

## **Syndesmos Consultation on Cooperation between Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Youth Movements**

St. Bishoy Monastery, Egypt, May 20th-26th 1991

We, 25 youth representatives from the Orthodox Church and Oriental Orthodox Churches in 11 different countries met in St. Bishoy Monastery, Egypt, May 20th-26th 1991.

This meeting was made possible with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch and Pope Shenouda III and of His Holiness Patriarch and Pope Parthenios III and by the generous hospitality of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, Bishops of Youth, and Public, Ecumenical and Social Services.

We rejoice in the fact that our Churches have, by God's will, in the official dialogue "clearly understood that both families have always loyally maintained the same authentic Orthodox Christological faith, and the unbroken continuity of the Apostolic Tradition, though they may have used Christological terms in different ways. It is this common faith and continuous loyalty to the Apostolic Tradition that should be the basis of our unity and communion". (Second agreed statement of the joint commission of the theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and Oriental Orthodox Churches, Chambésy, Switzerland, September 23rd-28th 1990).

In accordance with the recommendations on pastoral questions of this official dialogue and the resolution made by the XIIIth SYNDESMOS General Assembly (Boston, USA, 1989), SYNDESMOS convened this Consultation, with the aim of enabling Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox youth movements to support the imminent re-establishment of communion between our Churches.

During the Consultation, we heard three presentations which provided the basis for our deliberations: Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland, (unable to attend in person), outlined the History and Progress of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches; Bishop Moussa, Coptic Orthodox Bishop for Youth, and Metropolitan George of Mont Lebanon (Byblos and Batroun) both spoke on Challenges for Cooperation on Pastoral Questions. Two themes were discussed during group work: How can SYNDESMOS support, on a youth level, the official dialogue between the two families of Churches? And what should be the forms of cooperation between youth movements of the two families of Churches? We shared a common worship life, which reflected our varied liturgical traditions.

We agreed that youth should participate in making the official theological agreed statements an ecclesial reality. This can be done initially by informing our young people of the results of the official dialogue between our Churches, which, in turn, will help the Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox youth to know and love each other better, and to give their common faith together, thus preparing themselves for the restoration of communion.

We agreed to make the following recommendations:

- 1) That all Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox youth movements prepare their members for the imminent renewal of communion between our Churches by means of information, common activities and close cooperation. This is particularly important in those regions where our Churches co-exist.

2) That Syndesmos publish and distribute information about the official Theological dialogue between the two families of Churches. This information could take the form of a booklet containing a short history of each of the Orthodox Churches and Oriental Orthodox Churches and their youth movements, and a chapter summarizing the history of the dialogue between our Churches up to and including the recent agreed statements.

3) That SYNDESMOS actively encourage close cooperation on a local and regional level of youth movements from both families of our Churches. This cooperation could take the form of regional and local committees, joint seminars and retreats with biblical and liturgical studies, and discussion on themes of Tradition and renewal.

4) That SYNDESMOS initiate a program of contacts and exchanges between students and teachers of Theology from both families of Churches.

5) That SYNDESMOS amend its Constitution to allow Oriental Orthodox youth movements and Theological Schools to become full (affiliated) members of SYNDESMOS, thereby enabling these movements to participate fully in the life and decision-making processes of SYNDESMOS.

As the Consultation concluded on the day of Pentecost, we thanked God who through His Holy Spirit had brought us together in our common Orthodox faith, and had guided us in an atmosphere of Hope and Love.