#### Notes:

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St. Cyril of Alexandria called the Blessed Holy Virgin Mary the Theotokos, Mother of God, not mother of the human nature of Christ.

Copts believe in two natures "human" and "divine" that are united in one "without mingling, without confusion, and without alteration" (from the declaration of faith at the end of the Coptic divine liturgy). These two natures "did not separate for a moment or the twinkling of an eye" (also from the declaration of faith at the end of the Coptic divine liturgy). In fact, at the time Christ died on the cross, His human soul left his human body, but His divine nature remained united to His human soul and human body.

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Since the Holy Synods of both the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and all Africa have already accepted the outcome of the official dialogue on Christology between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, including the two official agreements: the first on Christology signed in June 1989 in Egypt and the second also on Christology and on the lifting of anathemas and restoration of full communion signed in Geneva 1990, in which it is stated that "In the light of our agreed statement on Christology..., we have now clearly understood that both families have always loyally maintained the same authentic Orthodox Christological faith, and the unbroken continuity of Apostolic tradition". It was agreed to have mutual recognition of the sacrament of Baptism, based on what St Paul wrote, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph 4:5)

But since up until now we are waiting for the responses of the Holy Synods of some other churches in both families, the restoration of full communion is not yet reached between the two sides of the bi-lateral dialogue. And due to the pastoral consequences and implications caued by mixed Christian marriages between the members of the two Patriarchates of Alexandria, having the majority of their people living in the same countries. Those marriages being difficult to perform in both Churches at the same time or in concelebration. The result is that mant sensitivities are created between the two families of the partners of such marriage. Those sensitivities which can extend even after the marriage and may affect the relation between the two communities of churches.

For those mentioned reasons, the Holy Synods of both Patriarchates have agreed to accept the sacrament of marriage which is conducted in either Church with the condition that it is conducted for two partners not belonging to the same Patriarchate of the other Church from their origin. Both the Bride and the Groom should carry a valid certificate from his/her own Patriarchate that he/she has a permit of marriage and indicating the details of his/her marriage status up to date.

Each of the two Patriarchates shall also accept to perform all of its other sacraments to that new family of Mixed Christian Marriage.

It is agreed that the Patriarchate which shall perform the marriage shall be responsible for any marriage problems that may happen concerning this certain marriage, taking into consideration the unified marriage laws signed by the heads of Churches in Egypt in the year 1999.

Each Patriarchate shall preserve its right not to give its sacraments to any persons whom she does not find fulfilling its canons according to the Apostolic Tradition.

Petros VII Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa Shenouda III Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St Mark

Highly recommended resources:

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http://orthodoxunity.org/

Audio interview with His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I on Eastern and Oriental orthodox Unity and the Christological agreement

already reached between the two Orthodox families. Now after almost ten years the main real hinderer seems to be the jurisdictional issue.

Listen now (MP3 - 309 Kb - right-click to save):

http://www.zeitun-

eg.net/members\_contrib/EcumenicalPatriarchBartholomewIOnE-OUnion.mp3

Also listen to the Rev. Dr. Milton B. Efthimiou, Ecumenical Officer, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America speaking about Chalcedon (MP3 - 113 Kb - right-click to save):

http://www.zeitun-

eg.net/members\_contrib/RevDrMiltonBEfthimiouOnChalcedon.mp3

"Unity in necessary things, liberty in doubtful things, love in all things" (In necessariis unitas (in essentials unity), in dubiis libertas, in omnibus autem caritas) --St. Augustine

We also invite you to watch this video starting at minute 26 (rare clips of the late Ecumenical Patriarchs Athenagoras and Demetrius, champions of Church unity)

rtsp://realserver.goarch.org/en/gotelecom/lightstillbright.rm

So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is LOVE (I Corinthians 13:13).

God Bless.

This PDF is freely available from:

www.zeitun-

 $\verb|eg.org/Coptic_interpretations_of_the_Fourth_Ecumenical_Council_\$28Chalcedon \$29.pdf$ 

Related paper by Fr. John S. Romanides St. Cyril's "One Physis or Hypostasis of God the Logos Incarnate" and Chalcedon http://romanity.org/htm/rom.08.en.st.\_cyrils\_one\_physis\_or\_hypostasis\_of\_god\_the\_log.htm

### The Gist of the Matter

by Peter Theodore

In my own reading I have understood that the most serious defect in the Tome of Leo is that it teaches that each nature acts on its own, and that the flesh receives insults while the Word receives glory. This is objectionable in several respects.

Firstly it fails to confess that it was the Word Himself who suffered in his own flesh. Indeed it is not surprising that Nestorius believed the Tome of Leo to describe his own Christology since he also taught that the suffering belongs to the flesh and the glory to the Word. It is not enough to defend Leo by saying that he is merely saying that the Word suffered in the flesh since he explicitly teaches that the Word did not suffer at all. He should have said that the Divinity of the Word was resplendent with glory while his own flesh suffered insults.

Instead of distinguishing divinity and humanity he distinguishes the Word himself and the humanity and describes how they each act in their own way.

In distinguishing in this way he fails to confess clearly how the humanity, at the crucifixion for instance, is in any sense united with the Word in any real sense since he has already taught that it is the humanity apart from the Word which suffers.

Even extremely pro-Leo writers like Grillmeier accept that Leo fails to properly describe the union of humanity and divinity in Christ. "he did not succeed in making evident the unity of the bearer".

And EO theologians like Fr John Romanides are clear that the Tome of Leo is defective and excuse the EO from censure by saying that the Tome has never been a definitive document for the EO. Most OO have a problem with the idea that the Tome of Leo wasn't important at Chalcedon. Fr John's articles are at www.orthodoxunity.org.

There is then the problem that Nestorius understood the Tome of Leo to describe his own Christology, and the OO always understood historically the ToL to describe at least a semi-Nestorian Christology very weak on the union of humanity and divinity in Christ.

