DIALOGUE INTERNATIONAL ENTRE ORTHODOXES ET ORTHODOXES ORIENTAUX

Patriarchs of the Middle East of The Orthodox Church And The Oriental Orthodox Churches

Joint Declaration 'On the Unity of the Faith'

1987

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orthodoxjointcommission.wordpress.com

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Patriarchs of the Middle East of The Orthodox Church And The Oriental Orthodox Churches

Joint Declaration 'On the Unity of the Faith'

We give thanks to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the joy of the spiritual communion which has been granted to us from on high, and which has allowed our meeting in the holy monastery of St Bishoy, Egypt, on the occasion of the Executive Committee meeting of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), 16-19 November 1987, on the invitation of our sister Coptic Orthodox Church which has welcomed us with goodwill.

It is the first time that we, the Primates of the Byzantine and Oriental churches, that are members of the MECC and that have their seat in the Middle East, meet to reflect together on our common task in the current situation in the Middle East.

While reflecting once more on the deeply-rooted inner unity of faith existing between our two families of Churches, we rejoice in realizing how much we have advanced in our rediscovery and in the growing consciousness among our people of that inner unity of Faith in the incarnate Lord.

Attempts by theologians of both families aimed at overcoming the misunderstandings inherited from the past centuries of alienation towards one another have happily reached the same conclusion that fundamentally and essentially we on both sides have preserved the same Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, in spite of diverse formulations and resulting controversies.

We welcome all the efforts made on the international or regional levels, and noting in particular that which has been done on the regioal level, in the meetings of Balamand, Lebanon in 1972, and of Pendeli, Greece in 1978, we affirm our togetherness in the true understanding of the Person of Christ, who being God of God, only-begotten Son of the Father, became truly man, fully assumed our human nature without losing or diminishing or changing His DIvine Nature. Being perfect God, He became perfect man, without confusion, without separation.

In the light of this conviction we recommend that the official dialogue on both the regional (Middle East) and the international levels be pursued through common endeavours in the healthy process of clarifying and

enhancing our commonness in faith and dispelling the misapprehensions of the past, thus preparing the way towards the full recovery of our communion.

We urge our people to continue to deepen their consciousness in the deep commonality of faith and to relate to one another as brothers and sisters who share the same Gospel, the same faith and the sae commission entrusted to them by their common Lord.

Thanks be to God that ancient controversies and rivalries have given way to a new era of sincere and open dialogue and new communal brotherhood. We pray that these most difficult and crucial times in the Middle East may stimulate all of us to see more clearly the command of our Lord Jesus Christ so that we may be one according to his will (John 10) and His prayer (John 17).

Pope Shenouda III, Coptic Orthodox Church
Patriarch Parthenios III, Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria
Patriarch Ignatios IV, Orthodox Church of Antioch
Catholicos Karekin II, Armenian Apostolic Church of Cilicia

Patriarch Mor Ignatius Zakka I. Iwas,
Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch,
Not present at the meeting, also expressed is accord with the statement