

Coptic interpretations of the Fourth Ecumenical Council

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The Chalcedon Crisis and Monophysitism

Monophysitism: Reconsidered

Mia-Physis

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Introduction

The Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria, in which I am a priest, is one of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. These churches are the Coptic, Armenian, Syrian, Ethiopian, and the Malankara Indian Churches. The common element among them is their non-acceptance of the Council of Chalcedon of AD 451. Accordingly they prefer to be called "Non-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches."

The Council of Chalcedon caused a big schism within the church which lasted until the present. In addition, after the Arab invasion in the seventh century, the churches lost communication with each other. Through this long period, the non-Chalcedonians were accused of Eutychianism, and called "Monophysites", meaning that they believe in one single nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. They never accepted this idea considering it a heresy. The purpose of this paper is to reconsider the issue.

Misunderstanding

Several publications reflect such an attitude. In The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium, for instance, Alexander Kazhdan shows monophysitism as a "religious movement that originated in the first half of the 5th C. as a reaction against the emphasis of Nestorianism on the human nature of the incarnate Christ." The Encyclopedia of the Early Church carries an entry on "monophysitism" where Manlio Simonetti writes, "The term monophysites indicates those who admitted a single nature in Christ, rather than two, human and divine, as the Council of Chalcedon (451) sanctioned." Then he gives examples of Apollinarius and Eutyches, and goes on to mention St. Cyril the Great as having a "Monophysite Christology". Furthermore, in the Coptic Encyclopedia, W.H.C. Frend defines monophysitism as a doctrine:

opposed to the orthodox doctrine that He (Christ) is one person and has two natures..... The monophysites hold.... that the two natures of Christ were united at the Incarnation in such a way that the one Christ was essentially divine although He assumed

from the Virgin Theotokos the flesh and attributes of man.

Now, what is the actual belief of the Church of Alexandria and the other non-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches on the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Common Declaration

In May 1973 H.H. Pope-Shenouda III of Alexandria visited H.H. Pope Paul VI of Rome. Their Common Declaration says:

We confess that our Lord and God and Savior 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.

After fifteen centuries, the two prelates declare a common faith in the nature of Christ, the issue which caused the schism of the church in the Council of Chalcedon. This will lead us to throw some light on that council.

Monophysitism and the Council of Chalcedon

1- According to some Scholars, there, was no need for it, but politics played a big role. "It was only under constant pressure from the Emperor Marcian that the Fathers of Chalcedon agreed to draw a new formula of belief."

2- The different expressions of the one faith are due in large part to non-theological issues, such as "unfortunate circumstances, cultural differences and the difficulty of translating terms." It is debated whether the opposition to Chalcedon was out of a Christological issue or an attempt to assert Coptic and Syrian identity against the Byzantine.

3- Ecclesiastical politics had been very confused ever since the legislation, in the Council of 381, of a primacy of honor for Constantinople, the New Rome," second only to that of the old Rome. It seems that both Rome and the Emperors used the Council of Chalcedon to carry out their respective plans: Rome for asserting its claim for primacy over the Church and the Emperors for trying to bring the entire Church in the East under the jurisdiction of the See of Constantinople.

4- No one can deny the disadvantages of the imperial interventions in the dispute. Most probably, Chalcedon's decisions and terms would have been different if the Emperor Marcian and his wife Pulcheria had not intervened. Since 450, they were gathering signatures for the Tome of Leo, the bishop of Rome. Many bishops of Chalcedon approved it only as a concession to the bishop whom the imperial authority supported.

5- The definitions of the Tome were composed in a way that it could be interpreted by different persons, each in his own way. It is known that Nestorius, who was still alive in 451, accepted the Tome of Leo, while the Alexandrines rejected it.

6- The Council of Chalcedon, which is believed to have condemned Eutyches, did not deal with him but with Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria. Eutyches himself was not present at the council. Scholars state that Dioscorus was deprived of office on procedural grounds **and not on account of erroneous belief**. At Chalcedon Dioscorus strongly declared, "If Eutyches holds notions disallowed by the doctrines of the Church, he deserves not only punishment but even the fire. But my concern is for the catholic and apostolic faith, not for any man whomsoever." The evidence is sufficient for us to look for other reasons for his condemnation. Rome was annoyed by the extraordinary vitality and activity of the Church of Alexandria and its patriarch.

7- As soon as the members of the council had assembled, the legates of Rome demanded that Dioscorus be banished on account of the order of the bishop of Rome whom they called, "the head of all churches". When the imperial authorities asked for a charge to justify the demand, one of the legates said that he "dared to conduct a council without the authorization of the apostolic see, a thing which has never happened and which ought not to happen." As a matter of fact, the Council of 381 had been held without the participation, not to say the authorization, of the bishop of Rome, and the Council of 553 against his wishes. It is evident that the delegates intended by the words, "the head of all churches" to assert the claim of Rome of ecumenical supremacy over the church.

8- Chalcedon rejected the Council of 449, and Leo of Rome considered it as latrocinium, a council of robbers, a title which "has stuck for all time." This may uncover the intention behind such an attitude. A council which ignored Rome's authority, robbing its claim of supremacy, was not for Leo a church council but a meeting of robbers. The Council of Chalcedon, without even examining the issue, denounced the Council of 449, putting the entire responsibility for its decrees exclusively on Dioscorus. Only one hundred and four years later, the decision, not of Chalcedon, but of the so called latrocinium was justified. The Council of Constantinople in 553 anathematized Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Ibas of Edessa, and condemned their Three Chapters. It is remarkable that the desire of the Emperor Justinian to reconcile the non-Chalcedonian churches was behind the decree.

Two Different Traditions

Dioscorus, then, was not a heretic. The majority of the bishops who attended the Council of Chalcedon, as scholars indicate, believed that the traditional formula of faith received from St. Athanasius was the "one nature of the Word of God." This belief is totally different from the Eutychian concept of the single nature (i.e. Monophysite). The Alexandrian theology was by no means docetic. Neither was it Apollinarian, as stated clearly. It seems that the main problem of the Christological formula was the divergent interpretation of the issue between the Alexandrian and the Antiochian theology. While Antioch formulated its Christology against Apollinarius

and Eutyches, Alexandria did against Arius and Nestorius. At Chalcedon, Dioscorus refused to affirm the "in two natures" and insisted on the "from two natures." Evidently the two conflicting traditions had not discovered an agreed theological standpoint between them.

Mia Physis

The Church of Alexandria considered as central the Christological mia physis formula of St. Cyril "one incarnate nature of God the Word". The Cyrillian formula was accepted by the Council of Ephesus in 431. It was neither nullified by the Reunion of 433, nor condemned at Chalcedon. On the contrary, it continued to be considered an orthodox formula. Now what do the non-Chalcedonians mean by the mia physis, the "one incarnate nature?". They mean by mia one, but not "single one" or "simple numerical one," as some scholars believe. There is a slight difference between mono and mia. While the former suggests one single (divine) nature, the latter refers to one composite and united nature, as reflected by the Cyrillian formula. St. Cyril maintained that the relationship between the divine and the human in Christ, as Meyendorff puts it, "does not consist of a simple cooperation, or even interpenetration, but of a union; the incarnate Word is one, and there could be no duplication of the personality of the one redeemer God and man."

Mia Physis and Soteriology

"The Alexandrian Christology", writes Frances Young, "is a remarkably clear and consistent construction, especially when viewed within its soteriological context. Mia physis, for the Alexandrians, is essential for salvation. The Lord is crucified, even though His divinity did not suffer but His humanity did. The sacrifice of the Cross is attributed to the Incarnate Son of God, and thus has the power of salvation."

Common Faith

It is evident that both the Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians agree on the following points:

- 1- They all condemn and anathematize Nestorius, Apollinarius and Eutyches.
- 2- The unity of the divinity and humanity of Christ was realized from the moment of His conception, without separation or division and also without confusing or changing.
- 3- The manhood of Christ was real, perfect and had a dynamic presence.
- 4- Jesus Christ is one Prosopon and one Hypostasis in real oneness and not mere conjunction of natures; He is the Incarnate Logos of God.

5- They all accept the *communicatio idiomatum* (the communication of idioms), attributing all the deeds and words of Christ to the one hypostasis, the Incarnate Son of God.

Recent Efforts for Unity

In recent times, members of the Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches have met together coming to a clear understanding that both families have always loyally maintained the same authentic Orthodox Christological faith.

In 1964 a fresh dialogue began at the University of Aarhus in Denmark. This was followed by meetings at Bristol in 1967, Geneva in 1970 and Addis Ababa in 1971. These were a series of non-official consultations which served as steps towards mutual understanding.

The official consultations in which concrete steps were taken began in 1985 at Chambesy in Geneva. The second official consultation was held at the monastery of Saint Bishoy in Wadi-El-Natroun, in Egypt in June 1989. The outcome of this latter meeting was of historical dimensions, since in this meeting the two families of Orthodoxy were able to agree on a Christological formula, thus ending the controversy regarding Christology which has lasted for more than fifteen centuries.

In September 1990 the two families of Orthodoxy signed an agreement on Christology, and recommendations were presented to the different Orthodox Churches, to lift the anathemas and enmity of the past, after revising the results of the dialogues (<http://www.orthodoxunity.org/statements.html>). If both agreements are accepted by the various Orthodox Churches, the restoration of communion will be very easy at all levels, even as far as sharing one table in the Eucharist.

As for its part, the Coptic Orthodox Church Synod, presided by HH Pope Shenouda III, has agreed to lift the anathemas, but this will not take place unless this is performed bilaterally, possibly by holding a joint ceremony.

Conclusion

I conclude that the term "monophysitism" does not reflect the real belief of the non-Chalcedonians. They prefer not to be called "monophysites," as far as the term may be misunderstood. They believe in one nature "out of two", "one united nature", a "composite nature" or "one incarnate nature and not a "single nature". There is no evidence that the term was used during the fifth century. Most probably it was introduced later in a polemic way on behalf of the Chalcedonian Churches. However, considering the past, the non-Chalcedonians are better to be called "mia-physites" than "monophysites." Recently, in so far as they are coming to be understood correctly, they are to be called simply "orthodox", the same belief with their brothers the Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches. This could be an imminent fruit of the unity of all Orthodox Churches.

Agreed Official Statements on Christology with the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches

(1988 A.D.---Between the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria [Egypt] and the Catholic Church)

"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."

--Signatures

See also: http://www.prounione.urbe.it/dia-int/oo-rc_copt/e_oo-rc_copt-info.html

(1990 A.D.---Between the Coptic Orthodox Church and Eastern Orthodox [Chalcedonian] Churches)

Agreement with the Eastern Orthodox family (Ecumenical Patriarchate and representatives of other Eastern Orthodox Churches) - Chambesy, Geneva, 1990 (<http://www.monachos.net/mb/messages/4225/ORIENT3-20256.doc>)

Excerpts from above agreement

"The Orthodox agree that the Oriental Orthodox will continue to maintain their traditional cyrillic terminology of 'one nature of the incarnate Logos' (μία φύσις του θεου λόγου σεσαρκωμένη), 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 *in thought alone* (τη θεωρία μόνη). 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).

"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.

"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.

"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."



Eastern Orthodox Opponents of the Chambesy Union

Example of their writings: <http://ecumenizm.tripod.com/ECUMENIZM/id27.html>

Article by Fr. John S. Romanides

Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Consultation: Leo of Rome's Support of Theodoret, Dioscorus of Alexandria's Support of Eutyches and the Lifting of the Anathemas (http://www.romanity.org/hm/rom.06.en.orthodox_and_oriental_orthodox_consultation.htm) - by Fr. John S. Romanides (printed in Theologia, Athens, 1994, vol. LXV, issue 3, pp. 479-493)

Key excerpts from the above article that are relevant to this discussion

"It is important to note that Theodoret's profession of the faith of Cyril and the Third Ecumenical Council at session VIII of the Council of Chalcedon was accompanied by much hesitation on his part and Episcopal cries of " Nestorian" against him. This is a clear proof that had Dioscoros accepted to appear before the Council and face Theodoret his accuser, he would have certainly been cleared in his fight against this Nestorian enemy of Cyril. He would have been found at least doctrinally, if not canonically, excusable for his excommunication of Leo for his support of this Nestorian. Dioscoros and his bishops excommunicated Leo upon approaching Chalcedon and learning that the legates of Pope Leo were insisting that Theodoret must participate as a member of the Council. Leo insisted upon this in spite of the fact that Theodoret had never yet accepted the Third Ecumenical Council, the Twelve Chapters of Cyril, the condemnation of Nestorius, nor the re-conciliation of 433 between John of Antioch and Cyril of Alexandria. It seems that the Chalcedonian Orthodox must let these facts sink into their heads and take them seriously.

"This is why the Council of Chalcedon upheld the excommunication of Theodoret by the Ephesine Council of 449. Therefore, Dioscoros was legally and canonically correct by excommunicating Leo for his support of Theodoret before the Council of Chalcedon. Ephesus 449 was still before the Council of Chalcedon a part of Roman Law in spite Leo of Rome. From a purely doctrinal viewpoint the Pope of Rome was guilty of supporting a Nestorian and a vigorous enemy of the Twelve Chapters, which were the basis of the doctrinal decision of the Third Ecumenical Council. (...)

"Theodoret was a heretic before Leo got involved with him and he remained a heretic all the time that he was being supported by Leo. Just after Chalcedon Leo wrote in a letter to Theodoret about their common victory they had won at the Council of Chalcedon, yet in the very same letter complained about Theodoret's tardiness in rejecting Nestorius. In other words Leo supported Theodoret during all the time that he had not one confession of the Orthodox faith to his credit. The first time that he came close to a confession of the Orthodox faith was when he became a member of the committee, we have already mentioned, which found that Leo's Tome agrees with

Cyril's Twelve Chapters. Evidently he was made a member of this committee in order to create grounds for satisfying Leo's insistence that he must have his way about Theodore or there will be no Council of Chalcedon.

"Now we compare Leo's support for Theodore with Dioscoros's support of Eutyches. (...)

"On the contrary Dioscoros supported Eutyches on the basis of his confession of faith that " Christ is consubstantial with his mother." Whether this confession is genuine or not, or in reality an act of penance, the fact remains that Dioscoros defended a Eutyches confessing a Christology which was not exactly that for which he was condemned. (...) This corrected or perhaps falsified confession of faith was the basis on which Dioscoros accepted to defend Eutyches against false accusers. In any case this means that Chalcedon did not condemn the faith of Dioscoros. He was condemned only because he excommunicated Leo and refused to appear before the Council to defend himself. It is within this context that Anatolius of New Rome Constantinople opposed the effort of the imperial commissioners to have Dioscoros condemned for heresy. Anatolius clearly declared that, " Dioscoros was not deposed because of the faith, but because he excommunicated Lord Leo the Archbishop and although he was summoned to the Council three times he did not come." (...)

"(It was) By order of the emperor (that) the Review Council of 449 was convened to examine Eutyches' contentions. (...)

"The backbone of the Orthodox tradition is the fact that the Logos became consubstantial with us. There can be no doubt that Dioscoros agrees with this fact and so could never be accused of being a monophysite along with Eutyches. (...) But neither Dioscoros himself nor any other of the Oriental Orthodox Fathers ever followed Eutyches the way Leo followed Theodore like a pet on a leash. (...)

"One may conclude that Dioscoros can be defended in his actions against Leo. He is to be fully complimented for his fight against Theodore. His actions against Flavian and Eusebius can be explained as primarily motivated by his desire to defend the faith against Nestorianism to such a point that he came at least very close to abandoning Cyril's reconciliation of 433 with John of Antioch. The use of the Alexandrian formula " One Nature or Hypostasis Incarnate" by Flavian and Eusebius were technically wrong as such, since they used it not in its correct historical context. However, from the viewpoint of the 433 reconciliation between Cyril and John, this formula could also be used as was done by Flavian and Eusebius, but only so long as its original usage is made clear also. Neither Flavian nor Eusebius understood this and this is what got Dioscoros hot under the collar. He was correct when he protests that both contradicted themselves when using this formula. But he could have let them use it also in the light of 433."

N.B. The name of the author of the above article, Father John S. Romanides, appears at the end of the Chambesy 1990 Official Agreement document (<http://www.monachos.net/mb/messages/4225/ORIENT3-20256.doc>).

Chalcedon (An Analysis)

By Essam Tony

I believe that the historical incident of the Council of Chalcedon could be better understood in light of the politics that involved the incident. It's my own feeling that this was a fight that both sides intended to escalate, rather than absorb, in order to achieve a certain political gain.

We know that the direct consequence of the enactments of the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.) was the first split in the Church. The Western Church described the Eastern Church as being a Monophysite (believing in one Nature for Christ), and the Eastern Church described the Western Church as being Diophysite (believing in two natures for Christ). These terminologies are not new, and are as old as the dispute itself.

After the Council of Chalcedon, the Coptic Church of Egypt led the "Monophysite" Orthodox movement in all the east, and the motives were both theological and nationalist. The nationalist movement against the Byzantine Imperialists in Egypt was on the rise and was fuelled by the new religious dispute, and that peaked during the reign of the Emperor Justinian (c. 527-565 A.D.).

The religious disputations between the Monophysites in Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem in the East on one side, and the Diophysites in Rome and Constantinople in the West on the other side, exceeded the limits of courtesy and respect, and that was in the essence the real reason for the split between the east and the west. Both sides would share the blame for an indecent level of argument.

Several historical factors related to that dispute complicated the issue. The West further accused the East of being the followers of the heresy of Eutyches, which stipulated that the human nature of Christ was nullified and absorbed in his Divine nature. That accusation was not true, because in fact it was the Church of Alexandria that led the fight against that heresy years earlier.

With nationalistic motives on the Eastern side, there were also some nationalistic motives on the western side. The Bishops of Alexandria were "leaders" in the first three Ecumenical Councils of Nicea, Constantinople, and Ephesus. Both the Councils of Constantinople and Ephesus, led by the Alexandrian Church and its view, led to the excommunication of the respective bishops of Constantinople, which was the Capital of the Empire. The dominance of the theological arena by the Alexandrian church was a source of envy for the Western churches.

Moreover, in the Council of Ephesus the second (the "fourth" council), c.449 A.D., that was headed by St. Dioscorus I, 25th Pope of Alexandria (Bishop of Alexandria), the Pope of Rome (Bishop of Rome), Leo was excommunicated. That was badly received in the cities of Rome and Constantinople (which had its own Patriarchs excommunicated twice in the preceding 50 years, through councils steered by Coptic Popes). That Council of 449 A.D. was termed a "Council of thieves". In an attempt to overturn the decisions of the second Ephesian Council, the Bishops of the West, and

the Emperor Marcianus intensified all their efforts to assemble a council of 600 Bishops in Chalcedon in 451 A.D., in what came to be known as the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon. This Council overturned the canons of the Council of Ephesus the second, held two year earlier in 449 A.D., and asserted that the Bishopric throne of Rome is the first among the Christian World. The Council also excommunicated St. Dioscorus I, the bishop of Alexandria and exiled him. The Canons of the Council was documented in what came to be known as the "Tome of Leo", a document that was sent to all corners of the earth as the decision of the Council. The rally of the State in support of the Council was manifested in the number of attendants encouraged by Emperor Marcianus which reached 600 Bishops as compared to the 318 of Nicea, 150 in Constantinople, and 200 in Ephesus in the earlier three major Ecumenical councils.

In the final analysis of the Chalcedonean incident, the two parties appeared to have shared the same view, but disagreed on the semantics and the terminology each party saw befitting for the description of an agreed upon concept. The nationalistic ego was the reason behind the widening of a gap that could have been, otherwise, mended.

The Churches of Alexandria, Antiochs, and Jerusalem rejected the Canons of the Council of Chalcedon, and rallied behind the exiled bishop of Alexandria, and riots erupted in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia (Iraq), Armenia and Persia (Iran). St. Dioscorus, Pope of Alexandria, in return excommunicated all those who would accept the "Tome of Leo".

I would say, that had the path of history had a less formal approach to theological disputes, other than excommunications and exiles, it might have been possible to avert lots of divisions. So may be power corrupted the church at times.

After Chalcedon - Orthodoxy in the 5th/6th Centuries

By Subdeacon Peter Theodore Farrington

British Orthodox Church

Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate

Below is an article graciously contributed by Father Subdeacon Peter Theodore Farrington of the British Orthodox Church (Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate). This article examines the history and context of the Universal Church following the Council of Chalcedon. Please visit the BOC website: <http://www.britishorthodox.org/>, as they are a valuable part of our Communion.

It seems to be received as an historical fact that after the Council of Chalcedon those Christians who refused to accept its decisions and doctrinal statements were immediately isolated and rapidly withdrew into their own communion. This opinion is

far from reflecting historical reality, and yet it is often presumed to be true by Oriental Orthodox as much as Chalcedonian Orthodox.

It fails to take full account of the truth that for a Council to be Ecumenical it must be received by the whole Church, and ignores the reality that large numbers of Orthodox Christians rejected it, and continued to oppose it. This opinion assumes that because one group of Orthodox defined the Faith in a particular way any who disagreed with that definition must of necessity have separated themselves from the Faith and therefore from the Church. Yet in the years after Chalcedon, and throughout the 6th century, those who rejected Chalcedon continued to play a significant, and at times dominant, role in the Orthodox Church.

Even before the Council of Chalcedon there had been tensions between those who followed the teaching and terminology of St. Cyril and those who favoured the teaching and terminology of the Antiochean School. The Council of Ephesus in 431 AD had not resolved these tensions even though it had firmly stated the Orthodox position. The Council had left the Church divided and there were large numbers of Orthodox who were out of communion with one another. St. Cyril understood that it was the substance of Christological teaching which was at stake and allowed the use of certain Antiochean terminology, such as speaking of two natures after the union, where it could be unequivocally seen that those using such terminology were fully Orthodox in their understanding of Christ. Thus he was able to restore communion with the Antiocheans under John of Antioch.

Though communion was restored there were still many tensions between these two theological expressions. Yet there was no sense in which either party was viewed as having been a separate Church. Nor was there seen to be a need for any of the episcopal acts of those who had objected to the Council of Ephesus to be repeated, nor were they viewed as invalid. Indeed some Antiocheans continued to be supporters of Nestorius and other heretics such as Theodore and Diodore even while being in communion with St. Cyril and those who believed according to the Council of Ephesus. These differing attitudes towards Nestorius and his teachings undoubtedly caused problems, and towards the end of his life St. Cyril considered that the Antiocheans had failed to be really converted to Ephesine Orthodoxy. But there was never any sense that once out of communion there could never be the possibility of being back in communion, or that once in error and un-Orthodox there was no prospect of correction and being Orthodox again. When St. Cyril considered that the Antiocheans had substantially accepted an Orthodox Christology then all the other difficulties that remained were passed over to be dealt with later.

Thus at Chalcedon the fact that from the Alexandrian perspective most of the Orthodox world had fallen into error was not something that could not be remedied. And indeed the followers of Chalcedon hoped that those who rejected the Council could be persuaded to accept it. Neither side understood either the acceptance or rejection of the Council to be irrevocable and the end for all time of any prospect of the other side being Orthodox.

The period of a century and a half following Chalcedon is not the story of a small group of malcontents slipping into obscurity. It is in fact a period during which the Non-Chalcedonians fought hard to restore the whole Church to Cyrilline Orthodoxy,

and on several occasions seemed on the verge of doing so. In some respects the situation was similar to the current difficulties in the Anglican Church. There were Non-Chalcedonian congregations trying to cope with Chalcedonian bishops, and bishops faced with opposition from their Patriarchs. It was a period of some confusion but the theological conflict was played out within the Orthodox Church not between two completely separate Churches each claiming to be Orthodox.

There were three main factors complicating the theological debate that took place after Chalcedon . Rome had been lost to the barbarians, there was a growing sense of national identity in the various parts of the Empire, and the great Sees were continually in competition with each other. The Emperors had to balance the desire to regain Rome with the need to try and preserve unity within the Empire of the East. Theological divisions were no help and a uniform Christology was always one of the Emperors underlying ambitions. At times this meant that political policies impinged on theological and ecclesiastical affairs.

Thus Marcian supported Chalcedon and it must have appeared to him that there was the prospect of unity in the Church based on its Christological statement. But if that was indeed his opinion then he was quickly proved wrong. Pope St. Dioscorus may well have withstood his enemies alone, but the people of Alexandria were as staunch defenders of Cyrilline Orthodoxy as any of their bishops, and they were the first to make plain that the See of Alexandria was united in opposition to Chalcedon . When Proterius was appointed Patriarch in place of the exiled Pope Dioscorus he was greeted by a rioting crowd of Alexandrians. Opposition was not limited to Egypt . In Jerusalem the monks rejected Juvenal who had submitted to Chalcedon and appointed Theodosius in his place. The Emperor acted to replace Juvenal with another bishop who accepted Chalcedon but Theodosius had already consecrated several bishops who maintained opposition to Chalcedon .

In 457.AD the Emperor Marcian died. Those who had opposed Chalcedon were able to return to Alexandria and the people elected Timothy Aelurus as their bishop. Proterius was simply ignored, as far as the people of Egypt were concerned, he was merely an Imperial appointee. The Patriarchate of Alexandria was the only Church in Egypt . Those few who supported Proterius were not a different Church, and neither were the followers of Timothy a separate non-Orthodox sect. Thus when Timothy Aelurus was deposed and exiled by the command of the Emperor it was possible for another Timothy, nicknamed Salophaciolus or Trembling Cap, to be the Patriarch of both the Chalcedonian and Non-Chalcedonians in Egypt .

In 474.AD Zeno became Emperor, but he was the subject of a palace coup and Basiliscus became Emperor for just 20 months. During this time Timothy Aelurus was recalled from exile and became once more the head of the Church of Alexandria . He travelled to Constantinople where he was joined by the exiled Patriarch of Antioch, Peter the Fuller. The emperor was persuaded by these Patriarchs to send an encyclical to all the bishops throughout the empire calling upon them to anathematise the Tome of Leo and all the things said and done at Chalcedon which were innovations beyond the Faith of the three hundred and eighteen holy Fathers. Over 500 bishops subscribed to this letter, including the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Jerusalem and Antioch . The whole ecclesiastical situation seemed to have changed. It was now the Chalcedonians who were on the defensive.

A council was called at Ephesus and a large number of bishops gathered under Patriarchs Timothy and Peter to anathematise Chalcedon, recognise the autonomy of Ephesus and restore the former rights of the see to its bishop. When the council had concluded its business a letter was written to the emperor which said,

"We have anathematised and do anathematise the Tome of Leo and the decrees of Chalcedon, which have been the cause of much blood shedding and confusion, and tumult, and division and strifes in all the world. For we are satisfied with the doctrine and faith of the Apostles and the holy Fathers, the Three Hundred and Eighteen; to which also the illustrious Council of the One Hundred and Fifty in the royal city, and the two other holy Synods at Ephesus adhered, and which they confirmed."

Patriarch Timothy returned to Alexandria and the whole city came out to greet him. The compromise replacement who had held the Patriarchate while Timothy was in exile agreed to retire on a Church pension, and the holy relics of Pope St. Dioscorus were brought from Gangra, his place of exile, to be buried with the other Alexandrian bishops. It seemed for a while that the followers of St. Cyril would see the true faith established throughout the empire once more. A stand was made against those who leant towards the Eutychian heresy and Timothy disciplined several of his bishops. Yet Timothy always took a moderate line with Christians who came over to the Oriental position from having supported Chalcedon, and only insisted that they reject the dyophysite doctrine in writing. Those who had supported Chalcedon were never re-baptised or even anointed, clearly a sign that Timothy, and those with him, saw the followers of Chalcedon as fellow Christians even though they might be in error.

But Zeno returned from his exile and Basiliscus quickly issued another encyclical trying to gain support from the Chalcedonians. Patriarchs Timothy of Alexandria and Anastasius of Jerusalem refused to have anything to do with this new letter, but Zeno, when he had driven Basiliscus into exile, left them in peace since they were both elderly. This is another indication that though both sides opposed each other theologically they were nevertheless able to see a substantial measure of common ground between themselves. If the Chalcedonians had believed Timothy and Anastasius to be heretical in Christological substance then they would surely have not suffered them to retain their positions and influence under any circumstances.

Zeno realised that he could not force Chalcedon upon the empire. He was supported by Acacius, the Chalcedonian Patriarch of Constantinople, who also realised that concessions would need to be made to the opponents of Chalcedon. Acacius drew up the Henoticon as a document that could unite the divided Christians of the East. The text makes no use of the phrase 'two natures' and stresses the pre-eminence of the Nicene faith. It anathematizes both Nestorius and Eutyches and all who think contrary to the teachings of Niceae. The Twelve Chapters of St. Cyril are received and while the reality of Christ's Godhead and manhood are upheld, any idea of 'two Sons' is most emphatically rejected. The Cyrilline teaching that 'both the miracles and the sufferings are those of one Person', the Second Person of the Trinity who became Incarnate.

Acacius addressed his letter to 'the bishops, clergy, monks and laity of Alexandria, Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis'. This is again evidence that he believed his theological opponents to be fully part of the Orthodox Church rather than a non-Orthodox sect. It

is his fellow Christians he is trying to conciliate and not those who have lost any claim to Christian faith.

The Henoticon was understood to be an Imperial statement of faith which abrogated Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo. It seemed as though things could go back to the situation before Chalcedon had been called. Both Zeno and Acacius had been freed from the need to placate Western opinion by the establishment of a Vandal kingdom centred on Ravenna. The Henoticon caused a schism between the East and West which lasted 35 years but at the time the opinion of the Pope of Rome carried little weight in Constantinople.

Even though Zeno had expelled Basiliscus things were still going well for the opponents of Chalcedon. For the first time the great Sees of Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria were united and Zeno was praised as 'the triumphant star of Christ from the East'. Even the more extreme opponents of Chalcedon accepted that the Henoticon contained a right confession of faith.

Emperor Zeno died in 491 AD and was succeeded by Anastasius, a supporter of the anti-Chalcedonian position. The new emperor was determined to maintain the unity that prevailed in the East, and as a result of his policies 'the Council of Chalcedon was neither openly proclaimed, nor yet repudiated by all'. This is again evidence that the Orthodox Church at that time was able to cope with a certain plurality of opinion within the bounds agreed in the Henoticon. It was not that Christology no longer mattered, but with both the Nestorian and Eutychian positions being explicitly anathematised there was some scope for a variety of opinion about terminology.

In Egypt, however, there remained a large minority who insisted that the Henoticon didn't go far enough, and together with that Orthodox statement it was necessary to anathematise the Council of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo. Thus the Patriarchs of Alexandria all anathematised the Council, indeed as described previously this was the method used to reconcile those who had been supporters of the Chalcedon. As the opponents of Chalcedon again gained influence in the empire the requirement to anathematise the Council became more insistent. By 512 AD the unity based on the Henoticon was still holding, but in the See of Antioch the Patriarch was now Flavian who was in sympathy with the doctrine of the two natures. He gathered together his bishops and most of them made it clear that they objected to the more rigorous policy being pursued by the opponents of Chalcedon. They supported the Henoticon but were unwilling to wholeheartedly anathematise the Council.

Flavian had left himself exposed and an edict of deposition was issued. The emperor fully supported all these moves and St. Severus, perhaps the greatest of Oriental Orthodox theologians, was brought to Antioch and made Patriarch. When he entered the cathedral and ascended the throne of St Ignatius all the people cried out,

"Set our city free from the Council of Chalcedon! Anathematise now this council which has turned the world upside down! Anathematise now the council of the distorters of faith! Let all the bishops anathematise it now!"

The supremacy of the opponents of Chalcedon was almost complete. At a synod held at Tyre the Henoticon was explained as abrogating the Council and the doctrinal

statements which it issued, and which were viewed as additions to the faith, were anathematised. By 516 AD even the supporters of Chalcedon were willing to accept the Council and the Tome, 'not as a definition of faith, nor as a symbol, nor as an interpretation, but only as an anathema against Nestorius and Eutyches.'

Even at this high point of non-Chalcedonian influence and power there was no sense of their being two Churches in the empire. The struggle was for theological truth within the Church not between two different Churches. Both supporters and opponents of Chalcedon could co-exist in a compromise position based on the Henoticon but as the position of the opponents was increasingly established in the empire the requirement to explicitly anathematise Chalcedon meant that in all the great Sees it was the non-Chalcedonians who held the most important positions.

On July 1st, 518 AD, Anastasius died and almost overnight the situation changed. The opponents of Chalcedon now found themselves the opponents of the emperor. The new emperor, Justin, demanded strict uniformity throughout his empire, and he had determined that as far as the Church was concerned that would be a Chalcedonian uniformity. He entered into discussions with Rome about a re-union of East and West and within a year Rome had gained everything it asked for, Acacius was condemned and most of the non-Chalcedonian bishops had been deposed and exiled. Severus fled into Egypt where he spent the rest of his life supporting the non-Chalcedonian faithful and moving from monastery to monastery. Many other resisting bishops also found sanctuary in Egypt and it was at this time and under an increasingly severe persecution that the opponents of Chalcedon and its supporters found themselves becoming distinct Churches, though both still described themselves as Orthodox.

By 525 AD the imperial policy was that all resisting monks should be driven out of their monasteries. All over Arabia and Palestine the monks had to leave their monasteries, were robbed, put in irons and subjected to various tortures. Those faithful who gave them shelter were treated in the same way, and it seemed as if a great wave of persecution swept over all those who opposed Chalcedon. The monasteries of Syria broke off communion with the Chalcedonian bishops and all of them signed an anathema against Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo. In response the Imperial soldiers were sent to expel the monks. It was Winter, just two days before Christmas, and many of the faithful went out into the wilderness with the monks to accompany them some of the way in their journey. The old and sick were forced out and were borne along by the healthy on litters. These persecutions continued for many years until the godly empress Theodora was able to prevail on her husband to allow the monks to return to their monasteries.

In Egypt the Popes found themselves persecuted and imperial appointees imposed on the throne of St Mark. One such was Paul of Tinnis who arrived in Alexandria at the head of a body of soldiers. During his year in Alexandria no-one would communicate with him except the Imperial troops and provincial government. The emperor responded to these actions, which he viewed as a personal insult, by closing the Egyptian churches and setting a guard on them. Yet through this, and worse persecution, the people of Egypt refused to submit to the imperial policy of Chalcedonianism and felt themselves growing further apart from their Byzantine brethren.

Yet despite all of these difficulties there was still the possibility of a real union between the supporters and opponents of Chalcedon . In 530 AD the emperor relaxed his persecution of the resisting Christians and in 532 AD summoned the leaders of the non-Chalcedonians to Constantinople for a conference with the Chalcedonians. Severus did not attend this first meeting, but in 534 AD he made the long journey and was able to meet Anthimus who was made Patriarch of Constantinople and who refused to receive Chalcedon . In this year Theodosius, a friend of Severus, became Patriarch of Alexandria. Thus for a short time there were three opponents of Chalcedon in important positions.

The Emperor Justinian was never really committed to conciliating the non-Chalcedonians. He was more interested in union with Rome and the West. Thus in 536 AD Anthimus was deposed and Severus was condemned as a Nestorian and a Eutychian. The Empress Theodora, ever a supporter of Severus and the non-Chalcedonians helped him to escape back to Egypt where he died a few years later. But it was the last opportunity for any real chance at union. The persecution of non-Chalcedonians started again and the non-Chalcedonian's position increasingly became confused with national resistance to Byzantine oppression.

