

## *The Division of the G.O.C. Into Factions*

The first division among the Old Calendarists occurred in 1936, when three of the seven bishops returned to the New Calendarist State Church of Greece. The fallen hierarchs were Metropolitan Chrysostom Demetriou of Zacynthus, Bishop Christopher Hatziz of Megara and Bishop Polycarp Liosis of Diaulia. The remaining hierarchs of the Synod of the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece were Metropolitan Germanus Mavromatis of Demetrias, Metropolitan Chrysostom Kavouridis of Florina, Bishop Germanus Varykopoulos of the Cyclades and Bishop Matthew Karpathakis of Bresthena.

The second division among the Old Calendarists also occurred in 1936, when the government-recognized entity of the "Religious Community of the Genuine Orthodox Christians" (a group of laymen theologians without any bishops or priests) severed communion with the President of the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Germanus, and also severed communion with all the remaining hierarchs of the Synod, and went off alone, forming a parasynagogue.

The third division among the Old Calendarists occurred in September 1937, when Bishop Matthew of Bresthena severed communion with the Synodal President, Metropolitan Germanus, and instead formed his own party, and took over the leadership of the schismatic "Religious Community of the Genuine Orthodox Christians" which had severed communion from the Church a year earlier. Bishop Matthew left for ecclesiological reasons.

The fourth division occurred in October 1937, when Bishop Germanus of the Cyclades severed communion with the President of the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Germanus of Demetrias, and instead joined Bishop Matthew.

The fifth division occurred in 1942, when Bishops Germanus of the Cyclades and Matthew of Bresthena severed communion with one another due to dogmatic reasons. Bishop Germanus of Cyclades condemned Bishop Matthew for his writings and publications, which included a statement that if it were not for the birth of St. John Chrysostom, there would have needed to be a "second incarnation of Christ," and another statement that Christ's teeth were supposedly broken, etc. Bishop Matthew retaliated against this by stating that Bishop Germanus was guilty of blaspheming against King Abgar's letter to Christ, and the response from Christ to Abgar, and for mocking the "symbols of the Theotokos" that Bishop Matthew had published in his book "Garden of Graces."

The sixth division among the Old Calendarists occurred in 1943, when Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina severed communion with the Synodal President, Metropolitan Germanus of Demetrias, due to political reasons.

In other words, by 1943, there were four Old Calendarist bishops, and four factions! Each of the four bishops was the “president” of his own faction. Unfortunately, these hierarchs managed to preserve themselves from new calendarism, but they fell into the passion of factionalism, a passion that still runs wild among the Old Calendarist hierarchs even today. This is what occurs when bishops are led by their passions, make hasty decisions to condemn their brothers, and make themselves leaders of their own parties.

In 1946, this factionalism began to come to an end when Bishops Christopher and Polycarp returned to the Old Calendar and joined the Synod of Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina. Soon after this, Bishop Germanus of the Cyclades also began meeting with the above three bishops for the sake of reuniting all the factions of the Old Calendarists of Greece. However, he was placed in prison from 1947 to 1949, and it was not until he was released that he joined formally with the Synod of Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina. The only bishop who remained separated was Bishop Matthew of Bresthena, mainly for ecclesiological reasons, but he was much more open to unity than were those immediately surrounding him.

The below photograph is of Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina and Bishops Germanus of Cyclades, Christopher of Megaris and Polycarp of Diaulia in 1946, when the factionalism began to end and a united Synod began to form again (with the exclusion of Bishop Matthew who did not meet in person with any of the remaining hierarchs).



**Germanus of Cyclades, Chrysostom of Florina, Christopher of Megaris, Polycarp of Diaulia**