Then at Chalcedon there are a variety of problems. The deposition of Dioscorus is not the most important but it is symptomatic of the ecclesio-political context at the council. If you read the acts of the council it is clear that not only was he not deposed for any heresy but the actual charges against him were never disclosed to him.

EO tradition says that he had excommunicated Pope Leo but there is no evidence for this, nor any reason why he should not have done if he felt it neccessary. The Popes of Rome were constantly excommunicating Eastern bishops.

It was also said that Dioscorus had accepted Eutyches into communion before the council of 449 had heard his orthodox confession. There is no evidence for this either.

What is known is that Pope Leo had been in constant contact with the Nestorian Theodoret and all during this period of close contact he had never anathematised Nestorius. We have the letters to show their contact with each other. After Chalcedon Theodoret, whose writings were later anathematised because they were full of Nestorianism, boasted that his Christology had won the day.

Indeed the followers of Theodoret, who were not Assyrians, but members of the EO, started celebrating a feast of Nestorius after his death in exile.

I am not saying this to be offensive, though we must all put up with what might seem to be offense if we are to press through to unity. But this was the context in which the OO rejected Chalcedon.

- 1. The Tome of Leo was obviously weak on the unity of Christ.
- 2. Nestorius and Theodoret considered it to describe their own Nestorian christology.
- 3. Some of those who accepted Chalcedon were supporters of Nestorius and Theodoret.
- 4. The bishops who stood up for the traditional Orthodox terminology were either deposed or threatened with deposition.
- 5. All of the traditional phrases used to defend against Nestorianism were excluded.

In the actual definitio of Chalcedon there were a number of points which made it appear as a Nestorian conspiracy. EO fail to explain these points and tend to merely say that criticism of the council is itself a sign of heresy.

- 1. The phrase mia-physis or mia-hypostasis of the Incarnate Word is excluded from the definitio.
- 2. From two natures or hypostases was in the first draft of the definitio but was removed and in two natures was put in its place. At this time physis was synonomous with hypostasis and in two natures was used by the Nestorians, such as Theodoret who with great reluctance anathematised Nestorius while the acts of the council show that the other bishops jeered him because they knew he was anathematising him only to save himself. Theodoret was a member of the council and this must have been a real offense to the OO who believed that this was yet another sign of Nestoranising.
- 3. In two natures was used by the Nestorians to show that Christ was two beings not one, two realities, united only in the external aspect of person or appearance. From two natures St Cyrils terminology meant that out of humanity and Divinity a union had preserved one being or reality that was both human and Divine. It did not mean that the humanity had any pre-existence but that the union was from these two and perfected in one reality, or being or hypostasis. The Chalcedonian phrase had Nestorian written all over it as far as the opponents of the council were concerned.

Why did the council exclude the phrases which had preserved the church against Nestorianism in the past? Why remove the phrases from the draft under Roman pressure? The fact that they are important is shown by the 5th Council re-introducing them, but they seem to have little vitality in EO where the phrases of Chalcedon seem to be put in opposition to those of St Cyril.

Why did Chalcedon not use both phrases? Severus says that two speak of two natures is permissible if the mia-physis or mia-hypostasis is confessed, but this is what Chalcedon appears to have rejected and which the EO tried to re-introduce at the 5th council.

I have no doubt that the faith of the EO now is Orthodox, or that Chalcedon and even the Tome cannot be explained in an Orthodox manner. But when we read history we find great difficulties with this period where it does appear that the traditional Orthodox christology preserved by St Cyril at Ephesus was rejected in favour of a more Nestorian way of speaking — this is certainly what the Nestorians thought.

I have always perceived a revisionism in EO where the balance introduced at the 5th council is read back to the imbalance of the 4th.

I believe that the OO must come terms with the later councils simply because if the EO are Orthodox then they must be liable to an Orthodox interpretation. But there is a difference between interpreting the Definitio of Chalcedon in an Orthodox manner and re-writing history. I believe that the EO must become much more critical of their own history, and these councils — as far as they are able, and in view of the fact that they are human events in the life of the Church — at the same time that the OO must continue to be open to an explanation of these documents — as far as they are able.

History and Theology are different things. We can come to union based on Theology but if history is also made infallible - as some OO tend - then we have no hope because as far as we are concerned history itself challenges Chalcedon.

Byzantine Stance in Relation to Nestorianism

by Peter Theodore

The mainstream of Eastern Orthodoxy do not teach the heresy of Nestorius. I have come across just one or two extremists who are in communion with no-one and who run so far from the teaching of St Cyril out of a misplaced fear of the Oriental Orthodox that they find themselves in the shadier regions of Christology. They are not representative. Neither should we give undue heed to the misrepresentations of our Oriental Orthodox Christology by those who have not studied it at all. We must make every effort to work with people like Constantine, sympathetic people who are committed to Orthodoxy but also desire to do what is possible for unity based on truth as well as love.

The differences between Eastern Orthodoxy and Nestorianism are great. Or at least, since Nestorianism also shares roots in the same Apostolic tradition as the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, let us say that in the area of Christology the differences are great and significant for our salvation.

Our own fathers in these days have accepted the Second Agreed Statement in Holy Synod, and therefore it is part of the teaching of our Coptic Orthodox Church that:

"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 have used Christological terms in different ways."

Indeed this Second Agreed Statement shows clearly in what respects the teaching of the Eastern Orthodox, as described and defined in these days is both substantially the same as our own, and equally and significantly different from that ascribed to Nestorius and his

followers. Let me draw out a few of the points, as the whole text is on www.orthodoxunity.org.