There were still contacts between the non-Chalcedonians and the Chalcedonians. There were further conferences between 550 and 564 AD, and when the Empress Theodora died a large body of Egyptian monks went up to Constantinople . On each occasion the non-Chalcedonians presented the Cyrilline doctrines about Christ and the reasons for their resistance to Chalcedon , but on each occasion they went home having achieved nothing. At the Second Council of Constantinople the writings of the Nestorians Ibas, Theodore and Theodoret were condemned, and the statements issued by the Chalcedonian bishops gathered there were still broadly in line with those of the Henoticon. The Council tried to express its opposition to the teachings of both Nestorius and Eutyches and spoke in its decrees came close to the non-Chalcedonian position. One such decree states,

"If anyone using the expression, "in two natures," does not confess that our one Lord Jesus Christ has been revealed in the divinity and in the humanity, so as to designate by that expression a difference of the natures of which an ineffable union is unconfusedly made, a union in which neither the nature of the Word was changed into that of the flesh, nor that of the flesh into that of the Word, for each remained that it was by nature, the union being hypostatic; but shall take the expression with regard to the mystery of Christ in a sense so as to divide the parties, or recognising the two natures in the only Lord Jesus, God the Word made man, does not content himself with taking in a theoretical manner the difference of the natures which compose him, which difference is not destroyed by the union between them, for one is composed of the two and the two are in one, but shall make use of the number two to divide the natures or to make of them Persons properly so called: let him be anathema."

There had certainly been a shift over time from the strictly Chalcedonian expressions about Christ, and at this Council it seemed that some non-Chalcedonian concerns had been given due weight. But Chalcedonian attitudes were hardening rather than softening and with the succession of Councils held by the Chalcedonians the non-Chalcedonians found themselves increasingly the subject of anathema and excluded from positions of influence within the empire.

Nevertheless, it can be seen that until the accession of Justin in 532 AD the opponents of Chalcedon had more influence and greater opportunity to further their theological position than had the supporters of Chalcedon. It was only with the reigns of the Emperors Justin and Justinian that the non-Chalcedonians found themselves facing the full weight of imperial aggression. Until that time the differences between the opponents and supporters of Chalcedon were predominantly theological and the Henoticon showed that the two sides could be reconciled. But such was the force of the persecution under Justin and Justinian that national feelings were aroused against the Byzantine empire and the theological position of non-Chalcedonianism became mixed with the political position of anti-Byzantinism.

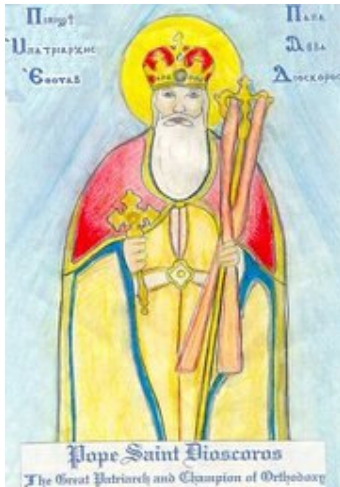
If a date should be placed on the separation of these two bodies of Christians it would be better to place it at 532 AD rather than 451 AD. The non-Chalcedonians had yet to reach the zenith of their influence in 451 AD and in 532 AD they were to suddenly find themselves at their lowest. Yet it is interesting that the two sides were still able to talk to each other, with some measure of equality, even up to 564 AD. This suggests that in the modern discussions between the Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians there is the possibility of dialogue as equals even while recognising the distinctives in each position. And it also suggests that Orthodoxy can accommodate such differences as exist between Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians as long as the heresies of Nestorius and Eutyches are explicitly condemned. An attitude of outright hostility between the two families of Orthodox is not a necessity, and nor is there a requirement for either side to give up all distinctives in an imposed uniformity.

The history of theological tension after Chalcedon provides some hope for modern times. The ecclesiastical position of extreme Chalcedonians is not 'traditional', rather it represents a fear of any difference and a concentration on secondary issues while agreement in substantial matters is ignored. The conciliatory efforts of moderate Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians better represents the 'traditional' attitudes of the fathers of these years, and indeed of St Cyril himself. Following in their footsteps with humility and compassion there is once more the possibility of a real theological unity that respects difference and is able to cope with it.

Some further reading:

- Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, Chronicle, (Liverpool University Press, 1996)
- Torrance Iain R., Christology After Chalcedon, (The Canterbury Press, 1988)
- Sellers R. V., The Council of Chalcedon, (S.P.C.K., 1953)
- el Masri Iris Habib, The Story of the Copts, (Coptic Bishopric for African Affairs, 1987)

Pope Saint Dioscorus I of Alexandria (Coptic POV)



Icon of Dioscorus I of Alexandria

See also:

- Pope Dioscorus I in the Coptic Orthodox Synaxarium (http://www.copticchurch.net/synaxarium/1_7.html#1) - N.B. In the year **457/458** (454 in some accounts) Pope Dioscorus died in exile, and when the Copts heard that, they met with the clergymen and elected Timothy, the disciple of Dioscorus, to be the new Pope.
- Dioscorus I, the twenty-fifth patriarch (444-458) (Chapter XIII). In: Severus of Al'Ashmunein (Hermopolis), History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic church of Alexandria (1904) Part 2: Peter I - Benjamin I (661 AD). Patrologia Orientalis 1 pp. 383-518 (pp.119-256 of text) (http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/severus_hermopolis_hist_alex_patr_02_part2.htm#DIOSCORUS_I)

(The Chalcedon Schism of the Church)

Dioscorus was the dean of the School of Alexandria and personal secretary to Pope Cyril the Great of Alexandria. He accompanied Pope Cyril to the Third Ecumenical Council and was quite aware of what had transpired, and of the attitude of some of the bishops against the Church of Alexandria. He was ordained as the 25th Pope of Alexandria in 444 during the reign of Emperor Theodosius II. Dioscorus was a man of great sensibility. He was much loved for his fiery zeal for the faith, his humility, and for his great courage. These virtues helped him cope with the numerous tribulations he was destined to face.

In his struggle against Nestorius St. Cyril explained the union between the two natures of Christ (His Divinity and His Humanity) as "inward and real without any division, change, or confusion." He rejected the Antiochene theory of "indwelling", or "conjunction", or "close participation" as insufficient to reveal the real unification. He charged that their theory permitted the division of the two natures of Christ just as Nestorius taught.

Thus the traditional Orthodox formula adopted by Cyril and Dioscorus was "ONE INCARNATE NATURE" which translated in Greek to "MIA-PHYSIS" and not "Mono Physis". They meant by "MIA": one; not "single one", but "unity one"; "out of two natures"; as St. Dioscorus stated. He insisted on "the one nature" of Christ to assert Christ's oneness, as a tool to defend the Church's faith against Nestorianism. Thus Christ is at once God and man.

On the other hand the Antiochene formula was "Two natures after the union" which is translated to "DYO PHYSIS". This formula explained Christ as two persons; Son of God, and Son of Man, and that God did not suffer nor did He die.

A struggle occurred between Eutyches and Theodoret. Eutyches was an archmandrite of a monastery in Constantinople. He defended the formula "one nature" against that of "two natures", but without sound theological basis. He concluded that the Godhead absorbed the manhood of Christ. Theodoret accused Eutyches and Cyril and published a long attack on them. The council of Constantinople was held in 448, and Eutyches was condemned and exiled.

Leo the Pope of Rome wrote to Eutyches praising his zeal in opposing the Nestorian dualism. But Leo changed his mind; perhaps when he heard that the emperor wrote to Dioscorus summoning him to a council to be held to discuss that matter. Leo, who was not part of the conflict between the Alexandrian and the Antiochian Christology, sent the famous Tome (letter) of Leo to Constantinople not to work for reconciliation of the parties, but to deform the Alexandrian theologians.

Then Emperor Theodosius II convened the second council of Ephesus in 449 A.D. and asked Dioscorus to exercise supreme authority over it as president. Eutyches was rehabilitated because he offered to repent and also because Pope Leo of Rome wrote to Flavian saying that he should be kind to him, and to accept him if he repented. The council also went on to depose the leading Nestorians such as Theodoret, Domnus, and Flavian of Constantinople.

Then on July 28, 450, Emperor Theodosius died and his sister Pulcheria and her consort Marcian were declared emperors. Pulcheria supported Rome against Alexandria. She gathered signatures for the "Tome" of Leo to be introduced as the basic paper for a new council to be held at Chalcedon. At the same time, she decided not to let Rome hold supreme authority in the church. She refused Leo's demand to hold the council in Italy, but insisted that it would be held in the East. Although the council of Chalcedon is believed to have condemned Eutyches, the man whom it really dealt with was Dioscorus for Eutyches was already in North Syria, where he had been exiled before the council met.

During the council St. Dioscorus explained why the Orthodox faith adopted the formula "One incarnate nature of God the Word". On hearing one nature some bishops in the council shouted, "Eutyches says these things also." Here Dioscorus clarified the Alexandrian point of view saying, "We do not speak of confusion, neither of division, nor of change." St. Dioscorus tried to make his position clear, that he did not accept "two natures after the union", but he had no objection to "FROM two natures after the union."

When the judges started the order of the acts of the Council, Paschasinus the Roman delegate said, "We have orders from Rome that Dioscorus should not have a place in this council. If this is violated he should be cast out." When the judges asked about what Dioscorus did, the Roman delegate replied, "He has dared to conduct a council without the authorization of the apostolic see in Rome, a thing which has never happened and which ought not to have happened."

It was the emperor's favor that the council had to drawl out Alexandria and declare a new formula to bring the entire Church in the east under the leadership of Constantinople. They used Leo as a tool to accomplish their objective through his enmity to Alexandria looking upon it as an obstacle in realizing his papal authority on the Church over the world.

During the council, the empress commanded to smite St. Dioscorus on his mouth, and to pluck out the hair of his beard. He took the hair and the teeth that were knocked out and sent them to Alexandria saying, "This is the fruit of Faith."

The verdict of the commissioners was announced: Dioscorus of Alexandria, Juvenal of Jerusalem, Thalassius of Caesarea, Eusebius of Ancyra, Eutathius of Berytus, and Basil of Seleucia - these were the men who had been responsible for the decisions of the second council of Ephesus, and should as such all be deposed. Thus the Pope of Alexandria was exiled to Gangra Island. In fact, Dioscorus was condemned **not** because of a theological heresy, but due to political circumstances.

Under strong pressure, the bishops of the council accepted a new formula of faith, so that Alexandria would not acquire theological precedence. Yet when the delegates attempted to impose the papal authority upon the universal church, silence turned into revolt. Leo announced, in his repeatedly angry letters, his resistance to the council because it regarded Rome and Constantinople as equal.

After those incidents, a messenger from Constantinople arrived in Alexandria announcing the exile of Pope Dioscorus, and the appointment of an Alexandrian priest named Proterius as a patriarch over Alexandria with the approval of the emperor. He threatened whoever dared to show disobedience. The Melchite (royal) patriarch who was appointed by the emperor became surrounded by soldiers willing to punish those who might resist the imperial command.

When they took St. Dioscorus to the island of Gangra, its bishop, because he was a Nestorian, met him with contempt and disdain. However, God performed at the hands of St. Dioscorus many great signs and wonders, so that all obeyed him, respected and revered him greatly, for God honors His chosen ones in every place. St. Dioscorus told St. Macarius, his companion in exile, "You shall receive the crown of martyrdom in Alexandria." He sent him with one of the believing merchants to Alexandria, where he received the crown of martyrdom.

In the year 457 Pope Dioscorus died in exile, and when the Copts heard that, they met with the clergymen and elected Timothy, the disciple of Dioscorus, to be the new Pope. This became a regular practice of the Coptic Church who never surrendered to the alien patriarchs throughout the Byzantine era which lasted until the seventh century when the Arabs occupied Egypt.

Related Saint: St. Timothy Aelurus of Alexandria

The life of the 26th Patriarch of Alexandria, the immediate successor of Saint Dioscorus.

By Subdeacon Peter Theodore Farrington

British Orthodox Church (Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, <http://britishorthodox.org/>)

There are few of the fathers of the Oriental Orthodox communion who escape uncritical censure on the part of the Eastern Orthodox. Uncritical because based on a few polemical comments deriving from the period of the Christological controversies and failing entirely to take into account any of the writings and historical records deriving from the Oriental Orthodox communities in which they were active.

St Timothy falls into this category of unreasonably maligned figures. Condemned as both a murderer and Eutychian, he has passed into the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox histories as a figure entirely without any redeeming features.

Yet, as is often the case, the truth is very different. St Timothy reveals himself, in his letters and theological writings, and in the historical record, as a kind and eirienic figure, struggling with more effort than even the Chalcedonians against the heresy of Eutyches, while also seeking to reverse the Chalcedonian settlement.

The major features of his life and episcopate can be usefully divided into the historical periods of the controversy surrounding the murder of Proterius, his extended period of exile, his return and influence upon the Emperor Basiliscus, and theologically into his activities against the Eutychians, his writings against the Chalcedonian settlement and his eirienic approach to the reconciliation of members of the Proterian party.

The Consecration of St. Timothy

St Timothy had been a monk in the desert monasteries when St Cyril had him brought, against his own inclination, to Alexandria and ordained a priest. When the Alexandrians heard that the Emperor Marcian had died, in 457 AD, they were able to take advantage of the absence of Dionysius, the general whose forces had propped up the usurping patriarchate of Proterius, and consult among themselves to elect a true successor of St Dioscorus. [1]

The Alexandrian Church agreed upon St Timothy. He was considered as having the same faith as St Dioscorus, being well versed in the Fathers, a man of ascetic lifestyle but with the ability to pastor the Church. The monks and people carried him to one of the major Churches in the city where he was consecrated by two Egyptian bishops and St Peter the Iberian, who had left his monastic home in Palestine and was staying in Alexandria at that time. According to Zachariah's Chronicle, while he was being carried to his consecration the people, priests and monks heard a spiritual voice saying 'Consecrate him by force, even though he be unwilling, and set him on the throne of St Mark'. [2]

Grillmeier rather confusingly states [3] that St Timothy was only consecrated by two bishops, St Peter the Iberian and Eusebius of Pelusium. He can only come to this judgement by ignoring the account of Zacharias and following solely the account of the Chalcedonian historian Evagrius Scholasticus [4]. Evagrius notes that St Peter and Eusebius was present at the consecration, but he does not say that only St Peter and Eusebius were present, this is stated only in the partisan account provided by the Proterian clergy after their expulsion. Unfortunately, Grillmeier repeatedly shows a marked bias against St Timothy and often appears to present historical material in an unfair manner.

Grillmeier says that St Timothy was secretly consecrated after the death of St Dioscorus, but this also appears not to reflect either Zacharias or Evagrius, since both state that the consecration of St Timothy took place during the period after the death of Emperor Marcian in 457 AD, while St Dioscorus died in exile at Gangra in 454 AD. Neither was the consecration in secret. In fact it was well known that there were now two rival bishops of Alexandria in the city, and the general Dionysius hurriedly returned with his army, took St Timothy prisoner and caused the slaughter of many Christians in the city. In fact things became so difficult in the city that eventually St Timothy had to be restored [5].

Zachariah comments on the relative strength of the two churches in Alexandria. At the baptisms during the feast of Pascha, those reading out and recording the names of the candidates being presented to St Timothy grew weary with the great number. Only five candidates were presented at this time to Proterius. In fact the people of the city rose up and chased Proterius out of the church he had made his own.

The Murder of Proterius

It was during this tumult that the death of Proterius occurred. Zacharias says,

“ When Proterius continued to threaten the Romans, and to display his rage against them; because they took his gold, but did not fill their hands with the blood of his enemies : then, indeed, a certain Roman was stirred to anger in his heart, and was boiling over with rage ; and he invited Proterius to look round and he would show him the corpses of the slain as they lay. And suddenly and secretly, he drew his sword and stabbed Proterius in the ribs along with his Roman comrades, and they despatched him, and dragged him to the Tetrapylum, calling out respecting him as they went along, "This is Proterius." And others suspected that it was some crafty plot. But the Romans left the body, and went away. Then the people, perceiving this, became also greatly excited, and they dragged off the corpse, and burnt it with fire in the Hippodrome.” [6]

So Zachariah is clear that one of the Roman mercenary troops killed Proterius, not from any theological impulse but out of irritation at his constant demands for force to be applied to those who opposed him.

If we turn to Evagrius, who is a Chalcedonian, we find that he also notes,

“the account given of the transaction by the writer of the life of Peter, also says that Proterius was not killed by the populace, but by one of the soldiers.” [7]

And Grillmeier also notes that the Chronicle of Michael the Syrian also writes of Proterius being killed by a Roman soldier. [8]

But then, rather perversely, he states that these references are unconvincing. He chooses instead to rely entirely on the naturally partisan statements of the Proterian clergy who had fled Alexandria after Proterius' death. Their description of the events in Alexandria are rather different.

“ When Dionysius, on account of the urgency of these disorders, had occupied the city with the utmost dispatch, and was taking prompt measures to quench the towering conflagration of the sedition, some of the Alexandrians, at the instigation of Timotheus, according to the written report made to Leo, despatched Proterius when he appeared, by thrusting a sword through his bowels, after he had fled for refuge to the holy baptistery. Suspending the body by a cord, they displayed it to the public in the quarter called Tetrapylum, jeering and vociferating that the victim was Proterius; and, after dragging it through the whole city, committed it to the flames; not even refraining themselves from tasting his intestines, like beasts of prey.” [9]

Now this passage seems most unlikely? Do we really imagine that Christians, of which ever party, would resort to cannibalism? This account, despatched to Leo of Rome, continues,

"And while undisturbed peace was prevailing among the orthodox people of our country and Alexandria, Timotheus, immediately after the holy synod at Chalcedon, being at that time a presbyter, severed himself from the Catholic church and faith, together with only four or five bishops and a few monks, of those who, as well as himself, were infected with the heretical errors of Apollinaris and his followers; on account of which opinions they were then deposed by Proterius, of divine memory, and the general synod of Egypt, and duly experienced the motion of the imperial will, in the sentence of banishment."

Now this passage is clearly misleading and mischievous. We know already that almost the entire population of Alexandria supported St Timothy, and the fact that the escaping Proterians numbered only a handful shows that in fact it was they who were in the minority? What was this 'general Synod of Egypt' that banished St Timothy? It is a fabrication since in fact St Timothy was restored to Alexandria specifically because he was so much loved and respected by the Church.

Even Grillmeier has to note that Leo of Rome was misled as to the following of St Timothy in Alexandria and thought that only four bishops supported him. This could not be further from the truth.

The letter to Leo of Rome continues,

"And after the interval of only one day, while Proterius, beloved of God, was occupying, as usual, the episcopal residence, Timotheus, taking with him the two bishops who had been justly deposed, and the clergy who, as we have said, were

condemned to banishment with them, as if he had received rightful ordination at the hands of the two, though not one of the orthodox bishops of the whole Egyptian diocese was present, as is customary on occasion of the ordinations of the bishop of the church of Alexandria—he possesses himself, as he presumed, of the archiepiscopal see, though manifestly guilty of an adulterous outrage on the church, as already having her rightful spouse in one who was performing the divine offices in her, and canonically occupied his proper throne."

Now clearly this also is a partisan statement. Even if Proterius were not guilty of the violent excesses which he seems to have urged against the Alexandrians, and the evidence suggests he was, nevertheless he remained a promoter of Chalcedon and was an agent of the Imperial power. A heretic cannot 'canonically occupy' any episcopal throne, and by this light alone was reasonably considered a false bishop by the Alexandrians. He had been intruded while their own dearly beloved St Dioscorus was still alive.

"The blessed man could do nothing else than give place to wrath, according to what is written, and take refuge in the venerable baptistery from the assault of those who were pursuing him to death, a place which especially inspires awe even into barbarians and savages, though ignorant of its dignity, and the grace which flows from it. Notwithstanding, however, those who were eager to carry into execution the design which Timotheus had from the first conceived, and who could not endure that his life should be protected by those undefiled precincts, neither revered the dignity of the place, nor yet the season (for it was the solemnity of the saving paschal feast), nor were awe-struck at the priestly office which mediates between God and man; but put the blameless man to death, cruelly butchering him with six others.

They then drew forth his body, covered with wounds, and having dragged it in horrid procession with unfeeling mockery through almost every part of the city, ruthlessly loaded the senseless corpse with indignity, so far as to tear it limb from limb, and not even abstain from tasting, like beasts of prey, the flesh of him whom but just before they were supposed to have as a mediator between God and man. They then committed what remained of the body to the flames, and scattered the ashes to the winds, exceeding the utmost ferocity of wild beasts."

No wonder that Leo of Rome was filled with such indignation against St Timothy when he read this account. Yet the evidence is entirely found only in this letter. Evagrius cannot believe it himself and has to record that,

"Zacharias, however, while treating at length of these events, is of opinion that the greater part of the circumstances thus detailed actually occurred, but through the fault of Proterius, by his instigation of serious disturbances in the city, and that these outrages were committed, not by the populace, but by some of the soldiery; grounding his opinion on a letter addressed by Timotheus to Leo." [10]

How can we believe these unseemly accusations against a bishop? Even more how can we believe them when the record of Zachariah shows what sort of man St Timothy was. Immediately on becoming sole bishop of Alexandria we find,

“ But Timothy, when he appeared before them as the only chief priest of Alexandria , showed that he was really what a priest should be. For the silver and the gold that were given to the Romans in the days of Proterius, he expended upon the poor, and the widows, and the entertaining of strangers, and upon the needy in the city. So that, in a short time, the rich men, perceiving his honourable conduct, lovingly and devotedly supplied him with funds, both gold and silver.”

How like St Severus this is. For in his case, when he succeeded to the throne of the See of Antioch he closed the episcopal baths, and dismissed the chefs who had prepared fine foods for his Chalcedonian predecessor and lived simply as a monk. We may reasonably ask why St Timothy is remembered as someone worthy of such affection if in fact he was the prime agent in an episcopal murder. Zachariah provides the reason behind this campaign of vilification.

“The presbyters and all the clergy belonging to the Proterian party, since they knew all his virtues and his angelic mode of life, and the devotion of the citizens to him, joined themselves together and made libels in which they entreated him that they might be received. They also promised that they would go to Rome to Leo, and admonish him concerning the novelties which he had written in the Tome.

But the jealousy and hatred of the citizens against these persons were great, on account of the events which had occurred in the days of Proterius, and the various sufferings which they had endured. So they would not consent to their reception.”

St Timothy is well attested as an eirienic patriarch. He insisted that those who came over to the Orthodox from the Proterian party should be received on the provision of a signed statement of faith and a rejection of Chalcedon and the Tome, being received even in their clerical rank after one years probation. But on this occasion his peaceable intent could not prevail over the anger of the people, who had seen so many killed on the streets of Alexandria at Proterius’ instigation. As Zachariah records, the outcome provoked the false accounts of events which were then sent to Leo of Rome, the Emperor and many other bishops. Zachariah says,

“This was the reason why matters were disturbed and thrown into confusion. For when these men were ignominiously refused, they betook themselves to Rome, and there they told about the contempt of the canons, and about the dreadful death of Proterius; and they said that he died for the sake of the Synod and for the honour of Leo; and that they themselves, also, had endured many indignities; and further, that Timothy had come forward in a lawless manner and taken the priesthood.” [11]

So in fact we have three sources, and even Evagrius, a fourth, contradicting or at least questioning the account proposed by the Proterian party. Yet Grillmeier still chooses to assume that the contradicted account is the true one. He notes that “there is no word of regret about this outrage from any anti-Chalcedonian”. But why should there be if in fact the records are clear that it had nothing to do with St Timothy at all.

Unfortunately Leo of Rome chose to listen to the Proterian account and took it as the truth. He wrote to the Proterian bishops now seeking support in Constantinople and informed them that he had already urged the Emperor to intervene. He consoled them

by the thought that the anti-Chalcedonians in Alexandria would receive no mercy from the Emperor when he acted, because he had already been stirred by Leo to,

“....not allow murderous spirits whom no reverence for place or time could deter from shedding their ruler's blood, to gain anything from his clemency, more particularly when they desire to reconsider the council of Chalcedon to the overthrow of the Faith.” [12]

Indeed in his letter to the Emperor he had already refused to allow the Emperor to call a council to try and reconcile the parties, and had described the Christians in Alexandria as ‘blasphemous parricides’, because they had, as he supposed, murdered their spiritual father. He warns the Emperor that the mere presence of those who should be cut off from the name of Christian ‘dim your own splendour, most glorious Emperor’. He dismisses the petition of the Orthodox in Alexandria, describing it as ‘the fiction of heretics’. One wonders if Leo of Rome truly believed that cannibalism took place in Alexandria. Nevertheless he urges the Emperor to act, and has nothing but opprobrium to heap upon St Timothy.

Yet this is all based only on hearsay and the word of a small group of embittered men who had lost much and had everything to gain by spinning as gross a libel as possible. Leo was already mistaken in thinking that only a handful of people supported St Timothy in Alexandria and Egypt, even Chalcedonian historians suggest that in fact Proterius had been murdered by his own mercenaries, and the Emperor Leo, when writing to Anatolius of Constantinople records what must be convincing since he is not an anti-Chalcedonian, and describes,

“ the before-mentioned Timotheus, whom the people of Alexandria and their dignitaries, senators, and ship-masters request for their bishop, and what relates to the other transactions, as intimated by the tenor of the petitions, as well as regarding the synod at Chalcedon, to which these parties by no means assent.” [13]

So it is clear that even the Emperor knew that Leo of Rome was misled and misleading when he claimed that hardly anyone supported St Timothy. In fact the people, their leaders and the merchants in the city all demanded St Timothy for their bishop. If the Proterian account was deceitful in this respect then it is legitimate to consider it an unreliable witness in any other respect.

The Exile of St. Timothy

Of course none of these considerations bore any weight with the Emperor, or those bishops who responded to the Imperial request for opinions about the consecration of St Timothy. And indeed anyone receiving what was presented by Leo of Rome as a reliable and lurid account of episcopal murder could hardly fail to find against St Timothy. Anatolius of Constantinople, agreeing with Leo of Rome, counselled the Emperor not to call a council, but to rather send out letters to bishops in every place. Zachariah suggests that the reason Anatolius did not wish a council to be held was that he was concerned that his own prerogatives might suffer if the 28th canon of Chalcedon should be repealed.

Fortunately Zachariah has preserved the letter which St Timothy wrote to the Emperor Leo defending his faith against the accusations of the Proterians and Leo of Rome. In it he presents his own faith in the incarnation, saying,

“For thus also the three hundred and eighteen blessed fathers taught concerning the true Incarnation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that He became man, according to His dispensation, which He Himself knows. And with them I agree and believe, as do all others who prosper in the true faith. For in it there is nothing difficult, neither does the definition of the faith which the fathers proclaimed require addition. And all (whoever they be) holding other opinions and corrupted by heresy, are rejected by me. And I also myself flee from them. For this is a disease which destroys the soul, namely, the doctrine of Apollinaris, and the blasphemies of Nestorius, both those who hold erroneous views about the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, Who became flesh from us; and introduce into Him the cleavage in two, and divide asunder even the dispensation of the only-begotten Son of God: and those, on the other hand, who say with respect to His Body that it was taken from Heaven, or that God the Word was changed, or that He suffered in His own Nature; and who do not confess that to a human body what pertains to the soul derived from us was united.

"And I say to any who have fallen into one or other of these heresies, 'You are in grievous error, and you do not know the Scriptures.' And with such I do not hold communion, nor do I love them as believers. But I am joined, and united, and truly agreeing with the faith which was defined at Nicea; and it is my care to live in accordance with it."

Now when Leo of Rome wrote to the Emperor Leo he dealt with the issue of the possibility of St Timothy being reconciled. He says,

“Nor need we now state all that makes Timothy accursed, since what has been done through him and on his account, has abundantly and conspicuously come to the knowledge of the whole world, and whatever has been perpetrated by an unruly mob against justice, all rests on his head, whose wishes were served by its mad hands. And hence, even if in his profession of faith he neglects nothing, and deceives us in nothing, it best consorts with your glory absolutely to exclude him from this design of his because in the bishop of so great a city the universal Church ought to rejoice with holy exultation, so that the true peace of the LORD may be glorified not only by the preaching of the Faith, but also by the example of men's conduct.”

And

“But you see, venerable Emperor, and clearly understand, that in the person, whose excommunication is contemplated, it is not only the integrity of his faith that must be considered; for even, if that could be purged by any punishments and confessions, and completely restored by any conditions, yet the wicked and bloody deeds that have been committed can never be done away by the protestations of plausible words.”

This makes it clear that there was nothing objectionable in St Timothy's confession, and that whatever he said could never be acceptable in Leo of Rome's eyes, because he had chosen to believe the report of a handful of Proterians. It was in the matter of his supposed conduct that St Timothy was considered irredeemable.

Thus it came about that St Timothy found himself banished to Gangra. Not on account of any heresy but because it was claimed that he had acted uncanonically and was implicated in the murder of Proterius.

Gangra is in Northern Turkey , and on his journey into exile he was taken into Palestine and up the coast. Throughout his journey crowds came out to seek his blessing,

“But when the cities and the inhabitants of Palestine and the seacoast heard it, they came to him to be sanctified, and that the sick among them gain healing for their diseases through the grace of God which was attached to his person; and they snatched torn pieces of stuff from his garments, that they might have them to protect them from evil.” [14]

It is clear that the people and clergy of Alexandria had a great affection for St Timothy, and that this respect and veneration extended outside of Alexandria and Egypt , and was held by many faithful Orthodox throughout the region. Even in his exile it seems that St Timothy was able to continue his good works. We read,

“... the believing, virtuous, and miracle-working Timothy, was the friend of the poor; because he used to receive gifts from the believers of Alexandria and Egypt and other places, and to make liberal distribution for the relief of the needy.” [15]

Now even here in Gangra St Timothy was not able to find relief from those who wished him ill. Gennadius, who had become the patriarch of Constantinople after Anatolius, moved the Emperor to have St Timothy sent even further from any civilised place, and so he found himself sent by boat, even in the middle of winter, to Cherson, a region far away and north of the Crimea. Much of the animosity felt against him was due to the correspondence which he maintained with the Orthodox, both against the Eutychians and the Chalcedonians.

St Timothy continued to win supporters in high places. His writings were studied even in Constantinople .

“In consequence of these writings, those persons who understood the matter left Gennadius of Constantinople and joined in communion with Acacius the presbyter and Master of the Orphans, the brother of Timocletus the composer, who joined the believers, and strenuously opposed the Nestorians; and he also set verses to music, and they used to sing them. And the people were delighted with them, and they flocked in crowds to the Orphan Hospital .” [16]

The Return of St. Timothy from Exile

Just as the death of Marcian had allowed the election and consecration of St Timothy, so the death of Emperor Leo in 474 AD allowed an opportunity for St Timothy to be restored to Alexandria after eighteen years of exile. Zeno, who had risen to become the commander of the army, the magister militum, succeeded to the imperial throne, and immediately the clergy and people of Alexandria sent representatives to

Constantinople requesting the return of St Timothy from his exile in far off Cherson. Zeno was of Isaurian origin however, and had taken the Greek name of Zeno on his marriage to the Emperor Leo's daughter, Ariadne. He was not popular among many of the Greek court, who especially resented the presence of Isaurian soldiers and officers in the city.

As a result, even before the Alexandrians reached Constantinople, there was a coup in January 474 AD and Leo's brother-in-law Basiliscus was placed on the throne by Verina, Leo's widow.

When the deputation from Alexandria arrived in the Imperial city they found themselves presented to Basiliscus, who was much impressed by them, as indeed were the queen, the court, and Acacius, Patriarch of Constantinople at the time.

Emperor Basiliscus gave orders that St Timothy should be restored from his long, but fruitful, exile, and while he was on his way to Constantinople the bishop Acacius prepared the church of Irene for his use, and set aside some of his own retinue and priests to serve him. He began to waver, however, and started to believe that one of the Alexandrian deputation, Theopompus the monk, was being prepared for the episcopacy in his place. In this state of mind he tried to oppose the pending arrival of St Timothy.

Nevertheless the exiled Patriarch of Alexandria finally entered the city in great state. Crowds of Alexandrian sailors and curious citizens of the Constantinople turned out to welcome him. He was taken to the royal palace and large numbers of people came to him to be blessed and receive healing at his hands. [17] St Timothy seems to have impressed many of those whom he met, including the Emperor and Acacius of Constantinople. Zachariah records,

“ And becoming intimate both with Basiliscus and his wife, Timothy, along with those who happened to be there with him and on his behalf, persuaded the king, so that he consented to write encyclical letters, in which he would anathematise the Tome and the addition which was made at Chalcedon . For Paul the monk, who was a rhetorician and a sophist, drew them up. And it was he who, in a discussion with Acacius the patriarch, was able to show that the heresies of Nestorius and Eutyches are one and the same; though they are generally thought to be diametrically opposed to each other. For the one, indeed, making objection declares that it would be a degradation to God to be born of a woman, and to be made in all points like as we are, by becoming partaker of flesh and blood; whereas He was only partaker by identity of name, and by power and indwelling, and by operation. But the other, indeed, for the purpose of liberating and exalting God, so that He should not suffer degradation and contempt by association with a human body, publishes the doctrine that He became incarnate from His own essence, and that He assumed a heavenly body; and that just as there is no part of the seal left upon the wax, nor of the golden signet upon the clay, so neither did there cleave to Christ any portion of humanity whatsoever.” [18]

It is clear that St Timothy was no Eutychian. Indeed he understood entirely the defects of the Eutychian and Apollinarian Christology, both of which denied the full humanity of Christ, consubstantial with us. It is also clear that both the Emperor and the Patriarch were convinced by theological argument rather than mere political

consideration. With this in mind Basiliscus restored Peter of Antioch and Paul of Ephesus to their own sees and promulgated his famous Encyclical.

“.... And earnestly desiring to honour the fear of God more than any affair of man, through zeal for the Lord Jesus Christ our God, to Whom we owe our creation, exaltation, and glory; moreover also, being fully persuaded that the unity of His flock is the salvation of ourselves and our people, and is the sure and immovable foundation, and the lofty bulwark of our kingdom ; we now, moved by a wise impulse, are bringing union and unity to the Church of Christ in every part of our dominion, namely, the faith of the three hundred and eighteen bishops, who being previously prepared by the Holy Ghost, assembled at Nicea, the security and well-being of human life, the faith which we hold, like all who have been before us, and in which we believe and are baptized, that it may hold and rule all the Churches with their chosen canons: the faith which is complete and perfect in all piety and true belief, and which rejects and exposes all heresies, and thrusts them out of the Church: the faith which the one hundred and fifty bishops, being assembled here to oppose and condemn the fighters against the Spirit, the Holy Lord confirmed, and with which they concurred and agreed : the faith which was also confirmed by the transactions of the two Councils at Ephesus, along with the chief priests of Rome and Alexandria, Celestine and Cyril, and Dioscorus, in condemnation of the heretic Nestorius, and all who after him have held similar opinions, and have confounded the order of the Church, and disturbed the peace of the world, and cleft asunder the unity; we mean the Tome of Leo, and the decrees of Chalcedon, whether by way of definition of the faith, or doctrine, or interpretation, or addition, or whatsoever other innovation was said or done contrary to the faith and the definition of the three hundred and eighteen.

"And therefore we command that wherever, here or elsewhere, such written doctrine be found, it shall be anathematised and burnt in the fire. For in accordance with this order, our blessed predecessors in the kingdom, Constantine the Great and Theodosius, in like manner, commanded and ordained. And also, the three subsequent Synods, that of the one hundred and fifty bishops here, and the two of Ephesus , ratified only the faith of Nicea, and agreed to the true definition there made.

"Moreover, we anathematise everyone who does not confess that the only-begotten Son of God truly became incarnate by the Holy Ghost from the Virgin Mary; not taking a body from heaven, in mere semblance or phantasy. And also we anathematise all the false teaching of all those heresies which are contrary to the true faith of the fathers....." [19] .

