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July--September 1982

# THE STAR OF THE EAST

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an ecumenical journal dealing  
specially with the oriental and  
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An Ecumenical Journal dealing specially with  
the Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

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Vol. 4. No. 3

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## **The Catholicate in India**

Seventy years ago, on September 12, 1912, the Catholicate of the East, which had become defunct in Persia, was re-established in India. In a ceremony at which the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch, Moran Mar Abdel Meshiha officiated, an Indian Catholicos was installed by the Indian Church.

Though the title Catholicos had not existed in India before 1912, the autonomy and independence of the Indian Orthodox Church had time and time again been re-established, somehow only soon to be lost in the course of a few generations.

The Church which St. Thomas established here in the first century was under the authority of no Church abroad. Seven bishops had been consecrated by the Apostle and they had been instructed, as in all Apostolic Churches, how to choose and consecrate their successors without referring to anyone outside.

But it seems that the Churches outside the Roman Empire had always trouble defending their autonomy. There was no state structure to enforce order when there were disputes in the Church. One faction could always use some outside group to create schism or division.

The first such separation in the Indian Church came with the immigrant Christians under Thomas of Cana in the 4th century.

In violation of the Christian principle which forbids the organisation of a Church on a racial or ethnic basis the descendants of the Cananite immigrants seem to have set themselves up as a separate group—the Suddhists or Southists, as distinct from the main body of Indian Christians who then became the Northists, who lived north of the river. There was communion between them, but no intermarriage.

But the Cananite immigration did not lead to the loss of autonomy of the Indian Church. It was the Persian Church which in the Sixth century managed to bring the Indian Church under the Metropolitan of Fars (near present Qatar). The historical evidence clearly shows that the Persian Metropolitan of India used his position to extract money out of the Christian Community, which was fairly prosperous because of its foreign trade in spices, ivory, apes, peacocks etc. The Persian Catholicos of the East then restored autonomy to the Indian Church by putting it under a Metropolitan of India who was an Indian.

It was this autonomy, which had its own vicissitudes in history from the 7th to the 16th centuries that was again violently taken away by the Portuguese in 1599. From that time on we have some groups of Christians who leaned heavily on the Portuguese for protection and patronage (*padroado*) and were willing to live under a foreign jurisdiction even when not forced to do so. It was not merely the temporal advantages that enticed them. Possibly more influential was the fact that there would be a strong political power, even though foreign and imperialist, to enforce discipline and maintain unity in the Church.

The Dutch captured Cochin in 1663, of course with the help of the *Mutha Thavazhi* of the ruling dynasty of the Cochin royal family, whose power had been usurped by the *Elaya Thavazhi*. The Dutch had to fight the Portuguese in order to capture Cochin and Pallipuram as well as Cranganore, the ancient centres of Christians where St. Thomas had once landed. If the Dutch had stayed long in the area, there would have been a Dutch Reformed Church also in Kerala. The Dutch plans for an Indian empire fortunately did not materialize—thanks to the vigour of Marthanda Varma of Travancore (1729–1758) in fighting them, and to the British intrigues against them. The collapse of Dutch power in Kerala may be dated in 1753 when the Treaty of Mavelikkara was signed, by which the Dutch agreed not to interfere with Travancore or its conquests. The Dutch lost Cochin to the British in 1795, and left.

It was during this period from 1663–1795 that the Indian Christians, fearing all three western “Christian” powers—Portugal, Holland and Britain, sought an alliance with the Syrian Church. The Dutch, who were fighting the Portuguese, helped to bring the Syrians here. The Dutch, being Reformed, were anti-Catholic, and were interested in the Indian Christians being liberated from the Roman hegemony. It is surprising that the Dutch East India Company, most of whose officers belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church, did not bring Dutch missionaries here to proselytise the Christians or evangelise the non-Christians in Kerala. But the Dutch did not give any direct assistance to the Syrian Bishops who came to take away



the autonomy of the Indian Church. They helped the Roman Catholic Indians and the Orthodox Indians alike. They often acted also as courriers between the Indians and people abroad.

It was during the British colonial period that there was another brutal incursion into the autonomy of the Church in India. In 1875, little more than a hundred years ago, Syrian Patriarch Peter III, came with the letters of authority from the British. He had visited Queen Victoria in England before coming to India. He dominated the young Indian Metropolitan (under 40) who was scared of the British, and forcefully in an action very similar to that of Portuguese Archbishop Menezes at the Synod of Diamper in 1599, drove the non-Roman Christians into a Syrian obedience at the notorious Mulanthuruthy Synod of 1876. He wanted all churches here to execute bonds pledging age-long obedience to him. Very few churches did that. Some of the descendants of those who did have been in the forefront of the new revolt the Syrians have engineered since 1970.

In 1912 the Indians reasserted their autonomy and got the ancient Catholicate of the East, associated with the name of St. Thomas the Apostle, established here. Till 1958 a group of Indians resisted submitting to the autocephalous authority of the Catholicos, preferring to owe allegiance to some of the bishops here who were obedient to the Syrian Patriarch.

Once the Supreme Court of India in 1958 recognized the validity of the Catholicate and the dwindling "to vanishing point" of the authority of the Syrian Patriarch here, it was possible for all, including the Syrian Patriarch, to recognize the full authority of the Catholicos in India. Between 1958 and 1964 all the Orthodox Christians in India came to acknowledge the authority of the Catholicos and to function in accordance with the Constitution of the Malankara Church.

There was perfect harmony between 1964 and 1970. Tensions began in 1970, and the Syrian Patriarch began to reclaim authority in the Indian Church, and to engage in many uncanonical actions listed elsewhere. But even in that situation, the Patriarch recognized the legitimacy and validity of the Catholicate, recognized by the Supreme Court of India. The only way he could interfere was by enthroning a rival Indian Catholicos, who on behalf of the Patriarch, could take over the Indian Church.

Today the Indian Church and its Catholicate enters a new stage in its history. What should have been done 900 years ago is now being clearly affirmed and established. The Orthodox Church of India is now a fully autocephalous Church in communion with the four other Oriental Orthodox Churches—those of Alexandria, Antioch,

Armenia and Ethiopia. Alexandria and Antioch are both ancient Patriarchal Sees and the Indian Church will continue to give them the respect due to them in accordance with the genuine decisions of the Ecumenical Synod of Nicea. But neither they nor any other Church will be allowed to interfere in the internal affairs of the Indian Church.

We should eventually work out a proper system by which the five Oriental Orthodox Churches can work together not only in peace and concord, but also in active co-operation. The Indian Church stands ready to serve our sister Churches. We are prepared to support and contribute to a co-ordinating office for the five Oriental Orthodox Churches, and to work out a constitution for an Inter-Synodal Committee of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. There are many things which the Oriental Orthodox Churches could today do in the ecumenical sphere. There too this ancient Apostolic Church stands ready to serve the Oriental Orthodox Churches to make their contribution to the ecumenical movement more creative and co-ordinated. We stand ready to co-operate also in the theological research and development so that the precious heritage of the Oriental Orthodox may become more readily accessible, both to our own people and to fellow Christians of other Churches.

For all this of course we need some initiative, especially from the two ancient patriarchates of Alexandria and Antioch. Unfortunately they are both living under extremely difficult political conditions and sometimes are unable to act. Despite all this, the Synods of all our Oriental Orthodox Churches would do well to turn their minds away from domestic problems and quarrels among sister Churches, in order to focus their minds and efforts on what they could do together for the glory of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and for the peace and welfare of that humanity for which Christ died and rose again.



# The Roman Catholic Church and The Identity of the World Council of Churches

(Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios Metropolitan)

As the Vancouver Assembly of the W. C. C. approaches, (July-Aug. 1982), the question of the relationship between the W. C. C. and the Roman Catholic Church takes on a new significance.

Of course the Roman Catholic Church will send some 20 delegated observers to the W. C. C. Assembly in Vancouver. In addition there will be scores of Roman Catholics present as guests, advisors and visitors, as well as press. The official delegation may be led by a Cardinal or at least an Archbishop. There may even be a Catholic speaker or two.

It is clear, however, that the Roman Catholic Church would not be a full participant at the Assembly, since it is not a member Church. But unlike other non-member Churches, the Roman Catholic Church has had a permanent Joint Working Group with the W. C. C. for the last 17 years, which gives periodic reports to the parent bodies and plans common programmes.

But the Joint Working Group itself becomes less and less productive as the years go by. There is not much by way of programme that has come out of the JWG in recent years. Though the reports do not expressly say so, there is a feeling, at least on the W. C. C. side, that there is a brake on, on the other side.

There are many factors operative on the Roman Catholic side. As early as 1968-69, the brakes began to be stepped on. Four or five years of ecumenical openness was sufficient to convince the Vatican authorities that they had opened up too fast, without preparing their people for it. Roman Catholic authorities were shocked by the sudden drop in vocations for the religious orders and for the priesthood, the marriage of a large number of priests and nuns, the wide-spread questioning of Church regulation on birth control, and the practice of indiscriminate inter-communion beyond the limits set by the Church. For more than ten years it has been a conviction on the part of important people in the Vatican that the ecumenical concern should give place to the more urgent need for restoring order within the Church. This does not mean a revocation of the ecumenical commitment on the part of the Roman Catholic Church. The present Pope as well as his three predecessors have frequently reiterated their unequivocal commitment to the ecumenical movement and to the unity of all Christians. But there is a new time-scale

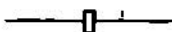


operating for the last 12 years or so, in which that commitment has taken second place in relation to the demands of enforcing discipline over the faith, canon law, and worship of the Church, and strengthening the internal unity of the Church.