- 1. Both families of Churches call the Virgin Mary Theotokos and thereby safeguard the doctrine that it is God Himself, the Second Person of the Trinity, who is incarnate.
- 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 confess that the hypostasis of the Word is composite, while also rejecting any idea of confusion or mixture.
- 4. Both families reject any interpretations of any councils which contradict the Horos of the Third Council.
- 5. The Eastern Orthodox also accept the validity of St Cyril's 'mia phyis.....'
- 6. The Oriental Orthodox, and in our holy bishops all Copts, also accept that the Eastern Orthodox may use the phrase 'in two natures' since:
- "they acknowledge that the distinction is 'in thought alone' "

So the Eastern Orthodox confess one hypostasis, that is one concrete reality in Christ. They acknowledge that it is the one hypostasis of the Logos incarnate who wills and acts. They do not teach two hypostases, that is two concrete realities, but they do confess with us that both the Divinity and the humanity of Christ are real and are hypostatic. They confess that the humanity and Divinity are only distinguished in thought alone and by careful contemplation, but with us they confess that the humanity and Divinity, though perfectly and hypostatically united are not confused, divided, mixed or separated. Humanity remains humanity, Divinity remains Divinity, but in Christ these two are united in one hypostasis.

This does not take away the historical problems we face. And it is reasonable to conclude both that Eastern Orthodox now as we discuss these things believe the same faith as us, even while we may also conclude that in the historical period there were those who accepted Chalcedon and failed to confess the right faith.

Chalcedon is not the same faith as Nestorius because the Eastern Orthodox do not interpret in such a way and our bishops have concluded that the Eastern Orthodox are indeed Orthodox. Now we may criticise Chalcedon from a historical perspective, and even suggest that the Eastern Orthodox understanding of Chalcedon has changed in the 5th and 6th centuries. But it seems to me, both out of respect for our fathers, and out of personal conviction, that we cannot say that what is described now as Chalcedonianism is anything other than in accord with our own Orthodox faith.

The key doctrinal difficulty that we OO have with Chalcedon is the phrase 'in two natures'. And we may still conclude that for many at that council it did indeed mean something a lot closer to Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius' own opinions. But that is separate to the discussion we have between two groups of people here and now who have discovered that what they believe is substantially the same. What matters in this instance is how do Eastern Orthodox now, the ones we are talking with, how do they interpret 'in two natures', and the answer is that they take this to describe the continuing reality of humanity and Divinity in Christ, and not to stand for any separation, or even worse, for the establishment of two hypostases. Our bishops have accepted in Synod that this interpretation of Chalcedon is acceptable and in accord with our own faith since the EO also teach that the humanity and Divinity are distinguished in thought alone.

The Tome of Leo is read and understood in the same manner by EO. In the Tome Leo is taken as describing the continuing reality of the humanity and Divinity and not establishing separation. On this basis we accept the EO position as being Orthodox.

Now it must be fairly well known that I have historical problems with the Tome and with Chalcedon. But I agree wholeheartedly with our bishops that if we have accepted that the EO have maintained the Orthodox faith while separated from us for all of these centuries then we must accept that their interpretation of Chalcedon is coherent and Orthodox. In a sense we must accept that their acceptance and understanding of Chalcedon is Orthodox even while we do not consider that council to be ecumenical. We are saying that the Tome and Chalcedon can and have been accepted in an Orthodox manner even while we reject them. We have therefore modified our historic position that Chalcedon can never be acceptable, and it may now be perhaps explained that we can understand that others might interpret it in an Orthodox manner and be Orthodox but we do not necessarily share that interpretation. This does not take away our opinion that some have held heretical opinions while confessing Chalcedon, or that Chalcedon was a mistake. But we may not say that those who accept Chalcedon are necessarily heretical. Constantine most certainly does not hold to any

Christological heresy yet he accepts both the Tome and Chalcedon. Indeed he interprets, and has been taught to interpret them, in an Orthodox manner and not in any way that is in accord with the teaching of Nestorius. Interpretation is everything, look at how the heretics have mishandled the scriptures and the teachings of the fathers.

So as for the Tome. I believe it says A, B and C and that C is error. Yet I need not say that the Tome is explicitly heretical, I may, as I do, suggest that it is ambiguous and badly written in places. EO theologians such as Father John Romanides of blessed memory have said the same. Now if Constantine believes it says A, B and D then he may quite happily confess it as Orthodox. And I might talk to him and agree that if it did say A, B and D then it would be free from error. So I then discover that Constantine and I, who both believe A, B and D, find no substantial difference in our own faith. We disagree however in whether the Tome teaches C or D. It is the same with Chalcedon. Our bishops have agreed in Synod that both our Church and the Eastern Orthodox do indeed teach A, B and D while we may still disagree as to whether any historical events or synods taught C, D or indeed E.

We are united in our faith, we differ in our understanding of history.

### Recommended link:

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http://www.geocities.com/mfignatius/others/byzantine.html

By the time the Council of Chalcedon was called, politics had already started to intermingle with Church affairs. When the Emperor Marcianus interfered with matters of faith in the Church, the response of Dioscorus of Alexandria (the Pope of Alexandria who was later to be exiled) to this interference was clear: "You have nothing to do with the Church." It was at Chalcedon that the emperor would take his revenge for the Pope's frankness.

The Council of Chalcedon abandoned Cyrillian terminology and declared that Christ was one hypostasis in two natures. However, in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, "Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary," thus the foundation according to non-Chalcedonians is made clear. In terms of Christology the Oriental understanding is that Christ is "One Nature--the Logos Incarnate," of the full humanity and full divinity. The Byzantine understanding is that Christ is in two natures, full humanity and full divinity. (Just as all of us are of our mother and father and not in our mother and father, so too is the nature of Christ. If Christ is in full humanity and in full divinity, then He is separate in two persons as the Nestorians teach. Imagine your nature in your mother and your father; you are then two different people. If however your nature is of your mother and your father, then you are one person [
http://www.geocities.com/mfignatius/others/byzantine01.html ].) This is the linguistic difference which separated the Orientals from the Byzantines.