This document is notable for its recognition of the second council of Ephesus in 449 AD, which is described as condemning the heresy of Nestorius, and for its categorisation of the Tome of Leo and the decrees of Chalcedon as breaking the unity of the Church and perpetuating that same heresy. The Encyclical orders the destruction of any written materials containing such doctrines and anathematises those who fail to confess the reality of the incarnation, and all the false teachings which are contrary to the fathers.

All in all the document is rather restrained. The Tome and Chalcedon are criticised as being of the same opinion as Nestorius, but the anathema is reserved for those who fail to confess the incarnation and have a Eutychian Christology, and it falls equally

upon the false teachings of any who set themselves against the fathers. Practically speaking it sets aside the Tome and Chalcedon, restores the authority of the second council of Ephesus and anathematises those who truly hold to Eutychian ideas.

The Encyclical was sent out throughout the Empire and was signed by St Timothy, Peter of Antioch, Paul of Ephesus, the bishops of Asia and the East, and Anastasius of Jerusalem and his Synod. Altogether about 700 bishops signed their agreement with the document. The bishops of the province of Asia Minor gathered at Ephesus and sent the following statement to the Emperor.

“ But now that the light of the true faith has arisen upon us, and the dark cloud of error been rolled away from us, we make known by this declaration our true faith to your Majesties and to all the world. And we say that freely and with willing consent, by the aid of John the Evangelist as our teacher, we have signed this Encyclical; and we agree to it and to everything in it, without compulsion, or fear, or favour of man. And if at any future time violence shall meet us from man, we are prepared to despise fire and sword and banishment and the spoiling of our goods, and to treat all bodily suffering with contempt; so that we may adhere to the true faith. We have anathematised and we do anathematise the Tome of Leo and the decrees of Chalcedon; which have been the cause of much blood-shedding, and confusion, and tumult, and trouble, and divisions, and strifes in all the world. For we are satisfied with the doctrine and faith of the apostles and of the holy fathers, the three hundred and eighteen bishops; to which also the illustrious Council of the one hundred and fifty in the Royal City, and the two other holy Synods at Ephesus adhered, and which they confirmed. And we join with them in anathematising Nestorius, and everyone who does not confess that the only-begotten Son of God was incarnate by the Holy Ghost, of the Virgin Mary; He becoming perfect man, while yet He remained, without change and the same, perfect God; and that He was not incarnate from Heaven in semblance or phantasy. And we further anathematise all other heresies." [20]

It is necessary to note that the bishops of Asia Minor state that they have agreed to and signed the Encyclical without compulsion, and without political considerations. They even state that if they are threatened with violence or exile in the future they are willing to despise such persecution for the sake of the true faith which the Encyclical promotes. The bishops gathered at Ephesus also give authority to the second council at Ephesus in 449 AD under Pope Dioscorus. This second council, and the Encyclical of Basiliscus, is understood as anathematising Nestorius, and rejecting Eutychianism. The bishops agree with the Emperor Basiliscus and explicitly anathematise the Tome of Leo and the decrees of Chalcedon.

Zachariah mentions that the bishops of the other regions wrote similar letters, some even considering, in an honorific sense, the Emperor Basiliscus as a 319th bishop among the fathers of Nicaea. The intent of the Encyclical, St Timothy who had influenced the Emperor to issue it, and that of the bishops who signed it, seems to have been to ensure that both Nestorianism and Eutychianism were condemned while the Chalcedonian Christological settlement was rolled back to that of the second council of Ephesus in 449 AD. It was to be no longer acceptable to speak of Christ as being ‘in two natures’, once more the Cyrilline terminology ‘of two natures’ was to be solely authorised. The Encyclical and the bishops agreeing to it were careful to ensure

that the doctrine of the real incarnation of Christ, as perfect God and perfect man, without change, was confessed.

In fact the purpose of the Encyclical was to gain support from the bishops of the whole Empire for the imperial objective, which was to suppress all mention of Chalcedon and the Tome, as being the root of disunity in the Church at that time, while also ensuring that both Nestorianism and Eutychianism were anathematised.

It is something of a surprise to find so many bishops subscribing to the Encyclical only 23 years after the council of Chalcedon . A great many of the bishops must have been signatories of Chalcedon itself, and certainly to have been monks and priests at that time.

There was opposition to St Timothy in Constantinople . Not from the Chalcedonians so much as from the Eutychianists, who had hoped that St Timothy would support them. Far from it. He continued to oppose them in person as he had by his letters from exile. As a result of his public statements the Eutychianists separated themselves from him, while many others joined themselves to him. Nevertheless the Eutychianists had some influence at court and Theoctistus, the Master of the Offices, urged St Timothy to leave Constantinople for Alexandria , where he would be safe.

St Timothy therefore travelled to Ephesus , en route for Alexandria , where the bishop Paul was restored to his see by a synod convened there, and Ephesus was able to regain many of the canonical privileges which had been taken from it at Chalcedon and given to Constantinople . For a moment it was as if Chalcedon had never taken place.

On his arrival in Alexandria he was greeted by crowds of people speaking all the different languages represented in the city, with torches and songs of praise, and they conducted him to the great church chanting, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'. [21]

There is a difference of opinion between Zachariah and Evagrius in respect of the welcome which St Timothy received in Alexandria . This seems to be due to Evagrius simply misreading Zachariah's account. Zachariah mentions that a number of people withdrew from him when he arrived in Alexandria ,

“ And inasmuch as he was a peaceable and kind man, and also gentle in his words, and by no means passionate, he remitted to the members of the Proterian party the term of repentance, which he had written and appointed for the penitents when he was in banishment.....

But certain persons, who were ignorant of the rights of divine love, severed themselves from him on account of his gentleness and mildness towards the penitents, in that he required nothing else from them except that they should anathematise the Synod and the Tome, and confess the true faith; and because he did not hold them aloof, even for a little while, from the communion which they had made desolate.

But at the head of these persons was Theodoret the bishop of Joppa, who had been consecrated by Theodosius some time before. And he was then filled with envy

because he had not also been received back again to his see. And, lo! the illustrious Peter the Iberian did not return to Gaza ; and he did not at all agree with this faction, but he was warmly attached to Timothy, and he proved that his conduct and actions were in conformity with the will of God. But the Separatists who sided with Theodotus fell into such error that they even practised reanointing, and they were called Anachristo-Novatians.” [22]

From this passage it is clear that St Timothy maintained his eirenic and reconciliatory approach, which was that those who had supported Chalcedon and the Tome could be received into communion if they simply anathematised the Tome and the Council and, in the case of clergy, remained constant for the course of a year. It is also clear that a small group of rigourists existed which rejected this approach and wished to consider the Chalcedonian party as being without sacramental grace, so that they chrismated those that came over to them.

Now Evagrius Scholasticus takes this passage and misinterprets it completely. He writes,

“ Proceeding thence, he arrives at Alexandria , and uniformly required all who approached him to anathematise the synod at Chalcedon . Accordingly, there abandon him, as has been recorded by the same Zacharius, many of his party, and among them Theodotus, one of the bishops ordained at Joppa by Theodosius, who had, by means of certain persons, become bishop of Jerusalem, at the time when Juvenalis betook himself to Byzantium.” [23]

Now of course it is true that St Timothy required those in his communion to anathematise the council of Chalcedon , but Evagrius represents the separation of Theodotus as being caused by this requirement. As though St Timothy were the strict enforcer of the anti-Chalcedonian position offending even his supporters by his severity. Nothing could be further from the truth, as Zachariah, the author of Evagrius’ information actually makes very clear. St Timothy was the gentle and peaceable bishop while Theodotus was the Novatian, going beyond what Orthodoxy required for the reconciliation of separated believers.

This shows just how difficult it is to gain a fair appreciation of St Timothy from any Chalcedonian sources since even where the primary sources of information are plainly in St Timothy’s favour the Chalcedonian histories manage to paint something entirely negative.

Zachariah gives a few glimpses of the spirit of St Timothy when he had been restored to Alexandria . The Proterian Patriarch, Timothy Salophaciolus, a quiet man himself, had retired to his monastery and supported himself, as a simple monk, by the weaving of baskets. St Timothy arranged that he should receive a pension of a denarius a day for his own use.

He insisted on giving as gifts to the Emperor, the nobles and the tax-gatherers, merely a few pennies, reasoning that it was the duty of the Church to expend itself on the widows and orphans. And the people of Alexandria especially loved him because he had brought back from exile the remains of St Dioscorus and his brother Anatolius, which were laid among the other bishops of Alexandria in great state.

Unfortunately, Acacius of Constantinople was not willing to lose any of the powers which Chalcedon had given to the Imperial city, and he stirred up those who remained in opposition to the Emperor and his Encyclical, even calling on Daniel the Stylite to come and add his authority. The Emperor was proclaimed a heretic and fearful for his security within the city, and even more fearful of Zeno, the Emperor he had himself usurped, and who was now approaching with an army, he issued an Anti-Encyclical, reversing his previous position.

Zeno entered the city and regained his throne, cancelling all the actions which had taken place under Basiliscus. He deposed Peter of Antioch and Paul of Ephesus, but St Timothy passed away in 476 AD while threats were being raised against him. He was buried with great honour by Peter Mongus who succeeded him.

As a footnote to the historical context of St Timothy's life it should be noted with some disappointment and even shame that many of the bishops who had signed the Encyclical, stating that they were not acting under compulsion, now wrote to the new Emperor claiming that their agreement had been entirely due to necessity. Even Evagrius sounds rather ashamed of these wavering supporters of Chalcedon and writes,

“ The bishops of Asia, to sooth Acacius, address to him a deprecatory plea, and implore his pardon in a repentant memorial, wherein they alleged, that they had subscribed the circular by compulsion and not voluntarily; and they affirmed with an oath that the case was really thus, and that they had settled their faith, and still maintained it in accordance with the synod at Chalcedon. The purport of the document is as follows.

An epistle or petition sent from the bishops of Asia , to Acacius, bishop of Constantinople . "To Acacius, the most holy and pious patriarch of the church in the imperial city of Constantine , the New Rome." And it afterwards proceeds: "We have been duly visited by the person who will also act as our representative." And shortly after: "By these letters we acquaint you that we subscribed, not designedly but of necessity, having agreed to these matters with letters and words, not with the heart. For, by your acceptable prayers and the will of the higher Power, we hold the faith as we have received it from the three hundred and eighteen lights of the world, and the hundred and fifty holy fathers; and, moreover, we assent to the terms which were piously and rightly framed at Chalcedon by the holy fathers there assembled."

Whether Zacharias has slandered these persons, or they themselves lied in asserting that they were unwilling to subscribe, I am not able to say.” [24]

Whether they had signed the Encyclical out of fear and lied when they said they had faced no compulsion, or later lied when they said that they had faced compulsion, either way they come out of the episode shamefully. While St Timothy had spent 18 years in exile rather than sacrifice his principles and faith to save his position many of these bishops seem to have blown this way and that with whatever theological position had Imperial support.

Nevertheless Zachariah records that Anastasius of Jerusalem remained faithful to the position of the Encyclical, as did the provinces in his Synod. And Epiphanius of Magdolum departed to Alexandria rather than deny what he had agreed to.

The Christology of St. Timothy of Alexandria

We are fortunate that we have a number of sources of theological materials from the pen of St Timothy. Some of these are found in the histories of Zachariah and Evagrius, others are letters recently translated into English, while others remain available only in other European languages.

Much of the material concerns St Timothy's struggle against Eutychians in Alexandria and especially in Constantinople.

There was a community of these heretics in Constantinople who were claiming that St Timothy believed as they did. He wrote a lengthy letter against them, containing many proofs from the fathers that Christ should be confessed as consubstantial in His Godhead with the Father, and consubstantial in flesh with us. He writes,

“For we believe, in accordance with the tradition of the fathers, that our Lord Jesus Christ was consubstantial in flesh with us, and one with his own flesh. For we hear the holy Apostle declaring: ‘Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself partook of it like them,Therefore he had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in what pertains to God.....’ This expression, ‘like us in everything’ counsels all of us, who wish to live and enjoy eternal benefits, to confess that our Lord Jesus Christ’s flesh is derived from Mary the holy Virgin and Mother of God, because he was consubstantial in the flesh with her and with us, he who is consubstantial in his Godhead with the Father”. [25]

St Timothy then goes on to quote from St Athanasius, St Basil, St Gregory, St Ambrose, St Theophilus, St Cyril and St John Chrysostom. He uses all of these passages to stress that Christ is really consubstantial with us according to his humanity, while remaining consubstantial with the Father according to his Divinity.

The Eutychian party in Constantinople failed to heed his rebuke and St Timothy was finally forced to send a letter excommunicating two prominent members of the heretical community, Isaiah, who had been a bishop, and Theophilus who was a priest. They had professed the heresy of Eutyches for some time privately, and after having failed to reform their opinions St Timothy now addressed himself to the Church of Alexandria warning all the faithful about them. He wrote, saying,

“I promised that if they refrained from heterodoxy and confessed that our Lord was consubstantial in flesh with us and that he was not of a different nature, I would maintain them in their former honour and would grasp them with the same love.....I then saw that they persisted for about four years in not repenting, in being disobedient to the doctrine of the holy fathers and bishops and in refusing to accept that our Lord

took flesh from the holy Virgin, and in asserting that he did not truly partake of her blood or flesh at all.” [26]

It is clear that St Timothy had no time for proponents of the heresy of Eutyches, and he considered that it was merely a companion heresy of Nestorianism, both of which refused to confess that God the Word had become truly incarnate. St Timothy cannot be considered a Eutychian. He confesses that ‘our Lord was consubstantial in the flesh with us’. This was Eutyches’ sticking point. He believed that Christ was man, but not of the same humanity as us.

St Timothy was so hostile to the Eutychian poison that he had no choice but to write,

“It seemed to me to be necessary, for the sake of those simple folk who are falling victim to them, to inform everyone, naming the above mentioned Isaiah and Theophilus as persons who, by asserting that our Lord and God Jesus Christ is of an alien nature from us and that he was not consubstantial in flesh with men and that he was not really human, have alienated themselves from communion with the holy fathers and with me, and give warning that no man henceforth should hold communion with them”. [27]

This must surely prove that St Timothy believed that our Lord Jesus Christ was consubstantial with us, and really human. Christ would not be ‘really human’ if his humanity was swallowed up in his Divinity, or if his humanity came from heaven, or if he was of some third Christ essence, neither human nor Divine. He shows himself to be a consistent follower of the teaching of his predecessors, indeed he quotes from a letter of St Dioscorus which shows clearly that both of them confessed the real and complete humanity of Christ, which was not an ‘unreal appearance’ in any sense, but was the true flesh of the Word of God, who ‘became man, without abandoning his being Son of God, in order that we might, through the grace of God, become sons of God’. [28]

A few excerpts from this letter show how both St Timothy and St Dioscorus thought about the humanity of Christ, in opposition to the Eutychians. He writes,

“My declaration is that no man shall assert that the flesh, which our Lord took from holy Mary, through the Holy Spirit, in a manner known only to himself, is different from or alien to our body.....’It was right that in everything he should be made like his brethren’. The phrase is ‘in everything’. It does not exclude any part of our nature at all. It includes nerves, hair, bones, veins, belly, heart, kidneys, liver, and lung. That flesh of our Saviour, which was born of Mary, and which was ensouled with a rational soul, was constituted of every element of which we are composed....For he was with us, like us, for us. He was not, God forbid, an unreal appearance, as the heresy of the evil Manichees has it. But he truly issued from Mary, Mother of God, according to his will, thus restoring, by his present advent to us, the shattered vessel...These are the views we hold and confess.” [29]

How could anyone, reading these words, believe that either St Timothy or St Dioscorus were Eutychians, teaching a fantasy incarnation in which Christ was actually not ‘made flesh’ at all? It is surely excluded in every sentence and phrase and by the explicit rejection of an incarnation in appearance only.

Elsewhere he writes,

“These anti-Christians neither acknowledge that Jesus Christ has come into the world in human flesh, nor believe that God the Word became man whilst remaining God unchanged.... Some of them say that our Lord’s incarnation was illusion, imagination and unreal..They are now preaching the evil doctrines of the Phantasiast heresy by saying that the body of our Lord and God Jesus Christ is uncreated, that body which was constituted of created manhood.” [30]

And he writes much more in the same vein. Now if it is anti-Christ to deny the real humanity of Christ, his complete consubstantiality with us, save sin, and his unchanged Divinity, then how can St Timothy be accused of these same things? He says that ‘our Lord was truly man for our sake and for the sake of our salvation’, and these are thoughts which no Eutychian could ever share.

But St Timothy also wrote against Chalcedon and the settlement which had been imposed by Imperial force. There is no doubt that he considered the Tome of Leo and Chalcedon to have been compromised by Nestorianism. Thus he writes to his people in Egypt ,

“On the question you wrote to me about, of the unknown and foreign religious who come to you, first acquaint them with the harm, of which they may be unconscious, of the heresy of the Diphysites. If they agree to take our side, let them anathematise those who hold such views, namely the Council of Chalcedon, the Tome of Leo of Rome, and the whole heresy.” [31]

Now the heresy of the Diphysites is not the confession of the perfect and complete humanity and Divinity of Christ, hypostatically united without confusion, mixture, division or separation. It is the confession of a Christ in whom the humanity and Divinity stand in a relationship of independent realities, united only externally and in honour and name. This passage, and others like it from the letters of St Timothy, show that he was not rejecting Chalcedon and the Tome as a result of politics, or out of wilfulness, but because he was convinced that it had facilitated ‘those two wolves which have leaped forwardly over the wall and entered into the divine fold of Christ’s flock’. It was as a matter of spiritual necessity that he objected to Chalcedon and the Tome.

The error St Timothy found in Chalcedon and the Tome was exactly that of allowing Christ to be separated and divided into two. Two persons, two self-subsistent hypostases, two independent realities. And it is a fact that there were plenty of supporters of the Tome and Chalcedon who did divide Christ in such a way and provided plenty of cause for concern among the anti-Chalcedonian party.

It is well known that Nestorius himself had written that the Tome of Leo expressed his own Christology. And there were monks even in Constantinople keeping a feast of Nestorius after he died in exile. And in the West, the provinces under the authority of Rome and in North Africa considered that Chalcedon had in fact defended the teaching of Theodoret and Ibas. There were plenty of real Nestorians, as there were real Eutychians. But whereas St Timothy fought vigorously against the Eutychians,

it seemed to him that the Tome and Chalcedon had quite simply accepted a Nestorian Christology and had failed to struggle against it at all.

It cannot be asserted that St Timothy rejected the Tome and Chalcedon because they taught the reality of the humanity and Divinity in Christ. It is already clear that this was entirely his own confession. If he objected to them it was because he considered that they had failed to exclude the Nestorian heresy from the Church.

The Encyclical of Basiliscus was perhaps the high point in his efforts to reverse what he saw as a Nestorian settlement after Chalcedon. It is clear from the Encyclical, written under the influence of St Timothy, who had been recalled from exile, that Eutychianism and Nestorianism were to be excluded,

“ We anathematise everyone who does not confess that the only-begotten Son of God truly became incarnate by the Holy Ghost from the Virgin Mary; not taking a body from heaven, in mere semblance or phantasy..... We ordain that the basis and settlement of human felicity, namely, the symbol of the three hundred and eighteen holy fathers who were assembled, in concert with the Holy Spirit, at Nicaea, into which both ourselves and all our believing predecessors were baptised; that this alone should have reception and authority with the orthodox people in all the most holy churches of God, as the only formulary of the right faith, and sufficient for the utter destruction of every heresy, and for the complete unity of the holy churches of God; without prejudice, notwithstanding, to the force of the acts of the hundred and fifty holy fathers assembled in this imperial city, in confirmation of the sacred symbol itself, and in condemnation of those who blasphemed against the Holy Ghost; as well as of all that were passed in the metropolitan city of the Ephesians against the impious Nestorius and those who subsequently favoured his opinions.” [32]

So as far as St Timothy was required, the solution to the divisions introduced by the Tome and Chalcedon, both Christologically and Ecclesiologically, was to base the rejection of Nestorianism on the first council of Ephesus, with the anathemas of St Cyril, and the rejection of Eutychianism on an explicit anathema in the Encyclical. The Tome and Chalcedon had no place in this alternative settlement, indeed they were considered as part of the problem. Yet it must be insisted over and over again that St Timothy did not reject the Tome and Chalcedon because he was a Eutychian, but because he was vehemently opposed to any failure to confess the true and real incarnation of Christ, which he considered both Nestorianism and Eutychianism were guilty of.

But St Timothy should not be considered a harsh and aggressive polemicist. On the contrary he was a gentle man and filled with concern for those he thought had been deceived by error. We can note the manner in which he dealt with different categories of believers.

If we consider the ordinary believer, perhaps a little confused by ecclesiological events over the previous years, St Timothy has the following instructions,

“If, therefore, an ordinary, simple person comes to you, confessing the holy faith of the consubstantial Trinity, and desirous of being in communion with you who acknowledge our Lord’s fleshly consubstantiality with us – I entreat you, not to

constrain those who hold such views as these at all with other words, nor require from them additional verbal subtleties, but leave such people to praise God and bless the Lord in the simplicity and innocence of their hearts....Anyone who does not abuse the saints touching this declaration: 'I confess that our Lord is our brother and that he was of the same fleshly stock as us for the sake of our salvation', accept such an one in our Lord." [33]

St Timothy is not overly concerned about words and formulas. He seeks a right content to a person's faith. If a simple soul, not particularly theologically literate, confesses that Christ is consubstantial with us according to his humanity, then such a one is Orthodox. No chrismation, no period of probation. The simple believer is received into communion on the basis of his simple confession in the reality of the incarnation.

Other believers were simply required to anathematise those who held heretical views, both Nestorian and Eutychian. The aim was to restore separated Christians to commune as easily as possible with due regard to the necessity for making a clean break with Nestorianism and Eutychianism.

Finally, in regard to clergy, whether ordained bishop, priest or deacon, St Timothy was equally considerate rather than committed to an violent approach. His instructions were,

"Let such an one repair to the bishops, clergy of ours or orthodox religious, in his vicinity, so that they may be trustworthy witnesses of his present repentance. Let him anathematise in writing, before the orthodox who belong to the whole place, the Council of Chalcedon and the Tome by wicked Leo of RomeThen let him thus be granted the burden of penance in God, in such a case as his is limited to one year." [34]

Thus even in the case of clergy coming over to the anti-Chalcedonian communion it was necessary only for an anathema to be pronounced upon the Tome and Chalcedon, and for a period of penance to prove the stability of such repentance.

St Timothy was certainly a gentle and peaceable bishop, even his long exile had not embittered him. His letters are filled with pastoral concern, even for those bound up in what were considered the errors of the Tome and Chalcedon . He took a moderate but vigorous stand against the conjoined errors of Nestorianism and Eutychianism, both of which failed to confess the real incarnation of Christ.

St Timothy clearly confesses that the humanity of Christ is entirely consubstantial with us, save sin, and that the Divinity of Christ remained without change when Christ became incarnate. He is no Eutychian, but a faithful disciple of St Cyril, as St Dioscorus, his predecessor equally was.

The whole tenor of his letters, and the content of the ecclesiastical histories of the period, strongly resist the partisan and unreliable account of St Timothy's involvement in the death of Proterius, the intruding Patriarch of Alexandria.

St Timothy has been unfairly treated by history. He is perhaps too little known even by members of the Oriental Orthodox communion of Churches. The evidence shows that he was a genuinely eirenic bishop, with a pastoral spirit deserving the honour that the Church has accorded him as St Timothy the Great of Alexandria.

[1] Hamilton F.J. & Brooks E.W. trans. Zachariah of Mitylene, Syriac Chronicle , Book 4. Ch 1. p64, 1899; [2] Hamilton F.J. & Brooks E.W. trans. Zachariah of Mitylene, Syriac Chronicle , Book 4. Ch 1. p65, 1899; [3] Grillmeier A. Christ in Christian Tradition Vol 2. Part 4. p10 Mowbray, 1996; [4] Walford E. Evagrius Scholasticus, Ecclesiastical History, p70 Bagster, 1846; [5] Hamilton F.J. & Brooks E.W. trans. Zachariah of Mitylene, Syriac Chronicle , Book 4. Ch 1. p65, 1899; [6] Hamilton F.J. & Brooks E.W. trans. Zachariah of Mitylene, Syriac Chronicle , Book 4. Ch 1. p66, 1899; [7] Walford E. Evagrius Scholasticus, Ecclesiastical History, p70 Bagster, 1846; [8] Grillmeier A. Christ in Christian Tradition Vol 2. Part 4. p11, n23 Mowbray, 1996; [9] Walford E. Evagrius Scholasticus, Ecclesiastical History, p71 Bagster, 1846; [10] Walford E. Evagrius Scholasticus, Ecclesiastical History, p74 Bagster, 1846; [11] Hamilton F.J. & Brooks E.W. trans. Zachariah of Mitylene, Syriac Chronicle , Book 4. Ch 1. p66, 1899; [12] Leo of Rome, Letter CLVIII Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series II, Vol XII.; [13] Walford E. Evagrius Scholasticus, Ecclesiastical History, p76 Bagster, 1846; [14] Hamilton F.J. & Brooks E.W. trans. Zachariah of Mitylene, Syriac Chronicle , Book 4. Ch 1. p77, 1899; [15] Hamilton F.J. & Brooks E.W. trans. Zachariah of Mitylene, Syriac Chronicle , Book 4. Ch 1. p79, 1899; [16] Hamilton F.J. & Brooks E.W. trans. Zachariah of Mitylene, Syriac Chronicle , Book 4. Ch 1. p80, 1899; [17] Hamilton F.J. & Brooks E.W. trans. Zachariah of Mitylene, Syriac Chronicle , Book 4. Ch 1. p104, 1899; [18] Hamilton F.J. & Brooks E.W. trans. Zachariah of Mitylene, Syriac Chronicle , Book 4. Ch 1. p105, 1899; [19] Hamilton F.J. & Brooks E.W. trans. Zachariah of Mitylene, Syriac Chronicle , Book 4. Ch 1. p106, 1899; [20] Hamilton F.J. & Brooks E.W. trans. Zachariah of Mitylene, Syriac Chronicle , Book 4. Ch 1. p108, 1899; [21] Hamilton F.J. & Brooks E.W. trans. Zachariah of Mitylene, Syriac Chronicle , Book 4. Ch 1. p110, 1899; [22] Hamilton F.J. & Brooks E.W. trans. Zachariah of Mitylene, Syriac Chronicle , Book 4. Ch 1. p111, 1899; [23] Walford E. Evagrius Scholasticus, Ecclesiastical History, p129 Bagster, 1846; [24] Walford E. Evagrius Scholasticus, Ecclesiastical History, p132 Bagster, 1846; [25] Ebied R.Y. and Wickham L.R. Syriac Letters of Timothy Aelurus Journal of Theological Studies XXI pt 2, p352.; [26] Ebied R.Y. and Wickham L.R. Syriac Letters of Timothy Aelurus Journal of Theological Studies XXI pt 2, p358.; [27] Ebied R.Y. and Wickham L.R. Syriac Letters of Timothy Aelurus Journal of Theological Studies XXI pt 2, p359.; [28] Ebied R.Y. and Wickham L.R. Syriac Letters of Timothy Aelurus Journal of Theological Studies XXI pt 2, p360.; [29] Ebied R.Y. and Wickham L.R. Syriac Letters of Timothy Aelurus Journal of Theological Studies XXI pt 2, p360.; [30] Ebied R.Y. and Wickham L.R. Syriac Letters of Timothy Aelurus Journal of Theological Studies XXI pt 2, p367.; [31] Ebied R.Y. and Wickham L.R. Syriac Letters of Timothy Aelurus Journal of Theological Studies XXI pt 2, p362.; [32] Walford E. Evagrius Scholasticus, Ecclesiastical History, p123 Bagster, 1846; [33] Ebied R.Y. and Wickham L.R. Syriac Letters of Timothy Aelurus Journal of Theological Studies XXI pt 2, p365.; [34] Ebied R.Y. and Wickham L.R. Syriac Letters of Timothy Aelurus Journal of Theological Studies XXI pt 2, p363.

Related Event: The Martyrdom of Thirty Thousand Christians in Alexandria

(29 August - 23 Misra)

On this day, is the commemoration of the martyrdom of the thirty thousand Christians in the city of Alexandria. When Emperor Marcianus banished Pope Dioscorus (http://www.copticchurch.net/synaxarium/01_07.html#1) to the island of Gangra, he appointed Proterius, a Patriarch, in his place. The bishops of Egypt refused to have a fellowship with him. They assembled a council against him, the Council of Chalcedon, and the Tome of Leo(1). Proterius became enraged and with the aid of the government forces he attacked and plundered the monasteries and churches. Then he confiscated all their endowments for himself and he became wealthy. Thieves attacked him during the night, killed him, and plundered what he had. His friends sent to the Emperor saying, "The followers of Dioscorus were the ones that killed the Patriarch that was appointed by the Emperor."

The Emperor became furious and sent a number of his soldiers, who killed about thirty thousand Christians in the city of Alexandria.

Shortly after, Marcianus died and was succeeded by Leo the Great. The bishops of Egypt seized this opportunity and ordained Fr. Timothy a Patriarch for Alexandria. Immediately the new Pope assembled a council and excommunicated the Council of Chalcedon. The heretics informed the Emperor saying, "Those who killed Proterius ordained for themselves a Patriarch without permission from the Emperor." The Emperor was enraged and he exiled Abba Timothy and his brother Anatolius to the island of Gagra. They remained there for seven years until Emperor Leo the Less released them. After the return of Pope Timothy, he cooperated with Abba Peter of Antioch, and assembled a council of five hundred bishops in the capital. This council judged to refuse the Council of Chalcedon, and also affirmed the teaching of the unity of the natures of the Lord Christ. They also presented their report to the Emperor who approved it. The Emperor issued an edict that dictated to abide by this council report only. As a result, the Sees of Alexandria, Constantinople, Antioch and Jerusalem were united for a long time.

May the prayers of these fathers be with us. Amen.

(1) This Tome was sent by Leo, bishop of Rome, to the Council of Chalcedon. It briefly stated that, "Christ the two, the God and the Man, came. The first overwhelmed us with miracles, and the second received the humiliations." Therefore the Orthodox anathematized the Council of Chalcedon, as Pope Dioscorus had anathematized the heresy of Eutyches. Eutyches stated that the Human nature of Christ mingled with His Divine nature, and that the essence of the Divinity had suffered the passion of the Cross.

Pope Cyril of Alexandria (Kyrillos I) said, "The union of the Divinity and the Humanity, like the union of fire and iron, the hammering of the iron affects only the iron, but doesn't affect the fire, although it shares a unity with the iron. The

union of the Divinity with the Humanity gave an infinitive (infinite; soteriological) value for the one Who suffered for the sake of the salvation of all the humanity."

Source: Coptic Orthodox Synaxarium (Book of Saints)
(http://www.copticchurch.net/synaxarium/12_23.html#1)

Related Saint: St. Acacius, Patriarch of Constantinople

On 30 Hatour (Coptic month/calendar = 9 December), St. Acacius, Patriarch of the city of Constantinople, departed (died 489 A.D.). He was knowledgeable and well informed about the Holy Books and was an expert in explaining their mysteries. So, he was ordained a priest over the church of Constantinople.

When the council of Chalcedon convened, he refused to attend its meeting and when they called on him to hear his opinion, he refused, claiming he was sick. He was exceedingly sorrowful for the tribulations that befell St. Dioscorus and he made that known to his companions and those he trusted: the Governors, Christians and ministers whom he knew to be dedicated and faithful Orthodox. He thanked the Lord that he did not participate in the works of this council.

When Anatolius, the Patriarch of Constantinople departed, this father was chosen by the believing ministers and the enlightened government officials to be successor. St. Acacius strove diligently to eliminate the division and enmity that dwelled in the church. When he found that the spiritual ailment was deep-rooted and difficult to overcome, he believed that the proper thing to do was to devote his efforts to the salvation of his own soul.

He sent a letter to the holy father, Abba Peter, the (Non-Chalcedonian) Pope of Alexandria, confessing the true faith which he had learned and received from the holy fathers, Abba Cyril and Abba Dioscorus. He followed that letter with many others, asking the Pope of Alexandria to accept him in the fellowship. The Pope of Alexandria answered all his letters, then he wrote him a Catholic letter and sent it with three bishops. They went disguised until they entered Constantinople and there they met Acacius, who treated them with great honor and received the letter from them. He read the letter to his friends, the Orthodox nobles of the city and they all agreed on it and with him, and confessed the True Faith. Then he wrote a letter before them, accepting the faith of Abba Dioscorus, Abba Timothy and Abba Peter and confessing the soundness of their faith.

Afterwards, he accompanied the three bishops to some monasteries and he took part with them in the celebration of the liturgy and the partaking of the Holy Communion. The bishops then exchanged the blessings with him, took the letter and returned it to Abba Peter. The Bishops informed Abba Peter about their fellowship with Abba Acacius and that they had taken part in the liturgy with him. Abba Peter accepted the letter and ordered that Abba Acacius be mentioned in the liturgies and the prayers of the Coptic church.

When the news reached the bishops of Rome, they exiled St. Acacius from Constantinople. He remained in exile until he departed in peace, all the while remaining firm in his Orthodox Faith.

Source: Coptic Orthodox Synaxarium (Book of Saints)
(http://www.copticchurch.net/synaxarium/3_30.html#1)

Acacius advised the Byzantine Emperor Zeno to issue the Henotikon edict in 482, in which Nestorius and Eutyches were condemned, the twelve chapters of Cyril of Alexandria accepted, and the Chalcedon Definition ignored.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarch_Acacius_of_Constantinople) Zeno died in 491 A.D. His successor Anastasius I was sympathetic to the Non-Chalcedonians and their Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. Then in 518 A.D. Anastasius I was succeeded by Justin I, who wasn't very sympathetic to Non-Chalcedonians. Justin I was succeeded by his nephew, Justinian I. Emperor Justinian I was never really committed to conciliating the non-Chalcedonians, unlike his wife the godly Empress Theodora (see below).

Pope Timothy III of Alexandria, Empress Theodora, and Patriarch Anthimus I of Constantinople

A Missed Opportunity for Reconciliation

In the reign of Justinian the patronage accorded to Non-Chalcedonians by his wife the godly Empress Theodora raised hopes for reconciliation. Severus of Antioch went to Constantinople where he fraternized with the ascetical Patriarch Anthimus I of Constantinople (535-536 A.D.; commonly labelled by Chalcedonians as a Monophysite), who had already exchanged friendly letters with him and with the Non-Chalcedonian Coptic Pope Theodosius of Alexandria (535 to 566 A.D.).

Theodosius was preceded by Timothy III (517 to 535 A.D.), the Coptic Pope associated with the great repentance and conversion of Empress Theodora while she was in Alexandria. (<http://www.roman-emperors.org/dora.htm>)

The Rising Roman Papal Influence

Patriarch Anthimus was deposed by Pope Agapetus I of Rome. His successor, Patriarch Mennas of Constantinople, was also excommunicated in 547 and again in 551 for taking positions counter to those held by the Pope of Rome. The patriarchy of Menas represents the greatest extent of Roman papal influence in Constantinople.

Seventh Century

Severus ibn al-Mukaffa', Bishop of al-Ashmunein in Upper Egypt, relates the Islamic conquest of Egypt (639-641 A.D.) in his detailed biography of the Coptic Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria Benjamin I (622-661 A.D.)
(http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/severus_hermopolis_hist_alex_patr_02_part2.htm#BENJAMIN_I). According to Severus of Al'Ashmunein and other sources, at that time

when Arab Muslims conquered Egypt, the local Coptic (Non-Chalcedonians) Christians were severely persecuted at the hands of the rival Melchite, Chalcedonian Patriarch of Alexandria, Cyrus (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04597c.htm>), who was also Governor of Egypt. Cyrus is also famous for being one of the authors of monothelism, a seventh century heresy.

