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# Eastern Orthodox - Oriental Orthodox Agreement 1990

## JOINT-COMMISSION OF THE THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH AND THE ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHS

Orthodox Centre of Ecumenical Patriarchate Chambesy Geneva

September 23 - 28, 1990

### INTRODUCTION

The third meeting of the Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches took place at the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Chambesy, Geneva, from 23 to 28 September 1990.

The official representatives of the two families of the Orthodox Churches and their advisors, met in an atmosphere of prayerful waiting on the Holy Spirit and warm, cordial, Christian, brotherly affection.

We experienced the gracious and generous hospitality of His Holiness Patriarch Dimitrios I, through His Eminence Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland, in the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. We were also received at two grand receptions, one at the residence of Metropolitan Damaskinos, and the other at the residence of His Excellency Mr Kerkinos, the Ambassador of Greece to the United Nations, and Mrs Kerkinos.

The 34 participants (see list of participants below) came from Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, Greece, India, Lebanon, Poland, Switzerland, Syria, UK, USA, USSR (Russian Church, Georgian Church, and Armenian Church), and Yugoslavia.

The six days of meetings were co-chaired by His Eminence Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland, and His Grace Metropolitan Bishoi of Damiette.

His Eminence Metropolitan Dameskinos in his inaugural address exhorted the participants to 'work in a spirit of humility, brotherly love, and mutual recognition' so that 'the Lord of the Faith and Head of His Church' will guide us by the Holy Spirit on the speedier way towards unity and communion.

The meeting received two reports, one from its Theological Sub-Committee, which met at the Orthodox Centre, Chambesy (20 to 22 January 1990), and the other from its Sub-Committee on Pastoral Relations, which met at the Anba Bishoy Monastery, Egypt (31 January to 4 February 1990).

The following papers which had been presented to the Theological Sub-Committee were distributed to the participants:

1. Dogmatic Formulations and Anathemas by Local and Ecumenical Synods within their Social Context - Reverend Professor John S. Romanides, Church of Greece.
2. Anathemas and Conciliar Decisions - Two issues to be settled for Restoration of Communion Among Oriental Orthodox and Eastern Orthodox Churches - Dr Paulos Mar Gregorios, Metropolitan of Delhi, Orthodox Syrian Church of the East.
3. Historical Factors and the Council of Chalcedon - Father T. Malaty, Coptic Orthodox Church.
4. Historical Factors and the Terminology of the Synod of Chalcedon (451) - Professor Dr Vlassios Phidas, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria.
5. Interpretation of Christological Dogmas Today - Metropolitan George Khodr - Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch.
6. Interpretation of Christological Dogmas Today - Bishop Mesrob Krikorian, Armenian Apostolic Church of Etchmiadzin.

The six papers and the two Sub-Committee reports, along with the Summary of Conclusions of the Fourth Unofficial Conversations at Addis Ababa (1971), which was appended to the report of the Theological Sub-Committee, formed the basis of our intensive and friendly discussion on the issues and actions to be taken.

A drafting committee composed of Metropolitan George Khodr, Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios, Archbishop Kashishian, Archbishop Garima, Reveend Professor John Romanides, Metropolitan Matta Mar Eustathius (Syria), Professor Ivan Dimitrov (Bulgaria), with Professor V. Phidas and Bishop Krikorian as co-secretaries, produced the draft

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for the Second Agreed Statement and Recommendations to Churches.

Another drafting Committee composed of Professor Papavassiliou (Cyprus), Bishop Christoforos (Czechoslovakia), Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios, and Liqaselttanat Habtemariam (Ethiopia), with Father Dr George Dragas as secretary, produced the draft for the Recommendations on Pastoral Issues.

The following is the text of the unanimously approved Second Agreed Statement and Recommendations.

## SECOND AGREED STATEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CHURCHES

The First Agreed Statement on Christology adopted by the Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches, at our historic meeting at the Anba Bishoy Monastery, Egypt, from 20th to 24th June 1989 forms the basis of this Second Agreed Statement on the following affirmations of our common faith and understanding, and recommendations on steps to be taken for the communion of our two families of Churches in Jesus Christ our Lord, who prayed &quot;that they all may be one&quot;;

1 Both families agree in condemning the Eutychian heresy. Both families confess that the Logos, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, only begotten of the Father before the ages and consubstantial with Him, was incarnate and was born from the Virgin Mary Theotokos, fully consubstantial with us, perfect man with soul, body, and mind (nous). He was crucified, died, was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day, ascended to the Heavenly Father, where He sits at the right hand of the Father, as Lord of all Creation. At Pentecost, by the coming of the Holy Spirit, He manifested the Church as His Body. We look forward to His coming again in the fullness of His glory, according to the Scriptures.

2 Both families condemn the Nestorian heresy and the crypto-Nestorianism of Theodoret of Cyrus. They agree that it is not sufficient merely to say that Christ is consubstantial both with His Father and with us, by nature God and by nature man. It is necessary to affirm also that the Logos, Who is by nature God, became by nature Man, by His Incarnation in the fullness of time.

3 Both families agree that the Hypostasis of the Logos became composite (sunqetos) by uniting to His divine uncreated nature with its natural will and energy, which He has in common with the Father and the Holy Spirit, His created human nature, which He assumed at the Incarnation and made His own, with its natural will and energy.