The Council's finding were rejected by many of the Christians on the fringes of the Byzantine Empire: Egyptians, Syrians, Armenians, and others. From that point onward, Alexandria would have two patriarchs: the "Melkite" or Imperial Patriarch, now officially known by the Egyptian State as the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria and all Africa [http://www.greekorthodox-alexandria.org/], and the non-Chalcedonian national Egyptian one, now known as the Coptic Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and Apostolic See of St. Mark. Almost the entire Egyptian population rejected the terms of the Council of Chalcedon and remained faithful to the national Egyptian Church (now known as the Coptic Church). Those who supported the Chalcedonian definition remained in communion with the other leading churches of the Roman Empire. The non-Chalcedonian party became what is today called the Oriental Orthodox Church.

The Coptic Church regards herself as having been misunderstood at the Council of Chalcedon. Some Copts believe that perhaps the Council understood the Church correctly, but wanted to exile the Church, to isolate her and to abolish the Egyptian, independent Pope, who maintained that Church and State should remain separate. The Coptic Church regarded that the ousting of Pope Dioscorus of Alexandria in the council of Chalcedon was in part due to the rivalry between the Bishops of Alexandria and Rome. The Tome of Pope Leo of Rome was considered influenced by Nestorian philosophy. It is important to note that Pope Dioscorus of Alexandria was never labeled as heretic by the council's canons. Copts also believe that the Pope of Alexandria was forcibly prevented from attending the third congregation of the council in which he was ousted, which apparently was a result of the conspiracy tailored by the Roman delegates. For further info, please refer to this key paper [ http://www.romanity.org/htm/rom.06.en.orthodox\_and\_oriental\_orthodox\_consultation.htm ] on the subject by Professor Fr. John S. Romanides, a prominent Greek Orthodox scholar.

Before the current positive era of Eastern and Oriental Orthodox dialogues, Chalcedonians sometimes used to call the non-Chalcedonians "monophysites", though the Coptic Church denies that she teaches monophysitism, which she has always regarded as a heresy. They have sometimes called the Chalcedonian group "dyophysites". A term that comes closer to Coptic doctrine is "miaphysite" [ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miaphysitism ], which refers to a conjoined nature for Christ, both human and divine, united indivisibly in the Incarnate Logos. The Coptic Church believes that Christ is perfect in His divinity, and He is perfect in His humanity, but His divinity and His humanity were united in one nature called "the nature of the incarnate word", which was reiterated by Saint Cyril of Alexandria. Copts, thus, believe in two natures "human" and "divine" that are united in one hypostasis without mingling, without confusion, and without alteration. These two natures did not separate for a moment or the twinkling of an eye (Coptic Liturgy of Saint Basil of Caesarea).

Copts suffered under the rule of the Byzantine Eastern Roman Empire. The Melkite Patriarchs, appointed by the emperors as both spiritual leaders and civil governors, massacred the Egyptian population whom they considered heretics. Many Egyptians were tortured and martyred to accept the terms of Chalcedon, but Egyptians remained loyal to the faith of their fathers and to the Cyrillian view of Christology. One of the most renowned Egyptian saints of that period is Saint Samuel the Confessor.

## Linguistic and vocabulary difficulties at Chalcedon included:

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- \* 'of' vs. 'in' two natures (Non-Chalcedonians say 'of' Byzantine say 'in'). If Christ is in full humanity and in full divinity, then He is separate in two persons as the Nestorians (http://www.orthodoxwiki.org/Nestorianism) teach.
- \* the concepts of nature, person, and differences in thought/contemplation (theoria) between the two natures, as well as obscurities in related terms such as (synthetos) hypostasis, physis, ousia, prosopon/parsopa, qnome, atreptos (and related adverbs asyngchytos, achoristos, adiairetos), mia, mono, etc.

### See also:

http://www.ethiopianorthodox.org/english/maindoctrines/dogmasandrelations.h
tm

Christology - by A.B. Hanna Retrieved from: http://home.paonline.com/ahanna/HTML/Christology.htm ONE NATURE OF GOD: THE WORD INCARNATE

MIAPHYSIS TOW THEO : LOGO SESARKOMENE ( Gk.)

How can one person be humnan and divine in the same time?!....

The son of Mary, and the son of God ?!...

The Church answered this difficult question three times in her reply against three heretical attacks that happened from the fifth to the seventh centuries.

- 1- The heresy of Nestor : He separated the two natures of The Christ, thus refusing to call St. Mary " Theotokos " the bearer of God, or the mother of God, but rather Christotokos.
- 2- The heresy of Eutichia: He argued that The Christ is one divine nature, and that his incarnation was imaginary. The human nature was consumed by the divine.
- 3- The Tom of Leo: Which differentiated between the two natures and the two wills in the person of The Christ. This error was adopted in Chalcedon...

In the Council of Ephesus (431 A.D.) St. Cyril of Alexandria. The Pope number 24 Of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt, developed the Christological formula "ONE NATURE OF GOD; THE WORD INCARNATE." The actual litreral formulation in the Greek "MIAPHYSIS TOW THEO: LOGO SESARKOMENE" This was agreed upon by all. at all places, thus becoming a CATHOLIC DOGMA, meaning it can never be changed at any time.

This formulation summarizes the Orthodox Faith concerning the nature of The Christ. It is the true expression that preserved The Faith in the person of Jesus Christ pure and true since the Apostolic age until now. The importance of this formulation is the following principle stating that: Everything which is Christological is soteriological, meaning everything concerning The Christ and who He is, has to do with our salvation.

What the Council of Ephesus rejected is that Jesus was a man united through his own will to the Word of God (The Logos). The Divine incarnation can never be an external union between a man and God. It is God Himself becoming man. He put on and took upon Himself the human nature in a Hypostatic Union, which is perfect, yet without mixture or confusion between the two natures.