The Orthodox Christology of St. Severus of Antioch

By Subdeacon Peter Theodore Farrington

Saint Severus, the exiled Patriarch of Antioch who took refuge in Egypt, is considered one of the key post-Chalcedon Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Church. Subdeacon Peter Theodore Farrington (<http://britishorthodox.org/>), well-known for his writings and studies in the issue of Orthodox Unity, has contributed this article on the Orthodox Christology of St. Severus of Antioch. For more information on Orthodox Unity, please visit his site: <http://orthodoxunity.org/>.

St Severus of Antioch is one of the great Fathers of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. In the decades after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD it was he, more than any other theologian, who expressed most forcefully and clearly the Orthodox Christology of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. He grew up in the confused environment of the Church produced by Chalcedon and intermittently exacerbated by imperial persecution of those who rejected the decisions of that council. Yet despite his opposition to Chalcedon he always remained as tolerant and irenic as possible, being willing even to accept the phrase 'in two natures' as long as the union of Divinity and humanity in Christ was confessed. Yet the Eastern Orthodox have accused St Severus of being both a Nestorian and a Eutychian and the latter Eastern Orthodox councils have anathematised him together with St Dioscorus.

The actual teachings of St Severus have become unjustly obscure, both among the Eastern Orthodox and even the Oriental Orthodox, who should value him more. Yet his manifest reliance and dependence on the teaching of St Cyril of Alexandria, and the clarity of his thought, should make him a useful exemplar of the Christology of the Oriental Orthodox. The Christological teachings of the Eastern Orthodox are widely known and published, but in this time of ecumenical dialogue it seems that most of the Oriental Orthodox Christology that Eastern Orthodox learn is derived from second-hand and erroneous accounts that twist and distort what Oriental Orthodox have always believed. The teachings of St Severus, answering many of the same objections as are heard today, are an antidote to such misinformation and promote the dialogue between the Churches.

St Severus was born in Sozopolis in Pisidia in 465 AD. He came from a wealthy family and was sent to Alexandria to study. He continued his studies in Beirut where he came under the influence of a group of Christian students. He began to study the writings of Sts Gregory of Nazianzen and Basil and at some time in this period he was baptised.

After his baptism his outlook became increasingly ascetical and he spent much of his time in Church. Finally, after he had qualified as a lawyer, he decided to become a monk in Jerusalem . Travelling into the desert of Eleutheropolis he sought a more ascetic way of life, but illness and the persuasion of his friends led him to enter the monastery of Romanus. He shared out his property among his brothers, gave his share to the poor and devoted himself to the monastic life near the town of Maiuma .

Severus was already committed to opposing the council of Chalcedon . Maiuma had been the episcopal seat of Peter the Iberian, one of the bishops who had consecrated Timothy Aelurus, and Severus was part of this tradition of opposition. He rejected the Henoticon of Zeno, which was an imperial attempt at conciliation between the pro and anti-Chalcedonian parties, because it dealt with the stumbling block of Chalcedon by ignoring it.

His criticism of Chalcedon was never based on the acceptance in any form of the heresy of Eutyches. Indeed in his work, Philalethes, or the Lover of Truth, he explained that,

Had it confessed hypostatic union, the Council would have confessed also ‘one incarnate nature of God the Word’, and would not have defined that the one Christ is ‘in two natures’ thereby dissolving the union. [1]

Severus was sent to Constantinople and wrote his first major work there in 508 AD. While in the capital he became known by Emperor Anastasius who had greater sympathy with the anti-Chalcedonians than with the pro-Chalcedonians led by Patriarch Macedonius. In 511 Patriarch Macedonius was replaced by Timothy, and then in 512, after a synod assembled by the Emperor in Sidon, the Patriarch Flavian was ejected because he would not anathematise Chalcedon and Severus was consecrated Patriarch in his place.

In his enthronement address Severus affirmed Nicaea , Constantinople and Ephesus . He also affirmed the Henoticon of Zeno as an Orthodox document, but he also explicitly anathematised Chalcedon , the Tome of Leo, Nestorius and Eutyches, Diodore and Theodore of Tarsus. In 514 his Synod anathematised Chalcedon and the Tome while explaining the Henoticon as annulling Chalcedon .

All of this activity gives the lie to the prevalent opinion that in 451 AD the Oriental Orthodox went quietly into exile and schism. Here we see that the Church was alive with those who opposed Chalcedon , and it was those who supported it who found themselves on the defensive.

Severus continued his ascetic manner of life even as Patriarch. He sent away the many cooks from the episcopal residence and demolished the baths that previous bishops had built. In his homilies in the cathedral he constantly warned his people against attending the races and theatres.

But in 518 AD Emperor Anastasius died and the new emperor Justin immediately ordered the arrest and punishment of Patriarch Severus. He managed to escape to Egypt with some of his bishops while other anti-Chalcedonians were sent into a difficult exile. While in Egypt , moving from monastery to monastery, avoiding his

enemies, he wrote some of his most important works and corresponded widely and continuously.

In 530 AD the emperor Justinian eased the persecution which the anti-Chalcedonians had been suffering. In 532 AD he even attempted to reconcile the two parties in the Church by calling a conference in Constantinople. Finally, in 534 AD Anthimus, an anti-Chalcedonian, became Patriarch of Constantinople and Theodosius, another anti-Chalcedonian and friend of Severus, became Patriarch of Alexandria. Once more it seemed that the anti-Chalcedonian movement might gain the ascendancy in the Church. This so alarmed the pro-Chalcedonians that they exercised all of their diplomatic skills to bring the opinion of Agapetus of Rome to bear on the emperor. The Emperor Justinian was engaged in efforts to recapture Rome and the West and sacrificed Anthimus for the pro-Chalcedonian Menas. In a synod held in Constantinople in 536 AD Severus and his colleagues were condemned. He was accused of being both a Nestorian and a Eutychian, his books were ordered to be burned and he was sentenced to be banished. He managed to escape from Constantinople with the help of the Empress Theodora and he returned to Egypt. There after a light illness he fell asleep. He was 73 years old.

In the period 518-520 AD Severus engaged in a correspondence with a certain Sergius. This Sergius had been attempting to expound the Orthodox teaching about the Incarnation of Christ, but had been criticised by his local synod because he had spoken without discretion. In three letters that were sent by Severus to Sergius we can find much of the Christology of Severus presented in just such an explanatory manner as may be useful today. These letters have been recently translated and published by Dr Iain Torrance, and are well worth study. Since they are so easily obtained they will now be used as the basis for this examination of the teaching of St Severus. This essay is only an introduction to the Christology of St Severus and deliberately restricts itself to this one work, published as *Christology After Chalcedon* (Iain Torrance, The Canterbury Press, Norwich, 1988). It is not too difficult to acquire and in a small space describes much of the teaching of St Severus, both against the Nestorians and the Eutychians.

Sergius' problem was that in opposing the Nestorian position that in Christ the Divinity and humanity were naturally separate and united only in a personal manner, he strayed too far from the truth and failed to expound the Orthodox teaching. This Sergius taught that the opposite of a natural disunity was a simple unity in which there could only be one nature, which Sergius took in the sense of *ousia* or essence, and therefore created a new Christ nature which was neither essentially human or Divine. In most modern Christian's eyes this is the teaching of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. We are assumed to confess in one nature a simple and confused unity which destroys the distinction between humanity and Divinity. Severus' opposition of Sergius will clearly illustrate the fundamental difference between the 'one nature' of Sergius and the 'one incarnate nature' of Cyril and Severus.

Even a cursory glance at Severus' letters makes it abundantly clear that Severus was dependent on the thoughts and teachings of Cyril of Alexandria. In the three relatively short letters to Sergius we find more than 60 quotations from St Cyril. Many more than any other Father. Whenever Severus wants to make a point he will quote from Cyril. What does this tell us? Firstly, that Severus considered himself to be a disciple

of Cyril of Alexandria. Thus we should not read into any of his teachings an anti-Cyrrilline meaning which is not justified by his complete commitment to a Cyrrilline Christology. Secondly, that the writings of Severus should be read in continuity with those of Cyril and not as though they taught something different. Any obscure points in the teaching of Severus should be explained by the teaching of Cyril and not assumed to be at odds with it.

There are a number of Christological points which need to be examined in the writings of Severus. It is important to consider the accusation that he taught both Nestorianism and Eutychianism. How could this be so? If Nestorianism teaches the separation of the natures in Christ and Eutychianism the confusion, then how could Severus possibly be guilty of teaching both heresies? Such an understanding, though unjustified, may have arisen among his opponents because of the phrase 'of two natures' which is key to the Oriental Orthodox Christology. Among the Oriental Orthodox it describes both the continuing distinction between the Divinity and humanity of Christ, whilst confessing the real and perfect union between them. In the hands of those who sought Severus punishment and exile it was twisted to stand for a pre-existent humanity and Divinity coming together in a confused unity, therefore a perceived Nestorianism and Eutychianism. Thus we need to examine carefully the teaching of Severus about the humanity and Divinity of Christ, as well as the union between them.

Let us first consider the accusation of Eutychianism. What can be found in these letters of Severus to refute such a charge? Almost immediately as the first letter begins, Severus writes to Sergius:

Know, therefore, that professing the natural particularity of the natures from which there is the One Christ is not just recently determined by us. [2]

Here Severus indicates that Sergius' error lay in supposing that union must mean the extinction of each natures particular existence. More than that, Severus places himself within the Orthodox tradition which had confessed the continuity of the natures in Christ. He continues this passage immediately with a substantial and important quotation from Cyril:

For even if the Only-Begotten Son of God, incarnate and inhominate, is said by us to be one, he is not confused because of this, as he seems to those people, nor has the nature of the Word passed over into the nature of the flesh, nor indeed has the nature of the flesh passed into that which is his, but while each one of them continues together in the particularity that belongs to the nature, and is thought of in accordance with the account which has just been given by us, the inexpressible and ineffable union shows us one nature of the son, but as I have said, incarnate. [3]

The quotation from Cyril explains the meaning of the sentence from Severus. This passage shows us that Severus is dependent on Cyril for his Christology and that when he speaks of the particularity of the natures in Christ he is summarising the quotation which he then provides from Cyril. This in turn teaches that the humanity of Christ continues to be humanity and the Divinity of Christ continues to be Divinity. Therefore the concept of 'one incarnate nature' cannot and should not, in Cyril or in

Severus, be taken to stand for the extinction or confusion of either the humanity or Divinity.

Severus makes this absolutely explicit by stating:

When the Doctor has confessed one nature of God the Word, who is incarnate, he says that each of them continues together and is understood in the particularity that belongs to the nature. [4]

This makes clear that Severus teaches that the one nature of God the Word incarnate should be understood as allowing the two natures to continue to exist in the union of natures and to continue to preserve their distinctions and characteristics. There is no sense in which he teaches a Eutychian confusion of the humanity and Divinity.

Another quotation from Cyril is provided to illustrate what Severus means by the continuing distinctions of the humanity and Divinity of Christ:

Therefore let us recognise that even if the body which was born at Bethlehem is not the same, that is, as far as natural quality is concerned, as the Word which is from God and the Father, yet nevertheless it became his, and did not belong to another man beside the Son. But the Word incarnate is to be considered one Son and Christ and Lord. [5]

This is a key quotation because it expresses both Severus' confession of the continuing distinction and difference between the humanity born at Bethlehem and the eternal and divine Word, as well as his commitment to a union which makes one Christ without a confusion of these natures. The body born at Bethlehem was never the body of a man beside the Word or with the Word. From the moment of conception this humanity was the humanity of the Word, distinct from the divinity but never separated or divided, therefore, without suffering any change the humanity and the divinity are made one in the incarnation.

Severus, in his own words, writes to Sergius that:

..particularity implies the otherness of natures of those things which have come together in union, and the difference lies in natural quality. For the one is uncreated, but the other created....Nevertheless, while this difference and the particularity of the natures, from which comes the one Christ, still remains without confusion, it is said that the Word of Life was both seen and touched. [6]

How could it be expressed any clearer that Severus did not even conceive of the humanity and Divinity of Christ being confused in any way. The 'difference...remains without confusion', he confesses. Exactly the same teaching as steadfastly maintained by Cyril before him, and not at all to be compared with the teaching of Eutyches, however that is described. The union is confessed with the teaching that the Divine Word was seen and touched by the Apostles, but it is clear that this union does not confuse the continuing distinction between the humanity and Divinity.

Indeed Severus is well aware of the heresy of those who confused the natures in Christ. He writes to Sergius of their madness and he refutes any sense in which his

teaching of the union of the humanity and Divinity in Christ could be compared with the confusion of natures of the 'synousiasts'. Nor does he feel the need, as they have, to 'cure evil with evil', that is the evil of Nestorianism with the evil of Eutychianism.

To make this absolutely clear Severus quotes again from Cyril, who writes in his reply to a critic:

There is no share in any blame that one should recognise, for example, that the flesh is one thing in its own nature, apart from the Word which sprang from God and the Father, and that the Only-Begotten is another again, with respect to his own nature. Nevertheless to recognise these things is not to divide the natures after the union. [7]

These words should be taken as though written by Severus himself. He is quoting them with complete agreement. There is no blame, he says in Cyril's words, there is no blame associated with recognising that in Christ the humanity and Divinity are different things. The flesh is one thing, according to nature, the Divinity another, according to nature. Here is a clear expression of the Christology of the Oriental Orthodox. The recognition of the difference between the humanity and Divinity of Christ in no wise detracts from the confession of the true and perfect union of these natures. Both of these Christological facts are true. The humanity and Divinity retain their integrity, their distinctions, but the union of them drives out division. There is no room for Nestorianism or Eutychianism.

Severus proceeds to explain rather more about how he conceives of the union taking place:

Let us make an enquiry of the divinity and humanity. They are not only different in everything but they are removed from each other and distinct as well. But when the union is professed from the two of them, the difference, again, in the quality of the natures from which there is the One Christ is not suppressed, but in conjunction by hypostasis division is driven out. [8]

Here is the key to understanding Oriental Orthodox Christology: the difference remains, division is driven out and the union takes place hypostatically. No-one should allow any interpretation of the Christology of the Oriental Orthodox which mutilates this clear and straight-forward definition. If someone suggests that a confusion of natures is taught, then they are mistaken. It is clear that Severus, and all of us with him, confess the continuing difference of these natures. If someone suggests that we teach that these natures have their own independent existence then they are mistaken. It is clear that Severus, and all of us with him, confess a real and perfect union in which there is no division. And if others should suggest that we teach a mixture or confusion of essences or ousia then they are again mistaken, because Severus, and all of us with him confess a hypostatic union.

But this teaching should not be understood as something new, or something that originated after Chalcedon had confused the unity of the Church. Severus indicates his continuity and agreement with Cyril by quoting immediately from him:

I too allow that there is a great difference or distinction between humanity and Divinity. For these things which were named are seen to be other, according to the

mode of how they are, and they are not like each other in anything. But when the mystery which is in Christ has come for us into the middle, the principle of union does not ignore the difference but it removes the division; not because it confuses with each other or mixes the natures, but because the Word of God has shared in flesh and blood, thus again the Son too is understood and named as One. [9]

Oriental Orthodox should not be afraid to admit the real and absolute difference between humanity and Divinity. Not only is this the teaching of Severus, but it is the teaching of Cyril of Alexandria. The mystery of the incarnation is that in the union of humanity and Divinity the difference between these natures remains while division is driven out. Here in this quotation it is also clear that Severus and Cyril allow no confusion of these natures, or a mixture. The union is not like that. It is a real and perfect union that preserves the real difference between the humanity and Divinity.

So where does Severus dispute with Nestorius and those who divide Christ? It is certainly not in the recognition of the continuing difference between the humanity and Divinity. Rather, as Severus explains:

We confess the difference and the particularity and the otherness of the natures from which Christ is, for we do not quarrel about names, but we confess the particularity which lies in natural quality, and not that which will be set in parts, each one existing independently. [10]

So Severus makes clear that the argument with the supporters of Nestorius lies not in naming the natures of humanity and Divinity, nor in confessing their continuing difference and otherness. The argument lies in whether or not the union which is taught allows each nature to have its own separate and independent existence, or whether, as Cyril of Alexandria teaches, we confess a union in which these real and different natures are united such that Christ is One, even as the Nicene Creed professes.

It should be clear by now that the Oriental Orthodox, through the teaching of Severus and Cyril before him, and indeed through many other Fathers, teach as a fundamental Christological fact that the natures are different and retain this difference even in their perfect union.

Once again Severus is echoing Cyril's own words, since he had written years before:

It is not right that we should make a division into an independent diversity, so that they should become separate and apart from each other; rather we ought to bring them together to undivided union. For the Word became flesh, according to the words of John. [11]

This independent diversity is what we should reject. Not the fact of the diversity of the natures, the humanity and Divinity, which are completely other and different from each other. The heart of our Christology, indeed of our Orthodox Christology, is that these two distinct and different natures have been united in a union that has no division even whilst there is no confusion.

We do not refuse to confess the difference, God forbid! But we flee from this, that we should divide the one Christ in a duality of natures after the union. For if he is divided, the properties of each one of the natures are divided at the same time with him, and what is its own will cling to each one of them. But when a hypostatic union is professed, of which the fulfilment is that from two there is one Christ without confusion, one person, one hypostasis, one nature belonging to the Word incarnate. [12]

What Severus, and Cyril, strive so hard to prevent is a division of Christ such that there is a human and a God. This is the essence of Nestorianism. In this passage Severus shows the strength of his feeling that we must absolutely confess that the humanity and Divinity of Christ are different things. There is no room for a Eutychian confusion of humanity and Divinity. This recognition of the difference of the nature is not what we object to. What we object to is creating a duality of natures, which does not mean the destruction of the difference between them, rather it means setting up two independent centres of existence, the humanity and the Divinity, and these independent centres of existence destroy the union. It is a hypostatic union that ensures the real union of these different natures. This passage makes clear that firstly, a hypostatic union does not introduce confusion between the humanity and the Divinity; secondly, that 'one nature belonging to the Word incarnate' does not mean either a confused divine/human nature nor does it mean that the humanity is swallowed up by the Divinity; thirdly, the passage makes plain that the union is one in which the different natures have their differences preserved but within one concrete existence, that of the Incarnate Christ, and not preserved independently as the Son of God and a man united in some external manner. The 'duality of natures' which is rejected is not the reality of the humanity and Divinity, but a division between them which destroys the union and which makes One Christ of the two without confusion.

It was Cyril, as Severus quotes, who had said that:

The properties of the Word became properties of manhood, and those of manhood, properties of the Word. For thus one Christ and Son and Lord is understood. [13]

This is Cyril speaking, Cyril the great Orthodox christologian. He can hardly be accused of confusing the natures of humanity and Divinity, nor of failing to confess the continuing distinction between them. Yet he describes here how in the union of natures in Christ there is a communication of properties, without confusion, so that we may truly say that God was seen and heard and touched, that God suffered and died. Thus when Christ walked on the water this was neither a human action, since it is not human to walk on water, nor was it divine, since it is not of God to walk, but it is an evidence of the union of humanity and Divinity, without confusion such that we see always One Christ and not God and a man with him.

What could Severus object to in the teaching of those who supported Chalcedon? It was not that they confessed the reality and difference between the humanity and divinity. It was not that they refused to confuse the natures in Christ. But Severus did impress upon both Sergius in his letters to him, and to his own followers that:

When we anathematise those who say Emmanuel has two natures after the union, and speak of the activities and properties of these, we are not saying this as subjecting to

anathema the fact of, or naming, natures, or activities, or properties, but speaking of two natures after the union, and because consequently those natures...are divided completely and in everything. [14]

We should object, then, with Severus, to those who divide Christ and not those who name the natures of which Christ is. There is no error in stating that Christ is of humanity and divinity, and that in union these differences persist. But there is error in setting up a humanity and a divinity with their own separate activities as though there were Christ the man and the Word of God, each perfect in a simple humanity or divinity and only united in some external manner. Following Severus' argument we see that it is not the saying that Emmanuel has two natures which is condemned, but saying that he has these two natures and then describing their activities separately, as though there was God the Word acting as God in heaven and Christ the man acting as man on earth. Severus allows the naming of the natures. We can and must confess that Christ is human and divine, but we must not allow this Orthodox confession to be perverted such that we describe a man and the Word of God separately. It is God the Word who is this man Jesus.

We also recognise a variety of utterances: for some are proper to God, while others are human, but one Word incarnate spoke both the former and the latter. [15]

This is a further explication of the Orthodox Christology of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. This simple sentence describes the continuing difference of the natures of which Christ is, whilst confessing that the union is such that the human and Divine utterances alike belong to God the Word. Not that the human utterances become mixed or confused, but they belong to God and are of God the Word even though they are uttered by His humanity. The divinity belongs to God the Word from eternity because it is his own nature. The humanity has become truly and completely his own in the incarnation and because of His love for us, and therefore we may truly say that God the Word was seen, and heard and touched. Yet without the confusion or mixture of the divinity which was his from eternity and the humanity which he united to himself in time.

This is what Severus means when he says:

For how will anyone divide walking upon the water? For to run upon the sea is foreign to the human nature, but it is not proper to the divine nature to use bodily feet. Therefore that action is of the incarnate Word, to whom belongs at the same time divine character and human, indivisibly. [16]

This is why Severus criticises those who try to divide up the activities of Christ as though they belonged to the different natures separately and not to the incarnate Word, who is of humanity and divinity unconfusedly. There is no error in understanding that in his humanity Christ acts humanly, that speaking and eating and all such things are of humanity, and are not divine. But in the union of humanity and divinity in Christ, all of these things belong to God the Word who acts divinely in union with his humanity. The error that Severus opposes is the setting up of two separate centres of activity such that there is a man with God rather than God incarnate.

He who confesses one nature incarnate of God the Word, and teaches an unconfused union, does not deny awareness of the difference and particularity which lies in natural quality of the the natures from which there is the one Christ. [17]

Surely Severus has shown clearly enough that there is not one iota of sympathy in his teaching for those who either deny the reality of the humanity and divinity in Christ. Nor is there any sense in which he allows these perfect, real and complete natures to suffer diminution, confusion or mixture. Surely it is clear that it is the firm and decided teaching of the Oriental Orthodox Churches that the natures of humanity and divinity have a real, perfect, unconfused and continuing existence in union in the one hypostasis of the Word of God. That these natures in union mean that God the Word is truly incarnate, that he is really fully God and fully man.

It has often been presented as though opposition to the council of Chalcedon , and to the Tome of Leo, must of necessity be caused by some heretical impulse that confuses the natures of which Christ is, or dissolves the humanity in the Divinity, or teaches a heavenly humanity that is fundamentally not consubstantial with us. But the Fathers of the Oriental Orthodox Churches have never wandered from the faith of St Cyril or St Athanasius, and have always understood that if Christ were not fully God He would have no power to save us, and if He were not fully man then it would not be man who was saved. When Severus opposed Chalcedon and Leo it was because he believed them to have failed to adequately safeguard the Orthodox Christology of St Cyril and St Athanasius, not at all because he wished to introduce some christological novelty.

For instance, Severus criticises the Tome of Leo, not because Leo of Rome had sought to counter the errors of Eutyches, but because he believed that it contained itself some christological defects. After discussing the union of Divinity and humanity in Christ he speaks thus:

It is possible to see that those things which are contained in the Tome of Leo go clearly against these things, and I quote them:

'For each one of the forms does what belongs to it. The Word doing what belongs to the Word, and the body fulfilling those things which belong to the body, and the one of them is radiant with wonders, but the other falls under insults.' [18]

Now it cannot be said that Severus failed to discern and distinguish the real difference between the humanity and Divinity of Christ. Neither did he ever fail to confess the reality and perfection of these natures in Christ. Therefore if he condemns this passage in the Tome it is not because he himself teaches heresy. In the eyes of Severus, his colleagues, his followers, and those before and after him this passage seemed to teach that the reality of the humanity and Divinity of Christ had their own centres of existence. The Word is set in parallel with the flesh, as though the Word was one centre and the flesh another. This passage seemed to be presenting a doctrine too much like the Nestorian Word and a man with Him.

Whether or not Leo meant to teach this is another question. But it is a fact that the Oriental Orthodox of the 5th and 6th centuries certainly believed that Leo was teaching exactly such a thing. Indeed the position was made more complicated by the

agreement of Nestorius with the teaching of the Tome, and later by the celebration of a feast of Nestorius by some of those bishops who had welcomed the Tome at Chalcedon . It looked to many people as though all of this was of a piece and was nothing more than the propagation of Nestorianism by other means, and under the pretence of a respect for St Cyril.

Severus described his opinion of this passage from Leo in the following words,

For if each form or nature does those things which are its own, those things are of a bastard partnership and of a relationship of friendship, such as a master's taking on himself the things which are performed by a servant, or vice-versa, a servant's being glorified with the outstanding possessions of a master, while those things which are not properties of human nature are ascribed to him out of a loving friendship. For he is a man clad with God, who in this way makes use of a power which is not his own. [19]

The question in Severus' mind is not so much how may we divide the activities into human ones, Divine ones, and others which are of a mixed quality, since although he recognises the natural quality of humanity and Divinity he also confesses that all of the activities of Christ are always in reality both human and Divine. Not a mixture at all but the activities, whether human or Divine, belong always to the incarnate Word. He asks 'who' is doing these things?, 'who' do they belong to? and finds the categorisation of activities by Leo, and then even more the owning of each activity being described in the two centres of humanity and Divinity, to tend dangerously towards the division of Christ. The scriptures, and the Orthodox Fathers, taught that Christ, the Divine Word, participated in humanity. His humanity belongs to Him through His incarnation. The activities of His humanity, while being perfectly human, nevertheless belong to the Divine Word who has become incarnate. This sense of ownership, of participation, is missing in Leo's rather clinical and abstract division of activities, honour and insult. If the humanity in isolation suffers the insult then it becomes harder to understand how, in Leo's thought, we may say that God suffers.

This is not a criticism of Leo's Tome, which has had many defenders over the last 1400 years, but in relation to the Orthodox Christology of Severus it is merely an attempt to show that in this point, as in many others that Severus made against Leo's Tome and Chalcedon, the desire was not to promote any Eutychian heresy, but rather to counter a perceived Nestorianism.

Severus not only taught against the Synousiast or Eutychian heresy and the perceived Nestorianism of Leo and the Chalcedonians. He taught positively about the union of natures in Christ, and this element of his Christology should also be briefly examined. Severus' teaching about the union of natures in Christ remains as firmly based on the Christology of St Cyril as the rest of his teaching. Thus he quotes Cyril,

'When the mystery of Christ is brought into the middle for us, the principle of the union on the one hand recognises difference, but on the other hand rejects division, while neither confusing nor mixing the natures with each other. But with the Word of God becoming a partaker of flesh and blood, one Son is understood and named in this way as well .' [20]

Once more we must understand that the union is of a type that recognises the difference between those elements of which it is constituted. But it is also a union that prohibits division. This rejection of division is not caused by a confusion or mixture of the natures, since this would be a failure to recognise the continuing difference. There is a continuing and dynamic interplay between these two features of the union. Continuing difference on the one hand and a rejection of division on the other. For many of the opponents of Severus and the Oriental Orthodox this first aspect was as far as they read in St Cyril's own words. And in failing to read carefully they understood only that St Cyril taught a continuing difference, and thus claimed him as a champion of their own position. But they also exposed their teaching, as far as Severus was concerned, to the criticism that they fundamentally failed to understand the union and merely expressed the continuing perfection of humanity and Divinity without really teaching the union at all as St Cyril understood it. From Severus' point of view there was little difference between the avowed Nestorianism of Theodore, Diodore, Theodoret and Nestorius, and the neo-Nestorianism of those who rejected the Cyrilline theology of 'one incarnate nature of the Word'.

St Cyril continues, and Severus is also most insistent, that it is through the Word of God becoming a partaker of flesh and blood that we see the one Son. The humanity of Christ is thus shown to be not merely something that he has acquired or which he owns, but something in and through which the Divine Son of God participates in human existence. He has become man without change or diminution of his Divinity, not merely associated himself with humanity in some way.

The means by which this real, complete and perfect union of humanity and Divinity has taken place, without change, confusion, separation or division, is, in the words of St Cyril, quoted once more by Severus:

'...completely inexpressible and not known by any man who lives, but to God who alone knows everything'. [21]

Nevertheless, Severus agrees with St Cyril that:

'The fact of union is accomplished in many ways. For example, when men are divided in affection and opinion and are thinking at variance with each other, they are said to be united through reconciliation of affection as they remove their differences out of the centre. Again for example, we say that those things which cleave to each other or come together in different ways, whether by juxtaposition or mingling or mixture, are united. Therefore when we say that the Word of God was united to our nature, the mode of union is recognised to be above human comprehension for it is not like one of those ways which were mentioned.' [22]

So we learn that Severus, and the Oriental Orthodox, do not teach that the union of humanity and Divinity in Christ are united in any of these ways. We find an explicit rejection of juxtaposition, mingling or mixture, but a confession of an incomprehensible to man union which removes division while preserving distinctions, such that the one Christ is both truly and perfectly man, truly and perfectly God, without confusion or change damaging either.

Severus writes thus against John the Grammarian,

Christ is known to be one from both, which came together into a natural union. He is one prosopon, one hypostasis and one nature (physis) of the Word incarnate, in the same way as man is one, who is made up of body and soul. He is one not by a harmonious association of two persons. That which operates is one, namely God the Word incarnate: He performs the things that befit God as well as the things that befit man, the flesh not being alien to the God-befitting operation. The Word did not work the Divine miracles without being incarnate, neither was the Word external to bodily and human operations and sufferings. For he was incarnate. He who in His nature was without body, became in the dispensation with body, having united to Himself in His Person flesh possessing a rational soul. Therefore in His flesh, which is subject to suffering, He is said to have suffered, ascribing to Himself the passions of the flesh which He united to Himself naturally. [23]

Severus is clear that the union is of two different elements, the pre-existent divinity and the humanity, and Christ is one reality from two real elements, neither of which is lost or confused in the union. But his stress is always that we see Christ as one incarnate Person, so that even though he suffers in His flesh, nevertheless it is God who suffers because it is the flesh of God. For Severus the reality of the incarnation is completely lost if the humanity and Divinity are not real, and are not really united. And if this quotation sound as though Severus might be allowing that the divinity suffers in some sense, then we should heed his message to Julian, who taught that the humanity of Christ was always impassible,

God the Word became incarnate and was made man by uniting to Himself in His Person flesh possessing a rational soul. Therefore, when He endured in reality undeserved suffering of body and soul in the body which was prone to suffer, He continued to be without suffering in the Godhead. So it was not like us who, without wanting to, suffer as men, that He endured passions, but of His own free choice. And again, it is not that He did not suffer, but that He accepted in a real way, without sin, the suffering of humanity. [24]

Severus is therefore absolutely committed to the reality of the humanity in Christ, united without division or confusion to the divinity, such that there is One Christ. Indeed Severus criticises the Eutychian Sergius, with whom he corresponded, for suggesting that allowing the reality of the humanity and Divinity is necessarily the same as confessing a Nestorian juxtaposition.

'How can you charge this inexpressible and truly divine union which the Word of God has miraculously accomplished, with being that union taught by Nestorius which is a conjunction by relationship, and believe that we are required to speak of two natures unless we confess, as you say, that at one time Christ had one ousia? But this is nothing other than a real confusion of ousia....For you think it is impossible to say that he is one unless he changes into one ousia, even when he is made up from two things of a different kind.' [25]

Yet we find that Oriental Orthodox are continually being accused of reducing Christ to one ousia, either the Divine or some mixture of humanity and Divinity. But here Severus refuses to accept that his teaching requires or contains any such reduction. This is due, primarily to the failure of the Eastern Orthodox, and Western Christianity generally, to appreciate that oneness, or union, comes about in different ways, and

that to speak of 'one incarnate nature' is not at all to confess one simple nature which must be either human, Divine, or a confusion. St Cyril is quoted by Severus, from his second letter to Succensus,

'For it is not the case that "one" is truly predicated only of things which are simple in nature, but it may also be predicated of those which have come together in composition, an example being the situation of man, composed from soul and body...Therefore those who say that, if the Word incarnate is one nature it follows in everything and in every respect that there will be confusion and mixture, as if the nature of man were decreased and stolen away, speak needlessly, for it is not decreased, nor as they say, stolen away. For it suffices for the complete demonstration of the fact that the Word became man to say that he was incarnate.' [26]

It is something of a mystery that were many Eastern Orthodox to be presented with the preceding paragraph, describing the union of natures in Christ as a 'composition', without attribution to St Cyril, it would be rejected as heretical and Eutychian. Indeed it has been the case that ordinary Eastern Orthodox, when presented by such texts, have declared St Cyril to be merely one father among many whose teachings have no particular weight. Yet this passage completely describes Oriental Orthodox Christology. The union is not a mixture, nor is it simply an external personal union, but it is a composition such that the concrete reality of the incarnate Christ is human and Divine, even while the constituents of that reality remain perfect and different.

But it is not the Divine nature of the Word which is composite. The Divinity remains divinity and the Godhead has not become a quaternity with four hypostases. It is the hypostasis of the Word which is composite, composed in the incarnation of perfect and unconfused human and Divine reality and being. Thus we speak, with St Cyril and St Severus, not of 'one nature or hypostasis of the Word', as though it was made up of simple humanity, Divinity or a mixture, but of 'one incarnate hypostasis of the Word' since it is because of and in the incarnation that the one Christ is both human and Divine.

Thus St Cyril is quoted again and again from a variety of sources,

'It is not the case that in everything and from every respect only what is simple and of one type is called "one", but also those compounded from two or from many things of different types.'

'In his own will he became man, and without damage in any way he preserved the glory of his nature unchanged in himself, but took up manhood according to the economy. And he is understood one Son from two, a divine and human nature, which have run and come together to one, inexpressibly and in explicably composed to union, and in such a way that cannot be understood.' [27]

It is clear that when St Cyril speaks of one nature he is not speaking of one essence or ousia. Indeed in later times the Oriental Orthodox always used St Cyril's phrase 'one incarnate nature of the Word' with the addition 'or hypostasis' so that it was clear that they were describing one concrete reality, Christ who is both human and Divine by composition, rather than describing the underlying substance of humanity or divinity which remain what they always have been. 'One incarnate nature' says that this Christ

is both human and Divine, it does not say that humanity and Divinity have been confused so as to become some third 'Christ nature'.

Therefore St Severus rejects the teaching that Christ is two natures, not because he does not believe that Christ is perfectly human and perfectly Divine, indeed it must be clear that he believes in these perfections completely. But for him, and for the Oriental Orthodox, nature means, in many contexts, more than 'underlying substance or essence' and means a concrete and independent example of such an underlying essence. Indeed Oriental Orthodox are not happy with the idea that an ousia or essence can ever exist except as a nature, or concrete reality. It is not humanity that is harmed if I fall over, but this human, this concrete example of the human ousia. Thus Christ is 'one incarnate nature', one reality, but composite. He is 'of' or 'from' both humanity and Divinity, in the sense that these are the underlying substances of which the one reality is unconfusedly composed, but in the ears of St Cyril and St Severus, 'in two natures', without further explanation, sounds dangerously as though it confesses two independent realities, each existing separately, and is thus a variety of Nestorianism.

He explains,

'For the Word himself, who had existence before the ages and is forever together with the Father, and is seen in his own hypostasis and is simple in ousia, became composite in the economy, and that word "incarnate" ensures that it is understood that the flesh endowed with a reasonable soul existed in relationship to the Word himself, and was not independently completed in its own hypostasis. [28]

Thus, 'one incarnate nature' stands for the Divine Word with complete and perfect humanity united to him as his own humanity, and not for a new type of substance that is neither human nor Divine.

