

## Extracts from the “Report of the General Secretary 1956-1961”

5<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, Beirut, Lebanon, 29/08-04/09 1961

Mr. Eftimios Stylios

[...]

### I. Our Role

1. *We serve the Orthodox Church.* It should be pointed out once again that the role of "Syndesmos" and of the Youth Movements within the Orthodox Church is to offer their services to the Orthodox Church. With our activities we do not substitute the Church in and of its tasks, but we merely serve it. During such a critical period, which, at the same time, is so advantageous for Orthodoxy, the Church needs People willing to offer themselves with enthusiasm, zeal and self-denial, for her work. It is such workers that "Syndesmos" tries to supply for the Church, by inspiring and leading the members of the Movements, as well as by its existence itself, as a service coordinating these Movements.

2. *We bear witness of Orthodox unity.* The existence of "Syndesmos" provides a continuous witness of orthodox cooperation and of orthodox unity. Unfortunately, for various reasons the Orthodox Churches have been and are still kept at a distance. This is the disadvantage of Orthodoxy. Thanks to its unity and cooperation practised for many years now within "Syndesmos", Orthodox Youth gives forth a hopeful message to the whole of the orthodox world. The young people of the Church are the pioneers of Orthodox unity.

3. *We provide Youth with ideals.* The young people of today are short of ideals, but high ideals are cultivated for them within "Syndesmos". The idea of "Syndesmos" broadens the horizons of young people and affords them the possibility of acquiring great ideals; such ideals that are due to the influence of "Syndesmos" are the Ecumenicity of Orthodoxy and the Orthodox external Mission. It is amazing how these ideals have spread among the Orthodox Youth during the past few years.

In view of what precedes, let us now see our work as it has been done so far.

[...]

### IV. Conclusions

1. *The Super-natural element of our work.* You will allow me to confess that the whole affair of "Syndesmos" is a real miracle of the grace of God. Those of us who happen to be within the various developments of the entire work are witnesses of the miracle performed day after day. It is already our conviction, based on reality itself, that God is pleased with this humble work of ours, otherwise it is impossible to explain the progress of the effort. Without material or financial means, without persons, without any living powers, the work of "Syndesmos" is actually advanced and becomes an important Movement in our Church. There is something else as well: The duties at the Secretariat with the minimum of means and great responsibilities have been most trying for my co-workers and myself, always requiring many endless

efforts, difficulties often made us consider resignation. But the atmosphere of miracle has renewed our strength and given us courage to carry on our tasks.

2. *The element of sacrifice in our work.* This element has already been pointed out. It should be stressed once more that it constitutes the general principle of our work. "Syndesmos" must continue in the form of voluntary services to the Church. This of course involves sacrifices on the part of those working for it, but, at the same time, attributes a unique value to our work. The enthusiasm for the work of the Kingdom of God, the faith in the Head of the Church and the Presence of the Holy Spirit constitute the greatest possession that those working at "Syndesmos" could have. This does not mean that we exclude all other material resources. It means, however, that enthusiasm and sacrifice of its members for the work of the Kingdom of God should always be the precious asset of "Syndesmos".

3. *The ideals of Ecumenicity and Mission.* More specifically for the Movements of Youth, we must emphasize the fact that these two ideals of the Ecumenicity of Orthodoxy and of the Orthodox Missions must definitely be put forward. It is a gift sent by God that the Movements of "Syndesmos" can give two great and living ideals to Orthodox Youth. Let us not miss a chance to cultivate these ideals in our Movements for they will greatly help our members in their spiritual lives.

Dear brethren,

In view of the important Church and world events of our time, I am calling you all to realize the responsibility we have as the Youth of the Orthodox Church. We have not the right to linger in the margin. We have not the right to postpone things and remain inactive. "Now is the accepted time" (II Corinthians 6:2). *Now has come the time and hour of Orthodoxy.* If we remain inert today, one might wonder whether this hour ever will come back again.

God grant that this Assembly will help us to realize our duties more intensely.