What the Church rejected in the teaching of Eutichia is that the human nature was consumed by the Divine nature in the Christ resulting in one Divine nature, rendering his flesh "ethiric", or not real human.

The council of Chalcedon ( 451AD ) in attempting to refute the Eutichian heresy explained in lots of details the difference between the two natures in a way that eclipsed the Hypostatic Union, thus making The Christ as if He had two different wills resulting in two different kinds of acts. One suitable for the Divine, and

the other for the human. This will have a very detrimental impact on the Salvation of mankind. For His acts that are not related to The Logos Incarnate would not be effectual in the Salvation of mankind.

The Churches that refused The Tom of Leo adopted in the council of Chalcedon were persecuted by the Byzantine Emperors. Those Churches are: Alexandria, Ethiopia, Syria, Armenia, and India.

The other Churches that accepted the Tom of Leo are: Rome, Constantinople, and Jerusalem. The byzantine Emperors started to appoint Patriarchs in the non-chalcedonian churches against the will of these churches who continued to be loyal to their Patriarchs. This sad state of affairs resulted in having two Patriarchs in every jurisdiction: one Melkite (i.e.) appointed by the Emperor, but rejected by the people, and the other the legitimate Patriarch who was known as the "Jacobite".

However, in spite of this divisions the faithful pious Bishops and monks on both sides of the conflict continued to exchange fruitful dialogues to resolve the matter, and restore the lost harmony.

Pope Timothy II of Alexandria (e.g.) was able through his spiritual wisdom to get the Emperor to pardon the exiled Bishops who refused Chalcedon with Pope Dioscorous. He succeeded in holding a council of 500 Bishops who agreed unanimously to confess the Orthodox Faith of the Church of Alexandria. Thus reconciliation was accomplished at that council between Jerusalem, Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria that lasted for many years.

Pope Peter III of Alexandria (472 A.D.) accomplished unity in his days between Alexandria and the Patriarch of Constantinople "Akakios" Emperor "Zenon" consequently issued the "Henotikon" calling all Churches to accept the Orthodox teaching of the Church of Alexandria.

In the seventh century, following the serious threats from the Turks to the Byzantine Empire, Emperor Heraculus, and Sergius the Patriarch of Constantinople realized the need for unity among Christians against the new adversative Islamic power. So the

Patriarch suggested to the Emperor to add a new phrase that he thought will restore the unity of the Churches by using the term "One act of The Christ ".

In the same time "Cyrus" the Melkite Patriarch in Egypt Composed a new expression of reconciliation acceptable to the Patriarch of Constantinople. So the Emperor took the two expressions and issued an imperial declaration to that effect. But all these efforts were again condemned later by Constantinople in 681 A.D.

In the 19th. century; "Profer Ospenisky" one of the Bishops of the Church of Russia spent lots of years studying the Coptic Theology, and Liturgy and concluded that the Coptic Church is an Orthodox Church in belief and practice. He reported his findings to the Synod of the Russian Church to decide whether it is necessary to ask the Coptic Church to accept Chalcedon or not. Nothing was heard as a result. It looks like they ignored his report.

Bishop George Khadr of the Greek Orthodox Church in Antioch is now working with the Syrian Antiochian Orthodox Church to achieve unity between the Orthodox Churches. He also had a dialogue with the Coptic Orthodox Church 25 years ago.

The Union between the Divine Nature and the Human Nature which resulted into His birth in the flesh; ended into a perfect Unity in which there is no dichotomy. So after the union there is no two natures, but One of The Word Incarnate: One of two but not

two as St.Dioscorous put it in Chalcedon. This nature will do one act, and will one will, (i.e.) exactly the act of the one salvation, and the one redemption accomplished through weakness and power together, as death and resurrection together !!!....

From St. Cyril's of Alexandria message to Akakios:

We say that the two natures united. So after the union they cannot be separated into two natures. Therefore we believe in One Nature to the Son, for He is One in spite of His incarnation and becoming man.

From St. Cyril of Alexandria to Nestor:

While the two natures that came into the true union were different, yet He became ONE CHRIST, the ONLY BEGOTTEN SON. This is a Mystery that surpasses any discription or explanation.

The Mystery of mysteries ( Exacting the penalty )

Matthew 27:46

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Psalm 22:11 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

Psalm 22:12-18 - 12 Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan

have beset me round. 13 They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. 14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. 16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. 17 I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. 18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

Psalm 39:10- Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.

Lamentations 3:1-16 I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. 2 He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light. 3 Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day. 4 My flesh and my skin hath he made old; he hath broken my bones. 5 He hath builded against me, and compassed me with gall and travail. 6 He hath set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old. 7 He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out: he hath made my chain heavy. 8 Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer. 9 He hath inclosed my ways with hewn stone, he hath made my paths crooked. 10 He was unto me as a bear lying in wait, and as a lion in secret places. 11 He hath turned aside my ways, and pulled me in pieces: he hath made me desolate. 12 He hath bent his bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow. 13 He hath caused the arrows of his quiver to enter into my reins. 14 I was a derision to all my people; and their song all the day. 15 He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood. 16 He hath also broken my teeth with gravel stones, he hath covered me with ashes.

Isaiah 53:4-5 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Isaiah 42:18-20 Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. 19 Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD=S servant? 20 Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not.

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# **Miaphysitism**

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**Miaphysitism** is the christology of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. It evolved as a response to Nestorianism. As Nestorianism had its roots in the Antiochene tradition and was opposed by the Alexandrian tradition, it took hold in Syria among those who wanted to distance themselves from the extremes of Nestorianism, and in Egypt, among those who wished to uphold the integrity of their theological position.