Since the Christology of the Oriental Orthodox is so manifestly Cyrilline and in accordance with the Fathers one wonders why there is such a failure to understand these things on the part of those who have separated themselves from us. Yet the Oriental Orthodox Churches have suffered centuries of misunderstanding and abuse. Even today there are many Christians whose aim is to highlight as widely as possible our supposed heresies. Publications have been produced with titles such as 'The Errors of the Monophysite Heretics', and websites exist to promote a false explanation of our Christology. Almost every encyclopaedia propogates such errors and includes throw away lines which suggest that we teach the humanity of Christ was dissolved or swallowed up in his divinity.

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III has been criticised by some Eastern Orthodox, who feel they have made some great discovery by reporting him as stating that the body of Christ is a Divine body. They fail completely to understand, firstly that His Holiness is not at all ignorant of theology, and does not speak what he does not mean. Secondly, and even more importantly, they show how far from the teaching and witness of St Cyril some have strayed, because St Cyril himself is quoted by St Severus as teaching,

'Therefore we say that the body of Christ is divine because it is the body of God, and is brilliant with inexpressible glory, incorruptible, holy and life-giving. But that it was

changed into the nature of divinity, no-one of the holy Fathers thought or said, nor do we affirm this.' [29]

This failure illustrates the historic weakness of some Christologies, which fail to answer satisfactorily the question, 'whose is this flesh?', and satisfy themselves with a cataloguing and division of human and divine elements and behaviours. Yet the question is key to the Christology of St Cyril, St Severus, and the Oriental Orthodox.

St Cyril writes,

'Therefore let us acknowledge that the body which was born at Bethlehem, even if it is not the same - I mean in natural quality - with the Word which is from the Father, yet it became his, and not of some other son beside him. But one Son and Christ and Lord is understood even when the Word became incarnate.' [30]

This is the heart of Oriental Orthodox Christology. The humanity of Christ is not the same as his divinity, nor does it ever cease to be completely other than his divinity. But in the incarnation, and because of his love and the exercise of his will it has become truly his own humanity.

Again, in his writings against John the Grammarian, St Severus takes plain to make clear that while the humanity is not at any time apart from the divinity, nevertheless it is a real flesh, with the properties of humanity, and Christ is called Emmanuel because of the reality of His humanity, and because He is truly God with us, unchangeably, unconfusedly.

Before the union and the incarnation, the Word was simple, not incarnate, nor composite. But when he mercifully willed in the dispensation to become man unchangeably along with being what He was, then He was called Christ and Emmanuel – the name being taken from the act – and He became one with us, by reason of the fact that He united to Himself in His Person (hypostasis) flesh which was of the same substance with us and which was animated with a rational and intelligent soul.

The flesh did not come into being before, nor had it been formed already; but in the union with Him, it came into being inexplicably, so that conception, growth, gradual development and birth might be of the incarnate Word. On account of the essential union of the flesh, for which it is natural to be conceived and formed, to grow and be born, though He showed it to be beyond the laws of nature because it happened from the Virgin...and from the Holy Spirit...he who calls Him Christ after the union most certainly signifies Him. [31]

In conclusion, the Christology of St Severus is in every respect in accord with that of St Cyril. It is truly, deeply and completely Orthodox in the sense that it expresses perfectly the Christology of the Fathers of the Holy Councils of Nicaea, Constantinople and Ephesus. There is not one iota of justification for the anathemas historically raised against him by the Byzantine Orthodox, and these anathemas can only have been issued by those who had hardly read anything of his teachings. The Christology of the Oriental Orthodox Churches stands with St Severus and St Cyril in utterly repudiating any teaching in which the distinctions of the natures of divinity

and humanity cease to exist in the incarnation, or any teaching which damages the complete and perfect reality of the humanity and divinity of which Christ is. But neither should we cease to steadfastly confess that in the incarnation, and for our salvation, the Word of God has deigned to unite, in a manner past understanding, humanity with his divinity such that even as there is no confusion or mixture, equally there is no division or separation, but we see 'One Christ' and 'One Lord' as the creed confesses. This is the meaning of 'one incarnate nature of the Word', and this must continue to be the heart of our Orthodox Christology.

Through the prayers of St Severus and all the saints.

[1] Philalathes, p187 quoted in Handbook of Source Materials, p214, W.G. Young; [2] I. Torrance, Christology After Chalcedon, Canterbury Press, 1988, p147; [3] *ibid*, p148; [4] *ibid*, p148; [5] *ibid*, p148; [6] *ibid*, p148; [7] *ibid*, p149; [8] *ibid*, p149; [9] *ibid*, p150; [10] *ibid*, p150; [11] *ibid*, p150; [12] *ibid*, p151; [13] *ibid*, p151; [14] *ibid*, p151; [15] *ibid*, p153; [16] *ibid*, p154; [17] *ibid*, p155; [18] *ibid*, p154; [19] *ibid*, p154; [20] *ibid*, p171; [21] *ibid*, p173; [22] *ibid*, p172; [23] Against John the Grammarian, p286 quoted in H.S.M. p216; [24] Against Julian, p34, quoted in H.S.M. p215; [25] *ibid*, p173; [26] *ibid*, p174; [27] *ibid*, p174; [28] *ibid*, p176; [29] *ibid*, p180; [30] *ibid*, p214; [31] Against John the Grammarian, p236, quoted in H.S.M. p215

The Humanity of Christ (What Oriental Orthodox Believe)

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This is an explanation of the Oriental Orthodox understanding of the humanity of Christ, and rebuttals to common misconceptions and arguments.

The Oriental Orthodox Churches have often been criticised for professing a faulty doctrine of the humanity of Christ. This criticism is heard as much in the 21st century as it was the 5th. We may respond with frustration that our actual doctrinal position is misunderstood, and misrepresented, but it is perhaps wiser to seek to explain and inform. Our Churches no longer face the pressure of Imperial opposition, and many of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and indeed the Roman Catholic Church, have shown a willingness to listen and learn, rather than simply depend on age-old polemics in dealing with us.

The criticisms that are most often used against us are:

i. that we confess the humanity of Christ is dissolved or swallowed up by the humanity such that it has no real existence.

ii. that we confess that the humanity of Christ is not consubstantial with us but has come down from heaven and is merely a fantasy.

iii. that we confess that the humanity of Christ has been mixed or confused with his divinity such that a third nature, neither human nor divine, is created.

iv. that we confess that the humanity of Christ is defective in lacking a human will.

All of these criticisms may still be heard and read, in encyclopaedias and on websites, from clergy as well as lay people. The Columbia Encyclopaedia, Sixth edition 2001, states,

“Monophysitism was anticipated by Apollinarianism and was continuous with the principles of Eutyches, whose doctrine had been rejected in 451 at Chalcedon. Monophysitism challenged the orthodox definition of faith of Chalcedon and taught that in Jesus there were not two natures (divine and human) but one (divine).” [1]

If Eastern Orthodox Christians really believe this of us then it is not surprising that many remain hostile to the prospect of our reconciliation.

Of course the doctrine of the humanity of Christ is not the only issue which is a matter of dispute. But it is perhaps one of the most often used against us. We are accused of confessing a Christ whose humanity is not real, or is defective, or has been absorbed by his divinity. An investigation of the actual content of our faith will show plainly that we have never accepted any of these positions.

We should begin of course with St Cyril of Alexandria, who is the great champion of Orthodox Christology. There were many occasions when St Cyril himself faced much the same accusations that we bear. His position was misunderstood and misrepresented, so much so that Theodoret, whose writings were much later recognised as heretical by the Eastern Orthodox, wrote of St Cyril saying,

“In my opinion he appears to give heed to the truth, in order that, by concealing his unsound views by it, he may not be detected in asserting the same dogmas as the heretics. But nothing is stronger than truth, which by its own rays uncovers the darkness of falsehood. By the aid of its illumination we shall make his heterodox belief plain.” [2]

Now if St Cyril was misunderstood and accused of heresy, then perhaps we may take comfort in the situation we also face. Nevertheless we have a responsibility to do all we possibly can to clear up the confusion still experienced by those who condemn our Orthodox Churches as heretical.

It is clear from St Cyril that despite the conclusions of Theodoret, who also accused him of mixing the natures of humanity and divinity, he confessed a thoroughly Orthodox Christology. Indeed his Christology is the model for that of all the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

He writes in some of his letters,

“Our Lord Jesus Christ is, to be sure, the only begotten Son of God, his Word made man and made flesh, not to be divided into two sons, but that he was ineffably begotten from God before all time and in recent periods of time he was born according to the flesh from a woman, so that his person is one also. In this way we know that the Holy Virgin is the Mother of God, because he is God and man at the same time, that he who without change and without confusion is the only begotten, is incarnate and made man, and moreover that he was able to suffer according to the nature of his humanity. We know that it is impossible for him to suffer according to the nature of his divinity, and that he did suffer in his own flesh according to the scriptures.” [3]

and,

“Accordingly we confess that the only begotten Son of God is perfect God, consubstantial to the Father according to divinity, and that the same Son is consubstantial to us according to humanity. For there was a union of two natures. Wherefore, we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord.

And, if it seems proper, let us point out as an example the composition in us ourselves according to which we are men. For we are composed of soul and body, and we see two natures, the one of the body and the other of the soul, but one man from both according to a union, and the composition of two natures does not make two men be considered as one, but one man.

For, if we shall give the answer that there is only one Christ from two different natures, those on the opposite side will say, if he is entirely one physis, how was he made man or of what kind of flesh was he made?

Those who say that there was a blending, or a mixture, or a confusion of God the Word according to the flesh, these the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes.” [4]

and yet again,

“I have never been of Apollinarius’ persuasion (God forbid!) nor ever shall be. It is not my assertion that the holy body, which God the Word put on, lacked a soul. No, it contained a rational soul. Nor have I ever asserted or declared, as many report against us, mixture, confusion, or intermingling of natures.” [5]

These passages teach us that the foundation of Oriental Orthodox Christology is rooted in a confession of the reality of the humanity of Christ. The first passage shows us that St Cyril teaches that the humanity of Christ derived from the humanity of Mary, his mother. It was not a fantasy, nor was it from heaven, but it was real humanity. A humanity that suffered in the flesh according to the scriptures. But it was a humanity that was united with his divinity so that our Lord Jesus Christ remains one, not two. And it was a humanity that remained distinct but not separate from his humanity so that the nature of his divinity was not confused. Christ suffers in his humanity and is impassible in his divinity, but in all things he is one Lord, for it is his flesh which suffers and not another’s.

The second passage makes quite clear that St Cyril, and those of us who follow his teachings, confess that the humanity of Christ is consubstantial with us. This was the point on which Eutychius faltered. He had read in the Creed that Christ was consubstantial with the Father but considered that speaking of Christ as being consubstantial with us, according to his humanity, was an innovation he could not accept. Of course St Cyril had already spoken in this way and therefore Eutychius was setting himself apart from the Orthodoxy of St Cyril.

If the humanity of Christ is consubstantial with us then it is like us in every way except sin. It is a humanity that hungers and thirsts, that aches and bleeds. More than that we find St Cyril teaching us that because the humanity is that of Christ, it belongs to him and is his, so we must say that it is the Word, the second person of the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity which is consubstantial with us according to his humanity, as he is consubstantial with the Father according to his divinity.

Because of this we confess that there is a union of two natures in our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ. There is only 'One Lord', there is only one whose is both the humanity and the divinity. St Cyril points us to the example of our own human composition, both material and fleshly, and immaterial and spiritual. Yet these two completely different natures, or ways of being, are united without division or confusion to make us one man or woman.

Now St Cyril faced the same question that we do. If Christ is one physis or nature then of what sort is his humanity? But he explains that this union of natures is a composition, not a mixture. Christ is 'of' humanity and divinity, and just as the material and immaterial remain in us as human persons, so the reality of these natures remains in Christ, who continues to be 'of' two natures through the millennia after his incarnation.

Yet this is not a confusion, nor a mixture, nor a blending, and St Cyril anathematizes those who teach thus. Humanity is humanity and in Christ is consubstantial with us. Divinity is divinity and in Christ is consubstantial with the Father.

Could St Cyril be much clearer? Yet in the third extract he goes as far as to condemn Apollinarius who taught that the humanity of Christ was without a soul. This humanity that St Cyril speaks of is entirely ours, yet without sin. It possesses all that is proper to humanity, including a human soul. It is a rational, that is a thinking and willing soul.

What can we learn from St Cyril? He teaches that the humanity of Christ is the same as ours. It is of the same substance, consubstantial with us. This is contrary to the teaching of Eutychius who confessed that Christ's humanity was from the Virgin Mary but was not consubstantial with us. He teaches that the humanity had a rational soul and was not merely a body being animated by the divine Word. But he is equally insistent that the humanity was united to the divinity, such that both the humanity and the divinity really belonged to the Word. It was his own humanity and not someone else's. And this humanity was united to the divinity according to his analogy as the immaterial component of our humanity is united to the material, without confusion, mixture or blending. Each remaining what it always is. Yet we are one man or woman, as Christ is one, both God and man. We do not exist in the nature of spirit and the

nature of flesh, we are not two, but we exist as one in a union of spirit and flesh in our complete humanity. Neither, as St Cyril teaches, does Christ exist in the nature of divinity and in the nature of humanity, as though he were two, but he exists, after the incarnation, in the union of humanity and divinity, a union that preserves each but does not introduce division.

Perhaps it will be accepted that this is the teaching of St Cyril, and there are some in other churches who will even go so far as to disparage the teaching of St Cyril. But it may be suggested that this is no longer the teaching of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. A survey of the teaching of some of the Oriental Orthodox fathers should make it quite clear that in fact the Orthodox Christology of St Cyril remains the foundation of our own faith.

St Dioscorus is almost universally considered, outside of Oriental Orthodoxy, as an heretical and violent man who led many of the Eastern Christians into the heresy of Eutychus. Yet within our own Oriental Orthodox tradition we remember a very different man. Those writings which have come down to us show us a bishop who never failed to confess the complete humanity of Christ.

The proceedings of the Council of Chalcedon show us that St Dioscorus was not opposed to the phrase ‘from two natures after the union’. He did not accept Eutychus’ defective teaching of ‘two natures before the union, one nature after the union’. His ‘from two natures’ is the same as St Cyril’s ‘of two natures’. Christ is always, after the incarnation, existing in the dynamic union of humanity and divinity. He does not exist in a static, parallel existence of humanity and divinity. Now if the Eastern Orthodox, as we believe, express this Orthodox conception of the continuing, dynamic union of humanity and divinity by using the term ‘in two natures’ this is acceptable, but if what is confessed is a static division of natures united only externally or notionally then this is not acceptable, and it is against this position that we have always stood firm.

If Christ is ‘from two natures after the union’ then these natures have to be real. How can Christ be ‘from two natures’, or ‘of two natures’ and yet one of these does not exist or is overwhelmed by the other?

St Dioscorus also wrote,

“God the Logos, consubstantial with the Father, at the end of the ages for our redemption became consubstantial with man in the flesh, remaining what he was before.” [6]

This is entirely what has been found in the teaching of St Cyril. Christ is God the Word, or Logos. He is consubstantial with the Father according to his divinity, and consubstantial with us according to his flesh. This can in no sense at all be considered Eutychianism. As has been described before, Eutychius rejected the idea that Christ was consubstantial with us according to his humanity. Now if Christ is consubstantial with us then his humanity is real humanity, like us in every way except sin.

But St Dioscorus goes further and expresses that other Cyrilline teaching, that even when becoming man for us the Word never ceased to be what he was. If the Word

‘remained what he was before’ then his divinity suffered neither confusion, nor mixture nor any diminution at all. And if the Word is consubstantial with us according to the flesh then the flesh must be preserved as a reality. How can the Word be consubstantial with us if his humanity has no reality?

Another letter of St Dioscorus says,

“I know full well, having been brought up in the faith, that he has been begotten of the Father as God, and that the Same has been begotten of Mary as man. See Him walking on the sea as man, and Creator of the heavenly hosts as God; see him sleeping in the boat as man, and walking on the seas as God; see Him hungry as man, and bestowing nourishment as God; see him thirsty as man, and giving drink as God; see him stoned by the Jews as man, and worshipped by angels as God; see him tempted as man, and driving away the demons as God; and similarly of many instances.” [7]

Where does this passage show a failure to comprehend the continuing reality of humanity and divinity in Christ? It seems once more to be very similar to passages found in other writings of St Cyril, as indeed we would expect of St Cyril’s disciple and successor. St Dioscorus teaches that in the earthly life of Christ we can see both the humanity and the divinity acting as is proper to each. Yet he does not act divinely and humanly on different occasions but in the union of humanity and divinity we see the unconfused natures acting as is appropriate.

How can it be thought that St Dioscorus denies the reality of the humanity, or confesses some sort of confusion? If Christ is described as ‘sleeping in the boat as man’ then how is he not perfectly and unconfusedly human? If Christ is described as walking, hungry and thirsty ‘as a man’ then how is the humanity of Christ not confessed? It seems rather that St Dioscorus is simply following the teaching of St Cyril.

Let us turn to St Timothy Aelurus, Pope of Alexandria after St Dioscorus. He wrote,

“For the Divine Logos, not yet incarnate, was conceived in the womb of the holy Virgin, and was then incarnate of the flesh of the holy Virgin, in a manner in which he alone knew, while remaining without change and without conversion as God.”

This shows us that St Timothy taught that the flesh, that is the humanity, of Christ was taken from the Virgin Mary, but that in the union of humanity and divinity the nature of divinity did not suffer any change, nor was there a mixture or confusion. He states this more explicitly in a letter written from exile,

“Since children partake of flesh and blood, he also participated in them, in order that he might, by his death, abrogate the power of death.....He did not receive the nature from the angels, but from the seed of Abraham. It was necessary that he should identify himself with his brethren in everything in order that he might be merciful...Since he endured suffering and temptation he is able to succour those who are being tempted.” [8]

St Timothy reminds us that the humanity of Christ did not come from heaven, nor from angels, but is of the seed of Abraham. Taken from the flesh of his mother, Mary, it is of the same nature as our humanity. He writes elsewhere,

“Let no-one, thinking to honour God, insult his mercy by refusing to abide by the teaching of our holy fathers, who have confessed that our Lord Jesus Christ became consubstantial with us in the flesh.” [9]

We are not taught in these passages that Christ merely took flesh or humanity that was consubstantial with us, and then dissolved or overwhelmed it in his divinity such that it has no reality. On the contrary, he became, that is he remains, consubstantial with us. He bears still as his own flesh the humanity we bear. He says,

“He who is of the same nature with the Father as to Godhead, the same became of the same nature with [Mary] and with us in the body.” [10]

Now if the humanity of Christ has no reality, or is defective, then he has not become of the same nature with us. But St Timothy teaches us that we dishonour God if we fail to confess the reality and consubstantiality of the humanity of Christ. Seeing that St Timothy condemns those who do not make this confession it is a matter of some frustration that in fact he is accused, with us, of maintaining the position he rejects.

When he found that even among those who anathematised Chalcedon there were some who did indeed confuse the natures of divinity and humanity he took firm action. A certain Isaiah and Theophilus travelled to Constantinople and starting teaching a confusion of natures. St Timothy wrote letters against them and eventually excommunicated them. Why would he do this if in fact they were merely teaching a heresy that he himself believed?

In fact anyone reading the writings of St Timothy could not fail to be impressed by his Cyrilline Orthodoxy, if they approached such writings without prejudice. One last passage, found in his letters against the very people who taught a defective humanity of Christ, says conclusively,

“The Scriptures teach us of Christ that he identified himself with us in everything, and that he became perfectly of the same nature with us, but for the impulse of sin. He was born supernaturally apart from conjugal union. But he became perfect man, having been conceived in Mary the Virgin, and from her born by the Holy Spirit, and he himself continued to remain God incarnate without any change.” [11]

What could be clearer? St Timothy Aelurus most definitely does not teach any diminution of the humanity of Christ. It is complete in everything that pertains to our humanity. He became man with no change at all to his divinity.

We can find no denial of the humanity of Christ in the earliest non-Chalcedonian patriarchs. Without any difficulty we can also find the same constant witness to the reality of that humanity in the later, and even greater fathers. St Severus of Antioch, writing in the first part of the 6th century has much to say about the humanity of Christ.

He writes,

“When the Doctor [St Cyril] has confessed one nature of God the Word, who is incarnate, he says that each of them continues together and is understood in the particularity that belongs to the nature.” [12]

Each nature continues together. Now if each nature continues then neither is dissolved or changed, nor is there any mixture or confusion. This is the teaching of St Cyril, and we find it repeated from the hand of St Severus. More than that, this passage, quoting from St Cyril, shows how the ‘one incarnate nature of the Word incarnate’, that famous saying, should be understood. It does not stand for the confusion or mixture of natures, neither does it stand for the dissolution of the humanity. For each ‘continues together’.

In another passage St Severus quotes again from St Cyril saying,

“Therefore let us recognise that even if the body which was born at Bethlehem is not the same, that is, as far as natural quality is concerned, as the Word which is from God and the Father, yet nevertheless it became his, and did not belong to another man beside the Son. But the Word incarnate is to be considered one Son and Christ and Lord.” [13]

Here it is clear that he understands and teaches that the humanity is completely other and different from the divinity. And nine months after the miraculous conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary, when the Word was born as a human baby, that humanity remained, as it always was, other than the divinity. But it had become his, that is the Word’s, own humanity. Every action of the humanity of Christ was in fact the activity of the Word of God, there was no-one else whose activity it could be. Yet it was human activity, because the divine nature and the human nature are not the same.

It is clear that St Severus often quotes from St Cyril. Indeed in three letters written to a certain Sergius who had fallen into error he quotes over 60 times from St Cyril. One of these quotations, describing his own confession says,

“For even if the Only-Begotten Son of God, incarnate and inhominate, is said by us to be one, he is not confused because of this, as he seems to those people, nor has the nature of the Word passed over into the nature of the flesh, nor indeed has the nature of the flesh passed into that which is his, but while each one of them continues together in the particularity that belongs to the nature, and is thought of in accordance with the account which has just been given by us, the inexpressible and ineffable union shows us one nature of the son, but as I have said, incarnate.” [14]

What could be clearer? We say of the Son of God that he is incarnate and has been made man, but we do not confuse the natures, or say that the humanity has become divinity or the divinity become humanity. Again we find the express teaching that each ‘continues together’. And if we speak of ‘one nature’, it is in the sense that each of us as humans is ‘one’ and not two. So Christ is one individual not two, even though he is a union of humanity and divinity.

A final passage from St Severus, since this is only a brief overview and his teachings could fill many volumes,

“There is no share in any blame that one should recognise, for example, that the flesh is one thing in its own nature, apart from the Word which sprang from God and the Father, and that the Only-Begotten is another again, with respect to his own nature. Nevertheless to recognise these things is not to divide the natures after the union.”

Following St Severus the Oriental Orthodox Churches confess that the humanity is one thing and the divinity another. That is, they are not the same and do not become the same. Yet we do not divide the humanity from the divinity, nor make it act apart from the divinity as though it belonged to another.

St Severus is most strict in requiring that the confession of the integrity of the humanity and divinity in Christ be preserved. We know that he accepted the doctrinal content of the Henoticon of Zeno, a document designed by the Emperor Zeno to bring peace to the Church, but which was generally attacked by all sides for either failing to condemn Chalcedon, or failing to approve it.

This document says,

“And we confess as one and not two the only-begotten Son of God, even God, our Lord Jesus Christ who in truth was made man, consubstantial with the Father in divinity and the same consubstantial with us in humanity, who came down and was made flesh from the Holy Spirit and Mary the Virgin and Mother of God. For we declare to be of one being both the miracles and the sufferings which he endured voluntarily in the flesh. For those who divide or confound or introduce an illusion we utterly refuse to receive, since indeed the sinless incarnation, that was in truth from the Mother of God, did not create an additional entity of the Son. For the Trinity has remained a Trinity even after one of the Trinity, God the Word, was made flesh.” [15]

This is not merely the confession of one man, but as a theological statement it was accepted by many of the non-Chalcedonian bishops. It shows that the fathers taught that Christ was ‘in truth made man’. All possibility of a Eutychian fantasy incarnation is excluded. The consubstantiality of the humanity of Christ with us is re-iterated. It is not the case that he was consubstantial with us and then this humanity was somehow diminished, but as has already been shown from individual fathers, he remains consubstantial with us, a consubstantiality that demands the perfect and complete reality of his humanity.

What is positively taught is the union of humanity and divinity in Christ. What is condemned is the introduction of a division which separates the humanity and divinity such that they become two centres of activity; or a confounding of the natures such that they cease to preserve their integrity and reality; or even that the incarnation is an illusion in the manner of Eutychius who failed to confess the consubstantiality of the humanity of Christ with us.

All of these false understandings of the humanity of Christ are rejected by the Oriental Orthodox, and can be shown to have been rejected from the beginning. It can only be assumed in charity that the Eastern Orthodox lacked access to the writings of many of

our fathers. Not one suggests in any place that the humanity of Christ is not consubstantial with us, or fails to preserve its integrity and reality in the incarnation.

If we advance to modern times we can find this same faith professed by all the Oriental Orthodox Churches. Archbishop Aram Keshishian, surely someone who would know what the Armenians believe, states:

"the Christology of the Armenian Church is fundamentally in line with the Alexandrian Theological School. In fact, the Cyrillian formula of 'One Nature of the Incarnate Word' constitutes the foundation stone of her Christology. [It should be noted that] first, 'One Nature' is never interpreted in the Armenian Christology as a numerical one, but always a united one. This point is of crucial importance [for the Armenian Church] particularly in its anti-Eutychian and anti-Chalcedonian aspects. Second the term 'nature' (ousia, in Armenian bnut'iun) is used in Armenian theological literature in three different senses: (a) as essence, an abstract notion, (b) as substance, a concrete reality, (c) as person. In the context of anti-Chalcedonian Christology 'one nature' is used in a sense of 'one person' composed of two natures." [16] Or Archbishop Aram Keshishian of the Armenians also says:

"We say, always in a formal way, that Nestorianism and Eutychianism have been rejected and anathematized by our churches and we adhere to that. In other words, we both anathematized, once again, Eutychian and Nestorian heresies." [17] The Coptic Orthodox have also officially accepted a Christological statement which says:

"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."

This is part of the official teaching of the Church, and it makes clear that there was no mixture or confusion of the humanity and Divinity in Christ which are preserved and remain unchanged and unconfused.

Or in a shorter form the statement was recast and equally authoritatively accepted as:

"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."

Again the unconfused distinction of humanity and Divinity is confessed, and also the doctrines of Eutyches are anathematised. This is the official teaching of the Coptic Orthodox Church, and since both these statements were written by Pope Shenouda

and agreed by the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate they are explicit statements of Christological teaching.

The Syrian Orthodox Church have made an official statement on Christology in the following words:

“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.” [18]

Christ is perfect God and perfect man. There doesn't seem to be a lack of distinction in this statement. Confusion or mingling is also explicitly rejected, and the humanity and Divinity are confessed to be present and active in Christ with all their properties undiminished in any way.

Or the Indian Orthodox have made a statement in the following words:

“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. ” [19]

This statement confesses the dual consubstantiality of Christ, the perfection of each nature, and the union without confusion or change. And again the statement is careful to make clear that the divine and human natures are active in a real way. Active in a real way. Can this be much clearer?

The Oriental Orthodox Churches have never ceased to confess the real humanity of Christ. Consubstantial with us, like us in every way except for sin. Preserving the integrity of both his humanity and divinity in the union of both. A union which is without confusion or mixture. More than ever, while the possibility of the reconciliation of the Orthodox Churches exists, we must ensure that we ourselves are confident in the content of our own faith and are able to explain this faith to others.

If we fail to communicate our faith then there are countless others, misunderstanding and misrepresenting our position, who are already filling the void. From St Cyril, through St Dioscorus to St Severus and up to the present day, our Christology is wholly Orthodox and without any stain of heresy.

[1] Columbia Encyclopaedia. Sixth Ed. 2001; [2] Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series II. Vol 3.; [3] McEnerney, John. Trans. St Cyril of Alexandria , Letters 51-110 .

Letter 59. C.U.A. 1987; [4] McEnerney, John. Trans. St Cyril of Alexandria , Letters 51-110 . Letter 97. C.U.A. 1987; [5] McEnerney, John. Trans. St Cyril of Alexandria , Letters 51-110 . Letter 100. C.U.A. 1987; [6] Sellers, R.V. The Council of Chalcedon p31. n1. S.P.C.K. 1953; [7] Sellers, R.V. The Council of Chalcedon p32. S.P.C.K. 1953; [8] Samuel, Fr V.C. The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined , p259. Xlibris2001; [9] Samuel, Fr V.C. The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined , p258. Xlibris2001; [10] Samuel, Fr V.C. The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined , p259. Xlibris2001; [11] Samuel, Fr V.C. The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined , p260. Xlibris2001; [12] Torrance , Iain. Christology After Chalcedon p148. Canterbury Press. 1988; [13] Torrance , Iain. Christology After Chalcedon p148. Canterbury Press. 1988; [14] Torrance , Iain. Christology After Chalcedon p148. Canterbury Press. 1988; [15] Whitby , Michael trans. Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus p149, Liverpool University Press. 2000; [16] Aram Keshishian, The Witness of the Armenian Church in a Diaspora Situation (New York: Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, 1978), p. 58-59 [17] Window Quarterly 4, 4 (1994); ACRA c. 1994; [18] Joint Statement Pope John Paul II and His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas. 1984; [19] Joint Statement between the Roman Catholic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church . 1990

The One Will and the One Act, By HH Pope Shenouda III of Alexandria

(Excerpts from *The Nature of Christ*
(<http://www.copticchurch.org/Texts/Spirituals/Natofchr.pdf>))

Has the Lord Christ two wills and two actions, that is a Divine will and a human will, as well as two actions, that is, a divine act and a human act? As we believe in the One Nature of the Incarnate Logos, as St. Cyril the Great called it, likewise:

We believe in One Will and One Act:

Naturally, as long as we consider that this Nature is One, the Will and the Act must also each be one.

What the Divine nature Chooses is undoubtedly the same as that chosen by the human Nature because there is not any contradiction or conflict whatever between the will and the action of both.

The Lord Jesus Christ said: "My meat is to do the Will of Him that sent Me to finish His work. " (John. 4:34). This proves that His Will is the same as that of the Father. In this context, He said about Himself " the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner." (John. 5:19).

He does not seek for Himself a will that is independent of that of the Father. Consequently He Says "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." (John 6:38).

It is obvious that the Father and the Son in the Holy Trinity have One Will, for the Lord Jesus Christ said: "I and My Father are One." (John. 10:30).

Hence, since He is one with Him in the Godhead, then He is essentially one with Him concerning the Will. Again, the Son, in His Incarnation on earth, was fulfilling the Will of the heavenly Father. Thus it must be that He Who united with the manhood had One Will.

In fact, Sin is nothing but a conflict between man's will and God's.

But remember that our Lord Jesus Christ had no sin at all. He challenged the Jews saying: "Which of you convicts Me of Sin?" (John. 8:46). Therefore, His Will was that of the Father.

The Saints who are perfect in their behaviour achieve complete agreement between their will and the Will of God, so that their will becomes that of God, and the Will of God becomes their will.

And St. Paul the Apostle said "But we have the mind of Christ. " (1 Cor. 2:16). He did not say that our thoughts are in accord with the mind of Christ, but that "we have the mind of Christ", and here the unity is stressed.

If this is said about those with whom and in whom God works, then how much more the unity between the Son and His Own manhood would be in all that is related to the will, the mind and the power to act! He, in Whom the Divine nature has united with the human nature, a Hypostatic and Essential union without separation-not for a second nor a twinkle of an eye.

If there was not unity between the Will of the Divine nature of Christ and His human nature, this would have resulted in internal conflict. Far be it from Him! How then could Christ be our guide and our example... to follow in His footsteps (1 John. 2:6)?

The complete righteousness which marked the life of our Lord Jesus was due to His Divine as well as His Human will. The same is true of the salvation of mankind, the message for which Christ came and said: "For the Son of Man has come to save that which was." (Matt. 18:11). This is the same Will of the Father who "He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. " (1 John. 4:10). Thus, the crucifixion was the choice of the Divine as well as the human nature. Had it not been One Will, it would not have been said that Christ died by His Own Will for our sake.

Since the Will is One, the Act is necessarily One.

Here we do not distinguish between the two natures.

Additional/Miscellaneous Notes

1. St. Cyril of Alexandria called the Blessed Holy Virgin Mary the Theotokos, Mother of God, not mother of the human nature of Christ.
2. The Non-Chalcedonian, Oriental Orthodox were habitually represented by their Chalcedonian opponents as denying all reality to the human nature of Christ after the union, but this is definitely not true and was never the case.
3. There is a difference between the word "will" taken to mean the faculty, mere velleity or wish, and the same word taken to mean the decision taken by the will (the will willing vs. the will willed; also *voluntas ut natura* [thelesis] as opposed to *voluntas ut ratio* [boulesis]). In case of Christ, the Incarnate Logos, there was definitely one will willed (willed will). The Chambesy 1990 Agreement (<http://www.monachos.net/mb/messages/4225/ORIENT3-20256.doc>) reads, **"Both families agree that the Hypostasis of the Logos became composite 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, created human nature, which He assumed at the Incarnation and made His own, with its natural will and energy. 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. Both families agree that He who wills and acts is always the one Hypostasis of the Logos incarnate."**
4. More information on St. Severus, Patriarch of Antioch (from the Coptic Orthodox Synaxarium): (http://www.copticchurch.net/synaxarium/2_2.html#1), (http://www.copticchurch.net/synaxarium/4_10.html#1), (http://www.copticchurch.net/synaxarium/6_9.html#1), (http://www.copticchurch.net/synaxarium/6_14.html#1).

Back to <http://www.stmina-monastery.org> or <http://www.zeitun-eg.org>

APPENDICES

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A. WEB RESOURCES:

1. <http://www.monachos.net/patristics/christology/index.shtml>
2. http://www.monachos.net/patristics/christology/orthodox_and_oriental.shtml

B. RECENT EFFORTS FOR UNITY BETWEEN THE TWO FAMILIES OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

``Disputes merely about words must not be
suffered to divide those who think alike''

St. Athanasius, Tome to the people of Antioch

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1. PREFACE

The following report on the recent efforts for unity between the two families of the Orthodox Church is divided into two parts.

The first part is a synopsis of the Reports, Agreed Statements and Recommendations to the Churches, written by the delegates at these meetings. It will provide the reader with a basic understanding of the conclusions of each of the conversations.

The second part is a full print of the official Communiqués produced at each meeting, including a list of participants.

The report covers the four unofficial conversations (1964, 1967, 1970, 1971), the three meetings of the ``Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches'' (1985, 1989, 1990), and two meetings of sub-committees (1987, 1990). The sources for these communiqués are listed in the table of contents.

2. INTRODUCTION

Since 451, at the Council of Chalcedon, there has been a division within the Orthodox Church due to different Christological terminology. In recent times, members of the Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches have met

together coming to a clear understanding 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 has been the basis of the conversations held over the last two decades towards unity and communion.

In 1964 a fresh dialogue began at the University of Aarhus in Denmark. This was followed by meetings at Bristol in 1967, Geneva in 1970 and Addis Ababa in 1971. These were a series of non-official consultations which served as steps towards mutual understanding.

The official consultations in which concrete steps were taken began in 1985 at Chambesy in Geneva. The second official consultation was held at the monastery of Saint Bishoy in Wadi-El-Natroun, Egypt in June 1989. The outcome of this latter meeting was of historical dimensions, since in this meeting the two families of Orthodoxy were able to agree on a Christological formula, thus ending the controversy regarding Christology which had lasted for more than fifteen centuries.

In September 1990, the two families of Orthodoxy signed an agreement on Christology and recommendations were passed to the different Orthodox Churches, to lift the anathemas and enmity of the past, after revising the results of the dialogues. If both agreements are accepted by the various Orthodox Churches, the restoration of communion will be very easy at all levels, even as far as sharing one table in the Eucharist.