4 Both families agree that the natures, with their proper energies and wills, are united hypostatically and naturally, without confusion, without change, without division, and without separation, and that they are distinguished in thought alone (th qewria monh).

5 Both families agree that He who wills and acts is always the one Hypostasis of the Logos incarnate.

6 Both families agree in rejecting interpretations of Councils which do not fully agree with the Horos of the Third Ecumenical Council and the letter (433) of Cyril of Alexandria to John of Antioch.

7 The Orthodox agree that the Oriental Orthodox will continue to maintain their traditional Cyrillian terminology of 'one nature of the incarnate Logos' (mia fusis tou qeou logou sesarkwmenh), since they acknowledge the double consubstantiality of the Logos which Eutyches denied. The Orthodox also use this terminology. The Oriental Orthodox agree that the Orthodox are justified in their use of the two-natures formula, since they acknowledge that the distinction is &quot;in thought alone (th qewria monh). Cyril interpreted correctly this use in his letter to John of Antioch and his letters to Acacius of Melitene (PG 77, 184-201), to Eulogius (PG 77. 224-228), and to Succensus (PG 77, 228-245).

8 Both families accept the first three Ecumenical Councils, which form our common heritage. In relation to the four later Councils of the Orthodox Church, the Orthodox state that for them the above points 1-7 are the teachings also of the four later Councils of the Orthodox Church, while the Oriental Orthodox consider this statement of the Orthodox as their interpretation. With this understanding, the Oriental Orthodox respond to it positively. In relation to the teaching of the Seventh Ecumenical Council of the Orthodox Church, the Oriental Orthodox agree that the theology and practice of the veneration of icons taught by that Council are in basic agreement with the teaching and practice of the Oriental Orthodox from ancient times, long before the convening of the Council, and that we have no disagreements in this regard.

9 In the light of our Agreed Statement on Christology, as well as of the above common affirmations, we have now clearly understood that both families have always loyally maintained the same authentic Orthodox Christological faith, and the unbroken continuity of the apostolic tradition, though they may have used Christological terms in different ways. It is this common faith and continuous loyalty to the Apostolic Tradition that should be the basis of our unity and communion.

10 Both families agree that all the anathemas and condemnations of the past which now divide us should be lifted by the Churches in order that the last obstacle to the full unity and communion of our two families can be removed by the grace and power of God. Both families agree that the lifting of anathemas and condemnations will be consulted on the basis that the Councils and Fathers previously anathematized or condemned are not heretical.

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We therefore recommend to our Churches the following practical steps:

A The Orthodox should lift all anathemas and condemnations against all Oriental Orthodox Councils and fathers whom they have anathematized or condemned in the past.

B The Oriental Orthodox should at the same time lift all anathemas and condemnations against all Orthodox Councils and fathers, whom they have anathematized or condemned in the past.

C The manner in which the anathemas are to be lifted should be decided by the Churches individually.

Trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, Unity and Love, we submit this Agreed Statement and Recommendations to our venerable Churches for their consideration and action, praying that the same Spirit will lead us to that unity for which our Lord prayed and prays.

Signatures of the Second Agreed Statement and Recommendations to the Churches- Chambesy, 28th September 1990.

[in 2 columns - Byzantine Orthodox to the left, and Oriental Orthodox to the right] Metropolitan Damaskinos, Co-President, (Ecumenical Patriarchate) Metropolitan Bishoi, Co-President, (Coptic Orthodox Church) Prof. Vlassios Phidas, Co-Secretary, (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria) Bishop Dr. Mesrob Krikorian, Co-Secretary (Armenian Church of Etchmiadzin) Pro. Athanasios Arvanitis (Ecumenical Patriarchate) Metropolitan Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios (Orthodox Syrian Church of the East) Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Peristerion, Assistant Co-Secretary (Ecumenical Patriarchate) Doctorate Joseph M. Faltas, Assistant Co-Secretary, (Coptic Orthodox Church) Professor Father George Dragas+ Ecumenical patriarchate Bishop Serapion + Coptic Orthodox Church Orthodox members members Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria Father Tadros Y. Malaty Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch Metropolitan Eustathius Matta Rouhm Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch Metropolitan George Khodr Armenian Church of Etchmiadzin Bishop Dr Mesrob Krikorian Russian Patriarchate Mr Nikolai Zabolotski, Mr. Grigorij Skobej Catholicosate of Cilicia Archbishop Aram Keshishian Serbian Patriarchate Professor Stojan Gosevic Orthodox Church of the East Archbishop Mesrob Ashdjian, Father George Kondortha Bulgarian Patriarchate Dr Ivan Zhelev Dimitrov Ethiopian Orthodox Church Archbishop Abba Gerima Elvabur, Rev Habte Mariam Warkineh Georgian Patriarchate Metropolitan David of Sukhum, Er Boris Gagua Church of Cyprus Horepiskopos Barnabas of Salamis, Professor Andreas Papavasiliou Church of Greece Metropolitan Meletios Nikopolis, Pro. Father John Romanides Polish Orthodox Church Bishop Jeremiasz of Wroclaw Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia Bishop Christoforos of Olomouc, Father Joseph Hauser Finnish Orthodox Church Father Heikki Huttunen