This relegation to second place of the ecumenical commitment has affected Roman Catholic relations with the World Council of Churches. The brakes are on, not generally on all ecumenical relations, but primarily on relation with the World Council of Churches. The Roman Catholic Church continues to carry on bilateral conversations with individual Churches and confessions—Reformed, Lutheran, Methodist, Orthodox and so on. In these bilateral conversations, however, the agenda and the list of participants are fairly tightly controlled from the Roman Catholic side, and participation is usually limited to a few tested leaders. In the relation with the W. C. C., the agenda of W. C. C. meetings can be influenced but not controlled by the RCC. And participation cannot always be limited to a few. Some leading people in the Roman Curia sincerely believe that it is precisely through the influence of the W. C. C. and other local, national and regional ecumenical organizations of a progressive nature that new ideas and new trends have penetrated the Roman Catholic Church and undermined its coherent authority structure.

Thus the brakes have not been put on bilateral conversations, but only on participation in ecumenical councils on the world, regional, national and local levels. This however puts these councils in front of a dilemma. If they continue to argue and plead for Roman Catholic Participation they would be regarded as both impatient and unrealistic. But if they accept the fact that for a time at least the Roman Catholic Church would not participate fully in ecumenical councils, these councils are forced into the position of becoming councils of non-Roman Churches, at least for the time being. This certainly cannot be the identity of genuinely ecumenical council. There is no such thing as a non-Roman ecumenism. And it becomes a tough task of all ecumenical councils to resist such an identity being forced upon them. The World Council of Churches, regional councils in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Pacific, and Europe, as well as national councils in every country should be very much on guard against such a false identity imposed by the circumstances of history.

For the World Council of Churches especially, it is dangerous to precipitate a definitely negative reaction to it from the Roman Catholic Church. If there is no hope on the foreseeable future that the Roman Catholic Church will come as a full member into its fellowship, its very structure would need rethinking, as we indicate elsewhere in this issue.



# The Catholicate of the East

(Dr. Paul Gregorion)

The title and rank of Catholicos developed outside the Roman Empire, and is much more ancient than the title of Patriarch in the Christian Church. The title and rank of Patriarch developed first in the Roman Empire around the 4th and 5th centuries, and was later copied by others. There were three Catholicates in the early centuries before the title Patriarch became recognized in the 5th century: The Catholicos of the East, The Catholicos of Armenia and the Catholicos of Georgia.

The Catholicos of the East, first called The Great Metropolitan of The East, resided in Seleucia-ctesiphon. Ancient chroniclers list the following as their Catholicos before the Council of Nicea:

- ✓1. St. Thomas the Apostle
  - ✓2. Addai, the Apostle (Thaddeus, one of the Seventy?)
  - ✓3. St. Haggai
  - ① 4. St. Mari I
  5. Abresu
  6. Abraham I
  7. James I
  8. Ahadabuhi
  9. Shahlupah
  - 2-10. Baba
- Handwritten notes:*  
St Thomas sent Addai to Edessa  
Ar bel  
Ar bel  
① Mari  
② Papa

This was by far the largest church outside the Roman Empire, though there were several such churches of considerable size, not only in India, but also in Nubia, Armenia, Iberia (Georgia) and later in Ethiopia.

The church of Seleucia-ctesiphon was apostolic in origin, and whether the preaching was done by St. Thomas, one of the Twelve, or by St. Addai one of the seventy, the apostolic origin and dignity of the See of the Catholicate of the East has never been in question and was recognised at Nicea.

These early evangelists, i. e. St. Thomas, St. Addai, St. Mari and St. Haggai evangelized Persia, Mesopotamia, Media, Assyria, Parthia Kurdistan, Babylon and other parts of west and Central Asia. The organisation and consolidation of these churches took time, and the credit for putting them together as a sort of a



federation of several national churches Co-ordinated by a Catholicos (the word means "general bishop") should go to Catholicos Baba, a process which began towards the end of the 3rd century, Ca. 282 A. D. and continued into the first years of the next century.

When in 399 Roman Emperor Arcadius sent the Mesopotamian Physician and Bishop, Maruta of Maipherqat as his personal envoy to the enthronement of Persian Emperor Yazdegerd, the Persian government began to give more respect to the Christian church which it had previously persecuted. Bishop Maruta came back in 409-410 to help with the reorganisation of the Persian church. A great Synod of 40 bishops was convoked on February 1st, 410, and the faith of Nicea was accepted by the Synod of the Persian church. The quarrels among the various Metropolitans were settled. The Metropolitan of Seleucia-ctesiphon was acknowledged as "the Great Metropolitan and Chief of All Bishops".

The jurisdiction of the Catholicos of the East was also settled at this Synod of Seleucia-ctesiphon. Since we have the minutes of this Synod in the *Chronicle of Svet.* the full extent of that jurisdiction is now clearly known. Under the Catholicos there were six Metropolitans, Beit-Lapat (with four diocesan bishops, under him), Nisibis (with five diocesan bishops), Arbiles (six), Karka of Bet-slok (five), Fars (Perside) and Qatar (Bahrein and that region of the coast), and several other bishops in Media and other outlying areas. We do not hear at this time of any jurisdiction over the Indian church.

The Chalcedonian controversies had penetrated the Persian church. The Synod of Beth Lapat (484 A. D.) was the first stage in this controversy, when Metropolitan Barsauma of Nisibis called together a few bishops (after Catholicos Babowi had been killed by the state as the charge of corresponding with the Byzantine Emperor), and declared the Persian church to be Nestorian. Acacius became Catholicos in 485 A. D., who was more moderate than Bar Sauma, but continued a basically Nestorian theology. In 498, the then Catholicos Babowi assumed the title "Patriarch of The East" (sometimes also "Patriarch of Babylon")

The Nestorianism of this new Patriarchate of the East was certainly a mild one. As Patriarch Mar Babai (the great) put it,

"One is Christ, the Son of God, worshipped by all in two natures. In his Godhead begotten of the Father without beginning before all time; in his manhood born of Mary, in the fullness of time, in a united body. Neither his Godhead was of

the nature of the mother, nor his  
manhood of the nature of the Father.  
The natures are preserved in their  
*Qnune*, in one person, of one sonship".

The doctrine often ascribed to Nestorius—namely two persons and two sons—is not here. Babai's "Nestorianism" can be understood in an Orthodox manner.

During the period following Babai's reign, the theological school of Nisibis flourished, and it was during that period that "Nestorian" missionaries began coming to India and teaching their doctrines here.

Meanwhile those who opposed Chalcedon were not idle. The teachings of Severus of Antioch (Ca. 465-538) had also begun to penetrate the Persian church. Many in the Persian church were restive about the incipient Nestorianism of that church, however mild it may have been. With the renaissance of the pre-Chalcedonian church under Jacob Baradaeus (Ca. 500-578), the west Syrian tradition, emphasizing the "one united nature" Christology spreads widely in the Persian empire. The strong centres of resistance to Nestorianism were in the monasteries like the convent of Bar Sauma (established 5th century), Mar Matta (latter part of 4th century), and Mar Behmam (late 4th century), soon took up the cause of ante-Chalcedonianism, which for them meant the same as anti-Nestorianism.

The Arab conquest of Syria and the Middle East took place around A. D. 640. The Pax Arabica allowed the west Syrian or anti-Chalcedonian church to function legally—since the Arabs were unwilling to persecute any one group of Christians as heretics. For them all were the "people of the Book", and so long as the Christians their two taxes, the *Kharay* (land tax) and the *Jizyah* (head tax), they were all alike for the Arabs.

Thus in the seventh century there came to be three different Catholicates in the Persian Empire—one the original Persian church, a second started by the Byzantine or Chalcedonian Patriarch of Antioch with Byzantine imperial support, and the third the Maphrianate of the anti-Chalcedonians. Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia are now one caliphate. West Syrians were now free to come and reinforce the church in Persia. Thus Mar Marutha a native Persian, trained in a Syrian monastery was free to move to Mar Matta in Mosul. Marutha became the first "Maphriana of The East" in 629 and ruled for 20 years. Under his leadership the west Syrian church began spreading in the areas where Nestorianism had previously a monopoly (The Byzantine Catholicate was privilege-ridden and lazy and never flourished at all). This Church (later to be called 'Jacobite' by the Greeks, after Jacob



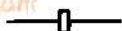
Baradeus) assimilated the wisdom of the Greeks – in philosophy, mathematics, astronomy and other such subjects as well as theology. It produced great scholars like Severus Sebokht (+667) and Jacob of Edessa (633 – 708), the great grammarian-philologist, philosopher and exegete, the redactor of the currently used Syriac liturgy of St. James. This was also the Church which produced Gregor, Bar Hebreus (1226–1286) and Michael the Syrian, (1126–1199) both of whom outstanding historians, as well as Dionysius Bar Slibi and Moshe Bar Kepha (833–903).

It is interesting to note that their west Syrian Catholicos (or Maphriana) of the East, had no jurisdiction at all over the Indian Christians. It was the Persian or East Syrian or “Nestorian” Catholicos that extended his jurisdiction to India during the seventh and eighth centuries. The West Syrian or “Jacobite” Maphriana did not seek to establish missionary colonies in India during these centuries. The reasons for this are yet to be investigated. By the thirteenth century this Jacobite Church under Arab rule, had twelve Metropolitanates with over a hundred Bishops spread over Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Arabia, but had no jurisdiction whatsoever in the Indian Church.

