

Abstract

'Patristic Symbiosis' – Beyond Neo-Patristic Synthesis: A Methodological Inquiry of the Orthodox Theology of Margins

While the neo-patristic synthesis aimed to liberate the Orthodox theology from the influence of Western scholasticism, rather than the Eastern and Western theological conversations, it focused on the need of 'returning' to the early teachers. Though this approach was exclusively against the westernised Russian theology, in the modern period, its effect percolated to the other Orthodox traditions around the world. One of the major criticisms that this method has to face in the Indian context of Orthodoxy is its deficiency to imagine the theology of the socially marginalized community, which is an important stream of theology, primarily developed through the Western theological influence. To address this lacuna, I propose a method of 'patristic symbiosis'. 'Patristic symbiosis' enables the contemporary Orthodox theologians, to contextually respond by 'partnering' with the patristic voices. It claims that the patristic teachers are not dead; they speak and reflect even today. Differently stated, 'patristic symbiosis' explores beyond what has been strictly said in the neo-patristic theology. To set a way towards this argument, the article turns to Pantelis Kalaitzidis, a contemporary Orthodox theologian whose theological program encourages to 'return to the fathers' and at the same time cautions against the danger of "objectification and museumification" of Orthodox theology. In conclusion, through 'patristic symbiosis', the article imagines an Orthodox theology of margins by 'partnering' with the early teachers without much difference of Western or Eastern theology.

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