

**JOINT COMMISSION OF THE THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE
BETWEEN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH AND
THE ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES
Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate
Geneva, November 1 - 6, 1993**

COMMUNIQUE

Following the mandate of their Churches, the Joint Commission for the Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches held their fourth meeting at the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate at Chambesy, Geneva, Switzerland between 1-6 November 1993 to consider the procedure for the restoration of full communion.

The official representatives of the two Orthodox families of Churches and their advisors met in an atmosphere of prayer and warm, cordial, Christian brotherly love. They experienced the gracious and generous hospitality of His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomaios I, through His Eminence Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland, in the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The 30 participants (see the List of participants) came from Albania, Austria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, Greece, India, Lebanon, Poland, Romania, Russia, Switzerland, Syria, United Kingdom and U.S.A.

The plenary meetings of the Joint Commission were co-chaired by His Eminence Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland and His Eminence Metropolitan Bishoy of Damiette. His Eminence Metropolitan Damaskinos in his inaugural address explained the procedure which was to be followed and stressed that *"The present Meeting of the Full Joint Theological Commission for the Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches is of the utmost importance not only for evaluating correctly the truly historic theological work of our Commission which has been already accomplished in our previous meetings, but also for facilitating the necessary ecclesiastical procedures for the restoration of full communion"*.

After the inaugural meeting each side met separately to consider papers prepared on the following subjects:

- What is the competent ecclesiastical authority from each side for the lifting of the anathemas and what are the presuppositions for the restoration of ecclesiastical communion?
- Which anathemas of which synods and persons could be lifted in accordance with the proposal of paragraph 10 of the second Common Statement?
- Which is the canonical procedure from each side for the lifting of the anathemas and the restoration of ecclesiastical communion?
- How could we understand and implement the restoration of ecclesiastical communion in the life of our Church?
- Which are the canonical and liturgical consequences of full communion?

They produced two Reports which were presented to the plenary meeting for clarifications and discussion on the third day of the proceedings. As a result of these discussions the Oriental Orthodox presented a document of Response which opened the way for further discussions in the plenary. A drafting committee consisting of H. E. Metropolitan Bishoy of Damiette, H. E. Metropolitan Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim of Aleppo, H. E. Archbishop Mesrob Krikorian from the Oriental Orthodox side and Professors Fr John Romanides, Fr George Dragas and Vlassios Phidas from the Orthodox side were appointed to prepare appropriate Proposals to the two church families on lifting of anathemas from each side and restoring full communion among them.

The text of these proposals, unanimously agreed upon after discussion in plenary session, is as follows:

PROPOSALS FOR LIFTING OF ANATHEMAS

1. In the light of our Agreed Statement on Christology at St. Bishoy Monastery 1989, and of our Second Agreed Statement at Chambesy 1990, the representatives of both Church families agree that the lifting of anathemas and condemnations of the past can be consummated on the basis of their common acknowledgement of the fact that the Councils and Fathers previously anathematized or condemned are orthodox in their teachings. In the light of our four unofficial consultations (1964, 1967, 1970, 1971) and our three official meetings which followed on (1985, 1989, 1990), we have understood that both families have loyally maintained the authentic orthodox christological doctrine, and the unbroken continuity of the apostolic tradition, though they may have used Christological terms in different ways.

2. The lifting of the anathemas should be made unanimously and simultaneously by the Heads of all the Churches of both sides, through the signing of an appropriate ecclesiastical Act, the content of which will include acknowledgement from each side that the other one is orthodox in all respects.

3. The lifting of the anathemas should imply:

a. that restoration of full communion for both sides is to be immediately implemented,.

b. that no past condemnation, synodical or personal, against each other is applicable any more;

c. that a catalogue of Diptychs of the Heads of the Churches should be agreed upon to be used liturgically.

4. At the same time the following practical steps should be taken:

a. The Joint Sub-Committee for Pastoral issues should continue its very important task according to what had been agreed at the 1990 meeting of the Joint Commission.

b. The Co-Chairmen of the Joint Committee should visit the Heads of the Churches with the view to offering fuller information on the outcome of the Dialogue.

c. A Liturgical Sub-Committee should be appointed by both sides to examine the liturgical implications arising from the restoration of communion and to propose appropriate forms of concelebration.

d. Matters relating to ecclesiastical jurisdiction should be left to be arranged by the respective authorities of the local churches according to common canonical and synodical principles.

e. The two Co-Chairmen of the Joint Commission with the two Secretaries of the Dialogue should make provisions for the production of appropriate literature explaining our common understanding of the orthodox faith which has led us to overcome the divisions of the past, and also coordinating the work of the other Sub-Committees.

Damaskinos, Papandreou
Metropolitan of Switzerland

Metropolitan Bishop of Damiette

Prof. Vlassios Phidas

Archbishop Dr Mesrob K. Krikorian

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November 1 - 6, 1993**

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