``As for its part, the Coptic Orthodox Church has agreed to lift the anathemas, but this will not take place unless it is performed bilaterally, possibly by holding a joint ceremony.'' (H.E. Metropolitan Bishoy, Metropolitan of Damiette and Secretary of the Holy Synod, Coptic Orthodox Church, and Co-chairman of the Joint Commission of the Official Dialogue, El-Kerasa English Magazine, May 1992, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 8).

3. SYNOPSIS

AARHUS 1964

- + Over 3 days, 15 theologians from both families met in Aarhus in Denmark for informal conversations. They recognised in each other the one orthodox faith.
- + The well known phrase used by our common father, St. Cyril of Alexandria ``the one nature of God's Word Incarnate'' was at the centre of the conversations. Through the different terminologies used by each side, they saw the same truth expressed. On the essence of the Christological dogma they found themselves in full agreement.
- + As for the Council of Chalcedon (451) both families agreed without reservation on rejecting the teaching of Eutyches as well as Nestorius, and thus the acceptance or non-acceptance of the Council of Chalcedon does not entail the acceptance of either heresy.
- + It was agreed that the significant role of political, sociological and cultural factors in creating tension between factions in the last fifteen centuries should be recognized and studied together. They should not, however, continue to divide us.

BRISTOL 1967

The Agreed Statement from the second informal conversations in Bristol, England, firstly affirmed new areas of agreement and then discussed the questions that still remained to be studied and settled.

-- ONE --

- + Based on the teachings of common fathers of the universal Church they approached the Christological question from the perspective of salvation.

- + ``Thus He who is consubstantial with the Father became by the Incarnation consubstantial also with us''. God became by nature man that man may attain to His uncreated glory.
- + Ever since the fifth century, we have used different formulae to confess our common faith in the One Lord Jesus Christ, perfect God and perfect Man. Some of us affirm two natures, wills and energies hypostatically united in the One Lord Jesus Christ. Some of us affirm one united divine-human nature, will and energy in the same Christ. But both sides speak of a union without confusion, without change, without division, without separation. The four adverbs belong to our common tradition. Both affirm the dynamic permanence of the God-head and the Manhood, with all their natural properties and faculties, in the one Christ. Those who speak in terms of ``two'' do not thereby divide or separate. Those who speak in terms of ``one'' do not thereby commingle or confuse.
- + They discussed also the continuity of doctrine in the Councils of the Church, and especially the mono-energistic and monothelete controversies of the seventh century. They agreed that the human will is neither absorbed nor suppressed by the divine will in the Incarnate Logos, nor are they contrary one to the other.

-- TWO --

- + Secondly they began to explore adequate steps to restore the full communion between our Churches.
- + They recommended a joint declaration be drafted with a formula of agreement on the basic Christological faith in relation to the nature, will and energy of our one Lord Jesus Christ, for formal and authoritative approval by the Churches.
- + They saw a need to further examine the canonical, liturgical and jurisdictional problems involved (e.g. anathemas, acceptance and non acceptance of some Councils, and agreements necessary before formal restoration of communion.

CENACLE, GENEVA 16-21 Aug 1970

The third unofficial conversations yielded a four part Summary of Conclusions:

I. REAFFIRMATION OF CHRISTOLOGICAL AGREEMENT

- + The theologians found that they were still in full and deep agreement with the universal tradition of the one undivided Church .
- + Through visits to each other, and through study of each other's liturgical traditions and theological and spiritual writings, they rediscovered other mutual agreements in all important matters: liturgy and spirituality, doctrine and canonical practice.
- + They concluded by saying `` Our mutual agreement is not merely verbal or conceptual it is a deep agreement that impels us to beg our Churches to consummate our union by bringing together again the two lines of tradition which have been separated from each other for historical reasons for such a long time. We work in the hope that our Lord will grant us full unity so that we can celebrate together that unity in the Common Eucharist. That is our strong desire and final goal''.

II. SOME DIFFERENCES

- + Despite their agreement on the substance of the tradition, the long period of separation has brought about certain differences in the formal expression of that tradition. These differences have to do with three basic ecclesiological issues:

(a) The meaning and place of certain Councils -

The Eastern Orthodox Church teaches that there were seven ecumenical Councils which have an inner coherence and continuity that make them a single indivisible complex.

The Oriental Orthodox Church feels, however, that the authentic Christological tradition has so far been held by them on the basis of the three ecumenical Councils.

- (b) The anathematization or acclamation as Saints of certain controversial teachers -

It may not be necessary formally to lift these anathemas, nor for these teachers to be recognised as Saints by the condemning side. But the restoration of Communion obviously implies, among other things, that formal anathemas and condemnation of revered teachers of the other side should be discontinued as in the case of Leo, Dioscorus, Severus, and others.

- (c) The jurisdictional questions related to uniting the Churches at local, regional and world levels -

This is not only an administrative matter, but it also touches the question of ecclesiology in some aspects. Most cities will need to have more than one bishop and more than one Eucharist, but it is important that the unity is expressed in Eucharistic Communion.

- + The universal tradition of the Church does not demand uniformity in all details of doctrinal formulation, forms of worship and canonical practice. But the limits of variability need to be more clearly worked out.

III. TOWARDS A STATEMENT OF RECONCILIATION

- + They reaffirmed the need for an official joint commission to draft an explanatory statement of reconciliation which could then be the basis for unity.
- + They suggested that this statement of common Christological agreement could make use of the theology of St. Cyril of Alexandria and John of Antioch, and that it be worded in unambiguous terminology that would make it clear that this explanation has been held by both sides for centuries, as is attested by the liturgical and patristic documents.

IV. SOME PRACTICAL STEPS

- + There had already been visits between the two families on the levels of heads of churches, bishops and theologians.
- + Some Oriental Orthodox students have been studying in Eastern Orthodox Theological Institutions and it was hoped that there would be more exchange both ways at the level of theological professors, church dignitaries and students.
- + Although it was realised that some work could be initiated at an informal level, it was hoped that official actions would make further unofficial conversations unnecessary.
- + A special Executive Committee was formed to have the following functions:
 - (a) Publish in the Greek Orthodox Theological Review a report on this meeting in Geneva.
 - (b) Produce a resume of the three unofficial conversations, which may be studied by the different churches
 - (c) Publish a handbook of statistical, historical, and theological information regarding the various Churches
 - (d) Explore the possibility of an association of all the Theological Schools
 - (e) Publish a periodical which will continue to provide information about the

Churches and to pursue further discussions

- (f) Make available to the Churches the original sources for an informed and accurate study of developments
- (g) Encourage theological consultations on contemporary problems
- (h) Explore the possibilities of establishing a common research centre for Orthodox theological and historical studies
- (i) Explore the possibility of common teaching material for children and youth .

ADDIS ABABA 1971

- + The informal discussions at Addis Ababa centered around the lifting of anathemas and the recognition of Saints.
- + This was termed ``an indispensable step on the way to unity''. The delegates felt that such a step presupposes essential unity in the faith and thus as previously discussed there is a need for an official announcement of unity in faith first.
- + They agreed that once the anathemas against certain persons cease to be effective, there is no need to require their recognition as saints by those who previously anathematized them.
- + They felt that the lifting of anathemas should be prepared for by careful study of the teaching of these men, the accusations levelled against them, the circumstances under which they were anathematized, and the true intention of their teaching. Such study should be sympathetic and motivated by the desire to understand and therefore to overlook minor errors.
- + There was also a request for a study of how anathemas have been lifted in the past. It was suggested that there may be no need for a formal ceremony but that it is much simpler gradually to drop these anathemas in a quiet way. The fact that these anathemas have been lifted can then be formally announced at the time of union.
- + Another study suggested was ``Who is a Saint?'; a study of the criteria for sainthood and distinctions between universal, national and local saints.
- + An educational programme for churches was suggested, for both before and after the lifting of the anathemas, especially where anathemas and condemnations are written into the liturgical texts and hymns. Also the rewriting of Church history, text-books and theological manuals will be necessary. As this is a time consuming project, we need not await its completion for the lifting of anathemas or even for the restoration of Communion.
- + The Summary of Conclusions of this fourth unofficial meeting was submitted to the churches with the following closing note: ``It is our hope that the work done at an informal level can soon be taken up officially by the churches, so that the work of the Spirit in bringing us together can now find full ecclesiastical response.''

CHAMBESY, GENEVA 10-15 Dec 1985

- + After two decades of unofficial theological consultations the first official dialogue between the two families of orthodoxy finally occurred with a delegation that was called the ``Joint-Commission of the Theological Dialogue Between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Non-Chalcedonian Churches''.
- + They set up a Joint Sub-Committee of six theologians to prepare common texts for future work. The aim of the next meetings would be to re-discover common grounds in Christology and Ecclesiology. The following main theme and subsequent sub-themes were agreed upon:

``Towards a common Christology''

- a) Problems of terminology
- b) Conciliar formulations
- c) Historical factors
- d) Interpretation of Christological dogmas today.

CORINTH, GREECE 23-26 Sep 1987

- + This was a meeting of the Joint Sub-Committee to discuss the problems of terminology. They were convinced that though using some terms in a different sense, both sides express the same Orthodox theology.
- + The dialogue focused on the terms: Physis, Ousia, Hypostasis, Prosopon.

Although these terms have not been used with conformity in different traditions and by different theologians of the same tradition, all the delegates confirmed their agreement that the unique and wonderful union of the two natures of Christ is a hypostatic, natural and real unity.
- + In confessing Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son of God the Father, truly born of the Holy and Virgin Mary, our Churches have avoided and rejected the heretical teachings of both Nestorius and Eutyches.
- + The common denominator was the common doctrine of the two real births of the Logos. The Logos, the Only-begotten of the Father before the ages, became man through his second birth in time from the Virgin Mary.
- + The discussion concluded with the expression of the faith that the hypostatic union of the two natures of Christ was necessary for the salvation of the human kind. Only the Incarnate Logos, as perfect God and at the same time perfect man, could redeem man.
- + As discussed in Bristol in 1967, the Joint Sub-Committee concluded that the four attributes of the wonderful union of the natures belong also to the common tradition since both sides speak of it as ``without confusion, without change, without division, without separation''. And thus those who speak in terms of ``two'' don't thereby divide or separate. Those who speak in terms of ``one'' don't thereby co-mingle or confuse.
- + They affirmed that the term ``Theotokos'' used for the Virgin Mary, is a basic element of faith in our common tradition.

ANBA BISHOY MONASTERY, EGYPT 20-24 Jun 1989

- + This was the second meeting of the Joint Commission, there were 23 participants representing 13 Churches.
- + The main item for consideration was the report of the Joint Sub-Committee from Corinth on common Christological convictions. An Agreed Statement was approved for transmission to our Churches which subsequently gained widespread acceptance by everybody.
- + It confessed the common apostolic faith and tradition of the undivided church of the first centuries. This was best expressed in the formula of our common father, St. Cyril of Alexandria' ``the one nature of God's Word Incarnate''.
- + They confirmed that the Holy Virgin is Theotokos and the Holy Trinity is one True God, one ousia in three hypostases or three prosopa.
- + They acknowledged the mystery of the Incarnation when the Logos, eternally consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit in his Divinity, became incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin Mary Theotokos, and thus became consubstantial with us in His humanity but without sin; true God and true man at the same time.
- + It is not that in Him a divine hypostasis and a human hypostasis came

together, but that the one eternal hypostasis of the Second Person of the Trinity has assumed our created human nature to form an inseparably and unconfusedly united real divine-human being, the natures being distinguished from each other in contemplation only.

- + The agreed condemnation of the Nestorian and Eutychian heresies means that we neither separate nor divide the human nature in Christ from His divine nature, nor do we think that the former was absorbed in the latter and thus ceased to exist.
- + Again the four adverbs were used to qualify the mystery of the hypostatic union: without co-mingling, without change, without separation and without division.
- + This mutual agreement was not limited to Christology, but encompassed the whole faith of the one undivided church of the early centuries.
- + They included a statement on the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father alone.
- + They then appointed a 10 person Joint Sub-Committee for Pastoral Problems to report at the next meeting of the newly named Joint Commission of the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

ANBA BISHOY MONASTERY, EGYPT 31 Jan-4 Feb 1990

- + This was a meeting of the Joint Sub-Committee for Pastoral Problems. They found that while the faith unifies us, history keeps us distant because it creates ecclesiastical practical problems, which often are more difficult to rectify than the historical differences of theological expressions.
- + They recognised that although these problems do not have a deep theological cause, they renew the feelings of suspicion and pain among us, and will diminish the value of the theological fruits of our official dialogues unless ties of love and common sincere desire for unity complement our relations.

They made proposals in two areas :

1 - The relation between the two Orthodox families:-

- + The first step must be official ecclesiastical acceptance of the agreed statement on Christology. From there an education programme should begin with publications to acquaint congregations with the joint agreements, with the churches taking part in the dialogues, a summary of the most important Christological terms together with a brief explanation based on the fathers' writings, and updates on the relations existing between us.
- + There should be an objective to create ecclesiastical relations through exchanging the theological writings, professors and students of the Theological Institutes.
- + They recommended the clear official acceptance and recognition of the Baptism performed by the two families and a joint confrontation of the practical problems in the two families such as the problems of marriage - divorce (consideration of the marriage as having taken place) etc.

2 - Our common relations with the rest of the Christian world:-

- + There were several recommendations for a joint front :
 - To adopt the same attitude in theological dialogues with the World Council of Churches and other ecumenical movements.
 - To issue a joint communique against the modern conceptions which are completely in contradiction with our Apostolic tradition, whether related to faith or ecclesiastical issues, such as the ordination of women, and the moral issues.
 - Common work in neutralising the trends of proselytism and the confrontation of religious groups who mislead believers from the faith,

such as Jehovah's witnesses, Adventists, etc

CHAMBESY, GENEVA 23-28 Sep 1990

- + Over six days the third meeting of the Joint Commission was held at the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. They produced a ``Second Agreed Statement and Recommendations to the Churches'', and a four part appendix related to the report of the Joint Sub-Committee on Pastoral Problems from their meeting at Anba Bishoy Monastery.

I. Second Agreed Statement and Recommendations to the Churches

- + They reaffirmed our common faith based on the first Agreed Statement on Christology. Points reiterated were the condemnation of the heresies of Eutyches and Nestorius; the Incarnation of the Logos from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary Theotokos, to become fully consubstantial with us; the hypostatic union of His divine and human natures with their proper energies and wills naturally without confusion, without change, without division and without separation, being distinguished in thought alone; the acceptance of the first three ecumenical councils as common heritage and a mutual understanding of respective views on the four later councils; the veneration of icons.
- + They stated a clear understanding 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.
- + They recommended 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. The manner in which the anathemas are to be lifted should be decided by the Churches individually.

II. Recommendations on Pastoral Issues

(A) Relations among our two families of Churches:

- + They felt that a period of intense preparation of our people to participate in the restoration of communion of our Churches is needed. This should include an exchange of visits by our heads of Churches and prelates, priests and lay people of each one of our two families of Churches to the other; and further encouragement to the exchange of theological professors and students among theological institutions of the two families for periods varying from one week to several years.
- + In localities where Churches of the two families co-exist, they suggested that the congregations should organize participation in one Eucharistic worship on a sunday or feast day.
- + Again the need for various publications to reach the people was stated; these would include the key documents of the Joint Commission, a summary of Christological terminology as it was used in history and in the light of our agreed statement on Christology, a descriptive book about all the Churches of our two families, brief books of Church History giving a more positive understanding of the divergencies of the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries.
- + They recognised each others baptism's and suggested that where conflicts arise between Churches of our two families over marriages, annulments etc., the Churches involved should come to bilateral agreements on the procedure to be adopted until such problems are finally solved by our union.

(B) Relations of our Churches with other Christian Churches:

- + They agreed with the Joint Sub-Committee that our common participation in the ecumenical movement needs better co-ordination to make it more effective and fruitful.

- + There was a suggestion for small joint consultations on issues like :
 - (a) The position and role of the woman in the life of the Church / the ordination of women to the priesthood,
 - (b) Pastoral care for mixed marriages between Orthodox and heterodox Christians,
 - (c) Marriages between Orthodox Christians and members of other religions,
 - (d) The Orthodox position on annulment of marriage, divorce and separation of married couples,
 - (e) Abortion,
 - (f) Proselytism,
 - (g) The theology and practice of Uniatism in the Roman Catholic Church (as a prelude to a discussion with the Roman Catholic Church on this subject).
 - + There was found to be a need for another joint consultation to co-ordinate the results of the several bilateral conversations now going on or held in the past by the Churches of our two families with other Catholic and Protestant Churches.
- (C) Our common service to the world of suffering, need, injustice and conflicts:
- + They called for the co-ordination of our existing schemes for promoting our humanitarian and philanthropic projects in the socio-ethnic context of our peoples and of the world at large. This would entail our common approach to such problems as : hunger and poverty, sickness and suffering, political, religious and social discriminations, refugees and victims of war, youth, drugs and unemployment, the mentally and physically handicapped, the aged.
- (D) Our co-operation in the propagation of the Christian Faith:
- + This includes mutual co-operation in the work of our inner mission to our people, and also collaborating with each other and with the other Christians in the Christian mission to the world.

4. COMMUNIQUES

AARHUS 1964 AGREED STATEMENT

Ever since the second decade of our century representatives of our Orthodox Churches, some accepting seven Ecumenical Councils and others accepting three, have often met in ecumenical gatherings. The desire to know each other and to restore our unity in the one Church of Christ has been growing all these years. Our meeting together in Ithodos at the Pan-Orthodox Conference of 1961 confirmed this desire.

Out of this has come about our unofficial gathering of fifteen theologians from both sides, for three days of informal conversations, in connection with the meeting of the Faith and Order Commission in Aarhus, Denmark.

We have spoken to each other in the openness of charity and with the conviction of truth. All of us have learned from each other. Our inherited misunderstandings have begun to clear up. We recognize in each other the one orthodox faith of the Church. Fifteen centuries of alienation have not led us astray from the faith of our fathers.

In our common study of the Council of Chalcedon, the well known phrase used by our common father in Christ, St. Cyril of Alexandria, *mia physis* (or *mia hypostasis*) *lou Theou Logou sesarkomene* (the one *physis* or *hypostasis* of God's Word Incarnate) with its implications, was at the centre of our conversations. On the essence of the Christological dogma we found ourselves in full

agreement. Through the different terminologies used by each side, we saw the same truth expressed. Since we agree in rejecting without reservation the teaching of Eutyches as well as of Nestorius, the acceptance or non-acceptance of the Council of Chalcedon does not entail the acceptance of either heresy. Both sides found themselves fundamentally following the Christological teaching of the one undivided Church as expressed by St. Cyril.

The Council of Chalcedon (451), we realize, can only be understood as reaffirming the decisions of Ephesus (431), and best understood in the light of the later Council of Constantinople (553). All councils, we have recognized, have to be seen as stages in an integral development and no council or document should be studied in isolation.

The significant role of political, sociological and cultural factors in creating tension between factions in the past should be recognized and studied together. They should not, however, continue to divide us.

We see the need to move forward together. The issue at stake is of crucial importance to all churches in the East and West alike and for the unity of the whole Church of Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit, Who indwells the Church of Jesus Christ, will lead us together to the fullness of truth and of love. To that end we respectfully submit to our churches the fruit of our common work of three days together. Many practical problems remain, but the same Spirit Who led us together here will, we believe, continue to lead our churches to a common solution of these.

Eastern Orthodox

Bishop Emilianos,
Ecumenical Patriarchate

The Very Rev. Prof. G. Florovsky,
Ecumenical Patriarchate

The Very Rev. Prof. J.S. Romanides
Ecumenical Patriarchate

The Very Rev. Prof. Vitaly Borovoy
Russian Orthodox Church

The Rev. Prof. J. Meyendorff
Russian Orthodox Greek
Catholic Church of North America

Prof. J.N. Karmiris
Church of Greece

Prof G. Konidaris
Church of Greece

Dr. K.N. Khella
Coptic Orthodox Church

Dr. Getachew Haile
Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Oriental Orthodox

Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan,
Armenian Apostolic Church

Bishop Karein Sarkissian,
Armenian Apostolic Church

Archbishop Mar Severius Zakka Iwas
Syrian Orthodox Church

Metropolitan Mar Thoma Dionysius
Orthodox Syrian Church of the East

The Rev. Father Dr. N.J. Thomas
Orthodox Syrian Church of the East

Like Siltanat Habte Mariam Worqineh
Ethiopian Orthodox Church

The Rev. Prof. V.C. Samuel
Orthodox Syrian Church of the East

BRISTOL 1967
AGREED STATEMENT

1. We give thanks to God that we have been able to come together for the second time as a study group, with the blessing of the authorities of our respective Churches. In Aarhus we discovered much common ground for seeking closer ties among our Churches. In Bristol we have found several new areas of agreement. Many questions still remain to be studied and settled. But we wish to make a few common affirmations.

-- ONE --

2. God's infinite love for mankind, by which He has both created and saved us, is our starting point for apprehending the mystery of the union of perfect Godhead and perfect manhood in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is for our salvation that God the Word became one of us. Thus He who is consubstantial with the Father became by the Incarnation consubstantial also with us. By His infinite grace God has called us to attain to His uncreated glory. God became by nature man that man may become by grace God. The manhood of Christ thus reveals and realizes the true vocation of man. God draws us into fullness of communion with Himself in the Body of Christ, that we may be transfigured from glory to glory. It is in this soteriological perspective that we have approached the Christological question.

3. We were reminded again of our common fathers in the universal Church - St. Ignatius and St. Irenaeus, St. Anthony and St. Athanasius, St. Basil and St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. John Chrysostom, St. Ephraim Syrus and St. Cyril of Alexandria and many others of venerable memory. Based on their teaching, we see the integral relation between Christology and soteriology and also the close relation of both to the doctrine of God and to the doctrine of man, to ecclesiology and to spirituality, and to the whole liturgical life of the Church.

4. Ever since the fifth century, we have used different formulae to confess our common faith in the One Lord Jesus Christ, perfect God and perfect Man. Some of us affirm two natures, wills and energies hypostatically united in the One Lord Jesus Christ. Some of us affirm one united divine-human nature, will and energy in the same Christ. But both sides speak of a union without confusion, without change, without division, without separation. The four adverbs belong to our common tradition. Both affirm the dynamic permanence of the God-head and the Manhood, with all their natural properties and faculties, in the one Christ. Those who speak in terms of "two" do not thereby divide or separate. Those who speak in terms of "one" do not thereby commingle or confuse. The "without division, without separation" of those who say "two," and the "without change, without confusion" of those who say "one" need to be specially underlined, in order that we may understand each other.

5. In this spirit, we have discussed also the continuity of doctrine in the Councils of the Church, and especially the monenergistic and monothelete controversies of the seventh century. All of us agree that the human will is neither absorbed nor suppressed by the divine will in the Incarnate Logos, nor are they contrary one to the other. The uncreated and created natures, with the fullness of their natural properties and faculties, were united without confusion or separation, and continue to operate in the one Christ, our Saviour. The position of those who wish to speak of one divine-human will and energy united without confusion or separation does not appear therefore to be incompatible with the decision of the Council of Constantinople (680-81), which affirms two natural wills and two natural energies in Him existing indivisibly, inconvertibly, inseparably, inconfusedly.

6. We have sought to formulate several questions which need further study before the full communion between our Churches can be restored. But we are encouraged by the common mind we have on some fundamental issues to pursue our task of common study in the hope that despite the difficulties we have encountered the Holy Spirit will lead us on into full agreement.

-- TWO --

7. Our mutual contacts in the recent past have convinced us that it is a first priority for our Churches to explore with a great sense of urgency adequate steps to restore the full communion between our Churches, which has been sadly interrupted for centuries now. Our conversations at Aarhus in 1964 and at Bristol in 1967 have shown us that, in order to achieve this end by the grace of God, our Churches need to pursue certain preliminary actions.

8. The remarkable measure of agreement so far reached among the theologians on the Christological teaching of our Churches should soon lead to the formulation of a joint declaration in which we express together in the same formula our common faith in the One Lord Jesus Christ whom we all acknowledge to be perfect God and perfect Man. This formula, which will not have the status of a confession of faith or of a creed, should be drawn up by a group of theologians officially commissioned by the Churches, and submitted to the Churches for formal and authoritative approval, or for suggestions for

modifications which will have to be considered by the commission before a final text is approved by the Churches.

9. In addition to proposing a formula of agreement on the basic Christological faith in relation to the nature, will and energy of our one Lord Jesus Christ, the joint theological commission will also have to examine the canonical, liturgical and jurisdictional problems involved - e.g anathemas and liturgical deprecations by some Churches of theologians regarded by others as doctors and saints of the Church, the acceptance and nonacceptance of some Councils, and the jurisdictional assurances and agreements necessary before formal restoration of communion.

10. We submit this agreed statement to the authorities and peoples of our Churches with great humility and deep respect. We see our task as a study group only in terms of exploring together common possibilities which will facilitate action by the Churches. Much work still needs to be done, both by us and by the Churches, in order that the unity for which our Lord prayed may become real in the life of the Churches.

Eastern Orthodox

Metropolitan Emilianos
Ecumenical Patriarchate

The Very Rev. Prof. G. Florovsky
Ecumenical Patriarchate

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Archpriest V. Borovoy
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Archimandrite D. Papandreou
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Coptic Orthodox Church

Vardapet Dr. M.K.Krekorian
Armenian Apostolic Church

Ato G.E. Mikre Selassie
Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Metropolitan Theophilos Philippos
Orthodox Syrian Church of the East

Bishop Samuel
Coptic Orthodox Church

The Rev. Prof. V.C. Samuel
Orthodox Syrian Church of the East

Rev. Fr. P. Verghese
Orthodox Syrian Church of the East

GENEVA 1970

1. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. The third unofficial consultation between the theologians of the Oriental Orthodox and Eastern Orthodox Churches was held from August 16-21, 1970 at the Cenacle, Geneva, in an atmosphere of openness and trust which has been built up thanks to the two previous conversations at Aarhus (1964) and Bristol (1967).

REAFFIRMATION OF CHRISTOLOGICAL AGREEMENT

2. We have reaffirmed our agreements at Aarhus and Bristol on the substance of our common Christology. On the essence of the Christological dogma our two traditions, despite fifteen centuries of separation, still find themselves in full and deep agreement with the universal tradition of the one undivided

Church. It is the teaching of the blessed Cyril on the hypostatic union of the two natures in Christ that we both affirm, though we may use differing terminology to explain this teaching. We both teach that He who is consubstantial with the Father according to Godhead became consubstantial also with us according to humanity in the Incarnation, that He who was before all ages begotten from the Father, was in these last days for us and for our salvation born of the blessed Virgin Mary, and that in Him the two natures are united in the one hypostasis of the Divine Logos, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation. Jesus Christ is perfect God and perfect man, with all the properties and faculties that belong to Godhead and to humanity.

3. The human will and energy of Christ are neither absorbed nor suppressed by His divine will and energy, nor are the former opposed to the latter, but are united together in perfect concord without division or confusion; He who wills and acts is always the One hypostasis of the Logos Incarnate. One is Emmanuel, God and Man, Our Lord and Saviour, Whom we adore and worship and who yet is one of us.

4. We have become convinced that our agreement extends beyond Christological doctrine to embrace other aspects also of the authentic tradition, though we have not discussed all matters in detail. But through visits to each other, and through study of each other's liturgical traditions and theological and spiritual writings, we have rediscovered, with a sense of gratitude to God, our mutual agreement in the common tradition of the One Church in all important matters liturgy and spirituality, doctrine and canonical practice, in our understanding of the Holy Trinity, of the Incarnation, of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, on the nature of the Church as the Communion of Saints with its ministry and Sacraments, and on the life of the world to come when our Lord and Saviour shall come in all his glory.

5. We pray that the Holy Spirit may continue to draw us together to find our full unity in the one Body of Christ. Our mutual agreement is not merely verbal or conceptual it is a deep agreement that impels us to beg our Churches to consummate our union by bringing together again the two lines of tradition which have been separated from each other for historical reasons for such a long time. We work in the hope that our Lord will grant us full unity so that we can celebrate together that unity in the Common Eucharist. That is our strong desire and final goal.

SOME DIFFERENCES

6. Despite our agreement on the substance of the tradition, the long period of separation has brought about certain differences in the formal expression of that tradition. These differences have to do with three basic ecclesiological issues - (a) the meaning and place of certain councils in the life of the Church, (b) the anathematization or acclamation as Saints of certain controversial teachers in the Church, and (c) the jurisdictional questions related to manifestation of the unity of the Church at local, regional and world levels.

(a) Theologians from the Eastern Orthodox Church have drawn attention to the fact that for them the Church teaches that the seven ecumenical councils which they acknowledge have an inner coherence and continuity that make them a single indivisible complex to be viewed in its entirety of dogmatic definition. Theologians from the Oriental Orthodox Church feel, however, that the authentic Christological tradition has so far been held by them on the basis of the three ecumenical councils, supplemented by the liturgical and patristic tradition of the Church. It is our hope that further study will lead to the solution of this problem by the decision of our Churches.

As for the Councils and their authority for the tradition, we all agree that the Councils should be seen as charismatic events in the life of the Church rather than as an authority over the Church; where some Councils are acknowledged as true Councils, whether as ecumenical or as local, by the Church's tradition, their authority is to be seen as coming from the Holy Spirit. Distinction is to be made not only between the doctrinal definitions and canonical legislations of a Council, but also between the true intention of the dogmatic definition of a Council and the particular terminology in which it is expressed, which latter has less authority than the intention.

(b) The reuniting of the two traditions which have their own separate continuity poses certain problems in relation to certain revered teachers of

one family being condemned or anathematized by the other. It may not be necessary formally to lift these anathemas, nor for these teachers to be recognised as Saints by the condemning side. But the restoration of Communion obviously implies, among other things, that formal anathemas and condemnation of revered teachers of the other side should be discontinued as in the case of Leo, Dioscurus, Severus, and others.

(c) It is recognised that jurisdiction is not to be regarded only as an administrative matter, but that it also touches the question of ecclesiology in some aspects. The traditional pattern of territorial autonomy or autocephaly has its own pragmatic, as well as theological, justification. The manifestation of local unity in the early centuries was to have one bishop, with one college of presbyters united in one Eucharist. In more recent times pragmatic considerations, however, have made it necessary in some cases to have more than one bishop and one Eucharist in one city, but it is important that the norm required by the nature of the Church be safe guarded at least in principle and expressed in Eucharistic Communion and in local conciliar structures.

7. The universal tradition of the Church does not demand uniformity in all details of doctrinal formulation, forms of worship and canonical practice. But the limits of pluralistic variability need to be more clearly worked out, in the areas of the forms of worship, in terminology of expressing the faith, in spirituality, in canonical practice, in administrative or jurisdictional patterns, and in the other structural or formal expressions of tradition, including the names of teachers and Saints in the Church.

TOWARDS A STATEMENT OF RECONCILIATION

8. We reaffirm the suggestion made by the Bristol consultation that one of the next steps is for the Churches of our two families to appoint an official joint commission to examine those things which have separated us in the past, to discuss our mutual agreements and disagreements and to see if the degree of agreement is adequate to justify the drafting of an explanatory statement of reconciliation, which will not have the status of a confession of faith or a dogmatic definition, but can be the basis on which our Churches can take the steps necessary for our being united in a common Eucharist.

We have given attention to some of the issues that need to be officially decided in such a statement of reconciliation. Its basic content would of course be the common Christological agreement; it should be made clear that this is not an innovation on either side, but an explanation of what has been held on both sides for centuries, as is attested by the liturgical and patristic documents. The common understanding of Christology is the fundamental basis for the life, orthodoxy and unity of the Church.

Such a statement of reconciliation could make use of the theology of St. Cyril of Alexandria as well as expressions used in the Formula of Concord of 433 between St. Cyril and John of Antioch, the terminology used in the four later Councils and in the patristic and liturgical texts on both sides. Such terminology should not be used in an ambiguous way to cover up real disagreement, but should help to make manifest the agreement that really exists.

SOME PRACTICAL STEPS

9. Contacts between Churches of the two families have developed at a pace that is encouraging. Visits to each other, in some cases at the level of heads of Churches, and in others at episcopal level or at the level of theologians have helped to mark further progress in the growing degree of mutual trust, understanding and agreement. Theological students from the Oriental Orthodox Churches have been studying in institutions of the Eastern Orthodox Churches for some time now; special efforts should be made now to encourage more students from the Eastern Orthodox Churches to study in Oriental Orthodox institutions. There should be more exchange at the level of theological professors and church dignitaries.

It is our hope and prayer that more official action on the part of the two families of Churches will make the continuation of this series of unofficial conversations no longer necessary. But much work still needs to be done, some of which can be initiated at an informal level.

10. With this in mind this third unofficial meeting of theologians from the

two families constitutes:

(a) a Continuation Committee of which all the participants of the three conversations at Aarhus, Bristol and Geneva would be corresponding members, and

(b) a Special Executive Committee of this Continuation Committee consisting of the following members, and who shall have the functions detailed further below:

1. Metropolitan Emilianos of Calabria
2. Archpriest Vitaly Borovoy
3. Vardapet Mesrob Krikorian
4. Professor Nikos Nissiotis
5. Father Paul Verghese

Functions:

(a) To edit, publish and transmit to the Churches a report of this third series of conversations, through the Greek Orthodox Theological Review.

(b) To produce, on the basis of a common statement of which the substance is agreed upon in this meeting, a resume of the main points of the three unofficial conversations in a form which can be discussed, studied and acted upon by the different autocephalous Churches;

(c) To publish a handbook containing statistical, historical, theological and other information regarding the various autocephalous Churches;

(d) To explore the possibility of constituting an association of Theological Schools, in which all the seminaries, academies and theological faculties of the various autocephalous Churches of both families can be members;

(e) To publish a periodical which will continue to provide information about the autocephalous Churches and to pursue further discussion of theological, historical and ecclesiological issues;

(f) To make available to the Churches the original sources for an informed and accurate study of the historical developments in the common theology and spirituality as well as the mutual relations of our Churches;

(g) To sponsor or encourage theological consultations on local, regional or world levels, with a view to deepening our own understanding of, and approach to, contemporary problems especially in relation to our participation in the ecumenical movement;

(h) To explore the possibilities of and to carry out the preliminary steps for the establishment of one or more common research centres where theological and historical studies in relation to the universal orthodox tradition can be further developed;

(i) To explore the possibility of producing materials on a common basis for the instruction of our believers including children and youth and also theological text-books.

