assuming greater personal responsibility of people in Western societies for the environmental crisis and the future of our planet.<sup>43</sup> In his *Message addressed to the G8 meeting* in L'Aquila, Italy in July 2009, "the Green Patriarch" reminded that the people living in G8 nations both consume and corrupt far too much of the earth's resources. He encouraged world leaders to break the vicious circle of economic stagnation and ecological degradation, convincing that such a gathering like "The G8 meeting is a golden opportunity for world leaders to issue a decisive signal to the entire world that they recognize their unique role, that they respect the more vulnerable in this situation, and that they are prepared to assume responsibility for an issue of critical significance and global urgency."<sup>44</sup> On the basis of the Gospel saying "Man does not live by bread alone" (Mt. 4.4) the Patriarch explains that we, the human persons cannot live by economic development alone, but we must seek the "word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Mt. 4.4) – that is, acknowledge that the economy should be a servant of humanity, not its master. And if we take such a conviction seriously, than we must look for the values and principles that transcend economic concerns.<sup>45</sup>

#### 4. TOWARDS A CLOSER RELATION BETWEEN SCIENCE AND ONTOLOGY

It seems that it is not easy to combine contemporary environmental problems with theological presuppositions. Although Patriarch Bartholomew had been aware that many scientists, politicians or policy-makers could consider such an effort as a paradoxical and even eccentric enterprise, he has been trying to convince them that ecology should be related to theological cosmology and anthropology. Protection of the natural environment requires interdisciplinary cooperation. If we want to survive as the human race it is not enough to stay on the ground of ecology treated merely as thematic scientific

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Message to the Twelfth Economic Summit*, Istanbul, May 6, 2009. In: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. *In the World, Yet Not of the World* p. 69.

<sup>44</sup> *Message addressed to the G8 meeting*, L'Aquila, Italy in July 2009. In: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. *In the World, Yet Not of the World* p. 72.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. *Address to the meeting of the World Economic Forum*, Davos, February 2, 1999. In: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. *In the World, Yet Not of the World* pp. 126-127.

research. The crucial question is: why does man destroy the environment? Is it for the reason that he is motivated by irrational self-gratification?<sup>46</sup> The Patriarch's opinion is opposite. He claims that man "destroys the natural environment by trying to take advantage of nature in order to secure more conveniences and comforts in daily life."<sup>47</sup> It is not enough to call for the rational limitation of nonrational exploitation of the natural environment in order to ensure natural resources for future generations. By definition it is irrational in practice because most of human population does not accept being deprived of comfort and conveniences of the environment that has been secured for a minority who live in "civilized" societies. Changing such attitude towards the natural environment requires the theological vision of the world and to understand it as a creation of God.

"The Green Patriarch" points out that the monotheistic religious traditions give their faithful great wisdom that "The use of the world by humans constitutes a practical relation between man and God, since God gives and man receives the natural goods as an offering of God's divine love for the sake of the world."<sup>48</sup> Therefore we should put into practice a necessary change concerning the meaning of matter and the world. In order to implement such a change it is necessary to use ontological categories of philosophy and theology, such as: person (Gr. *prosopon*, *hypostasis*), energy (Gr. *energeia*), and essence (Gr. *ousia*). If we take into account the ontological content of the category of "energies" it will be evident that the ontological "beginning" of the world (and of matter) should be ascribed to a personal God. These "energies" disclose the personal otherness of God, whose essence is totally different from that of matter. It is worth to mention that Christianity confirmed that matter is energy, asserting that matter is a created result of the uncreated divine energy, fifteen centuries before the theory of quanta adopted in modern physics. Only when human beings accept the truth that matter and all of nature as the work of a personal God, it will be possible a radical change towards the natural environment. Then they concentrate their efforts in order to establish a true relationship between man and natural reality rather than the domination by man over it.<sup>49</sup> Accepting the truth that the world is created

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. *Address to the Summit on Religions and Conservation*, Atami, Japan, April 5, 1995, In: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, *In the World, Yet Not of the World*, pp. 272-273.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 273.