The theology of miaphysitism is based on an understanding of the nature (Greek  $\phi \dot{\psi} \sigma \iota \varsigma$ ) of Christ: divine and human. After steering between the heresies of docetism (that Christ only appeared to be human) and adoptionism (that Christ was a man chosen by God), the church began to explore the mystery of Christ's nature further. Having agreed that Christ is both divine and human, the first difficulty was Nestorianism, which was perceived as stressing the two natures of Christ to such an extent that it appeared, to opponents, that two persons were living in the same body. The reaction to this was monophysitism, which stressed that Christ has but one, single nature that is both divine and human (at its most extreme, this was called eutychianism). Both of these positions were seen as heretical, but the church remained divided on how best to formulate a response to these. Cyril of Alexandria's works were the basis of the stance of miaphysitism. he spoke of the "one (mia) nature of the Word of God incarnate" (μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη) and a "union according to hypostases" (ἕνωσις καθ' ὑπόστασιν), or hypostatic union. The distinction of this stance was that the incarnate Christ has one nature, but that nature is of the two natures, divine and human, and retains all the characteristics of both. However, opponents of those who took this stance regarded it as nothing more than monophysitism. The alternative response, which eventually became Byzantine dogma, was dyophysitism. This states that Christ has two natures, but emphasises that they are not separated: Christ is fully one person (πρόσωπον). The miaphysites regarded this as verging on Nestorianism.

The Council of Chalcedon (451) is often seen as a watershed for christology, as it adopted dyophysitism. However, as large portions of the church in Syria and Egypt, who held to miaphysitism, rebelled against the decision, the controversy became a major socio-political problem for the Byzantine Empire. There were numerous attempts at reunion between the two camps (including the Henoticon), and the balance of power shifted several times. However, the decision at Chalcedon remains the offical teaching of the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church and traditional Protestants. The anti-Chalcedonian churches are usually grouped together as Oriental Orthodox. Over recent decades, leaders of the various churches have spoken about the differences between their respective christologies as not being as extreme as was traditionally held.

Much has been said about the difficulties in understanding the Greek technical terms used in these controvesies. The main words are ousia (οὐσία, 'essence'), physis (φύσις, 'nature'), hypostasis (ὑπόστασις, 'property') and prosopon (πρόσωπον, 'person'). Even in Greek, their meaning can overlap somewhat. These difficulties became even more exaggerated when these technical terms were translated into other languages. In Syriac, physis was translated as  $ky\bar{a}n\hat{a}$  (Syriac: a and a and a and a syriac are even more blurred between these words, and they could not be used in such a philosophical way as their Greek counterparts. Thus, it has been suggested that miaphysitism came about due to a grounding of language in the fact that someone's person and nature are a verisimilitude.

As stated, the Churches of the Oriental Orthodox Communion, while sometimes called monophysite, vehemently reject that label. These include the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Syrian Orthodox Church, the Indian Orthodox Church, the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (*tewahido* is a Ge'ez word meaning 'being made one') and the newly autocephalous Eritrean Orthodox Church.

One or more of the Independent Catholic Churches, while not being in full communion with the above Churches for various reasons, also embrace this Christology. These include the Antiochian Catholic Church in America.

# See also

# The following material is quoted from:

http://www.cnewa.org/generalpg-ver1.aspx?pageID=109

Paulist Father Ronald Roberson's book, *The Eastern Christian Churches – A Brief Survey*, the most up-to-date primer on these churches and a must reference (freely available to read on CNEWA's Web site)

**Oriental Orthodox Churches** 

The term "Oriental Orthodox churches" is now generally used to describe a group of six ancient eastern churches. Although they are in communion with one another, each is fully independent and possesses many distinctive traditions.

The common element among these churches is their rejection of the christological definition of the Council of Chalcedon (451), which asserted that Christ is one person in two natures, undivided and unconfused. For them, to say that Christ has two natures was to overemphasize the duality in Christ and to compromise the unity of his person. Yet they reject the classical monophysite position of Eutyches, who held that Christ's humanity was absorbed into his single divine nature. They prefer the formula of St. Cyril of Alexandria, who spoke of "the one incarnate nature of the Word of God"

During the period following Chalcedon, those who rejected the council's teaching made up a significant portion of the Christians in the Byzantine Empire. Today, however, they are greatly reduced in number. Some of these churches have existed for centuries in areas where there is a non-Christian majority, and more recently others have suffered from many decades of persecution by communist governments.

Because they denied Chalcedon's definition of two natures in Christ, these Christians have often erroneously been called "monophysites," from the Greek word meaning "one nature." The group has also been referred to as "the Lesser Eastern churches," "the Ancient Oriental churches," "the Non-Chalcedonian churches," or "the Pre-Chalcedonian churches." Today it is widely recognized by theologians and church leaders on both sides that the christological differences between the Oriental Orthodox and those who accepted Chalcedon were only verbal, and that in fact both parties profess the same faith in Christ using different formulas.

# The Contemporary Relationship between the Catholic and Oriental Orthodox Churches: Christology

The Oriental Orthodox said little about Christology in their earliest encounters with Pope Paul VI. But the Pope seems to have been convinced that the ancient disputes over christological terminology should no longer prevent the two churches from professing their faith in Christ together. 7 In his welcoming speech to Armenian Catholicos Khoren I of Cilicia in May 1967, Pope Paul said:

With you We give glory to the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; with you We acclaim Jesus Christ, Son of God, Incarnate Word, our Redeemer, the founder and head of the holy Church, his mystical body. 8

During his visit to Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople Shnork Kalustian in July 1967, Pope Paul pointed out the importance of the Council of Ephesus' teaching as the basis of the unity of the two churches:

It is a great consolation to meditate upon the vision of Christ presented to the

Church and to the world by that holy assembly. That vision, too, we share in common. God, made man for our salvation, is the God we confess in our Creed and preach to the world. 9