Eastern Orthodox -----

Dr. A. Arvanitis
Church of Greece

Archpriest V. Borovoy
Russian Orthodox Church

Prof. N. Chitescu
Romanian Orthodox Church

Metropolitan Emilianos
Ecumenical Patriarchate

The Very Rev. Prof. G. Florovsky
Ecumenical Patriarchate

Metropolitan Georges

Oriental Orthodox -----

Kahali Alemu C.
Ethiopian Orthodox Church

The Very Rev. N. Bozabalian
Armenian Apostolic Church

Abba G.E. Degou
Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Bishop Gregorius
Coptic Orthodox Church

Metropolitan Severius Zakka Iwas
Syrian Orthodox Church of India

The Rev. Dr. K.C. Joseph

Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch

Prof. J.Karmiris
Church of Greece

Prof. G. Konidaris
Church of Alexandria

The Rev. Prof. J. Meyendorff
Orthodox Church in America

Metropolitan Nikodim
Bulgarian Orthodox Church

Prof N.A. Nissiotis
Church of Greece

Archimandrite D. Papandreou
Church of Greece

Prof. B. Piperov
Bulgarian Orthodox Church

The Very Rev. Prof. J.S. Romanides
Church of Greece

Prof. L. Voronov
Russian Orthodox Church

Dr. J.D. Zizioulas
Church of Greece

Prof. I. Zonewski
Bulgarian Orthodox Church

Syrian Orthodox Church of India

Dr. M.K.Krekorian
Armenian Apostolic Church

Metropolitan Theophilos Philippos
Syrian Orthodox Church of India

Rev. Fr. P. Verghese
Syrian Orthodox Church of India

Lige Seltanat Habte Mariam Worqneh
Ethiopian Orthodox Church

ADDIS ABABA 1971
1. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions and questions have arisen out of our informal discussions in Addis Ababa about the lifting of anathemas and the recognition of Saints:

1. We agree that the lifting of the anathemas pronounced by one side against those regarded as saints and teachers by the other side seems to be an indispensable step on the way to unity between our two traditions,

2. We are also agreed that the lifting of the anathemas would be with a view to restoring communion between our two traditions, and therefore that it presupposes essential unity in the faith between our two traditions. The official announcement by both sides that there is in fact such essential unity in faith, a basis for which is already provided by the reports of our earlier conversations at Aarhus, Bristol and Geneva, would thus appear to be essential for the lifting of anathemas.

3. We agree further that once the anathemas against certain persons cease to be effective, there is no need to require their recognition as saints by those who previously anathematized them. Different autocephalous churches have differing liturgical calendars and lists of Saints. There is no need to impose uniformity in this matter. The place of these persons in the future united church can be discussed and decided after the union.

4. Should there be a formal declaration or ceremony in which the anathemas are lifted? Many of us felt that it is much simpler gradually to drop these anathemas in a quiet way as some churches have already begun to do. Each church should choose the way most suited to its situation. The fact that these anathemas have been lifted can then be formally announced at the time of union.

5. Who has the authority to lift these anathemas? We are agreed that the Church has been given authority by her Lord both to bind and to loose. The

Church which imposed the anathemas for pastoral or other reasons of that time, has also the power to lift them for the same pastoral or other reasons of our time. This is part of the stewardship or Oikonomia of the Church.

6. Does the lifting of an anathema imposed by an ecumenical council call in question the infallibility of the Church? Are we by such actions implying that a Council was essentially mistaken and therefore fallible? What are the specific limits within which the infallibility of the Church with her divine-human nature operates? We are agreed that the lifting of the anathemas is fully within the authority of the Church and does not compromise her infallibility in essential matters of the faith. There was some question as to whether only another ecumenical council could lift the anathema imposed by an ecumenical council. There was general agreement that a Council is but one of the principal elements expressing the authority of the Church, and that the Church has always the authority to clarify the decisions of a Council in accordance with its true intention. No decision of a Council can be separated from the total tradition of the Church. Each council brings forth or emphasizes some special aspect of the one truth, and should therefore be seen as stages on the way to a fuller articulation of the truth. The dogmatic definitions of each council are to be understood and made more explicit in terms of subsequent conciliar decisions and definitions.

7. The lifting of anathemas should be prepared for by careful study of the teaching of these men, the accusations levelled against them, the circumstances under which they were anathematized, and the true intention of their teaching. Such study should be sympathetic and motivated by the desire to understand and therefore to overlook minor errors. An accurate and complete list of the persons on both sides to be so studied should also be prepared. The study should also make a survey of how anathemas have been lifted in the past. It would appear that in many instances in the past anathemas have been lifted without any formal action beyond the mere reception of each other by the estranged parties on the basis of their common faith. Such a study would bring out the variety of ways in which anathemas were imposed and lifted.

8. There has also to be a process of education in the churches both before and after the lifting of the anathemas, especially where anathemas and condemnations are written into the liturgical texts and hymnody of the church. The worshipping people have to be prepared to accept the revised texts and hymns purged of the condemnations. Each church should make use of its ecclesiastical journals and other media for the pastoral preparation of the people.

9. Another important element of such education is the rewriting of Church history, text-books, theological manuals and catechetical materials. Especially in Church history, there has been a temptation on both sides to interpret the sources on a partisan basis. Common study of the sources with fresh objectivity and an eirenic attitude can produce common texts for use in both our families. Since this is a difficult and time consuming project, we need not await its completion for the lifting of anathemas or even for the restoration of Communion.

10. The editing of liturgical texts and hymns to eliminate the condemnations is but part of the task of liturgical renewal. We need also to make use of the infinite variety and richness of our liturgical traditions, so that each church can be enriched by the heritage of others.

11. There seems to exist some need for a deeper study of the question: ``Who is a Saint?'' Neither the criteria for sainthood nor the processes for declaring a person as a Saint are the same in the Eastern and Western traditions. A study of the distinctions between universal, national and local saints, as well as of the processes by which they came to be acknowledged as such, could be undertaken by Church historians and theologians. The lifting of anathemas need not await the results of such a study, but may merely provide the occasion for a necessary clarification of the tradition in relation to the concept of sainthood.

12. Perhaps we should conclude this statement with the observation that this is now the fourth of these unofficial conversations in a period of seven years. It is our hope that the work done at an informal level can soon be taken up officially by the churches, so that the work of the Spirit in bringing us together can now find full ecclesiastical response. In that hope we submit this fourth report to the churches.

Metropolitan Parthenion
Patriarchate of Alexandria

Metropolitan Nikodim
Moscow Patriarchate

Metropolitan Nikodim
Church of Greece

Metropolitan Methodios
Patriarchate of Alexandria

Archpriest L. Voronov
Moscow Patriarchate

Prof. S. Agourides
Church of Greece

Prof. N.A. Nissiotis
Church of Greece

Prof. T. Sabev
Church of Bulgaria

Archpriest V. Borovoy
Russian Orthodox Church

Prof. P. Fouyas
Church of Greece

Dr. A. Mitsides
Church of Cyprus

Fr. S. Hackel
Russian Orthodox Church

Fr. N. Osolin
Russian Orthodox Church

Bishop Samuel
Coptic Orthodox Church

Bishop K. Sarkissian
Armenian Apostolic Church

Rev. Fr. P. Verghese
Syrian Orthodox Church of India

Dr. V.C. Samuel
Syrian Orthodox Church of India

Like Seltanat Habte Mariam Workineh
Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Prof. M. Selassie Gebre Ammanuel
Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Archimandrite N. Bozabalian
Armenian Apostolic Church

Archimandrite S. Kasparian
Armenian Apostolic Church

Dr. K.M. Simon
Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate

Ato Abebaw Yigzaw
Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Ato Adamu Amare
Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Ato Aberra Bekele
Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Ato Wolde Selassie
Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Ato Ayele Gulte
Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Archpriest Memher Ketsela
Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Melakem Berhanat Tesfa
Ethiopian Orthodox Church

CHAMBESY, 10-15 December, 1985

Joint-Commission of the Theological Dialogue Between the Orthodox Church
and the Oriental Orthodox Non-Chalcedonian Churches

After two decades of unofficial theological consultations and meetings (1964-1985), moved forward by the reconciling grace of the Holy Spirit, we, the representatives of the two families of the Orthodox tradition, were delegated by our Churches in their faithfulness to the Holy Trinity, and out of their concern for the unity of the Body of Jesus Christ to take up our theological dialogue on an official level.

We thank God, the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, for granting us the fraternal spirit of the love and understanding which dominated our meeting throughout.

The first part of our discussions centered on the appellation of the two families in our dialogue. Some discussion was also devoted to the four unofficial consultations of Aarhus (1964), Bristol (1967), Geneva (1970), and Addis Ababa (1971). It was thought that the studies and "agreed statements" of these unofficial consultations as well as the studies of our theologians could provide useful material for our official dialogue.

A concrete form of methodology to be followed in our dialogue was adopted by the Joint-Commission. A Joint Sub-Committee of six theologians was set up, three from each side, with the mandate to prepare common texts for our future work.

For the next meetings, whose aim would be to re-discover our common grounds in Christology and Ecclesiology, the following main theme and subsequent sub-themes were agreed upon:

Towards a common Christology

- a) Problems of terminology
- b) Conciliar formulations
- c) Historical factors
- d) Interpretation of Christological dogmas today.

Special thanks were expressed to the Ecumenical Patriarchate for convening this official dialogue, as well as for the services and facilities which were offered for our first meeting here in Chambesy, Geneva, at the Orthodox Centre.

We hope that the faithful of our Churches will pray with us for the continuation and success of our work.

Prof. Dr. Chrysostomos Konstantinidis
Metropolitan of Myra
Ecumenical Patriarchate

Bishop Bishoy
Coptic Orthodox Church
Co-President of the Commission
Co-President of the Commission

CORINTH, 23rd to 26th September, 1987

Meeting of the Joint Sub-Committee of the Joint-Commission
of the Theological Dialogue between
the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox non-Chalcedonian Churches

We, a group of theologians forming and representing the Joint Sub-Committee of the Joint-Commission of the theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the {\bf Oriental Orthodox non-Chalcedonian Churches}, met at Corinth, in Greece, from 23rd to 26th September 1987 in order to discuss problems of terminology as decided by the first Plenary Session (Chambesy, 10-15 December 1985).

Although not all official members of the Joint Sub-Committee were able to participate in this meeting for different reasons, the group however could accomplish its mandate in preparing a common text for the future work.

We discuss the main problems of christological terminology and were convinced that though using some terms in different nuances or sense, both sides express the same Orthodox theology. We focused our dialogue on the terms: physis, ousia, hypostasis, prosopon,} and attested that they have not been used with conformity in different traditions and by different theologians of the same tradition. Following St. Cyril who in his key phrase sometimes used ``mia physis (tou theou Logou sesarkomeni)'' and sometimes ``mia hypostasis'', the non-Chalcedonians pay special attention to the formula ``mia physis'', and at the same time they confess the ``mia hypostasis'' of Jesus Christ, where as the Chalcedonians stress specially the term ``hypostasis'' to express the unity of both the divine and human natures in Christ. Yet we all confirmed our agreement that the unique and wonderful union of the two natures of Christ is a "hypostatic", natural and real unity.

We affirmed that the term "Theotokos" used for the Virgin Mary, is a basic element of faith in our common tradition. In this connection for the solution of the terminological problems of Christology could be helpful the confession of St. Cyril of Alexandria, our common father:

``Almost the whole of our struggle is con central in order to assure that Holy Virgin is "Theotokos" '}', (Ep. 39, PG 77, 177).

``Therefore it is sufficient for the confession of our true and irreproachable faith to say and to confess that the Holy Virgin is ``Theotokos'', (Hom. 15, PG 77, 1093).

We were convinced therefore, in confessing Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God the Father, truly born of the Holy and Virgin Mary, our Churches have avoided and rejected the heretical teachings of both Nestorius and Eutyches. Both lines of terminological development produced the same true faith through different terms, because both condemned Nestorianism and Eutychianism. The common denominator of these two interpretations was the common doctrine of the two real births of the Logos. The Logos, the Only-begotten of the Father before the ages, became man through His second birth in time from the Virgin Mary. Both interpretations accepted the two real births of the Logos, whereas Nestorianism denied his second birth - "for that which is born of flesh is flesh". Every theologian who accepted the two real births of the Logos, was to be considered orthodox, regardless to every terminological differentiation.

We concluded our discussions expressing our faith that the hypostatic union of the two natures of Christ was necessary for the salvation of the human kind. Only the Incarnate Logos, as perfect God and at the same time perfect man, could redeem man and peoples from sin and condemnation.

The four attributes of the wonderful union of the natures belong also to the common tradition of the Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Christology, since both sides speak of it as "without confusion, without change, without division, without separation". Both affirm the dynamic permanence of the Godhead and the Manhood with all their natural properties and faculties, in the one Christ. Those who speak in terms of "two", don't thereby divide or separate. Those who speak in terms of "one", don't thereby co-mingle or confuse. The "without division, without separation" of those who say "two" and the "without change, without confusion" of those who say "one", need to be specially underlined, in order that we may understand and accept each other.

Heart-felt thanks were expressed to His Eminence Panteleimon, Metropolitan of Corinth and president of the Commission of Interorthodox Relations, for his friendly and generous hospitality as well as for the services and facilities offered for our meeting in Corinth.

We hope that the faithful of our Churches will pray with us for the continuation and success of our dialogue.

Elias
Metropolitan of Beirut

Bishoy
Bishop of Damiette

Chrysostomos
Metropolitan of Peristerion
Europe and Sweden

Dr. Mesrob K. Krikorian
Patriarchal Delegate for Central

Prof. Vlassios Phidas
Canada

Father Tadros Y. Malaty
Coptic Orthodox Church

Secretary: Dr. M.K.Krikorian,
Kolonitzgasse 11/11, 1030 Vienna,
Austria

EGYPT, 20-24 June, 1989

Anba Bishoy Monastery - Wadi El-Natroun

Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between
the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches

The second meeting of the Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches took place at the Anba Bishoy Monastery in Wadi-El-Natroun, Egypt from June 20th to 24th, 1989.

The official representatives of the two families of the Orthodox Churches met in an atmosphere of warm cordiality and Christian brotherhood for four days at the guest house of the Patriarchal Residence at the Monastery, and experienced the gracious hospitality and kindness of the Coptic Orthodox Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and his Church.

His Holiness Pope and Patriarch Shenouda addressed the opening session of the meeting and appealed to the participants to find a way to restore communion between the two families of Churches. The participants also travelled to Cairo to listen to the weekly address of Pope Shenouda to thousands of the faithful in the Great Cathedral of Cairo. Pope Shenouda also received the participants at his residence later.

The twenty three participants came from thirteen countries and represented 13 Churches. The main item for consideration was the report of the Joint Sub-Committee of six theologians on the problems of terminology and interpretation of Christological dogmas today. The meetings were co-chaired by his Eminence Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland and his Grace Bishop Bishoy of Damiette. In his response to Pope Shenouda Metropolitan Damaskinos appealed to the participants to overcome the difficulties caused by differences of formulation. Words should serve and express the essence, which is our common search for restoration of full communion. `` This division is an anomaly, a bleeding wound in the body of Christ, a wound which according to His will that we humbly serve, must be healed. ''

A small drafting group composed of Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios of New Delhi, Professor Vlassios Phidas, Prof. Fr. John Romanides, Prof. Dimitroff, and Mr. Joseph Moris Faltas produced a brief statement of faith based on the report of the Joint Sub-Committee, in which the common Christological convictions of the two sides were expressed. This statement, after certain modifications, was adopted by the Joint Commission for transmission to our churches, for their approval and as an expression for our common faith, on the way to restoration of full communion between the two families of Churches. The statement follows :

Agreed Statement

We have inherited from our fathers in Christ the one apostolic faith and tradition, though as churches we have been separated from each other for centuries. As two families of Orthodox Churches long out of communion with each other we now pray and trust in God to restore that communion on the basis of common apostolic faith of the undivided church of the first centuries which we confess in our common creed. What follows is a simple reverent statement of what we do believe, on our way to restore communion between our two families of Orthodox Churches.

Throughout our discussions we have found our common ground in the formula of our common father, St. Cyril, of Alexandria : mia physis (hypostasis) tou Theou Logou sesarkomene, and his dictum that `` it is sufficient for the confession of our true and irreproachable faith to say and to confess that the Holy Virgin is Theotokos (Hom : 15, cf. Ep. 39) ''.

Great indeed is the wonderful mystery of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one True God, one ousia in three hypostases or three prosopa. Blessed be the Name of the Lord our God, for ever and ever.

Great indeed is also the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, for us and for our salvation.

The Logos, eternally consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit in his Divinity, has in these last days, become incarnate of the Holy Spirit and Blessed Virgin Mary Theotokos, and thus became man, consubstantial with us in His humanity but without sin. He is true God and true man at the same time, perfect in His Divinity, perfect in His humanity. Because the One she bore in her womb was at the same time fully God as well as fully human we call her the Blessed Virgin Theotokos.

When we speak of the one composite (synthetos) hypostasis of our Lord Jesus Christ, we do not say that in Him a divine hypostasis and a human hypostasis came together. It is that the one eternal hypostasis of the Second Person of the Trinity has assumed our created human nature in that act uniting it with His own uncreated divine nature, to form an inseparably and unconfusedly united real divine-human being, the natures being distinguished from each other in contemplation (theotia) only.

The hypostasis of the Logos before the incarnation, even with His divine nature, is of course not composite. The same hypostasis, as distinct from nature, of the Incarnate Logos, is not composite either. The unique theandric person (prosopon) of Jesus Christ is one eternal hypostasis who has assumed human nature by the Incarnation. So we call that hypostasis composite, on

account of the natures which are united to form one composite unity. It is not the case that our fathers used *physis* and *hypostasis* always interchangeably and confused the one with the other. The term *hypostasis* can be used to denote both the person as distinct from nature, and also the person with the nature, for a *hypostasis* never in fact exists without a nature.

It is the same *hypostasis* of the Second Person of the Trinity, eternally begotten from the Father who in these last days became a human being and was born of the Blessed Virgin. This is the mystery of the *hypostatic union* we confess in humble adoration – the real union of the divine with the human, with all the properties and functions of the uncreated divine nature, including natural will and natural energy, inseparably and unconfusedly united with the created human nature with all its properties and functions, including natural will and natural energy. It is the *Logos Incarnate* who is the subject of all the willing and acting of Jesus Christ.

We agree in condemning the Nestorian and Eutychian heresies. We neither separate nor divide the human nature in Christ from His divine nature, nor do we think that the former was absorbed in the latter and thus ceased to exist.

The four adverbs used to qualify the mystery of the *hypostatic union* belong to our common tradition – without co-mingling (or confusion) (*asyngchytos*), without change (*atreptos*), without separation (*achoristos*) and without division (*adiaretos*). Those among us who speak of two natures in Christ, do not thereby deny their inseparable, indivisible union; those among us who speak of one united divine-human nature in Christ do not thereby deny the continuing dynamic presence in Christ of the divine and the human, without change, without confusion.

Our mutual agreement is not limited to Christology, but encompasses the whole faith of the one undivided church of the early centuries. We are agreed also in our understanding of the Person and Work of God the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father alone, and is always adored with the Father and the Son.

The Joint Commission also appointed a Joint Sub-Committee for Pastoral Problems between churches of the two families, composed of the following ten persons.

- Metropolitan Damaskinos, Co-President, Ex officio
- Bishop Bishoy, Co-President, Ex officio
- Prof. Vlassios Phidas, Co-Secretary, Ex officio
- Bishop Mesrob Krikorian, Co-Secretary, Ex officio
- Metropolitan Georges Khodr of Mt Liban
- Metropolitan Petros of Axum
- Prof. Gosevic (Serbia)
- Prof. Dr. K. M. George (India)
- A nominee of Patriarch Ignatius Zaka Iwas of Syria
- Metropolitan Gregorios of Shoa

This Joint Sub-Committee will have its first meeting from December 5th to 9th in Anba Bishoy Monastery and will prepare a report for the next meeting of the Joint Commission.

It was also decided that the next meeting of the Joint Commission would be held in September 1990 at Chambesy, Geneva, to consider :

- a) The report of the Joint Sub-Committee on Pastoral Problems.
- b) Conciliar formulations and anathemas. (Rev. Prof. John S. Romanides, H. E. Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios).
- c) Historical factors. (Prof. Vlassios Phidas, Rev. Father Tadros Y. Malaty).
- d) Interpretation of Christological dogmas today. (Metropolitan Georges Khodr of Mt Liban, Bishop Mesrob Krikorian, and Mr. Joseph Moris).
- e) Future steps.

It was also decided that the name of the Joint Commission would be Joint Commission of the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

Eastern Orthodox

Metropolitan Damaskinos Papandreouy
Metropolitan of Switzerland

Oriental Orthodox

Bishop Bishoy
Bishop of Damiette

Orthodox Co-president of the Joint Commission.

General Secretary Holy Synod Coptic Orthodox Church and Orient. Orth. Co-president of the Joint Commission.

Prof. Vlassios Phidas
Co-Secretary
Sec. to Synod for Inter Ch. Relations

Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios
Metropolitan of Delhi

Mr. Joseph Moris Faltas
Dipl. Theol. Assistant Co-Secretary

EGYPT, 31 January - 4 February, 1990
Anba Bishoy Monastery - Wadi El-Natroun

Report of the Joint Sub-Committee about the Pastoral Problems

I- The General Committee of the Joint Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches, met at Anba Bishoy Monastery - Wadi El-Natroun, during the period 31/1 - 4/2/1990. In an atmosphere of hearty love and Christian brotherhood, both His Eminence Metropolitan Damaskinos, Bishop of Switzerland and His Grace Bishop Bishoy of Damiette, chaired the works of the Committee.

At the inaugural session His Holiness Pope Shenouda III welcomed and addressed the members, focussing on the importance of the joint agreement concerning the issue of Christology, the text of which was signed by the Joint Commission for the Theological Dialogue in its meeting in summer 1989. He also pin pointed the widespread acceptance of this agreement by everybody.

Moreover, he showed great interest in the joint work between our churches taking part in the dialogue, to overcome our pastoral problems. Furthermore, he drew the attention of the Committee to the importance of mutual recognition of Baptism, and taking into consideration marriage, divorce, etc

Both of the two Secretaries of the Committee Professor Vlassios Vidas and Mr. Joseph Morris Faltas, recorded the outcomes of these discussions and then put them down in the present text of the Report, which expresses the spirit of the discussions and the final proposals of the Joint Sub-Committee for Pastoral Affairs.

II- The Orthodox Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches have a clear feeling that they live in, and confess Jesus Christ in the same faith, that is fed continuously and uninterruptedly from the fatherly apostolic source of the early centuries. The lack of mutual understanding of the Christological explanations and expressions, did not affect the substance of the faith, in the humanity at its fullness and the divinity at its fullness of the Incarnate Logos Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God (Monogenis Eiou Oheou).

This common feeling did not only yield many fruits, in the attempts of brotherhood and theological initiatives and discussions, but also yielded the common spiritual experience of the believers.

The greatest criterion of the fatherly apostolic tradition is that it formed the teachings, worship of God, the conception of asceticism, and the ecclesiastic life in general. It also identified in the past, and even more today, the deep meaning of brotherhood and spiritual approach between the Orthodox Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

In this respect, it is worth confirming that while the faith unifies us, history keeps us distant, or isolates brotherly believers from each other. This is because it creates ecclesiastical practical problems, which often are more difficult in its outcomes than those of the historical difference, which are caused by theological expressions or dogmatic explanations.

In fact, the start of the official theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches always indicates the wealthy faith and tradition that we possess, and the common basis of our faith through the common theological texts. However, this alone does not automatically solve the problems of our ecclesiastical relations existing since many centuries.

And although these problems do not have a deep theological cause, they renew

the feelings of suspicion and pain among us, and will diminish the value of the theological fruits of our official dialogue that we started together.

Our assessment of the historical theological problems through our theological dialogue differs from our assessment of these problems through our practical ecclesiastical relations. This does not express our commitment as in the theological dialogue we all express our agreement of our overcoming approximately fifteen centuries on one hand, and in our ecclesiastical relations we still abide to the preservations of the past on the other.

In this case, we give a perception that either the theological dialogue is theoretical and will remain without practical outcomes in the liturgical life of the Church, or that the actual liturgical practical life of the Church does not interact with its theological reality.

Only love and common sincere desire in unity are able to complement what is lacking in our relations through the common faith and ties of love.

The reaction in the Christian world regarding the fruits of our theological dialogue, proves the importance of the effort exerted.

Today the approaching and common work between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, is increasing continuously, not only due to our feeling of the same spirit, but also due to the need of the Christian world for the dogmatic and moral principles.

Denial of the divinity of Jesus Christ, authenticity of the Holy Bible, the problem of ordination of women to priesthood, and the problems facing the spiritual life, impose on us a common witness, not only in the area of the Ecumenical Movement, but also to the civilised world of today.

The things that separate us can be overcome by the spirit of love, mutual understanding, and through our common witness to the whole world.

The proposals of the Sub-Committee for Pastoral Affairs can be identified in two areas :-

- 1- The relation of the two Orthodox Families.
- 2- Our common relations with the rest of the Christian world.

1 - In the area of the relation between the two Orthodox families:-

a) The official ecclesiastical acceptance by the two parties of the theological agreement related to the Christology and the joint theological text signed by the joint Committee for the dialogue, as this will also apply to the ecclesiastical relations.

b) The clear official acceptance and recognition of the Baptism performed by the two families through the spirit of our common tradition and the unity of the mysteries and its distinctions as regards the gifts granted on one hand, and on the other, we can not separate Christ of the mysteries from Christ of the faith.

c) Regular attempts in our joint theological work to benefit of the fruits of our theological dialogue in the writings and publications of each of the two families, towards a farther objective to create ecclesiastical relations. This can be realised through exchanging the theological writings, professors and students of the Theological Institutes.

d) Preparation of publications to the congregation of the two families to be acquainted with what is taking place in the theological dialogue, and the relations existing between us.

e) Joint confrontation of the practical problems in the two families such as the problems of marriage - divorce (consideration of the marriage as having taken place) etc

f) Preparation of a book containing information about the churches taking part in the dialogue.

g) A summary of the most important Christological terms together with a brief explanation and analysis, based upon the fathers' theology and writings.

h) Preparation and publication in different languages of a separate pamphlet

comprising the joint text agreed upon in the meeting of the committee held in July 1989, related to our agreement on the issue of Christology, and its necessity for the unity of the Church.

2 - Regarding our relation with the external world :-

The following is of utmost importance from the practical point of view :

a) Serious joint work of the two families to adopt the same attitude in relation to the theological dialogue within the framework of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and with the countries of the whole world through the ecumenical movement.

b) To issue a joint communique against the modern conceptions, which are completely in contradiction with our Apostolic tradition, whether those related to the faith and the campaigns of suspicion, or those related to ecclesiastical issues, such as the ordination of women, and the moral issues.

c) As regards the issue of the woman's position in the church and also not allowing her to be ordained as a priest, the attitude of our churches is the same. Also the joint General Committee for the Dialogue can issue a declaration indicating the importance of the theological basis, which will depend upon the outcomes of the World Orthodox Summit Meeting held in Rhodes in 1988, as well as the address of H.H. Pope Shenouda III to the meeting of the Anglican Churches held at Lambeth 1988, and other sources.

d) The common work in view of neutralising the trends of proselytism among the churches.

e) The joint work to confront the religious groups who use twisted and dangerous means to mislead believers from the faith, such as Jehovah's witnesses, Adventists, etc

GENEVA, September 23 - 28, 1990
Orthodox Centre of Ecumenical Patriarchate - Chambesy

Joint-Commission of the Theological Dialogue between
the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches

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 September 23rd to 28th, 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 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) came from Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, Greece, India, Lebanon, Poland, Switzerland, Syria, U.K., U.S.A., U.S.S.R. (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 Bishoy of Damiette. His Eminence Metropolitan Damaskinos 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 (20-22, 1990), and the other from its Sub-Committee on Pastoral Relations, which met at the Anba Bishoy Monastery, Egypt (Jan 31 - Feb 4, 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'', Rev. Prof. 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'', Rev. Fr. T.Y.Malaty, Coptic Orthodox Church.
4. ``Historical Factors and the Terminology of the Synod of Chalcedon (451)'', Prof. 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 reports 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, Rev. Prof. John Romanides, Metropolitan Matta Mar Eustathius (Syria), Prof. Ivan Dimitrov (Bulgaria) with Prof. V. Phidas and Bishop Krikorian as co-secretaries, produced the draft for the Second Agreed Statement and Recommendations to Churches. Another drafting committee composed of Prof. Papavassiliou (Cyprus), Bishop Christoforos (Czechoslovakia), Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios and Liqaselttanat Habtemariam (Ethiopia), with Fr. 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 and Recommendations.

SECOND AGREED STATEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CHURCHES

The first Agreed Statement on Christology (Annex 1) adopted by the Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox and the 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 ``that they all may be one''.

1. Both families agreed 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 (\$ \nu \circ \epsilon \zeta \$); He was crucified, died, was buried and rose from the dead on the third day, ascended to the Heavenly Father, where He sits on 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 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, 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.

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 Homos 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", 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 "in thought alone". Cyril interpreted correctly this use in his letter to John of Antioch and his letters to Acacius of Melitene (pages 77, 184-201), and to Eulogius (pages 77, 224-228) and to Succensus ((pages 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 the 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 disagreement in this regard.

9. In the light of our Agreed Statement on Christology as well as 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 consummated on the basis that the councils and the fathers previously anathematised or condemned are not heretical.

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 anathematised 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 anathematised 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, 28 September 1990,

Eastern Orthodox

Metropolitan Damaskinos
Co-President
(Ecumenical Patriarchate)

Prof. Vlassios Phidas
Co-Secretary
(Greek Orth. Patr. Alexandria)

Prof. Athanasios Arvanitis
(Ecumenical Patriarchate)

Metropolitan Chrysostomos
of Peristerion
(Ecumenical Patriarchate)

Ecumenical Patriarchate
Prof. Father George Dragas

Greek Orth. Patr. Alexandria
Metropolitan Petros of Aksum

Greek Orth. Patr. Antioch
Metropolitan George Khodr
Metropolitan Damaskinos

Russian Patriarchate
Mr. Nikolai Zabolotski

Russian patriarchate
Mr. Grigorij Skobej

Serbian Patriarchate
Prof. Stojan Gosevic

Bulgarian Patriarchate
Dr. Ivan Zhelev Dimitrov

Gregorian Patriarchate
Metropolitan David of Sukhum

Gregorian Patriarchate
Mr. Boris Gagua

Church of Cyprus
Horepiskopos Barnabas of Salamis

Church of Cyprus
Prof. Andreas Papavasiliou

Church of Greece
Metropolitan Meletios of Nikopolis

Church of Greece
Prof. Father John Romanides

Polish Orthodox Church
Bishop Jeremiasz of Wroclaw
per
Metropolitan Damaskinos

Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia
Bishop Christoforos of Olomouc

Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia
Father Joseph Hauser

Finish Orthodox Church
Father Heikki Huttunen
per
Metropolitan Damaskinos

Oriental Orthodox

Metropolitan Bishoy
Co-President
(Coptic Orthodox Church)

Bishop Dr. Mesrob Krikorian
Co-Secretary
(Armenian Church of Etchmiadzin)

Metropolitan Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios
(Orth. Syrian Church of the East)

Dr. Joseph M. Faltas
Assistant Co-Secretary
(Coptic Orthodox Church)

Coptic Orthodox Church
Bishop Serapion

Coptic Orthodox Church
Father Tadros Y. Malaty

Syrian Orth. Patr. Antioch
Metropolitan Eustathius Matta Rouhm

Armenian Church of Etchmiadzin
(see co-secretary)

Catholicosate of Cilicia
Archbishop Aram Keshishian

Catholicosate of Cilicia
Archbishop Mestrob Ashdjian

Orth. Syrian Church of the East
Father George Kondortha

Ethiopian Orthodox Church
Archbishop Abba Gerima of Eluvabur

Ethiopian Orthodox Church
Rev. Habte Mariam Warkineh

GENEVA, September 23 - 28, 1990
Orthodox Centre of Ecumenical Patriarchate - Chambesy

Joint-Commission of the Theological Dialogue between
the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches

RECOMMENDATIONS ON PASTORAL ISSUES

1. The Joint-Commission of the theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, at its meeting at the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, in Chambesy, Geneva from September 23rd to 28th, 1990, received a report from its Joint Pastoral Sub-Committee which had met at the Anba Bishoy Monastery in Egypt from 31st January to 4th February 1990. The report was the starting point for an extended discussion of four types of pastoral issues:

- I. Relations among our two families of Churches, and our preparation for unity.
- II. Relations of our Churches with other Christian Churches and our common participation in the ecumenical movement.
- III. Our common service to the world of suffering, need, injustice and conflicts.
- IV. Our cooperation in the propagation of our common faith and tradition.

I. Relations among our two families of Churches

We feel as a Joint Theological Commission that a period of intense preparation of our people to participate in the implementation of our recommendations and in the restoration of communion of our Churches is needed. To this end we propose the following practical procedure.

2. It is important to plan an exchange of visits by our heads of Churches and prelates, priests and lay people of each one of our two families of Churches to the other.

3. It is important to give further encouragement to exchange of theological professors and students among theological institutions of the two families for periods varying from one week to several years.

4. In localities where Churches of the two families co-exist, the congregations should organize participation of one group of people - men, women, youth and children, including priests, where possible from one congregation of one family to a congregation of the other to attend in the latter's eucharistic worship on Sundays and feast days.

5. Publications:

(a) We need to publish, in the various languages of our Churches, the key documents of this Joint Commission with explanatory notes, in small pamphlets to be sold at a reasonable price in all our congregations.

(b) It will be useful also to have brief pamphlets explaining in simple terms the meaning of the Christological terminology and interpreting the variety of terminology taken by various persons and groups in the course of history in the light of our agreed statement on Christology.

(c) We need a book which gives some brief account, both historical and descriptive, of all the Churches of our two families. This should also be produced in the various languages of our peoples, with pictures and photographs as much as possible.

(d) We need to promote brief books of Church History by specialist authors giving a more positive understanding of the divergencies of the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries.

6. Churches of both families should agree that they will not re-baptize members of each other, for recognition of the baptism of the Churches of our two families, if they have not already done so.

7. Churches should initiate bilateral negotiations for facilitating each other in using each other's church premises in special cases where any of them is deprived of such means.

8. Where conflicts arise between Churches of our two families, e.g. (a) marriages consecrated in one Church annulled by a bishop of another Church; (b) marriages between members of our two families, being celebrated in one church over against the other; (c) or children from such marriages being forced to join the one church against the other; the Churches involved should come to bilateral agreements on the procedure to be adopted until such problems are finally solved by our union.

9. The Churches of both families should be encouraged to look into the theological curriculum and books used in their institutions and make necessary additions and changes in them with the view to promoting better understanding of the other family of Churches. They may also profitably devise programmes for instructing the pastors and people in our congregations on the issues related to the union of the two families.

II. Relations of our Churches with other Christian Churches in the world

Our common participation in the ecumenical movement and our involvement in the World Council of Churches needs better co-ordination to make it more effective and fruitful for the promotion of the faith which was once delivered to the saints in the context of the ecumenical movement. We could have a preliminary discussion of this question at the Seventh Assembly of the WCC at Canberra, Australia, in February 1991 as well as in regional and national councils of Churches and work out an appropriate scheme for more effective co-ordination of our efforts.

11. There are crucial issues in which our two families agree fundamentally and have disagreements with the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches. We could organize small joint consultations on issues like :

(a) the position and role of the woman in the life of the Church and our common Orthodox response to the contemporary problem of other Christian communities concerning the ordination of women to the priesthood,

(b) pastoral care for mixed marriages between Orthodox and heterodox Christians,

(c) marriages between Orthodox Christians and members of other religions,

(d) the Orthodox position on dissolution or annulment of marriage, divorce and separation of married couples,

(e) abortion.

12. A joint consultation should be held on the burning problem of Proselytism, vis-a-vis religious freedom to draw the framework of an agreement with other Churches, for the procedure to be followed when an Orthodox or Oriental Orthodox person or family wants to join another (Catholic or Protestant) Church or vice-versa.

13. A special joint consultation should be held on the theology and practice of Uniatism in the Roman Catholic Church, as a prelude to a discussion with the Roman Catholic Church on this subject.

14. We need to have another joint consultation to co-ordinate the results of the several bilateral conversations now going on or held in the past by the Churches of our two families with other Catholic and Protestant Churches.

III. Our common service to the world of suffering, need, injustice and conflicts

15. We need to think together how best we could co-ordinate our existing schemes for promoting our humanitarian and philanthropic projects in the socio-ethnic context of our peoples and of the world at large. This would entail our common approach to such problems as :

(a) hunger and poverty,

(b) sickness and suffering,

- (c) political, religious and social discriminations,
- (d) refugees and victims of war,
- (e) youth, drugs and unemployment,
- (f) the mentally and physically handicapped,
- (g) the old and the aged.