The Maphriana (Catholicos) of Takrit ruled over eighteen episcopal dioceses in lower Mesopotamia and further east, but over none at all in India, as is clear from all the records. By the thirteenth century the ‘Jacobite’ Catholicate began to decline. The Mongolian invasions of that century saw the Church flourishing at first, even converting some of the conquering Kings like the Mongol Prince Hulagu. The advent of Timur (Tamurlane) in 1394 saw the devastation of these ‘Jacobite’ communities. The Catholicate (Maphriana) fell vacant. It was restored again in 1404. But the decline was shady. By massacre, emigration and mass conversions to Islam, their numbers dwindled to less than 200,000 in the 19th century, and have been steadily decreasing ever since. The great monasteries were pillaged, and their invaluable treasures of documents put to the flames or otherwise vandalized.

The eightyfirst Maphriana or Catholicos, Behnam IV, died in 1895, and the west Syrian Catholicate in Persia came to an end with him until it was revived 17 years later in India.

The “Nestorian” Catholicate, which was invariably known as the Patriarchate of the East, or as the Patriarch of Babylon, underwent a history much similar to that of the “Jacobite” Catholicate, except that it was transplanted to America by the “Boy Patriarch” Mar Shimeon in 1940.



# Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches

## A Movement towards Church unity

Rev. Dr. V. C. Samuel

### Introduction

The Church of the Eastern Roman Empire of ancient times came to be split into two camps in consequence of the Council of Chalcedon of 451 A.D. The struggle between them for exclusive recognition as *the one Church* resulted in their separation from 536 A.D. Thus it came about that two ecclesiastical bodies out of communion with each other took shape in the East, one accepting and the other rejecting the Council of Chalcedon. None of the many efforts to bring them back to unity was successful and both have continued in history ever since. They are referred to in recent times as the Eastern Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox Churches respectively.

Each of them came in due course to have its affiliation widened to include churches outside the geographical areas of their existence in the past. The Eastern Orthodox tradition, for instance, absorbed into itself the people of Russia and Eastern Europe. The Oriental Orthodox body consisted from the beginning of practically the entire Church of Egypt and a great part of the Church of Syria and the Orient. The Church of Armenia did, by a decision renouncing Chalcedon early in the 6th century, expressed its agreement in doctrine with the Oriental Orthodox group and so did the Church of Ethiopia as well. A similar development took place, though much later, in the section of the Indian Church.

All these bodies are now members of the World Council of Churches. Their representatives participating in the various ecumenical programmes have been brought to meet each other from about the second decade of the present century. Affinity in ecclesiastical ethos and an awareness of oneness in faith led them to seek closer relations and to explore ways and means of a restoration of the unity of their churches. Accordingly from 1964 a series of four unofficial consultations at the level of theologians, with the knowledge and approval of the Churches, concerned have been held. The World Council of Churches particularly its Faith and Order Secretariat, extended its unstinting assistance and co-operation in bringing about the consultations.



In this paper a brief summary of what has been done so far through them is given. We have only made a beginning and have to go farther ahead to achieve the goal of unity.

### **The Four Consultations**

From August 1964 to January 1971 four unofficial consultations have been held. Participants in them were on the whole theological experts from the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches. Since their separation was the result of their acceptance or non-acceptance of the Chalcedonian Council, they are referred to sometimes as "Chalcedonian" and non-Chalcedonian" Churches in the concerned documents. This terminology is employed in this paper also when felt necessary.

The meetings were held in Aarhus, Denmark, in August, 1964; in Bristol, England, in July, 1967; in Geneva, Switzerland, in August, 1970; and in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in January 1971. In all, fifty-seven persons attended them, twenty-nine from the Chalcedonian tradition and twenty-eight from the non-Chalcedonian. The Chalcedonian participants were drawn from the Ecumenical patriarchate in Constantinople; U. S. A., and Geneva; the Russian Orthodox Patriarchate; the Church of Greece; the Rumanian Orthodox Church; the Bulgarian Orthodox Church; the Orthodox Church of Alexandria; and the Orthodox Church of Cyprus. The non-Chalcedonians came from the Coptic Orthodox Church; the Syrian Orthodox Church; the Armenian Orthodox Church; the Indian Orthodox Church; and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. This shows that almost all the constituent Church bodies of both traditions were represented in the consultations.

The subjects discussed were also representative and relevant to the goal aimed to achieve. Christological doctrine held by each tradition was treated at length and depth. Issues like the meaning of the Cyrilline phrase "One Incarnate Nature of God the Word" as it is understood in both traditions, the question of the two natures, two wills and two energies, the doctrine of the person of Christ in the various Church traditions on both sides, and received attention. The place of Councils in the ancient Church and their inter-relatedness or otherwise; the question of the condemnations pronounced by those Councils and the ways to solve the problem which it raises for unity; a survey of efforts in ancient times to bring the two sides back to unity; and ecclesiological issues with reference to relations of the two sides, were also given sufficient prominence in the discussion.

### **Areas of clear Agreement.**

The result of the endeavour is indeed remarkable. The basic issue that separated the two traditions was indeed the doctrine

concerning Jesus Christ. On this point the agreement reached by the participants was most rewarding. The Aarhus consultation of August 1964 spoke of this in a guarded way. As its *Agreed Statement* said:

"Our inherited misunderstandings have begun to clear up. We recognise 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".

The statement then continued:

"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"

Both sides, it was shown, rejected a doctrine of two Sons on the One hand, and the teaching that confused the natures of which the One Christ is composed.

The Bristol consultation of 1967 spoke more clearly. After stating the positions of each side briefly, its *Agreed Statement* affirmed:

"But both sides speak of a union without confusion, without change, without division, without separation. The four adverbs belong to our common tradition"

The fact may be recalled here that these adverbs are central to the Chalcedonian *Definitio*. However at Chalcedon it was Patriarch Dioscorus of Alexandria, whom the Council deposed, who applied these adverbs to the union of the natures of which the One Christ is composed. Bristol went on to say:

"Both affirm the dynamic permanence of the Godhead and the Manhood, with all their natural properties and faculties in the One Christ".

The members of the Consultation acknowledged the fact that the Eastern Orthodox tradition speaks of Christ as existing in two natures, and that the Oriental Orthodox tradition, while rejecting it, affirmed that Christ is 'one incarnate nature of God the Word'. It is clarified that the difference in terminology here does not lead either side to fall into the heresy suspected of it by the other.

"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".



While expressing so positively their essential agreement in the Christological doctrine, the members of the consultation did not leave out the question of the Lord's will and energy. The Churches of the Chalcedonian tradition affirmed at the Council of Constantinople in 680-81 that there were two natural wills and two natural energies in Christ, existing united indivisibly, inconvertibly, inseparably, unconfusedly. In agreement with the emphasis on the "two natures" of Chalcedon a doctrinal development that is necessary and legitimate can be seen here. But the non-Chalcedonian side, which disagreed with Chalcedonians on the very issue of "two natures", has all along conserved a doctrinal continuity with its insistence on the 'One incarnate nature of God the Word'. Its emphasis on this point is based on the union of the wills and energies of the natures, of which the One Christ is composed. Acknowledging this terminological difference, the *Agreed Statement* of Bristol makes it clear,

"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 affirmation of a "dynamic permanence of the Godhead and the Manhood, with all their natural properties and faculties" by the non-Chalcedonian side is a clear indication of the fact that they do not ignore the conational and volitional faculties of the humanity in Christ. The position endorsed by both sides is, as the Bristol meeting made clear: "The uncreated and created natures, with the fulness of their natural properties and faculties, were united without confusion, or separation, and continue to operate in the One Christ, our Saviour".

These ideas were reaffirmed in Geneva in August 1970.

"On the essence of the Christological dogma", "our two traditions, despite fifteen centuries of separation, still find ourselves in full and deep agreement with the universal tradition of the one undivided Church."

The meeting went on to say that both traditions affirm the hypostatic union of the two natures in Christ, that for both

"He who is consubstantial to the Father according to Godhead became consubstantial also with us according to humanity in the Incarnation, that He who is before all ages begotten from the Father, was in these last days for us and for our salvation born of the blessed Virgin Mary".

As regards the human will and energy of Christ also, Geneva restated the position of both sides. These are neither absorbed nor suppressed by His divine will and energy, nor are the former opposed to the latter. They are together united in perfect concord

without division or confusion. "He who wills and acts", the consultation affirmed, "is always the One hypostasis of the Logos incarnate."

Geneva affirmed further the agreement between the two sides "in the common Tradition of the One Church in all important matters", namely "liturgy and spirituality, doctrine and canonical practice". They have the same "understanding of the Holy Trinity, of the Incarnation, of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit". They are also agreed in holding to the same view regarding "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 shall come in all his glory"

Finally the Consultation made it clear that

"Our natural 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".

In conclusion the consultation expressed the hope that

"our Lord will grant us full unity so that we can celebrate together that unity in the common Eucharist".