<sup>48</sup> *Address to the Summit on Religions and Conservation*, Atami, Japan, April 5, 1995. In: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, *In the World, Yet Not of the World* p. 274.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem* pp. 276-279.

by a personal God opens a way towards Christian conception of God in Trinity and the event of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christians should be witnesses that faith in the Trinitarian God combined with faith in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ gives them the identity marked by freedom and love.

When Orthodox Christians recall the Resurrection of Jesus Christ they admit the greatest miracle of their identity took place. This miracle, as Patriarch Bartholomew states, calls for an openness to confess the reality of the darkness in human beings and around them, and more than that, namely that it is necessary to admit role and responsibility of humankind for refusing to eradicate the suffering in the world. The powerful message of the Resurrection is the source of Christian hope and light, which gives a simple access to the truth, that we should stand honestly before the reality of evil in order to confess "both the hurt we inflict on our neighbor in society and in the global community and of the abuse with which we treat the earth's resources."<sup>50</sup>

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Patriarch Bartholomew receiving the Sophie Prize in 2002 had articulated principles which summarized his attitude and concern for the natural environment in a form of *An Environmental Creed*. The Patriarch believes that the human person constitutes the crown of creation, endowed with self-consciousness, freedom, love, knowledge, and will. He believes that the natural creation is a gift from God and that the universe comprises a single harmony or "cosmos". What is the fact of great importance he is convinced "that humanity did not wish to coordinate personal will and universal harmony in accordance with the divine plan". It results in growing anthropocentrism, identified as anthropomorphism. As a Christian he believes that "a New man, the God-Man, Jesus Christ, appeared in the world, demonstrating perfect obedience to the original plan of God the Father with regard to the relationship between humanity and the world". The Savior Jesus Christ reconciled the world to the Father. From this time forth, the world functions harmoniously through Him and in Him. The Good News of Jesus Christ gives us simple recommendations "to use the world's resources in a spirit of ascetic restraint and Eucharistic sacrifice" in order to change our way of thinking from egocentrism to altruism in the light of the ultimate end

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<sup>50</sup> Patriarch Bartholomew. *Invited op-ed*. "Washington Post", Easter 2008. In: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. *In the World, Yet Not of the World* p. 125.

(Gr. *telos*) of the world.<sup>51</sup> There will be possible to embrace all with love and joy, when we will become liturgical persons. Then with all our hearts we will be able to put into practice the words of liturgical prayer: “Offering You, Your own of Your own, on behalf of all and for the sake of all – we praise You, we bless You, we give thanks to You, O Lord, and we pray to You, our God”<sup>52</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup> Address during the official Sophie Prize presentation Ceremony, June 12, 2002. In: *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer* pp. 283-284.

<sup>52</sup> *The Divine Liturgy of our Father among the Saints John Chrysostom*. Oxford 1995 p. 33.

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„ZIELONE OREĐZIE” DO ŚWIATA  
PATRIARCHY EKUMENICZNEGO BARTŁOMIEJA

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Współcześnie coraz poważniej traktuje się ekologiczno-społeczny kryzys w świecie. Kwestia odpowiedzialności za postępujące zniszczenie środowiska naturalnego jest ważna nie tylko dla rządów państw, polityków, działaczy samorządowych i naukowców, ale również dla hierarchii Kościołów chrześcijańskich. Wkład Kościołów jest bardzo ważny ze względu na uświadamianie ludziom, że istnieje bezpośrednie powiązanie między stanem duchowym osoby ludzkiej a kondycją świata stworzonego.

W niniejszym artykule została bardzo syntetycznie przedstawiona ekologiczna działalność Jego Świątobliwości Bartłomieja, Patriarchy Ekumenicznego, na forum światowym. W pierwszej części ukazano „zielone powołanie” Patriarchy Bartłomieja, który od dwudziestu lat kontynuuje i rozwija w duchu szeroko rozumianego dialogu dzieło swego poprzednika Patriarchy Ekumenicznego Dimitriosia. Ważnym elementem zaangażowania ekologicznego obecnego Patriarchy Konstantynopola są encykliki wydawane co roku z okazji początku prawosławnego roku kościelnego – 1 września, które dotyczą ekologicznej odpowiedzialności prawosławnych chrześcijan za cały stworzony świat. Od 1997 r. Patriarcha Bartłomiej nazywany jest „Zielonym Patriarchą”. Jednym z przejawów jego misji jest ukazywanie prawdy o tym, że wszystkie szkody wyrządzone środowisku naturalnemu stanowią odzwierciedlenie duchowych problemów ludzkości. Stąd też ustawicznie Patriarcha głosi, że refleksja antropologiczna powinna stanowić warunek wstępny naszego rozumienia świata. Współcześnie coraz bardziej konieczne staje się łączenie chrześcijańskiej ontologii z naukami szczegółowymi. Ten postulat Patriarchy Bartłomieja urzeczywistnia w praktyce poprzez różnorodną działalność jednoczącą przedstawicieli różnych państw, społeczności, religii, naukowców czy dziennikarzy.