IV. Our co-operation in the propagation of the Christian Faith

16. We need to encourage and promote mutual co-operation as far as possible in the work of our inner mission to our people, i.e. in instructing them in the faith, and how to cope with modern dangers arising from contemporary secularism, including cults, ideologies, materialism, aids, homo-sexuality, the permissive society, consumerism, etc.

17. We also need to find a proper way for collaborating with each other and with the other Christians in the Christian mission to the world without undermining the authority and integrity of the local Orthodox Churches.

Source: <http://www.coptic.net/articles/OrthodoxUnityDialog.txt>

COP|NET

C. THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON AND THE CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA

By The Very Reverend Father Tadros Malaty

THE IMPORTANCE OF RESTUDYING THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON

Nowadays it is very important to restudy and reexamine the Council of Chalcedon, not for the sake of reminding the world of wounds inflicted upon the Church of Alexandria by her sisters, the apostolic Churches, but in order to clarify the position of the Church of Alexandria. From the seventh century the Church of Alexandria had lost communication with other churches because of unwilling political circumstances. Through this long period she was accused of the following charges:

1. She is Eutychian!, and is called "Monophysite!" This title means that she believes in one nature of Jesus Christ, that the human nature was absorbed totally in the divine nature. This idea differs from our own belief and from our Fathers' belief; and our church never accepted it.

2. Dr. J. Tager [1] states that Christianity was foreign to Egypt until the fifth century, and that Egyptians accepted Christianity for political reasons. When their Patriarchs felt sympathy of the Christian world and the world-wide respect to their education, they found a chance to get rid of the emperor's authority, and did their best to exercise their religious thoughts which differed from those of their direct principal, i.e. the Roman Pope!

This picture is too far from reality with regard to the Coptic Church. History witnesses that Christianity was not foreign in Egypt, hundreds of thousand of Copts had been martyred in the Roman age. In Egypt all forms of the evangelic monastic movements originated, and in Egypt the School of Alexandria was established and its Fathers were well known all over the world. I think that there is no need to argue this accusation that the Patriarchs of Alexandria used to oppose their leader, the Roman Pontiff, for history reveals the relations of mutual respect between Alexandria and Rome!

It is not true that the Coptic Church was separated from the Universal Church because of its desire to flee from Byzantium, but the truth is that the emperors wanted to solve the theological disputes by force, and the Melkite (royal) Patriarch, who was appointed by the emperor, used to persecute the Copts using the power given to him. These elements created a kind of revolution within the souls of the Copts against the rulers.

3. Some scholars accused St. Dioscorus of violence, looking upon his exile as a penalty for his violence. There is a new trend amongst scholars that attributes violence to all Alexandrian Fathers, such as SS. Athanasius and Cyril, looking to their spiritual struggle for keeping fast the true faith of the Church as a kind of violence.

Now, I do not ignore the efforts which the Church in the East and West offered for the cause of unity, especially when many of the theologians acknowledge our true belief concerning Christology. I have already written about this matter [2]. Here I present in brief the theological point of view to clarify the Coptic Church's opinion in the Council of Chalcedon.

THE ALEXANDRIAN AND ANTIOCHENE CHRISTOLOGICAL THOUGHTS[3]

Many scholars attribute the problem of the Christological formula concerning the nature of Christ to the controversy between the Alexandrian and the Antiochene theology. While the Alexandrian School adopted the "hypostatic union" or "natural union" of the Godhead and manhood to assert the oneness of Jesus Christ, the Antiochene School accepted the "indwelling theology," that is the Godhead dwell in Manhood, as if Jesus Christ were two persons in one, to assert that no confusion had occurred between the Godhead and manhood and to avoid attributing human weakness to His divinity. The basis of the point of view to the Alexandrian School was John 1:14 "And the Word became flesh," while that of the Antiochenes was Colossians 2:9 "For in Him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

I would like to make clear the following points:

1. There was a controversy between the two schools, but they agreed on many points.

2. The problem has risen because of those who misinterpreted these Schools' concepts. Apollinarius of Laodicea, who denied that the Lord Jesus had a human soul, and Eutyches of Constantinople denied the humanity of Christ, both did wrong to the School of Alexandria. It is noteworthy that they accepted the Alexandrian formula concerning the one nature of Christ (mia-physis), they were not Alexandrians, nor had they studied the Alexandrian system of theology. On the other side Nestorius, Theodoret of Cyrus, Theodore of Mospuestia and Ibas of

Edessa who insisted to divide the Lord Jesus Christ in two persons, did wrong to the School of Antioch.

3. The imperial and church politics played their role in this controversy to create a huge gap between the leaders of these schools.

THE ALEXANDRIAN HYPOSTATIC UNION

St. Cyril, in his struggle against Nestorius explained the "hypostatic union" as a "personal union," "natural union" and "real unification." He conserves at least two ideas:

1. The Logos, an eternal hypostasis, united Himself to manhood, which had no existence before the incarnation and could not be separated from the Godhead. He became individuated by receiving its hypostatic status through His union with the Logos. Manhood was not an independent hypostasis apart from the Logos, but became a hypostasis through union with the Logos.
2. The union of the natures was inward and real. St. Cyril rejected the Antiochene theory of "indwelling," that is the Godhead of Christ dwelt in His manhood, or the theory of "conjunction" or "close participation" as insufficient to reveal the real unification but permits the division of the natures of Christ as Nestorius taught⁴.

MIA-PHYSIS OR ONE INCARNATE NATURE⁵

Sellers states that the majority of bishops who attended the Council of Chalcedon believed that the traditional formula received by St. Athanasius was the "one incarnate nature of the Word of God." This formula differs from that of Eutyches concerning the "one nature."

I have already clarified the meaning of the one nature (of Alexandria) as "mia-physis," through the writings of St. Cyril and the non-Chalcedonian Fathers, such as SS. Dioscorus, Severus of Antioch and Philoxenus: We can summarize the meaning in the following points:

1. We mean by "mia" one, but not "single one" or "simple one," but unity, one "out of two natures" as St. Dioscorus states.
 2. St. Cyril insisted on "the one nature" of Christ to assert Christ's oneness, as a tool to defend Church's faith against Nestorianism.
 3. According to the Nestorians "one nature" of Christ means only one of two probabilities: the natures had been absorbed or a confusion between the divine and human nature happened to produce one confused nature. St. Cyril confirmed that no confusion or absorption had occurred but a real unity.
 4. Jesus Christ is, at once, consubstantial with God the Father and consubstantial with us, men.
 5. He is at once God and man (Incarnate God).
 6. St. Severus states that in the incarnation "the divine nature of the Word was not changed into what it was not," but He remained what He was.
 7. The Word became truly man.
 8. Jesus' manhood was perfect, He had a body and also a soul.
 9. Manhood of Christ was not formed before the incarnation, i.e. the manhood did not exist then the Godhead dwelt in it afterwards.
- Some scholars tried to attribute the Alexandrian theological system to the Egyptian attitude of asceticism, saying that Copts concentrated on the "deification" or "divination" of believers, ignoring the body. I have discussed this wrong idea before⁶.

THE ANTIOCHENE "DYO PHYSEIS" (TWO NATURES)⁷

To understand the Antiochene formula: "two natures after the union" we must know its position in the "one nature-two nature dispute":

1. The Arians could not accept the Godhead of Christ because it made of Him two persons: God and man.
2. St. Athanasius confirmed the unity of Godhead and manhood, repeating the church's belief in one person; and "Christ's body" was His own body and not a strange element (of Christ). Thus Jesus Christ is one Person and not two, had one nature without rejecting the dynamic presence of His Godhead and manhood.
3. Apollinarius of Laodicea used the Alexandrian formula "one nature" in his own theological system. In his eagerness to defend the church's faith against the Arianism he believed that the Logos was united with a mere human body and that the Logos replaced the soul that was united to the body received from the Virgin Mary. In other words to realize the hypostatic union he believed that the manhood of Christ is incomplete (body without soul).
4. The Antiochene leaders treated the "hypostatic union" of Cyril with suspicion as if it were Apollinarian. They adopted the theory of the "indwelling" of the Logos in the manhood, to assert Christ's manhood and to confirm Him as a real and perfect man. Nestorius declared this theory when he refused to call St. Mary "Theotokos" and rejected the Alexandrian statement: "the Son of God died." In fact the Antiochenes desired to assert three facts in the incarnation:

- a. The manhood of Christ was real and perfect.
 - b. There was no confusion between the natures of Christ.
 - c. The Godhead is impassable, God did not suffer, nor did He die.
- But at the same time they speak of Christ as two persons, two sons [Son of God and Son of Man].

The "Dualism" of the Person of Christ is very clear in the statements of the Antiochene leaders, but as they used to deny it to defend themselves, some modern scholars state that they did not intend to dualism, but rejected it, as well as Nestorius himself.

Today some scholars wonder whether Nestorius himself was truly a Nestorian, but the majority of scholars still believe that the Antiochene Christology divides the natures of Christ.

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1. Dr. Tager: Copts & Moslems (in Arabic, ch. [1].
 2. For more details see:
 *Christology according to the Non-Chalcedonian Churches, 1986.
 *The Term Physis & Hypostasis in the Early Church, 1986.
 *The Coptic Orthodox Church as a Church of Erudition & Theology, 1986, ch. 14.
 3. See: The Terms Physis & Hypostasis... p. 10f.
 4. Ibid 11,12.
 5. Ibid 12-19.
 6. Ibid 19f.
 7. Ibid 25f.

EVENTS PRECEDENT TO THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON[1]

DISPUTE OVER THE PERSON OF CHRIST REOPENED

In the third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus in the year 341 A.D, Nestorius was deposed from his See and excommunicated, his doctrines were condemned, the creed of Nicea reaffirmed, and formal approval was given to the title "Theotokos." The Antiochene side attacked these decisions. On the arrival of John of Antioch, joined by Theodoret of Cyrus and other bishops, a rival meeting was held at which St. Cyril and Memnon of Ephesus were excommunicated and deposed as guilty of violence and heresy... Every Party had its supporters in the court, and the Emperor, more or less uncertain, did not know which side to support. St. Cyril was put into jail for two months and was then permitted to return to his see, but Nestorius was exiled into Egypt where he died in Upper Egypt. A reconciliation between John and Cyril was finally effected in A.D 433. John sent Paul of Emesa to Alexandria with credentials for Cyril and a profession of faith that was to serve as the basis of an agreement. St. Cyril accepted it and sent back to Antioch his famous letter "Laetentur caeli" i.e., the "Formulary of reunion." The problem was externally solved, but the "Reunion" itself was being taken in a different way by the Alexandrian and the Antiochene sides. St. Cyril accepted it just as to lead the Antiochenes to accept the Council of Ephesus (431) unconditionally. The Antiochenes also were not satisfied by the reunion, and they were angry for the exile of Nestorius. Neither of the great parties was as a whole content with the term of the Union Symbol. Now, the circumstances had been changed and the controversy returned in a more severe form which created a bitter schism in the Church, through the Council of Chalcedon in A.D 451. We can summarize the events in the following:

At Edessa, in A. D 435 a newly elected bishop Ibas turned out to be a zealous disciple of Theodore of Mospuestia (an Antiochene leader), and the dogmatic controversy now began to concentrate on Theodore's writings. John of Antioch was replaced in A. D 443 by his nephew Domnus, who had a weak and unstable character, a man only capable of sensible decisions when he had Theodoret of Cyrus at hand to advise him. In the year 444 St. Cyril died and was succeeded by Dioscorus. At Constantinople Proclus was succeeded (A. D 446) by Flavian. He seemed to believe in "one incarnate nature of the Word of God out of the two," but Theodoret of Cyrus changed his mind.

According to church tradition St. Dioscorus sent letters to his brothers the bishops. Theodoret of Cyrus replied with a kind letter, wherein he praised his modesty and decency. Theodoret declared his enmity to St. Dioscorus, for the latter sent a letter to Domnus of Antioch, blaming him kindly and openly for his encouragement to Theodoret to preach the people with the Nestorian dualism of the Person of Christ, despising the Council of Ephesus and declaring that Nestorius was not a heretic. Domnus sent a kind reply to St. Dioscorus, telling him that he enjoyed his letter because of his love and openness.

ST. DIOSCORUS AND EUTYCHES

Eutyches (c.378-454) was an Archmandrite of a monastery at Constantinople. He was an old ascetic, endowed with eloquence but he was not a true theologian. Eutyches had widespread fame throughout the see of Constantinople, within the monastic

circles, the imperial court and among the people. As a friend of St. Cyril, he received from him a copy of the decisions of the Council of Ephesus in A.D 431. He accepted the Alexandrian Christological formula "one incarnate nature of the Word of God..." In his eager opposition to Nestorianism, he defended the formula "one nature" against that of the "two natures," but without sound theological basis, as he inferred that the Godhead absorbed the manhood of Christ. Until today scholars cannot understand the character of Eutyches and his theology, for he sometimes used orthodox statements, against his main ideas. Perhaps because he was shaky in the theological knowledge, or because he was a deceiver, or even because he was cautious not to lose his fame or his position and priesthood. A struggle occurred between Eutyches and Theodoret, the latter accused St. Cyril of Apollinarianism, and published a long attack against St. Cyril and Eutyches. Eusebius of Dorylaeum tried to agitate Flavian of Constantinople to condemn Eutyches. The Patriarch Flavian asked Eusebius to treat this matter with wisdom but the latter insisted on the condemnation of Eutyches before a council. The Council of Constantinople was held in A.D 448, but Eutyches refused to appear before the council till the seventh session. He denied ever having said that Jesus' flesh came from heaven. He repeated that Christ took flesh of the Virgin Mary, and added that it was a complete incarnation, but he refused to conclude that His flesh was consubstantial with us. Eusebius insisted on answering these two questions: Was Christ consubstantial with us? Were there in Him two natures after the Incarnation? Concerning the first question he was hesitating, but he assured that the holy Fathers of the Church spoke of the "one nature." Many scholars.[2] state that according to this council discussions, Eutyches was not confirmed heretic, and that Eusebius did not aim at gaining Eutyches to the truth but to obliging him to accept the Nestorian dualism and that the condemnation of Eutyches by the Council was a hasty action.

THE SECOND COUNCIL OF EPHESUS IN 449 A D

Eutyches condemnation caused many troubles in Constantinople. His supporters accused Flavian and his supporters of Nestorianism. Flavian had to excommunicate some monastery leaders somewhat violently. Eutyches appealed to Rome, Alexandria, Jerusalem and Thessalonica, and through his friend Chrysophius, the chief Chamberlain, he lodged a complaint to the emperor saying that those who judged him desired to accept the Nestorian dualism, and that the minutes of the Council had been falsified. Leo of Rome wrote to Eutyches, praising his zeal in opposing the Nestorian dualism, and at the same time wrote to Flavian to be kind to Eutyches.[3] But he changed his mind perhaps when he heard that the emperor wrote to St. Dioscorus, Pope of Alexandria, summoning him to a council to be held to discuss this matter. Leo, who had no real knowledge of the nature of the conflict between the Alexandrian and Antiochine Christology sent his tome (letter) to Constantinople on 13 June 449, not to work for the reconciliation of the parties but to deform the Alexandrian theologians. Tixeront's comment on this tome was : [This letter has always been regarded as a dogmatic document of exceptional value. Yet, it is decidedly inferior, in theological inspiration, to the work of Cyril, and strictly so-called speculation hardly finds any place in it at all. St. Leo does not discuss or demonstrate; he judges and settles difficulties[4]. Leo was occupied with "papacy" more than the dogma of the Church as we will see through the current events of the fifth century. J.W.C. Wand states: [Leo was one of the greatest of all ecclesiastical statesmen, and has been called the Father of Papacy.[5] This attitude was clear, as he wrote back to the emperor that there was no need for a council, but that he was nominating Julius of Puteoli, presbyter Renatus and deacon Hilary as his delegates simply to satisfy the emperor [6] declaring that his tome was enough to offer the needed guidance. Emperor Theodosius II who was convinced with the necessity to hold a council, asked Dioscorus to exercise supreme authority over it as president, and asked Juvenal of Jerusalem and Thalassius of Caesarea in Capadocia to be co-presidents with him. The decisions of the council were:

1. The Rehabilitation of Eutyches: It was not the error of St. Dioscorus that this council rehabilitated Eutyches, for these reasons:
 - a. Leo of Rome wrote to Pulcheria, saying that Eutyches inclined into heresy because of his ignorance, if he repents then let him be treated kindly. Leo declared the same idea in his letters to Julius of Cios (448-458) and to Flavian [7].
 - b. Eutyches declared orthodox statements, like: [For He who is the Word of God came down from heaven without flesh and was made flesh from the very flesh of the Virgin unchangeable and inconvertible, in a way He Himself knew and willed. And He who is always perfect God before the ages was also made perfect man in the end of days for us and for our salvation.]

2. Condemnation of the Nestorian leaders: Chadwick states in his book "the Early Church" that the council went on to depose the leading Nestorians, such as Ibas of Edessa, Daniel of Charrae, Irenaeus of Tyre, Theodoret of Cyrus, Domnus of Antioch and Flavian of Constantinople. The minutes of this council in Syriac revealed their Nestorian dualism attitude.

Many Chalcedonians state that the schism which occurred through the council of Chalcedon was a reaction of what happened in the Second Council of Ephesus; first because Dioscorus omitted the Tome of Leo, and second because he was violent. But we shall argue these two charges.

THE OMISSION OF THE TOME OF LEO

The Roman bishop considered this omission as a despise for his Petrine authority, describing the council as "the Robbers' Council," a title which is still used by many westerns!

It is noteworthy that this "Tome" was not written as a document to the council, but as a letter to the emperor and a copy had been sent to the council and handed to the delegates. This document had been given wide publicity in the East, even before the council was held. The bishops - and not Dioscorus alone - did not read it out of respect for the See of Rome. This Tome was read by Nestorius while he was in his exile and he declared his approval of it [8]. The Greek Prof. Florovsky says: [The tome of Leo, if taken alone by itself, could have created the impression of an excessive opposition of two natures especially by its persistent attribution of particular acts of Christ to different natures, without any adequate emphasis on the unity of Christ's Person, although the intention of the Pope himself was sound and orthodox. However the interprets of the Tome by the Roman Catholic historians and theologians in modern times quite often transfer a certain quasi Nestorian bias, to which attention has been called recently by some Roman Catholic riters themselves.[9]

WAS ST. DIOSCORUS VIOLENT [10]?

1. The Council was not held on the demand of Pope Dioscorus, and there were no previous letters between the Alexandrian Pope and the emperors. This means that St. Dioscorus demanded no personal benefit.
2. The imperial letters did not describe St. Dioscorus with titles more honorable than others. This means that there was no previous agreement between the emperor and St. Dioscorus.
3. The imperial letters revealed the increased theological troubles that spread in the See of Constantinople.
4. Decisions were accepted through voting, and we do not hear that one of the bishops who were present resented or withdrew from the Council, except Flavian and Eusebius on giving a statement against them.
5. In the opening word which Juvenal of Jerusalem addressed, he described Leo of Rome as a "saint" and "lover of God." These titles revealed the council's spirit.
6. When Leo of Rome asked the emperor of the West, Valentinus, his mother and his sister Pulcheria to intercede before Theodosius II, to summon another council, the latter sent them a letter praising the Council of Ephesus, starting that it was controlled by the fear of God.
7. In the imperial message at the opening of the Council, the emperor revealed the violence of Theodoret of Cyrus.
8. In fact, until the last moment of this council, St. Dioscorus did not speak an evil word against Rome, while Leo in his epistles referred to our Pope as "that Egyptian plunderer," and "preacher of the devil's errors," who tried to force his "villainous blasphemies" on his brethren.

1. The Coptic Church.. as a Church of Erudition & Theology, p.100-1; 115.
2. Kelly: Early Christian Doctrines, 1978, p. 333; Jobland: The Life and Time of St. Leo the Great, p.216.
3. Gregorius B. Behnam: Pope Dioscorus of Alexandria, Defender of the Faith, Cairo 1968 (in Arabic), p. 93.
4. History of Dogmas vol. 3, p. 81.
5. A History of the Early Church to A.D. 500, 1965, p. 237.
6. Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum (ACO), Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1933, II, i, p. 45:10.
7. Mgr. Hefele: Histoire de Conciles, Paris 1969, t2, p. 555-8.
8. Henry Chadwick: The Early Church, 1974, p.202 [See Methodios Fouyes, Archbishop of Theateria..., heological and Hist. Studies, v.8, Athens 1985, p.15].
9. Methodois Fouyes, p.12,13.
10. The Coptic Church ... as a Church of Erudition & Theology, p.122.

THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON

LEO OF ROME AND THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON

The delegates of Rome returned to their bishop declaring their failure to protect Flavian and his company. Leo wrote to Theodosius II against St. Dioscorus, and the Church of Constantinople and lastly asked Valentinian III, through his wife Eudoxia and his mother Galla Placidia, to write to his brother Theodosius concerning Dioscorus and the council of Ephesus of 449, but Theodosius refused his demand praising St. Dioscorus and the council of Ephesus.

Leo realized his aim with the help of the following events:

1. Leo received appeals from those who opposed the council of Ephesus (449), to attack the Alexandrian theology, calling the Second Council of Ephesus: "The Robbers' Synod."
2. The death of Flavian was an event which elicited sympathy for the cause of Leo, particularly in Constantinople. This incident came to be interpreted in later times by the opponents of the council of 449 as having been caused by physical injuries inflicted on Flavian at the council.
3. On July 28, 450 Theodosius died and his sister Pulcheria and her consort Marcian were declared emperors on 28 August 450. Pulcheria denied her vow as a virgin. She was a woman of remarkable ability and indomitable will. She removed Chrysophius - the grand Chamberlain - from her way by a sentence of death, and banished Eutyches to Doliche in north Syria. Now, she supported "Rome" against "Alexandria." She and her husband gathered signatures on the "Tome" of Leo, to be introduced as a basic paper at Chalcedon against Alexandrian theologians. At the same time she decided not to let Rome enjoy supreme authority in the Church; she refused Leo's demand to hold a council in Italy, but insisted that it would be held in the East. When she saw that matters were turning out well and that it was impossible to hold the desired council in Italy, he expressed a wish that no council be held at all, but Marcian and Pulcheria were bent on having one. Leo sent a letter to declare that he would send delegates to the council. For the first time Leo describes Eutyches as being malicious and wicked like Nestorius. This sudden change means nothing but that a conspiracy was atched against St. Dioscorus.

Although the Council of Chalcedon is believed to have condemned Eutyches, the man whom it really dealt with was not the old monk, but Pope Dioscorus of Alexandria, for Eutyches was not present at the council but he was away in north Syria, where he had been exiled even before the council was held.

In fact, St. Dioscorus was condemned not because of theological heresy but due to political circumstances which played the principal role in this council. Some of the leaders of this council, such as Anatolius of Constantinople considered him quite Orthodox. Many of the scholars confirm his orthodoxy [1].

SESSION 1 (8TH OF OCTOBER 451)

When the judges started to declare the order of the acts of the council, Paschasinus said, "We have orders from the most blessed and apostolic man, the bishop of the city of Rome, who is the head of all churches, enjoining that Dioscorus should not have a place in the synod. If this is violated, he should be cast out. We are obliged to obey this injunction. Your excellency may order, therefore, that either he goes out or we depart [2]". When the judges asked if what Dioscorus had done was against the laws, the other Roman delegate replied: "He had seized the office of judge, and dared to conduct a council, without the authorization of the apostolic See, a thing which has never happened and which ought not to have happened [3]."

Now I will discuss all the charges which were brought against our Pope.

1. HIS PRESIDENCY OVER THE EPHESIAN COUNCIL

It is clear that it was not in fact a charge against Dioscorus but it was an attempt to give the Roman bishop a supreme authority over the Universal Church. It was not Dioscorus who had summoned the Ephesian Council but the emperors, and their letter still survives. It is astonishing that Leo protested against the Ephesian Council as being illegal because he had not given permission for it, while we find him sending his delegates to the council, and they were angry as Leo's Tome was not read. It was not Dioscorus alone who was president of the council, but there were two co-presidents (Juvenal and Thalassius) attending according to an imperial order.

2. THE STORY OF THE BLANK PAPERS

Stephen of Ephesus said that they were forced to sign blank papers, through violence. This story was fabricated for many reasons:

- a- Eusebius of Dorylaeum who was present at Ephesian Council did not mention the story of the blank papers in his petitions to the emperor.
- b- If this story was true why did they wait for over two years to hear it for the first time on October A.D. 451 from the men who had signed the tome of Leo and agreed to support it?!

c- When St. Dioscorus asked them about the recording of the acts of the Ephesian Council, they confessed that every bishop was accompanied by a clerk and there were many copies of the acts recorded by the clerks of Juvenal, Thalassius, Elesuis of Coronth etc. How then had they signed blank papers?!

d- When the bishops were asked about the excommunication of Flavian they did not say that they had signed blank papers, but said twice: "We all have sinned, we ask for pardon."

e- Throughout the acts of the Chalcedonian Council, the bishops' discussions reveal that this story was fabricated, as everyone told a different story.

f- St. Dioscorus openly blamed the bishops who said that they had signed blank papers because it is the bishop's duty to be brave especially when he signs what concerns the precious Faith [4].

3. THE REHABILITATION OF EUTYCHES

When they discussed the words of Eutyches, his accuser said that Eutyches was a liar. St. Dioscorus explained that his concern is not persons but the apostolic faith.

4. THE CONDEMNATION OF FLAVIAN AND EUSEBIUS

The commissioners asked how Eutyches who had not accepted the Formulary of Reunion of A.D. 433 was acquitted, while Flavian and Eusebius who had accepted it were excommunicated. Here the main problem was raised, when St. Dioscorus explained how St. Cyril - confirmed by St. Athanasius - refused the formula "two natures after the union" as unlawful, but used "one incarnate nature of God the Word". On hearing "one nature," some bishops shouted, [Eutyches says these things! Dioscorus says these things!] Here St. Dioscorus clarified the Alexandrian point of view, saying: [We do not speak of confusion, neither of division, nor of change. Let him who says confusion, change or mixture, be anathema [5]. St. Dioscorus tried to make his position clear, that he did not accept "two natures after the union," but he had no objection to "From two natures after the union."]

The verdict of the Commissioners was announced:

Dioscorus of Alexandria, Juvenal of Jerusalem, Thalassius of Caesarea in Copadocia, Eusebius of Ancyra, Eustathius of Berytus and Basil of Seleucia in Insuria - these were the men who had been really responsible for the decisions of the second council of Ephesus, and should as such all be deposed. At the close of the first session - and contrary to what Pope (Leo) had planned should be the main business of the council - the commissioners decided that a discussion on the question of the true faith should take place at the following meeting, and that every delegate should produce in writing a statement of the faith, bearing in mind that the emperor believed in accordance with the decrees of Nicea and Constantinople, together with the writings of the holy Fathers, Gregory, Basil, Hilary, Ambrose and the two letters of Cyril which had been approved at the first council of Ephesus, besides the tome of Leo.

V. C. Samuel notices here that they refer to the two canonical letters of Cyril, i.e. the Second and Third letters addressed to Nestorius, but in fact the last one with its anathemas was not read at Chalcedon.

THE SECOND SESSION (On 10th October)

This session did not produce better results, despite the absence of the heads of Ephesian Council whose deposition was announced the day before. The assembly most strongly protested against the suggestion that they should dare to draw up "another exposition of the faith in addition to what had been taught by the Fathers and set down in writing [6]". Although many bishops signed the tome of Leo before holding the council, when it was read at this session there were men who raised objections to three passages in the Tome (especially the bishops of Illyricum and Palestine). Atticus of Nicopolis asked for a time to compare it with the third letter of St. Cyril to Nestorius.

The Illyrians pleaded that mercy should be shown to the heads of the Ephesian Council, but no attention was paid to them. At the close of the session the commissioners declared that the following session would be held after five days in order that those who had doubts about the tome may meet with Anatolius of Constantinople and clear their misgivings.[7]

THE THIRD SESSION (on 13th of October)

Suddenly the five-days recess was not respected, but on the 13th October the council met under the presidency of the Roman legate Paschasinus, and it was attended neither by the commissioners nor the six condemned men. Rev. V.C. Samuel states that the minutes contain no mention of the number of bishops who attended this meeting, which does not even deserve to be counted as a session, but it is clear that their number was small, and that it was held in the martyrion of St.

Euphemia [8] (a small chapel) instead of the Church of Euphemia. As they desired to realize the formalities so that their statement would be canonical, they summoned Pope Dioscorus who told them that he was in custody, thus he could not accompany them to the meeting unless he was given permission by the authorities, and he put conditions for his attendance: The presence of the commissioners and those who were condemned with him. In his absence, it was not difficult to incite persons to accuse him of many charges for example that his life was desolate, there was such disaffection against him in Alexandria, he prevented sending corn to Libya etc. These charges were false, for history itself witnesses how he was most warmly loved and honored by a vast majority of the people of Egypt. Even his adversaries didn't accuse him of any wrong conduct in his personal life. As for the story of the corn, it was a way to turn the emperor against him. They also accused him of excommunicating Leo. It is worthy to note that the word of the Roman legates at the end of the session declared that his disposal had been issued by Leo, and the assembly merely had to approve the decision... In fact it was not a statement for theological dogma but for defending the Roman Papal supremacy. The Contemporaries were confused in giving reasons for his deposal, but the majority did not attribute heresy to him, nor was he excommunicated.

THE FOURTH SESSION (17th of October)

A new formula of faith concerning the nature of Christ was not discussed except after the deposal of St. Dioscorus. Even while Aloys Grillmeier states: [It was only under constant pressure from the emperor Marcian that the Fathers of Chalcedon agreed to draw up a new formula of belief. Even at the fourth session of the council, on October 17th 451, the delegates of the emperor heard the synod once again endorse its purpose to create no new formula over and above the creeds of Nicea and Constantinople [9]. Tixeront also states: [Most of the Fathers were opposed to a new form of faith, but wished merely to approve certain documents, the contents of which would express their own belief [10]. It was the emperor's favor that the council had to draw out Alexandria and declare a new formula to bring the entire church in the east under the leadership of Constantinople. Emperors - for political reasons - wished to bring down Alexandria from the hegemony which it enjoyed in the east and to set up Constantinople in its place. They used Leo as a tool to realize their desire exploring his enmity to Alexandria, that seemed to him an obstacle in spreading his papal supreme authority over the church world-wide.

EVENTS OF THE 22ND OF OCTOBER

The eastern bishop came to the meeting with a draft statement of the formula to be adopted by the Council. According to Tixeront [its text is lost. All we know for certain is that it asserted that Jesus Christ is "of" two natures "ek dus phuson" on script. The expression was accurate, but ambiguous, and in a particular way, unsatisfactory, since Dioscorus himself had declared that he held it. However, the formula was accepted by most of the members of the council, except the papal legates and some Orientals (who held Nestorian attitudes)[11]. This comment explains how the majority of the bishops were holding fast the Alexandrian formula of faith, and it is important to study why this draft had been lost.

Under the threat of the Roman legates the commissioners asked a new statement, but the bishop insisted that this was the definition of the Orthodox[12]. Kelly states [Only by dint of consummate skill and diplomacy was the assembly induced to accept the necessary amendments[13].

The diplomacy that the commissioners used appears from what Hefele¹⁴ states, that the minutes here seem incomplete; perhaps they refer to Leo's formula not so contrary to the faith of the church but as a defense for it against Eutychianism.

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1. The Coptic Orthodox Church as a Church of Erudition, p. 129- 130.
 2. ACO II, i, p. 65:5.
 3. Ibid 65:9; Mansi VI & 581; Benham p. 134.
 4. Benham, p.140-2.
 5. ACO II, i, p. 112-263; Mansi VI, 676f.
 6. Sellers: The Council Of Chalcedon, p.109, Mansi VI, 953.
 7. ACO II, i, 279:31.
 8. Ibid 199:2.
 9. Christ in the Christian Tradition, London 1975, p.543.
 10. History of Dogmas, vol. 3, p. 89.
 11. Ibid [see Mansi V II: 105-105].
 12. ACO II, i, p. 210:36.
 13. Early Christ, Doct. p. 334.
 14. Early Christ. Doct. p. 345.

COULD THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON REALIZE A RECONCILIATION ?

I do not wish to present detailed theological discussions, for I have presented them in brief, in the book: "The Terms Physis and Hypostasis in the Early Church." I only want to clarify that some scholars who feel that the majority of bishops of the Chalcedonian Council preferred the Alexandrian formula: "one nature of the Incarnation Word of God" or "one nature of two Natures." The Roman legates practiced pressure on the commissioners to offer a new formula: "in two natures (en dus fuzzes)", instead of "ek dus phuson" (of two natures), those scholars try to give a justification to the Council, that it did not reject the Alexandrian formula nor did it consider it heretical, but insufficient, therefore the new formula was issued just to clarify the old one.

We reject the Chalcedonian formula for the following reasons:

1. The formula: "one nature" has an evangelic base, and touches our salvation. H. H. Pope Shenouda III clarifies this argument in detail in his book "The Nature of Christ," of which I wrote a summary as mentioned in this book.
 2. Some Chalcedonian Fathers and theologians stated that the Tome of Leo represents an insurmountable obstacle in the efforts made to unite with the non-Chalcedonians, for the latter believe that two "physeis and ousia" in one person is Nestorianizing. This is supported by the fact that Leo's Tome was praised by Nestorius himself [1], and that the Tome, if taken alone by itself could have created the impression of an excessive opposition of two natures, as Prof. Rev. Florovsky says[2].
 3. Kelly states that, unlike, their brethren in the East, the Westerns were concerned with the organization of ecclesiastical matters more than theological ones. He also states that with the exception of Tertullian, the west made little or no contribution to christological theology[3].
 4. We are in accord with the Tome in refuting Eutychianism and in confirming that Christ's manhood was real, Christ entered the mundane plane of existence and that the unity of Godhead and manhood had been realized without change... but the Tome consists of three statements, those which some of the Fathers of Chalcedon themselves rejected for their Nestorian attitude[4].
 5. Leo speaks of "one person (prosopon)" of Christ but this term does not suffice, for the Nestorians used it to mean "mask," i.e. external unity. There was a need to confirm the unity as a true and "hypostatic" one...
 6. The Council of Chalcedon adopted the Tome of Leo. In Egypt many believers were martyred for they refused to sign the Tome... The acceptance of the Tome as a principal document of faith disfigured the Council in the sight of the non-Chalcedonians.
 7. The "definitions" of Chalcedon admits the phrase "one hypostasis." Some of the Nestorians objected on this addition, but they accepted it when the word "hypostasis" was interpreted to them as an equal to "prosopon"...
 8. We do not recognize this Council because it ignored all the traditional formulas of the Church, which confirm the oneness of the Person of Christ, as a true unity, such as: "one nature of two natures" and "one nature of the Incarnate Word of God."
- I conclude my discussion of the Council of Chalcedon by referring to the words of Sellers who defends this council... [In the first place, it should be understood that the (Monophysite) theologians were not heretics, nor were they regarded as such by leading Chalcedonians.[5]

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1. Methodios Fouyas, p.12,13.
 2. Christology according to the non-Chalcedonian Churches, p. 12-3.
 3. Terms: "Physis & Hypostasis in the Early Church", p. 30-1.
 4. Ibid 30f.
 5. The council of Chalcedon, SPCK 1961, p. 269.

The term "monophysite" was not used during the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries, but was used later in a specific way and in a polemic spirit on behalf of the Chalcedonian Churches.

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See also:

Why I Am Oriental Orthodox Instead of Byzantine Orthodox (external Web site)
<http://www.geocities.com/mfignatius/others/byzantine.html>

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