### The Next Step

The doctrinal agreement reached by the theologians was an unofficial action. Though their work had the blessing of the Churches concerned, what they have accomplished has no official character. The *Agreed Statements* of all the four consultations were in fact submitted "to the authorities and people of our Churches with great humility and deep respect", in order that the Churches may act officially to act on them. To this end two official actions by the Churches are expected to be carried out. In the first place, the Churches should receive the findings of their theologians, and secondly, authorize an official commission to study the issues and make recommendations to the Churches. As to the second of these actions, the Bristol consultation proposed to the Churches to appoint official representatives in order to constitute a Joint Theological Commission to be in charge of the follow-up work.

The Bristol proposal was in fact twofold.

1. The Joint Theological Commission to be appointed should take up the drawing up of an agreed declaration as a formula expressing together "our common faith in the One Lord Jesus Christ whom we all acknowledge to be perfect God and perfect Man". This formula, the consultation made it clear "will not



have the **status of a creed**". After being drawn up, the formula is to be **"submitted to the Churches for formal and authoritative approval, or for suggestions for modifications"** which the commission will **consider "before a final text is approved by the Churches"**

The Geneva meeting, while reaffirming the suggestion for the appointment of the Joint Theological Commission by the Churches, clarified further the nature of the agreed formula. This should be "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". The basic content of this statement should be "the common Christological agreement". This, it should be made clear, "is not an innovation on either side, but an explanation of what has been held on both sides for centuries, as attested by the liturgical and patristic documents". As to content, the statement could make use of the theology of Cyril of Alexandria, the expressions used in the Formulary of Reunion of 433 between Cyril and John of Antioch, the terminology employed in the four later councils and in the liturgical and patristic texts. "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".

2. The Theological Commission should examine the canonical, liturgical and Jurisdictional problems involved in the actual realization of unity. The work of the Joint Theological Commission here is threefold. Firstly, to suggest ways and means of dealing with the question of "anathemas and liturgical deprecations by some churches of theologians regarded by others as doctors and saints of the Church". The first step is to drop the anathemas pronounced by one side against teachers recognized as saints by the other. The matter is indeed delicate. All the same when once the Churches are led formally to express their agreement in faith this is an indispensable step to be adopted for the restoration of their unity. The issue refers, for instance, to the cancelling of the anathemas pronounced against Dioscorus, Timothy Aelurus, Philoxenos, Severus and others by the Chalcedonian side, and those against Leo of Rome, Theodoret, Ibas, and so on by the non-Chalcedonian side. The Geneva Consultation observed on this point that

"It may not be necessary formally to lift these anathemas, nor for these teachers to be recognised as Saints by the condemning side".

The meeting added that

"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, Severus, and others".

The Addis Ababa meeting suggested the dropping of the anathemas in a quiet way by the Churches, following the formal expression of agreement in faith and decision in favour of unity of the Churches.

Regarding the lifting of the anathemas many participants in the Addis Ababa meeting expressed the view that "It is much simpler gradually to drop these anathemas in a quiet way as some churches have already begun to do". They further made the point that each autocephalous 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".

In this context the Addis Ababa meeting raised the question as to who has the authority to lift the anathemas. It was answered that the anathemas were pronounced in the first place by the Church "for pastoral or other reasons of that time". The Church 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".

Another equally important question was also raised there. "Does the lifting of an anathema imposed by one ecumenical council call in question the infallibility of the Church?" The meeting answered the question, "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". For the lifting of the anathemas pronounced by an ecumenical council is there need for another ecumenical council? On this point 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 conciliar decision can be viewed in isolation from the total tradition of the Church, and a council should be seen as a stage on "the way to a fuller articulation of the truth".

This point is to be taken up for further study by the Joint Theological Commission of the Churches.

Secondly, there is the question of the acceptance by the non-Chalcedonian side of the Council of Chalcedon and the three later Councils recognized as ecumenical by the Chalcedonian side. This indeed is a major issue. The Aarhus consultation had already made the point in its *Agreed Statement* that the Council of Chalcedon was to be understood "as reaffirming the decisions of Ephesus (431), and best understood in the light of the later Council of Constantinople (553)". It was also agreed there that all councils



had to be seen "as stages in an integral development and no council or document should be studied in isolation". The Bristol meeting proposed that "the acceptance and non-acceptance of some councils" should be taken up for study by the Joint Theological Commission. The Geneva meeting went further and stated the position of each side separately, as no agreement was reached on the issue. Theologians of the Eastern Orthodox Church stated the teaching of their Church that "the seven ecumenical councils which they acknowledge have an inner coherence and continuity to make them a single indivisible whole, to be viewed in its entirety of dogmatic definition". Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Church expressed their view 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". The agreement in faith, in other words, reached by the two sides was not the result of an acceptance of the Council of Chalcedon and the three later Councils by the non-Chalcedonian side. Therefore it cannot be admitted that for the maintenance of the faith in its purity and integrity the adoption of all the seven Councils was necessary. The Geneva meeting however expressed the hope that "further study will lead to the solution of this problem by the decision of our Churches".

It is hoped that the Joint Theological Commission, when it is appointed by the Churches, will address itself to this study.

Thirdly, there is the question of the "jurisdictional assurances and agreement" which needs settlement before the restoration of communion between the two sides. The issue implied here may be stated in this way. One of the consequences of the split in the Church was the setting up of parallel jurisdictions in the same cities. From about the middle of the 6th century, for instance, there were two lines of patriarchs in Alexandria and Antioch, and dual Metropolitans and bishops in many cities, who did not recognize each other. The restoration of unity will require a unification of these two lines.

On this point the Geneva meeting expressed the view that "jurisdiction is not to be regarded only as an administrative matter". It also "touches the question of ecclesiology in some aspects". The fact that in the early century there was one bishop in one city with one college of presbyters united in one Eucharist, was a manifestation of the Church in that area. The practice of having more than one bishop and more than one Eucharist in the same city has come about in more recent times on account of pragmatic considerations.

When the two families of our Churches meet officially it is necessary that a solution be found for the problem of parallel jurisdictions. The Joint Theological Commission should study the issues involved here and suggest ways and means of solving them.

## Conclusion

Before bringing this resume to a close there are two suggestions made by the Geneva and Addis Ababa Consultations to be noted. The former points out that the "universal Tradition does not demand uniformity in all details of doctrinal formulation, forms of worship and canonical practice". However the limits beyond which this variability should not go must be worked out.

The Addis Ababa meeting made the proposal that there is need for "the rewriting of the Church history text books, theological manuals and catechetical materials". These have been composed on both sides by interpreting the sources on a partisan basis. "Common study of the sources with fresh objectivity" in an ecumenic spirit "can produce texts for use in both our families"

The Addis Ababa Consultation concluded with the observation 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".

# **The West and the East Meet:**

## ***Non-official consultations between Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church***

**REV. Dr. K. M. GEORGE**

The now famous 'Vienna Consultations' between the Church of Rome and the five ancient non-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches of the East represent a radical break through in ecumenical history. When theologians of both sides met in Vienna in 1971 for their first consultation, Cardinal Koenig of Vienna, who sponsored this meeting under the auspices of the Foundation Pro Oriente, qualified the meeting as "the first theological consultation after 1520 years of separation" between the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Church. Inspired by the success of this historic meeting, three other consultations followed in the years 1973, 1976 and 1978 respectively. All the five Oriental Orthodox Churches, namely Coptic, Armenian, Syrian, Ethiopian, and Indian, sent important delegations consisting of bishops (in their capacity as theologians) and professional theologians informally representing their respective Churches. The Roman Catholic Church sent some of its best theological minds to Vienna.

Underlying the theological discussions which combined analytical sharpness and great breadth of vision, was the conviction "that the true way of faith is love," as stated by Monsignor Otto Maur, Chairman of the Theological Advisory Council of Pro Oriente. "And from this brotherly love which does not know of any malediction, any anathema, the 'world' will see that we are Christ's followers." We give below some of the major issues and questions discussed in the consultations.

### **Consultation No. 1 (1971)**

- 1. The Council of Chalcedon—Analysis of a Conflict.**
- 2. The Reasons for the rejection of the Council of Chalcedon by the Oriental Orthodox Churches.**
- 3. The Christological Problem—Biblical aspects.**
- 4. The differences in the Christological doctrine between the Orthodox and the Catholics.**



5. **The reception of the Ecumenical Councils after Chalcedon,**
6. **The reception of the Council of Chalcedon in the Roman Catholic Church.**
7. **The Monophysite and Dyophysite languages about Christ.**

#### **Consultation No. 2 (1973)**

1. **The understanding of the Christological definitions in R. C. and Oriental Orthodox traditions in the light of post-Chalcedonian theology.**
2. **Infallibility of the Church and the Ecumenical Councils.**
3. **The Reception of the Councils.**
4. **Anathemata, Schism, Heresy.**
5. **The Ecumenical Council and the Ministry of Peter.**
6. **Doctrine, Spirituality and Law.**

#### **Consultation No. 3 (1976)**

1. **The Christological consensus reached in Vienna.**
2. **The Church of Christ as a Local Church.**
3. **Necessity and signs of 'Communio' between the local churches.**
4. **The origins of the conciliar idea.**
5. **The importance of councils for the life of the universal church.**
6. **The authority of the councils and the unity of the church.**
7. **Binding dogmatic decisions and the historicity of the life of the church.**

#### **Consultation No. 4 (1978)**

1. **The development of the pre-eminence of some churches over others and the reasons for this.**
2. **The autonomy and centralization of the ancient Syrian churches of Edessa and Seleucia—Ctesiphon.**
3. **The changes in Rome's exercise of its primacy and the primacy as exercised by the ancient Oriental Patriarchs.**
4. **The connection between the post-Tridentine concept of primacy and the emergence of the Uniat Churches.**
5. **The First Vatican Council reviewed by the Oriental Orthodox Churches.**
6. **The tensions between the theoretical statements on the primacy and its effective exercise in the life of Oriental Orthodox Churches and of the Roman Catholic Church.**



### **Christology: the crux of the matter:**

Quite **naturally** discussions in the first consultation centred around the Council of Chalcedon and the related problem of Christology. Western scholars had conventionally been labelling the Christians of the East who rejected the council of Chalcedon as "Monophysites". The discussions made it clear that there was absolutely no theological ground for associating those churches which rejected Chalcedon with the heresy of monophysitism, i. e. the belief that the humanity of Christ was absorbed by His divinity, and that there was only one of the two natures remaining. It was generally agreed that the position held by the Oriental Churches with respect to Chalcedon had been seriously misrepresented by the Chalcedonians ever since the 5th century. In the same way, it was also recognized that any suspicion on the part of Oriental theologians about the Chalcedonians holding a Nestorian line was baseless as well.