And in his speech to Armenian Catholicos Vasken I (Etchmiadzin) in May 1970, Pope Paul stated that the different expressions of the one faith are due in large part to non-theological factors:

If we have come to divergent expressions of the central mystery of our faith because of unfortunate circumstances, cultural differences and the difficulty of translating terms worked out with much effort and given precise statement only gradually, then research into these doctrinal difficulties must be undertaken again in order to understand what has brought them about and to be able to overcome them in a brotherly way. 10

The Pope went on to quote Nerses IV, a twelfth-century Armenian Catholicos, who wrote that the term "two natures" would be acceptable insofar as it indicates the absence of any confusion of humanity and divinity in Christ, against Eutyches and Apollinaris. Pope Paul then asked: "Has the time not come to clear up once and for all such misunderstandings inherited from the past?" 11

In the *Common Declaration* signed at the end of Vasken's visit, both churches made a clear commitment to encourage theological research into the remaining difficulties:

They exhort theologians to devote themselves to a common study leading to a deepening of their understanding of the mystery of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the revelation brought about in him.... For their part, the Pope and the Catholicos will try to do all that is possible to support these efforts and will give them their pastoral blessing. 12

The *Pro Oriente* foundation in Vienna took up this challenge and sponsored a historic series of discussions between theologians of the two communions. The first "Non-Official Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches" took place in Vienna in September 1971. In the communiqué issued at the end of the meeting, the theologians affirmed that a common basis had been found in the apostolic traditions and the first three ecumenical councils. After rejecting both Eutychian and Nestorian christologies, they expressed their common faith in Christ in these words:

We believe that our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, is God the Son Incarnate; perfect in his divinity and perfect in his humanity. His divinity was not separated from his humanity for a single moment, not for the twinkling of an eye. His humanity is one with his divinity without commixtion, without confusion, without division, without separation. We in our common faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ, regard his mystery inexhaustible and ineffable and for the human mind never fully comprehensible or expressible.

We see that there are still differences in the theological interpretation of the mystery of Christ because of our different ecclesiastical and theological traditions; we are convinced, however, that these differing formulations on both sides can be understood along the lines of the faith of Nicea and Ephesus. 13

This text reveals an effort to avoid terminology which had been the focus of ancient disputes. Indeed, the words "person" and "nature" never appear. It is an effort to create a new vocabulary, using new concepts to express the one faith which underlies both traditional formulations.

The importance of this theological breakthrough was quickly realized. When the Syrian Patriarch Ignatius Yacoub III visited Rome one month later, Pope Paul was already echoing the findings of the *Pro Oriente* meeting when he said that theologians discussing the issue "are convinced...that these various formulations

can be understood along the lines of the early councils, which is the faith we also profess." 14

This thought was also reflected in the *Common Declaration*, which was signed at the end of the Patriarch's visit:

Progress has already been made and Pope Paul VI and the Patriarch Mar Ignatius III are in agreement that there is no difference in the faith they profess concerning the mystery of the Word of God made flesh and become really man, even if over the centuries difficulties have arisen out of the different theological expressions by which this faith was expressed. 15

In May 1973 Coptic Pope 16 Shenouda III visited Pope Paul VI in Rome. The profession of faith contained in the *Common Declaration* they signed at the end of the meeting had clearly benefited from the *Pro Oriente* formulation:

We confess that our Lord and God and Saviour and King of us all, Jesus Christ, is perfect God with respect to His divinity, perfect man with respect to His humanity. In Him His divinity is united with His humanity in a real, perfect union without mingling, without commixtion, without confusion, without alteration, without division, without separation. His divinity did not separate from His humanity for an instant, not for the twinkling of an eye. He who is God eternal and invisible became visible in the flesh, and took upon Himself the form of a servant. In Him are preserved all the properties of the divinity and all the properties of the humanity, together in a real, perfect, indivisible and inseparable union. 17

Despite the historic nature of this joint christological declaration, the theologians involved in the *Pro Oriente* consultations realized that more progress could be made. Christology, then, still figured strongly in their discussions at the second meeting which took place in September 1973. In the final communiqué, the theologians of both communions built on what had been said in the 1971 statement. They added that the mystery of Christ is incomprehensible, and that all concepts about him are limited. Thus correct christological formulations can be wrongly understood, and behind an apparently wrong formulation there can be a right understanding. This fact enabled them to affirm that "the definition of the Council of Chalcedon, rightly understood today, affirms the unity of person and the indissoluble union of Godhead and Manhood in Christ despite the phrase "in two natures." 18

The statement also deals with problems of terminology:

For those of us in the Western tradition, to hear of the one nature of Christ can be misleading, because it may be misunderstood as a denial of his humanity. For those of us in the Oriental Orthodox Churches to hear of two natures can be misleading because it can be misunderstood as affirming two persons in Christ. But both sides agree in rejecting Eutychianism and Nestorianism....

Our common effort to clarify the meaning of the Greek terms *hypostasis* and *physis* in the trinitarian and christological contexts made us realize how difficult it was to find a satisfactory definition of these terms that could do justice to both contexts in a consistent manner. 19

The communiqué also calls for new terminology that would express more effectively the mystery of Christ for people today.