Szczególną rolę pośród wielu organizowanych czy współorganizowanych przez Patriarchę międzynarodowych, interdyscyplinarnych czy międzyreligijnych spotkań naukowych odgrywają przedstawione w części drugiej artykułu tzw. zielone sympozja na wodzie. Odbywają się one w różnych częściach świata i dotyczą ważnych problemów związanych ze stanem mórz i rzek. Są one tak wyjątkowe, że przyciągają międzynarodową uwagę do miejsc szczególnie zagrożonych, jak np. Morze Egejskie (1995), Morze Czarne (1997), rzeka Dunaj (1999), Morze Adriatyckie

(2002), Morze Bałtyckie (2003), rzeka Amazonka (2006) czy Arktyka (2007). W czasie tych sympozjów dochodzi do twórczego i owocnego dialogu naukowców i teologów, polityków i filozofów, biznesmenów i nauczycieli.

W części trzeciej artykułu Patriarcha Bartłomiej zostaje ukazany jako znany w całym świecie mówca i działacz ekologiczny, który oddziałuje na polityków i władze państwowe różnych szczebli, poprzez uświadamianie im, że w działaniach na rzecz środowiska naturalnego należy uwzględnić związki zachodzące między międzynarodową ekonomią a ekologią na poziomie ogólnoświatowym. W swoich oficjalnych wystąpieniach „Zielony Patriarcha” podkreśla znaczenie prawd o człowieku, społeczeństwie i świecie stworzonym, jakie wniosło chrześcijaństwo. Jest głęboko zatroskany na poziomie duchowym o tych wszystkich ludziach, którzy ucierpieli czy stracili swoje życie w wielkich katastrofach ekologicznych. Odważnie też mówi o zagrożeniach wynikających z nadkonsumpcji w krajach rozwiniętych oraz głodu w krajach rozwijających się.

Mając świadomość, że nie jest możliwe rozwiązanie problemów ekologicznych współczesnego świata bez odwołania się do interdyscyplinarnego współdziałania naukowców, filozofów i teologów na bazie chrześcijańskiego rozumienia osoby ludzkiej i świata stworzonego, Patriarcha Bartłomiej nawołuje do korzystania z ontologicznych kategorii filozoficznych i teologicznych, takich jak: osoba (gr. *prosopon*, *hypostasis*), energia (gr. *energeia*) czy istota (gr. *ousia*). Przypomina, że to chrześcijaństwo wschodnie na piętnaście wieków przed teorią kwantową, stanowiącą podstawę współczesnej fizyki, nauczało, że materia jest energią. Radykalna zmiana w podejściu do środowiska naturalnego, zdaniem Patriarchy Bartłomieja, tylko wtedy będzie możliwa, gdy przyjmie się prawdę o stworzeniu człowieka i świata przez Boga w Trójcy Osób oraz uwierzy się w Zmartwychwstanie Jezusa Chrystusa. Zwieńczenie artykułu stanowi przedstawienie *Ekologicznego Credo „Zielonego Patriarchy”*, które stanowi syntezę podstaw jego odpowiedzialności za świat, w którym żyjemy.

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**Słowa kluczowe:** Patriarcha Ekumeniczny Bartłomiej, „Zielony Patriarcha”, ogólnoświatowy kryzys ekologiczny i społeczny, ochrona środowiska naturalnego, antropologia chrześcijańska, nauka i ontologia.

**Key words:** Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, “The Green Patriarch”, the worldwide ecological and social crisis, the protection of the natural environment, Christian anthropology, science and ontology.