The agreements on this point was reflected in the common communique of the consultation: "We all agree in rejecting both the Nestorian and the Eutychian positions about Jesus Christ". In the words of Dr. V. C. Samuel "the point of the dispute between those who accepted and those who renounced the Council was not that the former affirmed and the latter refused to admit the dynamic continuance of Godhead and manhood in the one Christ as may be suggested by the terms 'Orthodox' and 'Monophysite'. The dynamic continuance of both natures with their respective properties was affirmed equally by the churches which accepted and by those that rejected the Council of 451".

Therefore the problem lay with **the different terminologies** used by both sides. The unhealthy influence of **several non-theological factors** in the use and interpretation of **the theological terms** was also recognized. In spite of existing difficulties in the interpretation of the mystery of Christ, both sides agreed upon an exceptionally valuable statement of their common faith in Christ:

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

### **The Three Councils**

Another important achievement of the consultation was that it recognized the pre-eminence of the first three Ecumenical Councils (Nicea 325, Constantinople 381 and Ephesus 431) and their dogmatic statements as distinguished from Councils of later centuries including Chalcedon which are called 'ecumenical' by the Greek and Latin churches. The common communique of the first consultation says:

"We find our common basis in the same Apostolic tradition, particularly as affirmed in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed. We all confess the dogmatic decisions and teachings of Nicea, Constantinople and Ephesus"

The communique of the second consultation states:

"we agree that the first three Ecumenical Councils had, because of their more general acceptance in the church, a greater degree of fullness, which the later councils do not have".

### **Anathema, Infallibility, Ministry of Peter**

The second consultation considered the questions of anathemata and infallibility and the ministry of Peter. At the time of the Chalcedonian conflict both sides had formally condemned several of the teachers and leaders on the opposite side. The Vienna consultation expressed its opinion that it was not necessary to insist on the acceptance of these teachers and fathers by those who condemned them. Even a formal lifting of anathemata may not be necessary. The churches can simply drop from the liturgical corpus anathemata of saints and teachers of the other side.

As regards infallibility, the Oriental Orthodox maintained that the term as such did not belong to the universal tradition of the Church. The Orthodox do not speak of the infallibility of either the Patriarch or of the ecumenical councils. One can, however, speak of a certain indefectibility of the church on the basis of Christ's teaching that the Holy Spirit leads the Church to all truth. The common communique of the fourth consultation stated:

"There was agreement that infallibility, or, as the Oriental Orthodox prefer to say, dependable teaching authority, pertains to the Church as a whole, as the Body of Christ and as the abode of the Holy Spirit."

As regards the relation between the ministry of St. Peter and the Ecumenical Councils, as traditionally understood by the Roman Church, the consultations did not come to an agreement. However, the communique of the second meeting stated:

"the principle of collegiality emphasized by the Second Vatican Council is appreciated as a move in the right



direction according to which the role of the bishop of Rome is seen within the Council and not above it."

### **The 'local' and 'universal' churches**

The question of 'local' and 'universal' churches was approached from both the R. C. and Oriental Orthodox perspectives. The consultation came to the conclusion that:

"it is the same mystery of the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church, the Body of our risen and ascended Lord, that is being manifest both in the 'local' church and in the 'universal' church. One and the same church, for there cannot be more than one, is manifested both locally and universally as a koinonia of truth and love characterized by Eucharistic communion and the corporate unity of the episcopate. The unity of the Church has its prototype in the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

The principle of conciliarity was accepted as essential to the nature of the Church as a koinonia. The consultation distinguished between the Synod as an event and the Synod as an aspect of the continuing life of the Church. The convening of Ecumenical Councils at given intervals was not regarded as an essential or permanent structure of the Church, though the consultation expressed its hope for a council in which the unity of the One Church of Christ in truth and love, in Eucharistic communion and episcopal unity can be publicly affirmed and manifested. The consultation was not agreed on how and by whom such a world-wide council could be convoked and conducted.

### **Primacy, Primates and the Pope**

On the question of primacy there was more disagreements than convergence of opinion. While the primacy of the Bishop of Rome was claimed to be of universal scope, the Oriental Orthodox Churches traditionally exercised only regional primacy, though the latter has now universal dimensions in the light of the growth of the diaspora. While Rome considers its primacy as rooted in the divine plan for the Church, the Oriental Churches understand primacy as of historical and ecclesiological origins. However it was commonly recognized that in case of a full union among sister churches, each church as well as all churches together will have a primatial and conciliar structure, providing for their communion in a given place as well as on regional and world-wide scales. The communique of the fourth consultation stated in this connection:

"The structure will be basically conciliar. No single church in this communion will by itself be regarded as the source and origin of that communion; the source of the unity of the church is the action of the triune God."



It was agreed that the primates of all sister churches have a special responsibility for promoting and witnessing to the manifest unity of the Church. No agreement was reached on the R. C. claim of the special role of the Bishop of Rome or of the Petrine office in the matter of unity, though there was consensus on the need of a special ministry for unity in the One Church.

### **The Uniat Churches**

With regard to the Catholic Uniat Churches, it was agreed that:

"The Oriental Catholic Churches will not even in the transitional period before full unity be regarded as a device for bringing Oriental Orthodox Churches inside the Roman Communion. The Oriental Orthodox Churches, according to the principles of Vatican II and subsequent statements of the See of Rome, cannot be fields of mission for other churches".

The Consultation felt the need for further study and discussion on the following:

- nature and function of authority in the Church.
- the role of the Bishop of Rome.
- the shape of our future communion.
- the meaning and degree of autonomy in the Church.
- reception of conciliar decisions after the separation.

The final recommendations of the Fourth Consultation are specially worth heeding:

17. The results of the four Vienna consultations should be presented by the participants to their respective Churches for evaluation and assessment, so that these evaluations can be a basis for further steps to be considered by an official commission of the Churches taking into account especially the recommendations of the Third Consultation.

18. It would be useful to bring together in one volume the main conclusions of the four consultations with selections from the more significant papers. This could be published for use by theologians and theological students as well as others interested.

19. A series of more popular and briefer publications and articles in various languages could be published for bringing the members of our Churches into the discussion. Other mass media presentations would also be useful.

20. The differences between the Roman Catholics and the Oriental Orthodox have grown out of their mutual estrangement and separate development in the period since the Council of Chalcedon.

**Differing historical experiences of the past fifteen centuries have made deep marks on the thinking and convictions of both traditions. In order to overcome these differences and to find mutual agreement and understanding, new ways of thinking and fresh categories of reflection and vision seem to be required, so that the sister Churches may together fulfil their common responsibility to the Lord and carry out their common mission in the light of the present situation and for the sake of future generations.**

**The Holy Spirit who guides the Church, will continue to lead us to full unity. And all of our Churches have to be responsive to the divine call in obedience and hope."**

**In spite of the several still unresolved issues, the four consultations achieved tremendous progress in the path towards a deeper mutual understanding between the two traditions and towards greater mutual commitment in the love of Christ.**



# Oriental Orthodox Churches

## The Name

"Oriental Orthodox Churches" is name given to a group of five autocephalous churches in communion with each other but not with the "Ecumenical" Patriarchate of Constantinople or with the Byzantine, Slavic and Latin and other Orthodox Churches in communion with Constantinople. The five churches are (1) the Coptic Orthodox Church—Patriarchate of Alexandria and the See of St. Mark (about 6 to 8 million members); (2) the Syrian Orthodox Church—Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (about 1¼ million members); (3) the Armenian Apostolic Church, Catholicosates of Etchmiadzin, and Antelias (about 3½ million members); (4) the Orthodox Church of India—Catholicate of the East—(about 1½ million members) and (5) the Ethiopian Orthodox Church—Patriarchate of Ethiopia (about 15 million members). They thus number about 26 to 28 millions, to be compared with the more than 100 million of the Constantinople family.

## Common Features

The Oriental Orthodox Churches are also sometimes wrongly called Monophysites based on a western misunderstanding that the Oriental Orthodox believe only (*monos* in Greek means only, and *physis* means nature) in the one divine nature of the Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ; also mis-named "Jacobites" on the again mistaken assumption that these ancient churches were started by Jacob Baradeus (ca. 500–575). They are rightly called Ancient Oriental Churches in so far as they have been faithful to the Tradition of the Church as it was before its Super-hellenisation in the Byzantine empire; also called "pre-Chalcedonian", since they refuse to acknowledge the Council of Chalcedon as an Ecumenical Council.