Since 1973, Popes and heads of Oriental Orthodox churches have affirmed repeatedly that they share the same faith in Christ, an assumption taken for granted in most of their statements. For instance, during his visit to Rome in June 1983, Moran Mar Baselius Marthoma Mathews I, the Catholicos of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of India, quoted Cyril of Alexandria's "one divine-human

nature" formula as being part of the common faith of the two churches. 20

Another significant christological text was issued in June 1984, at the conclusion of the visit of Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Ignatius Zakka I Iwas to Rome. The Pope and Patriarch maintained in their Common Declaration that past schisms "in no way affect or touch the substance of their faith," since the divisions arose from terminological misunderstandings. They then made the following joint confession of faith in the mystery of the Word made flesh:

In our turn we confess that He became incarnate for us, taking to himself a real body with a rational soul. He shared our humanity in all things but sin. We confess that our Lord and our God, our Saviour and the King of all, Jesus Christ, is perfect God as to His divinity and perfect man as to His humanity. This Union is real, perfect, without blending or mingling, without confusion, without alteration, without division, without the least separation. He who is God eternal and invisible, became visible in the flesh and took the form of servant. In Him are united, in a real, perfect indivisible and inseparable way, divinity and humanity, and in Him all their properties are present and active. 21

Catholic and Coptic representatives meeting at Amba Bishoy monastery in February 1988 reaffirmed the christological agreement found in the 1973 *Common Declaration*. They also adopted this more concise formulation which was intended to make the christological accord more accessible to the faithful:

We believe that our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Incarnate-Logos, is perfect in His Divinity and perfect in His Humanity. He made His Humanity One with His Divinity without Mixture, nor Mingling, nor Confusion. His Divinity was not separated from His Humanity even for a moment or twinkling of an eye. At the same time, we Anathematize the Doctrines of both Nestorius and Eutyches. 22

This progress on christology was noted with satisfaction by the participants at the fifth *Pro Oriente* consultation in September 1988. They went on to emphasize the following:

...that the great mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God could not be exhaustively formulated in words, and that within the limits of condemned errors like Arianism, Nestorianism and Eutychianism, a certain plurality of expressions was permissible in relation to the inseparable and unconfused hypostatic unity of the human and the divine in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Blessed Virgin Mary, consubstantial with God the Father in His divinity and consubstantial with us in his humanity. 23

Another christological agreement was reached at the first meeting of the new Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church of India, held at Kottayam in October 1989. 24 The statement was officially approved by the authorities of both churches and published on June 3, 1990. It includes this text on the relationship between Christ's humanity and divinity in paragraph 5:

Our Lord Jesus Christ is one, perfect in his humanity and perfect in his divinity, at once consubstantial with the Father in his divinity, and consubstantial with us in his humanity. His humanity is one with his divinity – without change, without commingling, without division and without separation. In the Person of the Eternal Logos Incarnate are united and active in a real and perfect way the divine and human natures, with all their properties, faculties and operations. 25

This put an end to any christological disagreement between the Catholic and Malankara Orthodox Syrian churches.

The Common Declaration signed by Pope John Paul II and Armenian Catholicos Karekin I at the end of the Catholicos' visit to Rome in December 1996 contained

the following affirmation of agreement in the area of christology:

[The Pope and Catholicos] particularly welcome the great advance that their Churches have registered in their common search for their unity in Christ, the word of God made flesh. Perfect God as to His divinity, perfect man as to His humanity, His divinity is united in Him to His humanity in the Person of the Onlybegotten Son of God, in a union which is real, perfect, without confusion, without alteration, without division, without any form of separation.

The reality of this common faith in Jesus Christ and in the same succession of apostolic ministry has at times been obscured or ignored. Linguistic, cultural and political factors have immensely contributed towards the theological divergences that have found expression in their terminology of formulating their doctrines. His Holiness John Paul II and His Holiness Karekin I have expressed their determined conviction that because of the fundamental common faith in God and in Jesus Christ, the controversies and unhappy divisions which sometimes have followed upon the divergent ways in expressing it, as a result of the present declaration, should not continue to influence the life and witness of the Church today. 26

A careful reading of the statements issued over the past 30 years indicates that the ancient christological dispute between the Oriental Orthodox churches and the Catholic Church has been substantially resolved. Even though different interpretations of the meaning of the Chalcedonian definition remain, the churches have been able to set aside the old disputes and affirm that their faith in the mystery of Christ which transcends all formulations is, in fact, the same.

#### NOTES

**7**From the Catholic point of view, the idea that the dispute was essentially a question of terminology had been officially expressed as early as 1951, when Pope Pius XII stated in his encyclical *Sempiternus Rex* that these Christians "verbis praecipue a recto tramite deflectere videantur" ("seem to depart from the right path chiefly in Words"). *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 43 (1951) 636.

- 8 Acta Apostolicae Sedis 59 (1967) 510.
- **9** Information Service [Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity] 3 (1967/3) 13.
- **10** Information Service 11 (1970/III) 5-6.
- **11** Ibid., 6.
- 12 Acta Apostolicae Sedis 62 (1970) 416.
- **13** "Communiqué," *Wort und Wahrheit*, Supplementary Issue No. 1 (Vienna: Herder, 1972) 182.
- **14** Information Service 16 (1972/I) 3.
- 15 Acta Apostolicae Sedis 63 (1971) 814.
- **16** The Coptic Patriarchs of Alexandria have had the title "Pope" since ancient times. His full title is "Pope and Patriarch of the Great City of Alexandria and of all Egypt, the Middle East, Ethiopia, Nubia, and the Pentapolis."
- 17 Acta Apostolicae Sedis 65 (1973) 300.
- **18** "Communiqué," *Wort und Wahrheit,* Supplementary Issue No. 2 (Vienna: Herder, 1974) 175-176.
- **19** Ibid., 76.
- 20 Information Service 52 (1983/III) 74.
- 21 Information Service 69 (1989/1) 8.
- **22** "Communiqué," *Wort und Wahrheit*, Supplementary Issue No. 5 (Vienna: Herder, 1989) 149.
- **23** See G. Daucourt, "First meeting for dialogue with Syrian Orthodox Church of India," *L'Osservatore Romano*, English weekly edition, November 27, 1989, 2.
- 24 L'Osservatore Romano, June 3, 1990, 5.
- 25 L'Osservatore Romano, June 3, 1990, 5.
- **26** Information Service 94 (1997/I) 30.