The Oriental Orthodox Churches take their stand on the Niceno-Constantinopolitan faith, and regard any credal statement or dogmatic formulation beyond the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed as excess.

Recent unofficial conversations with the Constantinople family of Orthodox Churches have demonstrated the essential oneness of the Christological faith of all Orthodox. Both sides affirm: (a) the full humanity and full divinity of Christ along with all the faculties and features belonging to divinity and humanity; (b) the four



traditional adverbs: i. e. union of the two natures without confusion (*asugechutos*), without change (*atreptos*), without division (*adialreptos*), and without separation (*achoristos*); (c) the unity and double consubstantiality of the Incarnate Lord, i. e. *homoousion toe Patri* and *homoousion hemas*, consubstantial with the Father in His deity and consubstantial with us in his humanity, and (d) the Virgin Mary as Theotokos or God-bearer.

Apart from the non-recognition by the Oriental Orthodox of the Council of Chalcedon (451) and of three subsequent councils regarded as ecumenical by the Byzantine Orthodox, the basic tradition of the Oriental Orthodox is the same as that of the Byzantine—in ecclesiology, in understanding of ministry and sacraments as well as in the teaching on the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

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## 1. The Coptic Church

The Coptic Orthodox Church a substantially large minority of the population in Egypt, in 40 episcopal dioceses, is ruled by the "Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark", the present incumbent (1981) His Holiness Shenouda III (117th successor of St. Mark) has recently been deprived of government approval and banished to a monastery in Wadi-al-Natrun by President Sadat who was later assassinated. There are frequent conflicts between fanatical elements in the Muslim majority and the Christian minority. There is however much new spiritual vitality especially among the laity. The monastic movement which began in Egypt is experiencing a surprising renewal. Four monasteries in the Nitrean desert (as-Suriyani, Amba Makarius, Amba Pachom and Amba Mina), two in the eastern desert (St. Paul and St. Antony), and the Muharraqi Monastery of our Lady near Asiat are the seven most active today, besides some five convents for women, most of them near Cairo. There was a special bishop charged with Ecumenical Relations and Social service (Amba Samuel), who has also played a large role in making the Coptic Church known to others and other Churches known to the Copts. He was also assassinated along with President Sadat. Bishop Samuel was a member of the Central Committee of the W. C. C., and had also given leadership to many ecumenical development projects in Egypt. The Coptic Church has been a member of the W. C. C. since 1954, and sent observers to the Second Vatican Council. The Church has established a Joint Working Group with the Roman Catholic Church. There are five other bishops without diocesan charge, helping with the general ministry of the Church. It has two large theological colleges, one in Cairo and one in Alexandria, as well as an Institute of Coptic studies and a Coptic Museum.

The Church has recently revived ancient Coptic iconography in a creatively modern form. Attempts to renew Coptic architecture and music have had only limited success. The Institute of Coptic Studies in Cairo established in 1954 is giving leadership, more in research than in creating new forms. The liturgical languages are Coptic and Arabic. There are about 1300 Church buildings and some 2000 married priests.

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## 2. The Syrian Orthodox Church

The smallest of the Oriental Orthodox Churches today, this Church is the inheritor of a magnificent Christian tradition in direct continuity with the Semitic Christianity of Jerusalem in the first century. Tracing its history back to St. Peter the Apostle and St. Ignatius of Antioch one of the Apostolic Fathers, it was this Church which produced St. John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia, Severus of Antioch and Jacob Baraheus, to name only a few. To its tradition belong St. Simeon the Stylite and St. Ephrem Syrus.

Withstanding attacks from Byzantines and Latins on one side and Mongols and Turks on the other, the Syrian Orthodox Church, spiritually rooted more in Syriac Edessa than in Greek Antioch, the Patriarchate of the Syrian Orthodox Church has often shifted its headquarters between Antioch, Damascus, Homs (Emesa) and the monastery of Dair al-Zafran in Mesopotamia.

This Church has a very rich liturgical tradition, with some 90 different Eucharistic anaphorae, forms of the seven Canonical hours of prayer both ordinary and festal, at least three different baptismal liturgies, and an opulent Holy Week Liturgy.

The present head of the Syrian Orthodox Church is His Holiness Ignatius Zakka who was enthroned in 1980. He was a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches and is still very active in the ecumenical movement.

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### 3. The Armenian Apostolic Church

**Origins:** King Tiridates (261–317) converted by Gregory the Illuminator. Armenia became a Christian kingdom, and even when the Armenians lost their kingdom to conquerors Christianity has been their national religion. Armenian bishop Aristaces was present at the Council of Nicea in 325. Catholicos Narses, who became Catholicos around 363 A.D. (consecrated in the presence of St. Basil the Great) reorganized the Armenian Church on a Cappadocian model, reformed the society, established indissoluble monogamous marriage and strict monasticism, started institutions for the service of the poor and the sick. He was poisoned by the king who regarded him as a rival. The division of Armenia around 390 AD into the Persian and Greek empires caused difficulties for the Church which last to this day. But in the early 5th century in Persian-Armenia, Mesrob gave the Armenians an alphabet. Books beginning with the Bible and the Liturgy of St. Basil were translated into Armenian from Syriac and Greek.

The Armenians did not probably know about Chalcedon (451); but when they heard of it, rejected its decisions at the Synod of Divin (506) and again in 554.

The Arab invasion of Armenia in the 7th century only strengthened the Church. Under Arab protection the Armenian Church became more deeply the symbol of Armenian identity; especially since their repudiation of Chalcedon cut them off from Byzantine associations.

Under the Turks who replaced the Arabs the Armenians suffered. The climax was in 1914–1918 when 2 million Armenian Christians were massacred by the Turkish Government, a genocide attempt second only to that against the Jews later.

On December 2nd 1920 Armenia became part of the Soviet Union as the Armenian Socialist Republic. Today the Head of the Church, Catholicos Vazgen I lives in Etchmiadzin, some 50 miles from the Armenian Capital Yerevan. Under his Supreme authority, there are the Armenian Patriarchates of Constantinople and Jerusalem. The Catholicate of Cilicia has now established itself as an autonomous group with its own Catholicos living in Antelias, Lebanon. The co-adjutor Catholicos, Karekin II is a well known ecumenical leader, and is vice-chairman of the Central Committee of the W. C. C. since 1975. Both Etchmiadzin and Antelias joined the W.C.C. in 1962. The total number of Armenian Christians is today estimated around 4 millions.

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#### 4. The Orthodox Church of India

Also known as the Syrian Orthodox Church, traces its origins to St. Thomas the Apostle. The Indian Christians of St. Thomas became an autonomous part of the Persian Church around the 6th and 7th centuries; then under Portuguese colonialism they were forced into Roman obedience. The Coonen Cross revolt of 1655 led to the re-establishment of Orthodoxy, but this time in the west Syrian tradition.

The Thomas Christians are sadly divided today. The majority (about two million) are in the Roman obedience which was forced upon them in 1599, and constitute the Malabar rite in the Roman Catholic Church. The second largest group is the Orthodox, now divided into one jurisdiction directly under the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch with one Maphrian (Paulos Mar Baselios) and eight other bishops, the other, much larger under the autocephalous jurisdiction of the Catholicate of the East (Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews) with 15 diocesan bishops and a total membership of 1½ million. A third group broke away from the Orthodox under Protestant influence around the middle of the 19th century, to form the Reformed Mar Thoma Syrian Church (about ½ a million today).

The Orthodox Church in India has a well-trained leadership and was a founder-member of the W.C.C. in 1948. It has provided the ecumenical movement with some distinguished leaders. Its Theological Seminary at Kottayam is among the better Orthodox Seminaries of Asia.

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## 5. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Origins can be traced to 4th century. Syrian-Alexandrian Christianity brought to Ethiopia, and witnessed to by all 4th century. Church historians (Sozomen, Eusebius, Theodoret, Socrates), on the first hand authority of Rufinus who spoke to Aedesius, one of the co-founders with Frumentius of the Ethiopian Church. There may have been Christian settlements in Ethiopia before the 4th century; the Ethiopian Eunuch, Finance Minister of the Queen of Ethiopia was converted in the first century by Philip himself. The coming of the Nine (Syrian) Saints around 480 A.D established the Oriental Orthodox or pre-Chalcedonian faith in Ethiopia.

During the western and Arab incursions of medieval history, the Ethiopian Church showed remarkable vitality, and the monolithic or rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, built around 1190-1225 bear witness to a flourishing Church.

In the 16th century Ethiopian kings were forced to seek Portuguese help to resist attacks of the Muslim Ahmed Granh, and this was the occasion for Latin Christians to mount "Ethiopian missions"; the Pope consecrated even an Ethiopian Patriarch (Baretto) and two auxiliary bishops (Oviedo and Carneiro) and sent them to Ethiopia around 1560. Only Oviedo reached Ethiopia, and tried to force the Ethiopian Orthodox into Roman obedience, with the help of Portuguese troops. The patriotism of the Ethiopians was strong enough to resist even the inquisition which was exported to Ethiopia. There were subsequent attempts by Jesuits, Capuchine and other Franciscans. Only in the 19th century the Roman Catholics were able to gain a few "converts". Protestant missionaries also came in the 19th century, mainly the British and the Swedish, and the Hermannsburg and Basel Missions which were international. The Protestants numbering about two hundred thousand are now largely united; most of them are converts from pagans and not proselytes from the Orthodox.

Till 1959 the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was governed by a single Egyptian bishop (Abuna). In 1959, the autonomy of the Ethiopian Church was recognized by the Egyptians, and the Amba Basillos was consecrated Patriarch. His successor Amba Theophilos, once a president of the All Africa Conference of Churches, is now in jail with two other bishops, allegedly for plotting against the present socialist government of Ethiopia.

The overthrow of Emperor Haile Sellassie (1974) and the accession of the new Marxist military government has forced the Ethiopian Church to come out of its feudal past and face the



present. All its landed property along with buildings were nationalized. The priests and monks who depended on the land for their support have now to turn to the masses and depend on their support. The Church has lost its privileged position, but is treated as equal to other religions and not persecuted.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, with its estimated 14 million members, is now completely autocephalous. The present Patriarch is Abuna Takle Haimanot, a traditional monk with very progressive ideas, but no modern education. There are some 20 bishops, in addition to the ones in jail. The number of priests may be around 100,000, not counting the choristers or debteras who may number 150,000. The Church is a member of the WCC. Their liturgical languages are Ethiopic (classical) and Amharic (modern).

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# **The Eastern Orthodox Churches**

## **1. The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople**

The Byzantine family of Eastern Orthodoxy, (The Eastern Orthodox Churches), a communion of autocephalous and autonomous Churches, believing the tradition of the seven 'Ecumenical Councils (325—787) recognize the 'Ecumenical' Patriarch of Constantinople as first in rank among the Orthodox hierarchy. The main difference of the Constantinople family of the Orthodox Churches with the Oriental Orthodox Churches (the Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopian, Syrian and Indian) is that the latter do not regard the council of Chalcedon (451) and the three subsequent councils as ecumenical. The Patriarchate of Constantinople evolved in the history of the Christian Church when Emperor Constantine moved the capital of his empire to Constantinople, the newly founded city. Consequently it enjoyed a position higher than the other ancient Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. Persecutions, inner conflicts and a multitude of ecclesiastical and political problems mark the transition from the glorious past to the present situation of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Patriarch Dimitrios I, the present 'ecumenical' Patriarch of Constantinople (successor of Patriarch Athenagoras) has his headquarters at Fener, Istanbul in Turkey. Now the following Eastern Orthodox Churches are in communion with the 'ecumenical' Patriarchate :

1. Patriarchate of Alexandria, Egypt. (People: 5000) Headquarters: Alexandria. Patriarch Nicolaos VI.
2. Patriarchate of Antioch, (People: 200,000) Syria: Damascus. Patriarch Ignatius IV Hazim.
3. Patriarchate of Jerusalem (People: 2000) Jerusalem. Patriarch Benedictos.
4. Russian Orthodox Church: (People: 70 million) Moscow. Patriarch Pimen.
5. Serbian Orthodox Church: Belgrade (People: 7 million) Patriarch German.
6. Romanian Orthodox Church : Bucharest (People: 18 million) Patriarch Justin.

7. **Bulgarian Orthodox Church : Sofia (People : 8 million)**  
**Patriarch Maximos.**
8. **Orthodox Church of Cyprus. Nicosia (People: half a million)**  
**Archbishop Chrysostomos.**
9. **Orthodox Church of Greece : Athens. Archbishop Serafim.**  
**(People : 8 million)**
10. **Orthodox Church of Poland : Warsaw (People : 20,000)**  
**Metropolitan Basilius.**
11. **Georgian Orthodox Church, Tbilisi. Patriarch Ilia II**  
**(People : 3 million)**
12. **Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia. Prague, (People 20,000)**  
**Metropolitan Doroteji.**
13. **Orthodox Church of Finland. Kuopio. (People : 10,000)**  
**Archbishop Paavel**
14. **Orthodox Church in America (recently formed)**  
**(People : 3 million)**  
**New York. Metropolitan Theodosius.**
15. **Orthodox Church in Japan (recently formed)**  
**(People : 6000)**  
**Tokyo. Metropolitan Theodosios.**



## 2. The Russian Orthodox Church

Slavonic tribes were converted to Christianity in the ninth century as a result of the efforts made by Byzantine missionaries. The conversions of Princess Olga (955) and St. Vladimir of Kiev (988) led to mass conversions and Christianity became the state religion in the region of Kiev. The Bible and liturgical books were translated into Old Slavonic language for which the missionary works and literary contributions of St. Cyril and St. Methodius in Bulgaria and among the Slavs in Moravia contributed much.

The son of King Vladimir, Yaroslav (1036—1054), built a Cathedral in his capital decorated by the best artists from Constantinople. This was followed by the erection of a multitude of church buildings and monasteries. But the Mongol invasion (1240) which isolated the Russians from Europe for several centuries seriously disrupted the organic development of the Russian Church.

The Metropolitanate of Kiev, established under Vladimir was dependent on the Patriarchate of Constantinople until the fifteenth century. Almost all the Metropolitans of Kiev were Greeks who came from Byzantium, while the rest of the episcopate and clergy were chosen locally. The Mongols with certain exceptions were generally tolerant in matters of religion and allowed the Church to enjoy the privileges which it had enjoyed under the old Kievan regime. The history of St. Alexander Nevsky, the grand prince of Novgorod, (the only region not conquered by the Tartars) is so dear to the Russians that making an alliance with the Mongolian Khan, he withstood the invasions from the West effectively. Swedish Crusaders (1240) and Teutonic Knights (1242) were defeated and the Church in Russia began to expand and organize. Monasticism began to play an important role in the course of this expansion. The Monastery of the Crypts at Kiev (established by St. Theodosius) and the Monastery of the Trinity at today's Zagorsk (founded by St. Sergius of Radonezh) are among a multitude of spiritual centres set up in Russia in this period.

Sacked by the Tartars, Kiev, the ancient capital of Russia ceased to be the residence of the Metropolitan. It was transferred to Vladimir and then to Moscow in the beginning of the 14th century. Moscow became the religious capital of all the Russians. The Russian Church proceeded to develop its own religious literature, liturgical texts, and iconography in the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This followed the establishment of the Moscow Patriarchate and the claim of Moscow to be the Third Rome. The

**Russian Tsars and their general religious fervour contributed much for the flourishing and spreading of the "official state religion," the Russian Orthodox Church.**

**By 1914 the Russian Church was constituted of nearly a hundred million faithful divided into sixty-two dioceses. The 67 bishops in office were assisted by 82 auxiliary bishops, 50,105 priests and 15,210 deacons, 21,330 monks and 73299 nuns. There were 1025 monasteries for men and 473 convents for women. The Church had a total of 58 seminaries with 20,500 pupils.**

**In the varied situations of today, after the Socialist Revolution and the World Wars, the Church is separated from the State and there is a ministry under the State dealing with religious affairs. The Russian Orthodox Church has now a membership of about 70 million believers, in 80 dioceses more than 100 bishops, about 18000 priests and nearly an equal number of worshipping centres. The number of monasteries and women's convents come to about 18 and there are five theological seminaries and academies. The present Patriarch Pimen who succeeds Patriarch Alexy resides at Moscow. The Church's Information Department now employs some 150 people. The Church is supported financially entirely by voluntary contributions from believers.**

### 3. The Romanian Orthodox Church

As the result of the colonisation and romanisation of the Thracian people beyond the Balkan mountains the Romanian people came into existence on both sides of the river Danube. The historian Eusebius of Caesarea (4th century) affirms that the Apostle St. Andrew preached the Gospel of Christ through parts of the Lower Danube and the Black Sea. In the following centuries the number of Christians increased in this area as a result of the relations between the Greek fortress of Scythia Minor (present Dobrogea of Romania) and the Christian world of the Near East, with the settlement of the Slavonic people on the Dacia Moesia territory (beginning of the seventh century); The Daco-Roman language differentiated itself from the popular Latin, taking Slavonic elements. The settlement of the Bulgarians on the territory between the Danube, the Balkan Mountains and the Black Sea (7th century), their slavonisation, the formation of the Bulgarian State, their Christianisation (9th century) and the introduction of the Slavonic language into the Christian cult exercised a strong influence also on the religious life of the Romanians. The Romanians adopted the Slavonic language for worship during the 10th century.

Bishoprics were founded in the main cities of Muntenia, Moldavia and Transylvania in the 14th century which flourished and prospered during the following centuries. These bishoprics became great centres of Christian life and culture.

The autocephaly of the Romanian Orthodox Church was recognized by the Patriarchal decree of April 1885 signed by Patriarch Joachim IV and the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. In 1925 the Romanian Orthodox Church was elevated to the dignity of Patriarchate.

Miron Cristea, Metropolitan of Hungro-Wallachia became the first Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church (1925—1939).

Patriarch Nicodim Munteanu (1939—1948) succeeded him. Patriarch Justinian led the Church from June 1948 till his death in March 26, 1977.

Under present Patriarch Justin, the successor of Patriarch Justinian, there are now more than 20 bishops in the Romanian Orthodox Church.



#### 4. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church

It is believed that Christian communities were set up in the Balkan Peninsula during the first centuries of the Christian era. Slavonic tribes settled in the Balkan lands in the sixth and seventh centuries, and then the Proto-Bulgarians. By the last half of the ninth century a great number of Bulgarians had been converted to Christianity. Prince Boris adopted the Christian faith in 865 and then Christianity became the official religion in the Bulgarian state.

An Ecclesiastical Council held in Constantinople (from 5 October 869 until 28 February 870) created a separate church diocese within Bulgaria's boundaries and thus laid the foundations of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. At the beginning it was an autonomous archbishopric under the jurisdiction of the Constantinople Patriarchate, from which it obtained its first Primate, its clergy and theological and liturgical books.

In 886, Saints Cyril and Methodius came to Bulgaria. This resulted in an awakening in Bulgarian literature, learning and culture. By the end of the ninth century the Bulgarian language had become the official language of the Church and State. A great number of churches and monasteries were built.

Because of military and political developments, during the second half of the tenth century, the Bulgarian Patriarchal see was moved successively from the capital Prestan to Dorostol, Triaditsa, (today's Sofia), Voden, Muglen, Prespa and finally to Ochrid, which became capital of the western Bulgarian state under Tsar Samouil (976-1014).

Bulgaria fell under Byzantine domination in 1018 and Emperor Basil II acknowledged the autocephalous status of the Bulgarian Archbishopric of Ochrid. It continued to exist until 1767, when it was put under the Constantinople Patriarchate. At a Church Council convened in Lampsaki in 1235 presided over by Patriarch Germanos II of Constantinople, the autocephalous status and the Patriarchal dignity of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church was affirmed.

When the Church fell under Ottoman rule in 1393, Patriarch Efthimi was sent into exile and the Bulgarian Church was subordinated to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. In 1870, by a Firman (Decree) of the Sultan the Ottoman government restored the Bulgarian Patriarchate.

As a result of the First World War, the Patriarchate became unable to elect its head after the death of Patriarch Joseph I in 1915.

Bulgaria witnessed the victory of a socialist revolution in 1944 and in January 1945, Metropolitan Stefan of Sofia was elected as the Bulgarian Exarch. The Church Council in May 1953 restored the Patriarchal status of the Bulgarian Church and elected Metropolitan Kirill of Plovdiv as Patriarch of Bulgaria and Metropolitan of Sofia. After the death of Patriarch Kirill on 7th March 1971, Metropolitan Maximos of Lovech was elected Primate of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

Today under Patriarch Maximos there are 11 dioceses within the boundaries of the people's Republic of Bulgaria. For the Orthodox Bulgarians in America, Canada, and Australia it has two more dioceses with seats in New York and in Akron, USA. The Bulgarian parishes in Istambul, Budapest, Vienna and Bucharest are also under the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Church.

## 5. The Georgian Orthodox Church

One of the oldest of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Georgian Orthodox Church holds a tradition that the Apostles of Jesus, Andrew (the first-called) and Simeon the Canaanite came to Iberia (West Georgia) to proclaim the Gospel. The fact that Bishop Stratilat of Pitsund was a delegate to the first Ecumenical Council in 325, indicates that there was an Episcopate in West Georgia as early as the fourth century A. D.

St. Nino (4th century), a Woman Saint who arrived in Kartli (central Georgia) from Cappadocia and proclaimed the Christian faith, attracted numerous followers including Queen Nana and later King Miriam. The King sent envoys to Byzantium requesting bishops for Georgia. The Georgian historian Leonti Mroveli writes in the chronicle, *Kartlis Tskhovreba*, that Constantine the Great sent Bishop John, two priests and three deacons to Georgia. Anyhow, in the sixth century there were more than 30 bishops in the Georgian Church.

During the reign of Vakhtang Gorgaslan (Middle of the fifth century) the Georgian Church became autocephalous. Since then, the Head of the Church began to assume the title Catholicos. The Metropolitan of Mtskheta assumed the title Catholicos Peter I (467 - 474). At a local Council held at Dvin (in Armenia) in A. D. 505, the Georgian Church together with the Armenian Church and the Albanian Church rejected the Council of Chalcedon. But later under imperial pressures from the Roman Empire the Georgian Church under Catholicos Cyrion I (600 A. D.) was forced to accept the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon.

The 'Thirteen Syrian Fathers' who came to Georgia in between A. D. 560 and 570 laid a strong foundation for the monastic movement in the Georgian Church. Also there are evidences for a Persian connection which helped the flourishing of the Georgian Monasteries.

During the reigns of such Christian monarchs as King David and Queen Tamara, Georgia became one of the most powerful states in the East and ecclesiastical centres both inside and outside Georgia multiplied and flourished. The Gelati Academy, the Ikaltoi Academy, the Monastery of the Cross in Jerusalem, the Georgian Monastery on Mount Sinai, the Monasteries in Antioch and the Georgian monastery on Mount Athos are some among them.



Georgia was captured by Russia in the 19th century and as a result the Church's independence was taken away by the Russian emperor. The Exarchate of the Georgian Church was formed after 1811. The first Exarch was Varlam Eristavi and all the other Exarchs until 1917 were Russians. After the Bolshevik Revolution of Russia in 1917, the Catholicate of the Georgian Church was re-established. Kyrion Sadzaglishvili became the Catholicos - Patriarch of all Georgia.

Ilia II, the present Catholicos - Patriarch of all Georgia who succeeds Patriarch Kallistras, Melchizedek, Ephrem and David is the 146th Patriarch of the Georgian Church. The Church has now about 3 million members and ten dioceses. The headquarters of the Church is situated at Tbilisi, the capital of the Socialist Republic of Georgia.

## 6. The Orthodox Church of Finland

The Finnish Orthodox Church, a small Church consisting of 1.3% of the population of Finland, celebrated the 60th anniversary of the independence of the Church and the 800th anniversary of the coming of Orthodox Christianity to Finland in 1978. The roots and the spiritual heritage of Finnish Orthodoxy take us back to the origins of Christianity in Novgorod and Russia.

The influence of Christianity began to spread into Karelia (the eastern-most province of Finland on the border with Russia), in the 11th century, apparently as a result of commercial journeys of Karelians to Russia. Missionary work was done on the shores of Lake Ladoga in the 12th and 13th centuries as a result of which the famous Valamo Monastery was established in an island in Ladoga. This was followed by the founding of the Konevitsa Monastery (14th century) in Ladoga and of Petsamo Monastery (16th century) in Lapland.

In the 17th century, when Orthodox Karelia came under Swedish rule, attempts were made to convert the Karelians to Lutheranism. Consequently a great number of Orthodox people were scattered. As a result of a powerful cultural and national upsurge among the Finnish Orthodox people at the end of the 19th century, the Finnish language was introduced into services, and a bulk of Orthodox literature began to be published in the Finnish language.

In 1892 the Orthodox Diocese of Finland was established. After Finland had become independent in 1917, the Orthodox Church of Finland became autonomous, and this was recognized by Tikhon the then Patriarch of Moscow. When, under the new conditions it became impossible to maintain contact with the Russian Church, the Finnish Orthodox Church became affiliated to the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1923, and since then it has constituted the Autonomous Archbishopric of Finland.

As a result of the Second World War, the Finnish Orthodox Church lost 90% of its property and 70% of its members had to leave their homes and were scattered all over Finland. In 1949 the Finnish Parliament passed a law on the basis of which the Church was reconstructed in the years 1950-60. During this time 13 Orthodox churches, 42 chapels, 14 parsonages and 19 cemeteries were built at state expense for the new parishes.

Now the Finnish Orthodox Church is the second national Church and is supported by the state. The headquarters of the Church is in Kuopio, the seat of Archbishop Paul the present Primate. A church museum and a theological seminary are situated at Kuopio. The Church is divided into three dioceses, the centres being in Kuopio, Helsinki and Oulu.

The New Valamo Monastery and the Lintula convent attract a lot of worshippers and tourists from all over the world. The Church has altogether (in 1982) 70 priests, 18 deacons and forty precentors.

# News and Notes

## 1. INDIAN BISHOPS URGE GOVERNMENT ACTION

The conference of the 20 diocesan bishops of the Church of South India has urged government action in connection with several social issues.

Speaking of the "widening gap between the rich and the poor", the bishops ask the government to "bring about socio-economic justice to the oppressed and exploited sections of the society", notably "millions" "still go hungry" and victims of "unemployment. alarmingly on the increase."

Noting "divisive force and religious fanaticism disrupting the communal and religious harmony in several regions", the bishops appeal for state and national government action to "safeguard the legitimate rights of the minority communities" in the mostly Hindu country.

Referring to "increasing incidents of ill-treatment and attacks on the Harijan" (untouchables), the bishops urge more government protection. They also say that "the law and order situation throughout the country is deteriorating" with "travel by road and rail.. increasingly hazardous". The government is urged to "arrest these evils".

In an appeal to the CSI, the bishops ask renewed commitment to unity and ecumenism.

(Courtesy- EPS)

## 2. BCC-Sikhs

The British Council of Churches community and race relations unit is asking that UK law be changed to make it clear that discrimination against Sikhs is in the same category as discrimination against Jews. The call came after a court decision that it is not discrimination for a school to require a Sikh pupil not to wear a turban and to cut his hair. "The churches in Britain are deeply concerned about restrictions on Christians in other countries and it would be inconsistent not to acknowledge the need for members of other faiths to be able to practice their religious observances freely in Britain," the unit says.

(Courtesy-EPS)

## 3. Orthodox-China

The Eastern Orthodox cathedral in Harbin, Manchuria, China is reportedly soon to be reopened for worship. It has been used as a warehouse for the last 25 years and is the first Orthodox church reopened since the Cultural Revolution.

(Courtesy-EPS)